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**Ricardo plc**

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**9 February 2015**

## **Lightweight solutions for automakers - using advanced composites proven in aerospace**

**New Ricardo and Albany Engineering Composites partnership supports the introduction of advanced materials such as 3D composites into the automotive sector, providing structural light-weighting solutions that increase fuel economy while maintaining occupant safety**

Automakers are incorporating a variety of new and advanced materials to reduce the weight of vehicle structures and components as they work to reduce carbon emissions and improve passenger safety. Aerospace composite supplier Albany Engineered Composites (AEC) and automotive engineering and consulting company Ricardo announced today that they have entered into a collaborative partnership to provide composite body, chassis and other structural components to the automotive industry. Albany Engineered Composites has demonstrated expertise in the state-of-the-art design and manufacturing of composite parts noted for their impact and damage tolerance in the aerospace market. As a world leader in passenger car and commercial vehicle design with car manufacturers and their suppliers, Ricardo will collaborate with Albany Engineered Composites to grow the use of proven advanced aerospace composites within the global automotive industry.

“We’re excited to leverage our experience with 3D and other advanced composite technologies in the automotive industry. The ability to lightweight with durability has

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been a technology enabler for our aerospace customers, and we believe our partnership with Ricardo can deliver the same technology advances to automotive customers,” says Brian Coffenberry, vice president of business development for research & technology at AEC.

Under the terms the agreement, Ricardo and Albany Engineered Composites will jointly explore the use of AEC technologies like 3D composites for providing the stiffness, strength, durability and energy absorption necessary to lightweight applications such as crash structures. Often these structures are made of metal and are difficult to replace with a lighter weight materials while maintaining performance requirements. The synergies available from the AEC-Ricardo collaboration will be particularly attractive to automotive manufacturers and Tier 1 suppliers that want to reduce body and chassis mass, while also maintaining vehicle structural and safety performance.

“The agreement announced today is excellent news for our global automotive customers as we work to find further weight reductions in vehicles to meet future CO<sub>2</sub> reductions,” says Ricardo, plc chief operating officer Mark Garrett. “As industry experts forecast significant reductions in the cost of carbon composites, along with continuous improvements in related manufacturing cycle times, this becomes an attractive solution for the structural components of future global car platforms. The combination of Ricardo’s automotive engineering capabilities and Albany Engineered Composites technology, design and manufacturing capabilities should provide a unique opportunity to speed the implementation of advanced light-weighting solutions for our customers.”

Ends

**SOURCE: Ricardo plc**

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**NOTES TO EDITORS:**

**Albany Engineered Composites** designs, develops, and manufactures advanced composite components in order to help our customers push the frontiers of innovation. Our core strength is our ability to produce highly tailored, complex composite components. With our unique blend of products – including 3D woven structures, traditional and non-traditional 2D composite structures, and discrete through thickness reinforcement technologies, to name a few – AEC is able to produce composite components and products which meet performance and cost specifications often beyond the reach of metallic or conventional laminated composites. For more information visit <http://www.albint.com/aec>

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