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New Ricardo engine assembly facility commences pilot production

Ricardo has today announced that production has now started at the brand new state-of-the-art, high performance engine assembly facility that it has constructed at the company's Shoreham Technical Centre

The new Ricardo engine assembly facility has been designed to provide a near clean room production environment in which each and every process is carried out according to strict quality principles and within a comprehensive 'no faults forward' culture. This facility builds upon the established reputation of the Ricardo Performance Products group which has, for example, seen the company produce the advanced Ricardo-designed transmissions for the iconic Ford GT and the Bugatti Veyron supercar, as well as numerous driveline systems and components for the highest levels of competitive motorsport.

At the core of the new 600 square meter building is a ten station vertical conveyor based mini-line supported by incoming materials inspection and line-side delivery of components. Each station is equipped with a sophisticated 'human-machine interface' (HMI) providing guidance to each operator on the precise sequence of operations required at each stage. The tools and assembly equipment used at each station are instrumented and provide data – down to the level of the torque applied to each fastener – directly into a central warranty database for each engine built, and hence provide complete finished product traceability. Each line station is interlocked via its HMI to ensure that all operations and checks have been successfully completed and recorded before the line can be indexed and the engine moved forward to the next station. In addition to the main production line, the new engine assembly facility includes a cylinder head sub-assembly line, dress area and an end of line hot test cell so that the performance of every engine produced can be fully tested and validated.

When fully commissioned in the late spring of this year, this impressive new high quality assembly centre will be capable of producing up to 4000 engines annually across two daily shifts. The facility has been designed and configured around the requirements of its lead customer, McLaren



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Automotive, for whom it will act as the production supplier of the all-new McLaren M838T 90 degree, V8 twin-turbo engine. The high-performance (600 PS), low emissions (279g/km CO₂) engine has been designed and developed by McLaren Automotive in partnership with Ricardo, and will power the McLaren MP4-12C high-performance sports car that is due to go on sale from May 2011. With pilot production of engines commenced and initial deliveries already taking place, commissioning of the new Ricardo engine assembly facility will be continued over the next two months as production volumes are ramped up.

Commenting on the commencement of pilot production at the new Ricardo engine assembly facility, Ricardo CEO Dave Shemmans said:

“We are extremely pleased to be able to announce the pilot production of the first products to be produced by this extremely impressive, quality-focused assembly facility for high performance engines. This is an important milestone and we look forward to completing the commissioning of the facility and to supplying the engine needs of the McLaren MP4-12C sports car over the coming years. The successful design and construction of this facility is highly complementary with our existing production facilities for motorsport and niche vehicle drivelines and transmissions. It also serves to demonstrate Ricardo’s comprehensive capability to design and develop the ultimate in high performance powertrain systems incorporating the very latest technologies, and to take them into quality assured and fully warranted niche production.”

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

Ricardo plc: With technical centres and offices in the UK, USA, Germany, the Czech Republic, France, Italy, Russia, China, Japan, India and Korea, Ricardo is a leading independent technology provider and strategic consultant to the world's transportation sector and clean energy industries. The company's engineering expertise ranges from vehicle systems integration, controls, electronics and software development, to the latest driveline and transmission systems and gasoline, diesel, hybrid and fuel cell powertrain technologies, as well as wind energy and tidal power systems. Ricardo is committed to excellence and industry leadership in people, technology and knowledge; approximately 70 per cent of its employees are highly qualified multi-disciplined professional engineers and technicians. A public company, Ricardo plc posted sales of £162.8 million in financial year 2010 and is a constituent of the FTSE techMark 100 index – a group of innovative technology companies listed on the London Stock Exchange. For more information, visit www.ricardo.com.

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