

## **ITB Remains at the Forefront of Technical and Market Developments in Automotive Fuel Systems**

*The ITB Group Organizes an Inaugural Conference on Fuel Systems in Pune, India*

Novi, Michigan ([PRWEB](#)) January 06, 2014 -- The automotive fuel systems business represents a \$16 billion global market that provides opportunities for a wide range of thermoplastic materials from high density polyethylene to more exotic materials such as fluoropolymers including ethylene tetrafluoroethylene and long chain polyamides. There are a diverse range of benefits supporting the use of these materials but different geographic regions are adopting these materials at different rates.

We consider the case of plastic fuel tanks that are produced from high density polyethylene. When used on gasoline-based vehicles, concerns with permeation often result in the use of six-layer multilayer tanks that include virgin layers of polyethylene, an ethylene vinyl alcohol (EVOH) barrier layer, tie-layers and a regrind layer. Such tanks have a number of benefits when used on the vehicle which include:

- Improved packaging flexibility
- Lower weight than corresponding steel tanks
- Greater resistance to a wide variety of fuels especially biofuels compared with steel materials
- The greater number of advanced full service suppliers of plastic tanks compared with steel tanks

Over the last 20 years plastic tanks have shown substantial growth in major markets including China, Europe, Japan and North America. The accompanying exhibit shows that approximately four out of every five cars worldwide now have plastic fuel tanks. We notice from the exhibit that this figure is even higher in Europe and North America. Globally Inergy and Kautex Textron command a substantial share of the plastic fuel tank market.

Plastic tanks are currently being subjected to a number of challenges most notable of which is the move to partially electrified vehicles that is challenging fuel tank engineers to develop pressure-resistant plastic tank designs. Changes in government regulations such as by California and the US EPA will require fuel systems to have further reduced emissions while also incorporating ethanol in emission test fuels. Achieving the required emission limits while using ethanol-containing fuels will pose considerable challenges to fuel system engineers.

The globalization of the marketplace is posing further challenges to the development of suitable cost-effective fuel systems for use in global markets. Emerging markets such as India have a number of unique challenges such as fuels of questionable quality and emerging automotive OEMs that do not yet have the requisite skills for the development of world class, durable fuel systems.

“The simultaneous growth of the automotive market in developing countries together with the efforts to bring down vehicle exhaust emissions, reduce fuel consumption and increase the use of sustainable fuels is placing major hurdles in front of the automotive OEMs,” comments Dr. Joel Kopinsky, Managing Director, of The ITB Group.

As part of its efforts to bring automotive engineers and suppliers together in effective conference settings, The ITB Group recently organized its inaugural fuel systems conference in Pune, India. This conference, sponsored



by Inergy Automotive Systems, included presentations by Continental, Inergy, Mahle and Volkswagen together with a Keynote Presentation by Dr. Joel Kopinsky. Mr. Prakash Telang, former Managing Director of Tata Motors, provided the closing remarks.

#### About The ITB Group

The ITB Group, Ltd. is an international automotive technical/business consulting firm headquartered in Novi, Michigan, USA. It provides technical and business advice to OEMs, component and material suppliers in North America, Europe, and Asia. The company is a leading expert in the use of polymer materials for automotive applications including under-the-hood, interior and exterior applications. The firm further provides guidance for various forms of supplier transactions.

Further background can be found at <http://www.itbgroup.com>.



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