

Southern Africa

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SKILLS SHORTAGE POSES THREAT TO INDUSTRY

CALL GOES OUT FOR
UNIFIED INDUSTRY
ASSOCIATION

STAMFORD TYRES
SA EVOLVES INTO SOLUTIONS
PROVIDER

RECIRCLE AWARDS 2025
EVOLVES IN DRIVE
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Editor's Corner

Ask any member of the tyre and fitment industry to name the biggest challenge to their business, and their answer is likely to be, 'finding the right people for the job'.

The current skills shortage is posing a serious threat to the industry, as well as to the consumer, as new vehicle models demand an upscaled level of expertise and skills to service and maintain - skills that are not necessarily readily available in the current replacement market.

In response to this impending crisis, TEPA (Tyre, Equipment, Parts Association), has decided to tackle the issue head on, with a brand-new set of national training programmes aimed at closing the technical skills gap, while also serving to empower people by way of broader knowledge, added competence and an opportunity to obtain an official qualification.

Training Committee Leader, Angie Frederic, tells us more about this proposed initiative in our exclusive Interview section.

And, in a bid to address the effects of the anti-dumping duties on Chinese tyres, implemented last year, well-known industry player, Georg Schramm, puts out a call to the industry at large for a unified approach to tackle this, plus other prevailing issues, he deems as critical to the sustainability of the tyre sector. This story on page 8.

We also bring you a story on the newly-released Prometeon range of tyres for the truck and bus market, which have been specifically developed for African conditions, with the Prometeon company inviting South African fleets to carry out comparative tests, to prove their merit.

Enjoy these plus other stories circulating the domestic and international tyre market.

Liana



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SKILLS SHORTAGE POSES THREAT TO INDUSTRY

TEPA'S ANGIE FREDERIC OUTLINES NEW TRAINING GOALS

The critical skills shortage in the automotive sector threatens to de-rail one of the country's most important industries. A dire result of the industry's failure to impart technical training over the years, together with the rapid evolution of motor vehicles, motor repair outlets and tyre stores are struggling to find suitably qualified staff to carry out the necessary tasks required to keep up with new technologies.

TEPA Training Committee Leader (and owner of a Point S store in KZN), Angie Frederic, tells us about the proposed new training plans that are being laid out to address this pressing issue.

How critical is the skills shortage in the industry, based on member feedback? The skills shortage within our industry is so critical that our members are battling to fill vacancies within their businesses. The need to align skills with the ever-evolving demands of modern vehicles, is equally pressing and requires immediate action.

What are some of the more pressing skills shortages being identified in the industry at large?

One of our key areas of focus is minor servicing, with particular emphasis on brakes and suspension maintenance. These are crucial components of vehicle safety, and by upskilling professionals in these areas, we are not only enhancing the competency of the industry but also contributing to safer roads across South Africa.

An increasing number of tyre store owners are now also offering minor services in their premises, as a way to remain sustainable and augment profits, which means the demand for technical training on minor servicing is likely to grow.

Industry members are battling to fill vacancies within their businesses.

“

The success of this initiative will be largely based on industry support.

”

Please provide list of current training programmes you offer.

The courses we offer will include Tyre Repair and balancing, Suspension Specialist (including wheel alignment/replacement of suspension parts including brakes and shocks), Basic servicing skills, Salesperson, Retail Manager, Battery fitter and tester and New Venture Creation (Entrepreneurship).

We were under the impression that TEPA was already providing training courses on minor servicing?

These training programmes already exist within the merSETA framework, but our mission is to make them more relevant to our industry and up to date with the evolving technology of a vehicle.

Bear in mind that much of the existing training material is outdated and not in keeping with current technological demands. This needs to be urgently addressed, as the first step towards creating a sophisticated industry.

Moreover, our vision is to formalise training within our sector and make it easily available.

Also bear in mind that the proposed training programmes – under merSETA – will allow individuals to accumulate credits towards a higher qualification.

Jasmeena Shiba, (TEPA Chairperson and on the RMI Executive committee in KZN and Director of Royal Tyres), has further indicated their desire to pioneer training courses specific to the tyre sector, to run in tandem. What are your thoughts on this?

The success of this initiative will be largely based on industry support so I applaud Jasmeena for setting the example.

Basic skills training programmes lead to increased productivity and the ability to take on more work, which ultimately leads to increased revenue.

Pioneering training courses specific to the retail motoring sector is a great initiative. This will address skill gaps, enhance safety standards, and promote innovation in tyre/motor technology. Offering specialised training can help workers understand the latest advancements, improve maintenance practices, and better manage tyre issues, which ultimately benefits both businesses and consumers.

Additionally, such courses can foster a culture of continuous learning within the industry, ensuring that employees are well-versed in best practices and new regulations. By running these courses in tandem with existing programmes, organisations can create a more comprehensive training ecosystem that supports professional



Angie Frederic is also the owner of a Point S store in Hillcrest

MEET THE TRAINING COMMITTEE

development at all levels. Overall, it's a forward-thinking approach that can contribute significantly to the industry's growth and sustainability.

How do you see the evolution of these initiatives by way of possible venues and timelines?

We have set the timeline at a five-year plan. Because New Venture Creation also needs to be addressed, to attract more people into the industry, I see this initiative evolving in campaigns that will bring new entrants.

Are you planning to offer training nationwide?

Yes, this is the plan to reach all our TEPA members.

How can the industry at large become involved in supporting and realising these proposed initiatives?

The programmes we will offer are skilled based so the industry will need to get involved with workplace experience. So far, we have had great support from the industry on the initiative as it will not only solve the critical skills shortage but give many unemployed people in South Africa and opportunity enter our sector.

We need to banish the perception that investing in training is costly and counter-productive, and that up-skilling will result in losing trained staff to the competition. Instead, we are encouraging the notion that creating a sophisticated, professional landscape will be of benefit to everyone in this industry, in the long run.



ANGIE FREDERIC
COMMITTEE LEADER

Angie boasts more than 19 years of experience in the tyre industry, having begun her career in 2005 with Bridgestone South Africa. In 2016, she launched her own tyre retail store along with a merSETA-accredited training school for the tyre sector.

In 2017, Angie was elected to the Supa Quick Council, a position she held until 2021.

She has also taken on the role of Chairperson for TEPA KZN.

Currently, she serves on the merSETA Chamber and the merSETA KZN Regional Committee.



VISHAL PREMLALL

Vishal serves as the National Director of TEPA and has been with the RMI for 17 years, having previously led national consumer affairs, and held positions as TDAFA Director and MIWA Director. He is currently the Director for both SAPRA and TEPA.

With industry experience dating back to 1991, Vishal has navigated various roles, giving him a clear insight into the automotive landscape.

He holds a PMD from the Gordon Institute of Business Studies, as well as an MBA from the University of Suffolk in the UK.



DYLAN PETZER

Dylan currently leads multiple companies, including Supaquick Rustenburg. Having previously served as CFO for I-Protect and PCSA, he brings a unique expertise in SME development.

In 2019, he completed his BAP(SA) and achieved his CA(SA) designation in 2023. With extensive experience in the tyre and automotive industries, Dylan has held prominent positions and has been actively involved in industry committees.

His professional journey is further enriched by his roles on several boards, including the RMI & TEPA - Central REC, RMI - Central Disciplinary Committee, and MIBCO - Northern Executive Council.



KEITH STANTON JONES

Born on March 3, 1965, in Salisbury, Rhodesia, Keith Stanton-Jones began his career as a Pupil Technician at the Post Office, later earning an NTC6 from Smit Street Technical College. He went on to work with the Automotive Equipment Company and Tarry M&G, gaining experience in automotive equipment installation and training.

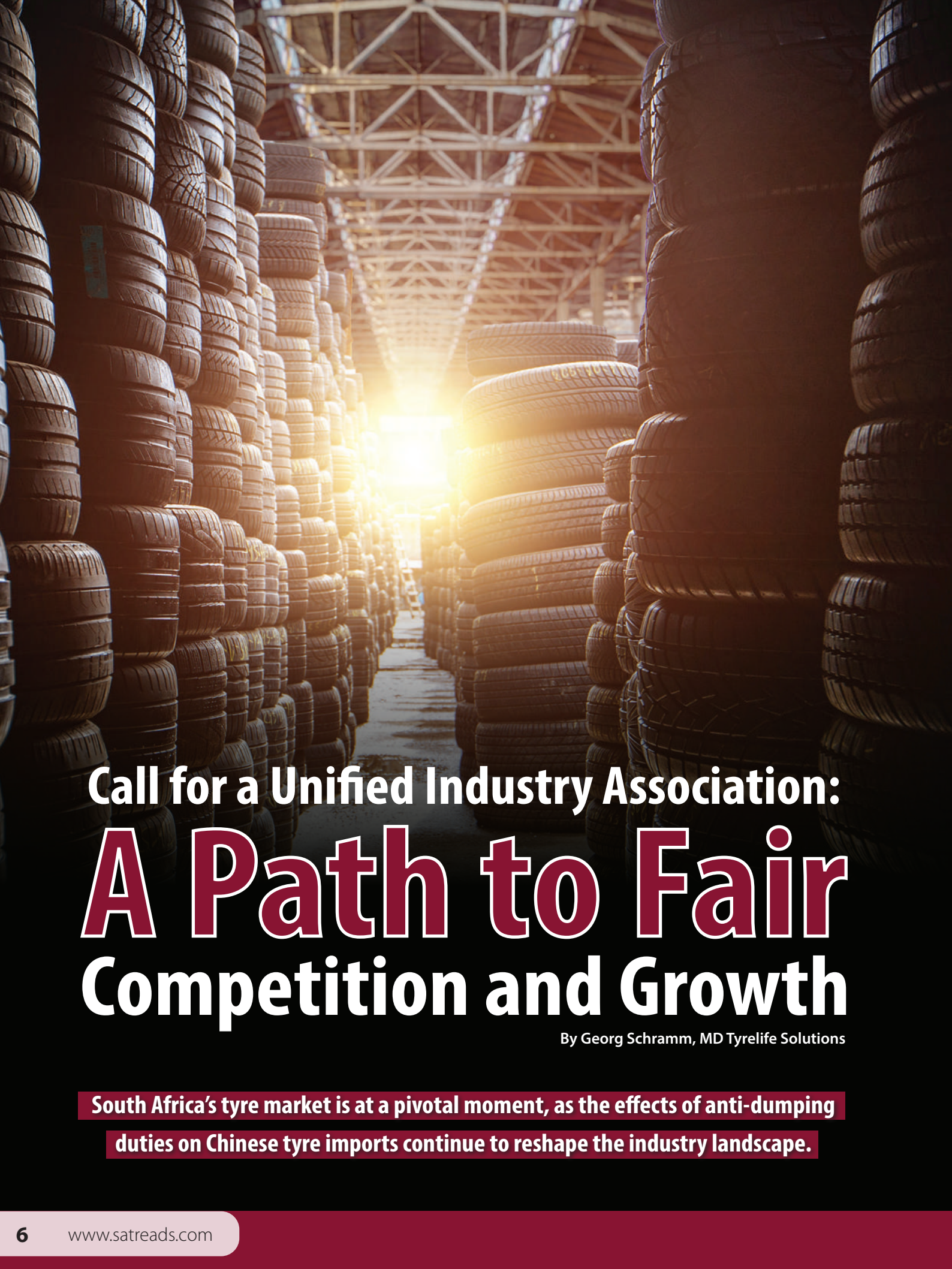
In 1994, he founded his own company, Stanquip, which he ran until 2005. Keith then joined Bosch, where he spent nearly a decade focusing on diagnostics, engine repairs, and launching ADAS systems in South Africa. In 2023, he joined the Point-S Group, bringing his extensive expertise in automotive equipment and training to the role.

Comment from TEPA national chair Johann van de Merwe:

TEPA fully understands and supports the need for training and continuous learning /development at the macro level in the automotive aftermarket industry and the positive impact that this brings to South Africa as a developing economy.

Developing relevant skills based on needs and evolution of the modern motor vehicle has become a strategic priority for TEPA to further professionalize their membership and to ensure a safer environment for all road users in South Africa.

TEPA will continue to advocate for best practices in the industry with the aim of achieving a more compliant operating environment whilst also broadening skills development and opening doors of opportunity for future potential participants in the sector.



Call for a Unified Industry Association: **A Path to Fair** Competition and Growth

By Georg Schramm, MD Tyrelife Solutions

South Africa's tyre market is at a pivotal moment, as the effects of anti-dumping duties on Chinese tyre imports continue to reshape the industry landscape.

Tyrelife Solutions, a long-established importer, has reiterated its call for the formation of a unified industry association. This proposal seeks to address growing concerns over the current regulatory framework, which Tyrelife suggests has led to market imbalances, inflated prices, and an environment that appears to favor a few dominant players.

The existing associations—SATMC (South African Tyre Manufacturers Conference) and TIASA (Tyre Importers Association of South Africa)—have faced criticism for not providing adequate representation for the entire industry. According to Tyrelife Solutions, decisions impacting the market are often based on limited perspectives, sidelining smaller players and restricting broader transparency.

LACK OF TRANSPARENCY AND FAIR REPRESENTATION

Georg Schramm, Managing Director of Tyrelife Solutions, brings a unique perspective to this discussion. With decades of experience in senior leadership roles within the tyre manufacturing sector, including at SRI, Apollo, and Goodyear, Schramm has gained valuable insights into the industry's inner workings. This background allows him to understand the challenges smaller players face and the broader market dynamics.

Schramm has raised concerns, stating, "The lack of transparency and the limited inclusion of smaller importers in key industry discussions is a serious issue. It impacts not just the industry, but also South African consumers who face higher prices and limited choices. There is a growing perception that the current structure primarily benefits a few large corporations, and stakeholders are calling for a review to ensure a more balanced industry landscape."

According to Schramm, the anti-dumping duties introduced last year have led to tyre price increases exceeding 30%, placing a disproportionate burden on consumers



The lack of transparency and limited inclusion of smaller importers in key industry discussions, is a serious issue.



and businesses that rely on affordable tyres. He believes that these price hikes have widened the gap between large manufacturers and smaller, independent importers, without addressing the broader realities of the sector.

PROPOSED OBJECTIVES FOR THE NEW ASSOCIATION

In response to this growing market imbalance, Tyrelife Solutions has proposed the creation of a new, fully inclusive association focused on the following objectives:

1. Promote Transparency: Full disclosure of all toll manufacturing agreements and global supply chains is essential to ensure transparency in import practices.

2. Provide Equal Representation: Both large manufacturers and smaller importers must have a voice in shaping the regulatory landscape, ensuring fair competition.

We need a balanced, fair and transparent regulatory framework that promotes competition.

3. Ensure Compliance: The association would work closely with regulatory bodies such as SARS, ITAC, and the NRCS to ensure that all players adhere to domestic trade laws and international sustainability standards.

4. Address Regulatory Gaps: By engaging with industry regulators, the association aims to close loopholes that currently allow illicit imports to undermine the market.

Tyrelife Solutions is also advocating for collaboration with existing industry bodies, including SATMC and TIASA, to ensure comprehensive representation across the entire spectrum of the tyre industry.

OPPOSITION FROM SATMC AND TIASA

Despite calls for reform, both SATMC and TIASA have expressed reservations about the proposed association. In a letter dated 12 September 2024, Nduduzo Chala, Managing Executive of SATMC, stated, "We believe that uniting manufacturers and importers under a single association may lead to conflicts of interest and dilute the strategic focus required for industrialization in South Africa. SATMC has a long-standing history of addressing industry challenges in collaboration with bodies such as TIASA, and we remain committed to this structure."

Charl de Villiers, Chairperson of TIASA, emphasized that many of the issues Tyrelife seeks to address are already being managed within the existing framework. "TIASA is dedicated to fostering a transparent and compliant industry environment. We believe that strengthening our current structures is the most effective way to address the challenges facing the industry," he noted.

A CALL FOR REGULATORY ENGAGEMENT AND TRANSPARENCY

Tyrelife Solutions has been actively engaging with various regulatory bodies, including the Department of Trade, Industry, and Competition (DTIC), ITAC, the Competition Commission, and the Retail Motor Industry Organisation (RMI). The DTIC has confirmed that the matter is being escalated for necessary input, while other organizations continue to assess the situation.

In communications with SATMC, Tyrelife Solutions has raised questions regarding transparency in SATMC members' global toll

manufacturing practices and the transfer pricing methodologies used when importing tyres and components. Schramm emphasizes that while SATMC advocates for anti-dumping measures, there are instances where its members reportedly continue importing from Chinese manufacturers. This has raised questions about how these practices align with the original intent of the duties. Moreover, a new circumvention investigation involving imports from Cambodia, Thailand, and Vietnam further complicates the landscape, suggesting a need for more clarity and consistency in regulatory approaches.

"We need a balanced, fair, and transparent regulatory framework that promotes competition and protects both businesses and consumers," says Schramm. "Without this, we risk perpetuating an unequal system that stifles growth and innovation." He emphasizes that the existing dialogue needs to evolve to address the reality of a globalized market, and has requested clarity from SATMC on their practices, particularly how they align with South African and international trade laws.

CONCLUSION

Tyrelife Solutions is urging industry stakeholders, regulators, and policymakers to seriously consider the need for a new, unified association that can represent all voices in the tyre industry. The call for reform is not just about protecting smaller importers—it's about fostering an environment where all players can thrive, ensuring long-term economic growth and consumer benefit.

As this conversation continues, it becomes evident that the future of South Africa's tyre industry depends on a fair and transparent approach that promotes healthy competition and addresses the challenges faced by all market participants. By advocating for a unified association, Tyrelife Solutions seeks to ensure a sustainable, inclusive, and thriving tyre industry.

DISCLAIMER: The views expressed in this editorial are those of Tyrelife Solutions, based on their market observations and experience, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the publisher. The goal is to encourage dialogue and collaboration within the tyre industry to promote transparency, fair competition, and compliance with regulatory standards.

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STAMFORD TYRES SA EVOLVES INTO A SOLUTIONS-PROVIDER WITH PREMIUM PROMETEON TRUCK AND BUS RANGE

By Liana Shaw

The local commercial market is about to be introduced to a new truck and bus tyre that is said to be out-performing its competitors by way of original tyre life, fuel consumption, lower rolling resistance, and overall performance.

Even casing integrity and retreadability has been greatly improved, according to the source, with end users now able to generate up to three retreads per casing. Best of all, the tyre maker has just released a dedicated commercial tyre range for the African continent, with these tyres boasting specific features to suit our particular weather and exacting road conditions.

On 18 August, Prometeon key personnel, fleet owners, transport operators and members of the press converged, (in person and virtually), to find out more about the tyre brand behind the hype, and why their tyre range is being deemed as the 'tyres for Africa'.

The event was hosted by their exclusive distributors - Stamford Tyres SA - a well-known, respected market player that, thanks to its flexibility and out-of-the-box thinking, has made sizeable inroads in the South African passenger market, by way of market share, something the company is now looking to repeat in the commercial segment.

Enter Prometeon, a premium tyre brand for the truck and bus segment, that was borne following the decision to separate and run its product segment divisions as private, wholly-independent business entities in 2017. Officially established as a spin-off from the industrial division of Pirelli Tyre, Prometeon now produces a range of upscale tyres for commercial, AGRO and OTR applications.

8000 researchers, four manufacturing plants (Italy, Brazil, Turkey, Egypt), and four R&D Centers, strategically located around the world, are now focusing on developing a multi-brand and multi-product approach, in a bid to widen their technological expertise, something that would not have been possible prior to the consolidation.

With more than 100 engineers and researchers now working exclusively on bringing new technology to market, their dedicated focus has led to key innovations for the commercial tyre sector.

Revolutionary technology unveiled

A number of key innovations are featured in the Prometeon truck and bus tyre range, among them:

Progea: A highly innovative PRO Grip Environment Approach compound, formulated to improve the tyre efficiency and safe performance, while reducing environmental impact.

SHTB: A Super High Tensile Belt cord, allowing high flexibility and prevention of corrosion propagation, to deliver superior integrity plus high resistance to aging.

SWiTe: A Spiral Wire Technology materializing in the bigger steel cable diameter that enhances optimisation of the total cost of ownership, thanks to high durability and long tyre life.

HR4B: A High Resistance four-belt structure that promotes casing flexibility and structural resistance for extended tyre life, even wear plus handling on uneven road surfaces.

COBe: A reinforced Cross Over Bead, combined with the new geometry of the rectangular wire steel, to ensure great flexibility, bead seating



Prometeon comprises 8000 researchers, four manufacturing plants and four R&D centers.



The tyre features a step shoulder with a square tread design that provides a better footprint, thereby minimising irregular wear.

with superior longevity throughout the entire casing life cycle, plus excellent resistance to high load.

Being dubbed as the ideal tyre for African conditions, the Nextroad Drive tyre, has integrated all these new technologies, whilst also sporting deep grooves to promote traction throughout the entire tyre life, even on the most difficult terrain.

More important, the tyre features a step shoulder with a square tread design that provides a better footprint, thereby minimising irregular tread wear.

"African fleet operators tell us the biggest challenge they face is shoulder drop," claimed Yan Toinette - Area Manager – South & East Africa Tyre Export Department, "and this is precisely where Prometeon engineers have focused their expertise, to produce the Nextroad Drive tyre, which comparative tests being carried out in other parts of Africa, are testifying to exceptional results: more mileage; even wear and an overall better driving experience."

Following in its 'footsteps', is the Nextroad Multi-axle tyre, (again equipped with all these new technologies), with an optimised footprint that ensures a uniform ground contact pressure, enhancing excellent even wear, high mileage, great tear resistance to chipping and chunking and grip in all weather conditions.

Moreover, the ejectors at the bottom of the central grooves prevent stone trapping and enhance casing resistance, a development that further contributes to higher retreadability and a lower cpk.

The R02 PRO Trailer Plus tyre

Over and above the patented new technologies, featured throughout the range, this new trailer tyre, (size 385/65 R22.5), is also said to be performing extremely well in other African countries, such as Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, courtesy of its new pattern geometry that delivers greater wet braking and effective water drainage, and a robust shoulder that promotes tear resistance to chipping and chunking and resistance to lateral sliding.

And that's not all. A completely new tread design and innovative compound, ensure low rolling resistance and durability.

Tyre tests a reliable proving ground

Although comparative tests against opposition premium tyre brands are currently underway in South Africa, (size 315/80 R22.5), it is too early to glean any concrete data.

However, if the test results emerging from other African nations are anything to go by, the Prometeon tyre range is looking to surpass the competition by a 'long mile'.

Case in point; after a two-year period, a comparative tyre test of the Prometeon tyre fitted to a leading fleet in Kenya, produced astounding results, recording between 240 000kms to 260 000kms in original tyre life, a regroove, plus an astonishing three retreads per casing. The overall tyre life achieved (cradle to grave), amounted to a staggering 650 000kms!

"We were immediately struck by the incredible technology that has gone into these tyres, when it was first showcased to us at one of Prometeon's R&D Centres in Turkey," said Jose Romero, Vice President Stamford Tyres SA.

"Finally – here was a product diverse and tough enough to equal our conditions here in Africa, unlike most of the truck and bus tyres coming in to the country that are only suitable for European conditions," added Romero.

"In particular, the development that's gone into the Drive and Multi-Axle tyre, is hugely impressive, making for a robust product that can rival even challenging climate and road conditions, as found here in Africa.

"Plus, the Prometeon team spend most of their time in the markets they service, providing stalwart support throughout the entire tyre testing period and beyond, in keeping with their pledge to remain close to their customers, in order to provide tailor-made solutions to suit their respective needs and applications. Their dedicated business approach provides us with added confidence in their product, along with peace of mind when it comes to after sales service.

"We are inviting select operators within the commercial sector to partner with us, as we put this exciting new product range to the test. Together, with professional assistance from GoMetro, who will be providing an inventive range of TPMS systems (at no cost to the transporter), to assess and monitor the performance of the new Prometeon tyres, from the inception of the tyre test, to its conclusion.

"We are excited that in due course, we will be reporting on a similar impressive performance of this revolutionary tyre range, as the tyres continue to prove their mettle on our roads here in South Africa," concluded Romero.

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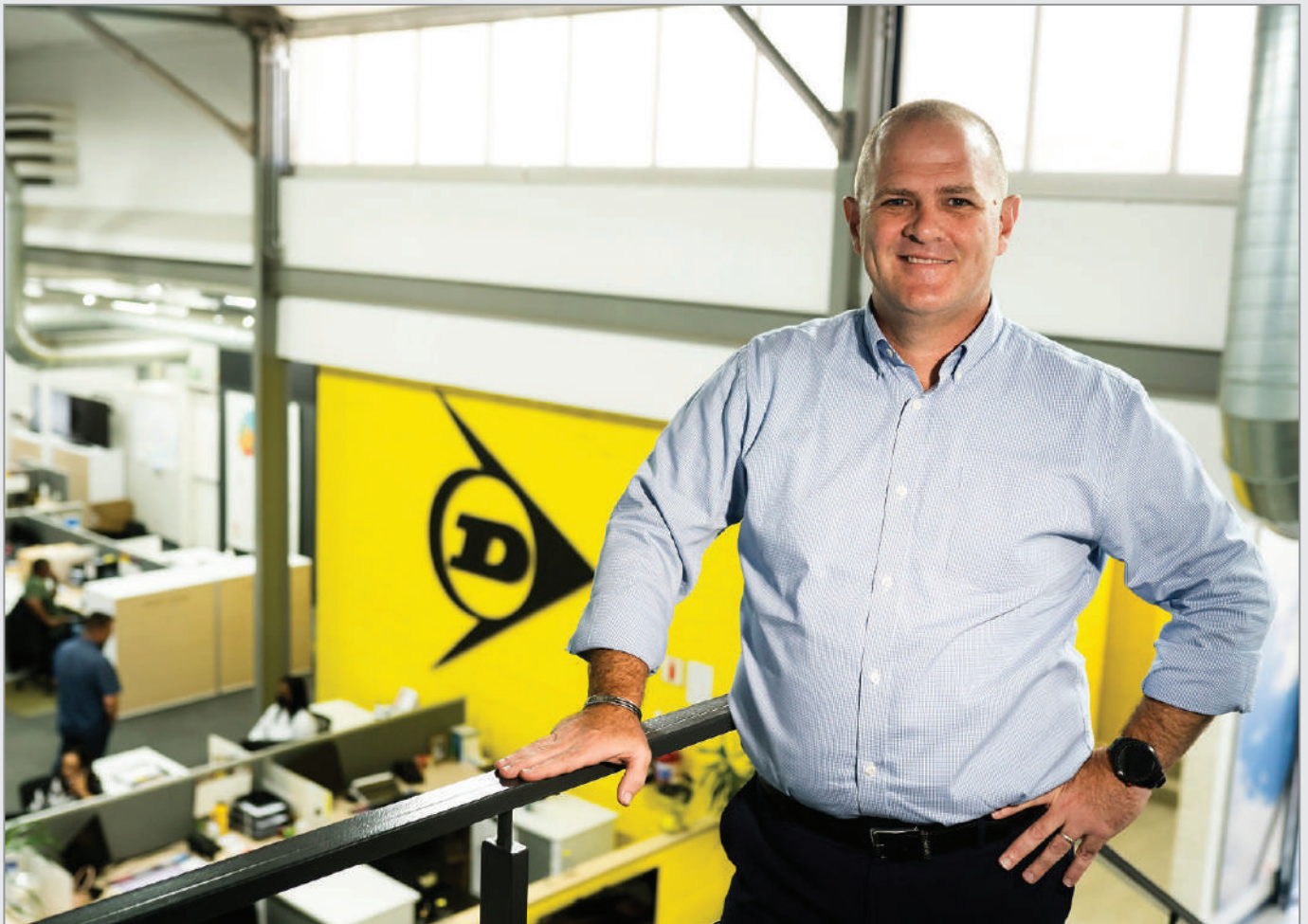


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STAMFORD TYRES

DUNLOP TYRES SA PARTNERS WITH THE ROAD FREIGHT SME SUMMIT TO DRIVE GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY



Dunlop Tyres SA is proud to announce its strategic partnership with the 2nd Annual Road Freight SME Summit, reaffirming its commitment to empowering local businesses.

The Summit, scheduled for October 10-11, 2024, at The Focus Room, Johannesburg, brings together key stakeholders in South Africa's transportation sector to foster growth, innovation, and collaboration among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the road freight industry. Industry experts will share invaluable insights on trends, challenges, and opportunities,

focusing on business development, access to funding, regulatory compliance, insurance, breakdown management, and technological advancements.

"Dunlop Tyres SA has a long-standing legacy of investing in local business and recognising the vital role SMEs play in driving South Africa's economic growth," said Lubin Ozoux, CEO of Dunlop Tyres SA. "Our partnership with the Road Freight SME Summit underscores our dedication to supporting the growth and sustainability of these enterprises."

According to a recent Mordor Intelligence report, the South African

freight and logistics market is projected to reach \$19.9 billion by 2030, growing at a compound annual growth rate of 6.29% (2024-2030). This emphasises the critical role SMEs play in the sector.

"SME development is essential for stimulating growth, innovation, and job creation. Providing SMEs with the right combination of insights, resources, and mentorship enables them to adapt, grow, and prosper in a rapidly changing world," added Ozoux.

To register for the 2024 Road Freight SME Summit and learn more, visit smeroadfreightsummit.co.za

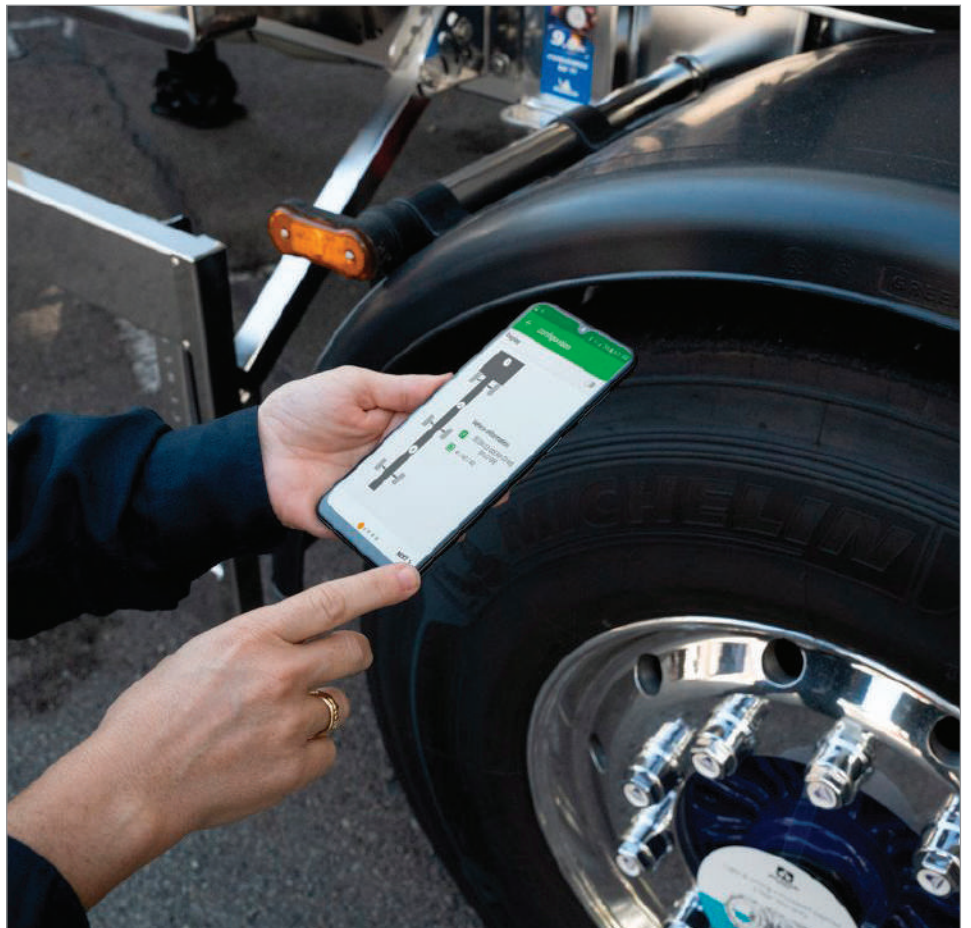
MICHELIN CONNECTED FLEET AND RTMS TO HOST TRANSPORT MONTH POWER BRUNCH ON TRAILER MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS AND COMPLIANCE

As part of the broader focus during Transport Month, MICHELIN Connected Fleet, in partnership with the Road Transport Management System (RTMS), will host a Power Brunch on 25 October 2024 at Adcorp Place, Woodmead, Johannesburg. The event, themed "At the Forefront of Trailer Management and Compliance", will focus on the often overlooked yet vital role of trailer management in fleet operations.

Boasting industry thought leaders such as Eugene Herbert, CEO of MasterDrive; Dr Paul Nordengen, Director at RTMS; Gavin Kelly, CEO of the Road Freight Association; and Shivani Pillay, Country Manager for MICHELIN Connected Fleet as some of the speakers. The discussion will highlight how proper trailer management solutions can improve safety, boost efficiency, and ensure regulatory compliance.

The Power Brunch aims to highlight the often-overlooked role of trailers in fleet operations, drawing attention to trailer management solutions that are crucial for transporters looking to enhance overall fleet performance. While trailers are a key component of transport and logistics, they are frequently overshadowed by the focus on trucks. However, effective trailer management plays a vital role in preventing costly delays, meeting tightening safety and regulatory standards, and optimising fleet operations.

By addressing areas such as maintenance, load distribution, and compliance, fleet operators can



significantly improve road safety and reduce operational costs in today's competitive and highly regulated environment.

Shivani Pillay, Country Manager for MICHELIN Connected Fleet, commented: "Trailer management is a key factor that often goes unnoticed in fleet operations. However, it has a significant impact on safety, efficiency, and compliance. Through this event, we aim to provide actionable insights that will help transporters unlock

the full potential of their fleet while staying compliant and efficient."

The MICHELIN Connected Fleet Power Brunch is set to provide a unique platform for fleet managers, logistics professionals, and the media to engage with industry leaders on this critical topic. The event aims to shed light on the innovative solutions available to help transporters remain compliant and competitive in the ever-evolving transport sector.

DUNLOP WINS RESPECTED ASK AFRIKA ORANGE INDEX® AWARD, REINFORCING COMMITMENT TO CUSTOMER EXCELLENCE



Lubin Ozoux

Dunlop Tyres South Africa celebrates being named the Industry winner of the Vehicle Consumables Category in the respected 2024/25 Ask Afrika Orange Index®. This special award is a testament to Dunlop's dedication to delivering outstanding customer service and customer experiences.

The Ask Afrika Orange Index®, a rigorous independent benchmark study, has been evaluating South Africans' service-experience expectations since 2001. This year's winners were selected based on meticulous evaluations of customer satisfaction, emotional satisfaction, and loyalty across 200 brands and 26 industries. Ask Afrika's data from 2024/5 revealed a shift in customer expectations regarding their interactions with businesses, with a marked emphasis on investing time, resources, and energy into finding balance and building new relationships based on hope, trust, and human connection.

Lubin Ozoux, CEO of Dunlop Tyres



South Africa, attributes this achievement to Dunlop's customer-centric approach: "We value this recognition, which is a testament to our commitment to providing quality safety-tested tyres, and striving to offer excellent levels of customer service. Our customers are at the heart of everything we do, and we will

continue to invest in building emotional connections with them."

The Ask Afrika Orange Index not only evaluates customer experiences but also serves as a catalyst for growth and innovation, enabling businesses to refine their services and solidify their market position.



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RECIRCLE AWARDS 2025 EVOLVES IN DRIVE FOR INCLUSIVITY

Recircle Awards 2025: Award Categories

- Lifetime Achievement Award in the Tyre Retreading Sector
- Lifetime Achievement Award in the Tyre Recycling Sector
- Retreader of the Year Award
- Tyre Recycler of the Year Award
- Best Retreading Industry Innovation
- Best Tyre Recycling Innovation
- Employee of the Year
- Best Company Director
- Spirit of Retreading Award
- Circular Economy Award
- Best Tread Rubber Supplier
- Best Retreading Equipment Supplier
- Best Retreading Accessory and Consumables Supplier
- Best Tyre Recycling Industry Supplier
- Women's Award for the Tyre Retreading Sector
- Women's Award for the Tyre Recycling Sector
- Best Tyre Recycling Research Project
- Business Breakthrough Award



Retreading Business and Tyre & Rubber Recycling magazines, the organisers of the Recircle Awards, have announced a number of new initiatives to drive inclusivity and engagement across the tyre retreading and tyre recycling sectors as it seeks to evolve and expand its position as the key industry awards event recognising sustainability in the tyre industry.

In announcing the launch of the 2025 Recircle Awards, which will culminate in a glittering ceremony to be held next May during Autopromotec 2025 in Bologna, Italy, David Wilson, Publisher of Retreading Business and Tyre & Rubber

Recycling, revealed the company's latest initiatives:

"2025 marks the fourth edition of the Recircle Awards, and we are delighted to be able to announce our continued co-operation with Autopromotec. We look forward to being able to host an enhanced ceremony in Bologna next May, and we thank Renzo Servadei and his team for their valued support in helping us to expand the influence of the Recircle Awards as the key awards event recognising the valuable contribution made by the tyre retreading and recycling sectors to the circular economy and to the sustainability of the tyre industry as a whole.

"We are constantly looking for ways

to increase the scope of the Awards and to drive engagement from companies from across the industry both large and small, and in analysing feedback from the market, we identified the need to alter the weighting of the voting process in order to gain the optimum balance between the opinions of our expert judges and engagement from the wider market. As a result, 65% of the voting strength in the 2025 awards will now be allocated to the views expressed by our independent Nominations Committee.

"We have also increased the robustness of the nominations and voting process by asking shortlisted nominees to submit a written case in support of their nomination which can be analysed by the Committee, as well as increasing the amount of information

required to be input by the voting public in order to minimise the risk of frivolous and/or organised mass voting.

“We are constantly looking at ways to improve the awards and we hope that these changes will represent a positive development as we strive to expand the profile and credibility of the Awards on a global level. We look forward to next year’s Awards ceremony with anticipation.”

In line with the 2023 event, the Recircle Awards 2025 will incorporate a total of 22 awards covering a wide and balanced range of categories from across the tyre industry. The first 18 awards categories were announced today and are as follows:

- Lifetime Achievement Award in the Tyre Retreading Sector
- Lifetime Achievement Award in the Tyre Recycling Sector
- Retreader of the Year Award
- Tyre Recycler of the Year Award
- Best Retreading Industry Innovation
- Best Tyre Recycling Innovation

- Employee of the Year
- Best Company Director
- Spirit of Retreading Award
- Circular Economy Award
- Best Tread Rubber Supplier
- Best Retreading Equipment Supplier
- Best Retreading Accessory and Consumables Supplier
- Best Tyre Recycling Industry Supplier
- Women’s Award for the Tyre Retreading Sector
- Women’s Award for the Tyre Recycling Sector
- Best Tyre Recycling Research Project
- Business Breakthrough Award

A further four categories will be announced on Monday February 10, 2025

Meanwhile, nominations for the Recircle Awards are now open and can be made via the official voting/nominations platform on the Recircle Awards website at www.recircleawards.com.

The shortlist, to be announced in

a virtual Nominations Ceremony on Monday, January 20, 2025, will once again be selected by a specially constituted Nominations Committee of 15 people, consisting of the respective editors of Retreading Business and Tyre & Rubber Recycling plus a further thirteen individuals from the global tyre retreading and recycling industries selected according to their independent status and their acknowledged expertise within their respective fields.

Voting for the 2025 Recircle Awards will open as soon as the shortlists are announced and will run until Friday, March 14, 2025.

The Awards Ceremony will take place on Thursday 22 May 2025, during Autopromotec 2025 in Bologna.

More details of the Awards Ceremony and associated activities at Autopromotec 2025 will be released in due course.





By John Stone

For the past two decades Sapphire Media has supported the worldwide tyre and automotive industry as a unique Business Media Consultant delivering professional editorial and marketing/PR services to a global client base and as a regular columnist in leading publications.

NOKIAN TYRES SIGNS DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT AIMING TO ADD RENEWABLE MATERIAL MADE FROM RESIDUE BIRCH BARK TO TYRES



Nokian Tyres has signed a development agreement with a Swedish biomaterial science company Reselo AB to further develop their renewable material Reselo Rubber as a potential new raw material in tyres. Reselo Rubber is a completely renewable material made from birch bark sourced from the residue of the global pulp, paper and plywood industry. The aim of the cooperation agreement now signed is to develop the material further to adapt it for commercial tyre production.

"According to the initial laboratory tests we have conducted on Reselo Rubber, it has great potential to replace traditional fossil-based materials in tires. Furthermore, the material is not only renewable, but we believe it may also be used to improve the tyre's performance features. We are excited to develop it further in cooperation with Reselo and hope to have Reselo Rubber in Nokian Tyres tyres in the future," says Heini Siekkinen, Senior Manager, Research & Sustainability from Nokian Tyres.

"We are proud and excited to join forces with Nokian Tyres to improve the sustainability of the largest rubber industry segment even further. The partnership with Nokian Tyres marks an important milestone in our ambition to revolutionise the rubber industry with a high performing bio-based rubber," says Henrik Otendal, CEO and one of the founders of Reselo.

Reselo was the winner of Nokian Tyres' FAST RACE, BIG CHANGE sustainable tyre innovation challenge that aimed to find new solutions for more sustainable tires. After the preliminary testing, the potential of Reselo Rubber as a possible tyre material was established, and now the co-operation continues in close collaboration to further develop the material to match demanding tyre properties in an industrial scale.

One of Nokian Tyres' most important sustainability goals is to have 50% of the raw materials in Nokian Tyres tires renewable or recycled by 2030, and the company has reached several milestones recently. In June 2024, the company demonstrated the usability of UPM BioMotion™, a groundbreaking new renewable material in tyres by presenting the concept tire Nokian Tyres Green Step Ligna. In August 2024, Nokian Tyres announced that their factory in Nokia, Finland has obtained the International Sustainability and Carbon Certification (ISCC) PLUS. With the certification, Nokian Tyres is able to introduce new sustainable, ISCC PLUS certified raw materials in its tyres.

"We believe that Reselo Rubber has potential to be one of the steps on our journey towards our goal and are glad to have Reselo as a partner supporting our quest," says Teemu Soini, VP, Innovations & Development from Nokian Tyres.

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ETM AWARD 2024: CONTINENTAL TOPS READERS' POLL IN THE COMMERCIAL VEHICLE TYRES CATEGORY

Continental has won the ETM Award 2024 "Best of New Transportation" in the renowned readers' survey conducted by German publisher ETM among commercial vehicle professionals. In the "Tyres" category, readers of trade magazines "trans aktuell" and "Fernfahrer" and users of "eurotransport.de" handed the most votes to Continental's product range. "This award provides a ringing endorsement both of the work carried out by our tyre developers and of our commitment to meeting the needs of our customers day in, day out," said Timo Röbbel, Head of Marketing Replacement Tires Germany.

New award concept: spotlight on forward-looking products The ETM readers' poll – one of the largest such surveys in Germany – was given a revamp this year, and is now geared fully to recognizing future-focused products and solutions. "Our tyre developers consistently incorporate our customers' requirements into their work. This means they are helping fleet operators to equip their vehicles with an eye to the future – and therefore to meet the highly exacting demands of the transport and logistics industry effectively over the long term. We are delighted that this approach is acknowledged and appreciated by users," commented Röbbel at the IAA Transportation trade fair in Hanover. The ETM Award is seen as a benchmark for and bellwether of the commercial vehicle sector.

Far-reaching tyre services: maximizing the benefits for customers As part of its Vision 2030 strategic program, Continental is focusing on a consistently customer-centric approach. "One of the keys to achieving this is our growing range of services to complement our products," explained Timo Röbbel. The objective here is an entire ecosystem of comprehensive tyre services designed to enhance customer benefit – including digital tyre solutions that boost safety at the same time as lowering costs. "As a complete solution provider, Continental aims to offer customers excellent products and services – and, by extension, achieve a high level of customer satisfaction."



Commercial vehicle tyres for sustainable transportation: circular economy is the goal Continental is seeking to put in place a fully circular operating model for its tyre production by 2050 at the latest. "A circular economy aims to separate continued growth from the consumption of finite resources," says Röbbel. "A circular process runs from design via the consumer's purchase to recycling – and then back again." In addition to renewable materials, the company is working systematically on using recycled raw materials. "We have set ourselves the goal of adopting recycled materials in the design, development and manufacture of premium tyre.

New tyres, new standards: Generation 5 tyres from Continental Continental is setting new standards with its practical and progressive tyre and maintenance concepts. The new, fifth-generation tyre line is geared

squarely to the needs of customers in the transport sector and to the dynamic regulatory environment, which includes the EU Taxonomy, VECTO and European Green Deal. The completely newly developed truck tyres allow haulage companies to significantly reduce their fuel consumption and CO2 emissions in both regional and long-distance operations, and to cut costs. With the new generation of the Conti Eco, the tyre developers were able to resolve the conflicting goals of optimized rolling resistance and high mileage.

"Our portfolio has kept growing over the years," points out Timo Röbbel. "Our Conti360° digital solutions and our ContiLifeCycle concept help fleet managers to reduce their CO2 emissions and increase fleet efficiency. With the launch of Generation 5, we have set up our tyre portfolio for the challenges of the future." And now these endeavors and successes have been recognized with the ETM Award 2024 "Best of New Transportation".

BANDAG EUROPE TO CLOSE BELGIAN RETREAD PRODUCTION PLANT IN 2025



Bandag says that over the past decade, the demand in the European retread market dropped by 30%.

Bandag Europe NV (Bandag) has announced its intention to close its retread production plant in Lanklaar, Belgium, around the first half of 2025. Bandag says in the last ten years the European retread market has seen a significant decrease resulting in production overcapacity and uncompetitive production costs and, consequently, the company says it has “no other option than to take structural measures.”

Over the past decade, the demand in the European retread market dropped

by 30%, predominantly driven by the import of low-cost truck and bus tires from East Asia, Bandag says, adding its sales continued to decline in Europe, resulting in significant production overcapacity and increasing and uncompetitive production costs. These costs have been further impacted by the high energy prices and subsequent inflation.

Over the years, the company says it has taken initiatives to address the structural issues in its retread business, amongst others with a transformation plan for its Belgian production site in Lanklaar in 2021. However, since then, the market has seen an even sharper decline. Given the present market conditions, Bandag says it must take

structural measures to bring the retread business back to profitability and secure its sustainability over time.

Bandag says a consolidation of the European production footprint to ensure alignment with market conditions therefore appears to be unavoidable. After careful analysis, Bandag says considering cost optimization as well as current and future production capabilities, centralizing production at one location, specifically Stargard (Poland), is considered “the only remaining option” to ensure a future for the company’s retread business in Europe. Accordingly, Bandag is starting the information and consultation process with the intention to close the Lanklaar plant around the first half of 2025. Bandag currently employs 111 people in this plant.

NOKIAN TYRES INAUGURATES ITS PASSENGER CAR TYRE FACTORY IN ORADEA, ROMANIA – THE WORLD’S FIRST FULL-SCALE ZERO CO2 EMISSION TYRE FACTORY

Nokian Tyres hosted the Grand Opening of its passenger car tyre factory in Oradea, Romania this week. The factory operates without utilizing any fossil energy, making it the world’s first full-scale tyre factory with zero CO2 emissions. The factory inauguration marks the successful completion of a 2-year long project and sets the ground for commercial production in early 2025.

The Oradea Factory Grand Opening was held in the presence of high-level Romanian government and local authorities; Ambassadors of Finland and Romania; together with Nokian Tyres’ Board of Directors, Management Team and some 200 guests.

“We are very pleased to be inaugurating our Oradea factory today. It will strengthen our capability to serve our customers in Central Europe and beyond and support our growth as planned toward net sales of EUR 2 billion. With our full-scale zero CO2 emission tyre factory we are ready to lead the industry and set the new standard for sustainable tyre manufacturing,” says Jukka Moiso, President and CEO of Nokian Tyres.

“The entire construction process was highly efficient, and I would like to thank everyone who made this achievement possible,” he adds.

Only zero CO2 emission energy

At the Nokian Tyres Oradea factory, no energy generated by fossil fuels is used. This enables the whole factory to operate with zero CO2 emissions. This is achieved through a combination of solutions.

“The factory makes Nokian Tyres, once more, a pioneer of the tyre industry. All electricity used at the Romania Oradea factory is CO2 emission free. Part of the electricity used in the factory is generated by on-site solar power units. Steam used to cure the tyres is generated by innovative electric boilers which use fully CO2 emission free electricity instead of



the usual fossil fuels such as coal or gas. In addition, the tyre manufacturing process is very energy efficient as we are only utilising the most modern technology and machinery. With our new Oradea factory, we are truly demonstrating our commitment to sustainability,” says Adrian Kaczmarczyk, SVP, Operation Excellence, Nokian Tyres.

6 million tires per year

The factory produced its first tyre in July 2024, and the project is ramping up to the annual capacity of 6 million tyres, with expansion potential in the future. The factory will focus on passenger car tyre production to be primarily sold in the Central European market as it is strategically located close to that area’s customers.

The total factory area is some 54 hectares. The facility includes the production unit, a distribution facility for storage and distribution of tyres, and mixing, utility and administrative buildings. The combined built-up area totals approximately 100,000 m².

Committed to Oradea with the largest foreign investment in Romania in the recent years

Nokian Tyres chose Oradea in North-West of Romania as the location for the new tyre factory as a result of a thorough evaluation, including more than 40 sites in various European countries. Among the criteria supporting the decision were talent, business

environment, infrastructure, real estate and utilities, operational cost and risks.

“The work done in the last years is aimed at bringing us closer to our customers, creating a sound foundation for future sustainable growth. Oradea is now home to us, and we are committed to be a good neighbor, supporting the community, the regional economy and each member of our team,” says Susanna Tusa, General Director and Vice President of Nokian Tyres Romania.

The total value of the project is approximately EUR 650 million, which positions the Finnish company as one of the largest foreign investors in Romania in the recent years. To finance its sustainable tyre manufacturing investment, Nokian Tyres will receive state aid from the Romanian government worth some EUR 100 million and an investment loan from European Investment Bank worth EUR 150 million.

A team of over 500 professionals

Along with the construction work, Nokian Tyres conducted a recruitment campaign for attracting skilled employees, with a focus on local talents in Bihor County. The planned headcount of the Oradea factory is about 500 people. By the end of 2024, the number is expected to reach 300, and the process will continue in 2025.

Those interested in joining the Nokian Tyres team are invited to apply online at www.nokiantyres.ro, where they will find the list of available jobs, as well as information about the company and the project.

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HANKOOK TIRE ION EVO NAMED AS WHATTYRE TYRE OF THE YEAR 2024

Hankook Tire & Technology (Hankook Tire) has three of its flagship products on the podium for the 2024 WhatTyre Awards, the fourth consecutive year of these prestigious awards.

WhatTyre is a tyre news and product comparison website designed to help consumers find the best tyres for their car with its Awards offering an authoritative ranking of tyres across nine categories that represent the best products available in the UK tyre industry. Hankook Tire has achieved awards in the following competitive categories:

1. Winner – 2024 Overall WhatTyre Tyre of the Year – Hankook iON evo
2. Winner – Electric Car Tyre of the Year – Hankook iON evo
3. Highly Recommended – Summer Tyre of the Year – Hankook Ventus Prime4
4. Highly Recommended – Winter Tyre of the Year – Hankook Winter i³cept evo3

This year, the focus of the awards is on the electric car segment, a rapidly evolving and increasingly competitive sector in the mobility industry. According to WhatTyre, “EVs offer some significantly different challenges for tyres. Compared to conventional internal combustion engine cars, EVs are heavier, transmit torque to the road far less progressively, and have almost silent engines.



This means tyres need to be harder wearing, more grippy, and quieter running, while EV drivers are also likely to want a tyre that helps to maximize range and even one that can demonstrate sustainability in its provenance.”

As we move towards an electric and technology-driven future, the electric vehicle sector is arguably the biggest revolution in

mobility- an area Hankook Tire has focused heavily on since the release of the iON range in 2022. As pioneers of the first full line of dynamic EV tires, Hankook Tire is proud to be recognised for its innovative practices by receiving the WhatTyre Tyre of the Year 2024 award for the iON evo tyre and aspires to continue its streak of award achievements.

BRIDGESTONE ANNOUNCES ¥25 BILLION STRATEGIC INVESTMENT AT KITAKYUSHU PLANT FOR MINING AND CONSTRUCTION VEHICLE TIRES

Bridgestone will invest ¥25 billion to upgrade equipment at the Kitakyushu Plant as part of strategic investments based on its Mid Term Business Plan (2024-2026).

Through this investment, Bridgestone will further enhance off-the-road tire and mining solutions business to support customers globally, also aim for sustainability. Tokyo (August 6, 2024) — Bridgestone Corporation (Bridgestone) today announced that it will invest ¥25 billion to upgrade equipment for certain facilities at the Kitakyushu Plant, which produces tires for mining and construction vehicles. This upgrade will be completed by the end of 2027.

This strategic investment is a part of Bridgestone's Mid Term Business Plan (2024-2026) to focus on delivering value over volume as it strengthens its off-the-road (OTR) tire business, which drives the Company's premium tire business. The Kitakyushu Plant is the strategic global



production base for OTR tires, including Bridgestone's Dan-Totsu products*1 – “Bridgestone MASTERCORE,” and supplies to customers globally. This strategic investment will not only ensure a high quality and stable supply, but also further elevate the level of safety, disaster prevention, eco-friendliness, quality, and productivity.

Furthermore, the investment will enhance

production technology for the future generation of Dan-Totsu products. Through this investment, Bridgestone is committed to contributing to the local community and supporting the realization of a sustainable society with safety and peace of mind. As the investment focuses on upgrading existing equipment, the production volume will remain at current level.



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BRIDGESTONE EXTENDS FIRESTONE AND INDYCAR PARTNERSHIP BY FIVE YEARS



At the Bridgestone Americas Technology Center (ATC) in Akron, OH, Bridgestone and Penske Entertainment revealed a five-year extension for Firestone to remain the exclusive tire supplier for all IndyCar-sanctioned racing via a live-streamed media event from Bridgestone Tower in Nashville, TN. Firestone has been the exclusive

tire supplier for the series for the last 25 years.

This partnership will keep the company as the sole supplier for all NTT IndyCar Series races, the Indy NXT by Firestone developmental series, and the annual Indianapolis 500.

"Motorsports is at the essence of who we are as a company and is truly in our

DNA. It allows us to build the integrity of our [Bridgestone and Firestone] brands," said Paolo Ferrari, executive chairman and CEO of Bridgestone Americas. "Over the last two or three years, we've also focused more on the sustainability angle. [We focus] on the materials, the way they would produce them at our facilities in Akron, and the way that we transport them."

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