Press Release

Continental And aft automotive Set Up Joint Venture For The Future of Mobility

- **Future potential: System supplier experience and technical know-how are driving developments for electromobility**
- **Philip Nelles, head of Mobile Fluid Systems: "No lines, no future mobility. We are pooling our know-how for the vital lifelines in cars."**
- **Less weight, reduced CO_2 emissions: New company will develop and manufacture couplings made of high-performance plastics for the automotive industry**
- **New jobs: More than 30 new jobs are planned in the medium term**

Hanover/Greven, Germany, August 10, 2020. Technology company Continental and system supplier aft automotive are setting up a joint venture to manufacture couplings made of high-performance plastics for the for the future of mobility. The partners have signed a relevant agreement to create a 50/50 joint venture. The two companies have already been jointly developing special couplings that connect the cooling circuit or the turbocharger/charge-air cooler with units in the engine compartment since 2016. This successful development partnership is now being further expanded by setting up a joint venture. "No lines, no hoses, no future mobility. Our lines and connectors remain vital lifelines in cars – both for hybrid and electric vehicles and for IC engines," said Philip Nelles, head of the Mobile Fluid Systems business unit and therefore responsible for automotive lines and hoses at Continental. He adds: "The close collaborative partnership with aft automotive will enhance our skills as a system supplier and enable us to consistently expand our technological expertise in high-performance plastics for the future. The new company is planned to create more than 30 new jobs by 2025. Completion of the joint venture is subject to the approval of the relevant anti-trust authorities.

Future potential: Sophisticated thermal management extends range of e-vehicles

Unlike conventional vehicles, electric vehicles require multiple cooling circuits with sophisticated thermal management. Batteries in electric vehicles achieve optimum operating efficiency at temperatures between 20 degrees Celsius and 40 degrees Celsius. This temperature span enables long ranges, allows the batteries to work more efficiently and extends battery lifetimes. For that reason, in similar fashion to drive and power components, the batteries have to be either cooled or heated, depending on the outside temperature. That results in complex circuits that significantly increase the demands on the individual components. The weight of the new hose generation is also being further reduced. Smaller line cross-sections, for instance on the high-pressure side and in the battery cooling system, mean that less coolant is needed when compared with previous systems.

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The right mixture of rubber, polyamide and aluminum materials and an ingenious line geometry ensure the system has adequate inherent stability. Special lines and couplings made of high-performance plastics are developed for this.

Future mobility: High-performance plastics reduce weight and CO_2 emissions

Up till now, line systems have often been made of rubber or stainless steel. Especially in vehicles with hybrid drives or electric motors, though, there is a growing trend towards replacing rubber with premium technical plastics. This has allowed the developers to achieve further weight reductions while simultaneously improving performance: Plastic components reduce vehicle weight and thus help lower fuel consumption and cut CO_2 emissions. At the same time, the downsizing of space in IC engines is changing the demands on connectors and lines because lighter, quieter and higher-power drives result in increased pressure and thermal loads. For example, auxiliary unit components in the latest generation of IC engines have to withstand continuous temperatures of 160 degrees Celsius for over 3,000 hours with temperature peaks of up to 210 degrees Celsius. High-performance plastics such as heat-stabilized polyamide are able to meet these demands in full.

aft automotive and Continental combine know-how and experience

Since it was founded in 2009, aft automotive, based in Greven in the Münsterland region of Germany, has become an established and innovative system supplier to the automotive industry. Its focus is on developing and manufacturing functional components such as valves, ejector pumps, control system elements and line systems made of high-performance synthetics. The company now has 189 employees across three sites in Germany, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia and achieved sales of 53.2 million euros in 2018. “Our components for safety-related systems are manufactured fully automatically and undergo extremely rigorous product tests; these ensure operational reliability, durability and efficiency. We have access to every system in-house ranging from a state-of-the-art 3D printer for prototyping to the test area for series production. Our joint venture will combine our know-how and experience in the future,” declares aft founder and CEO Dirk Kramer.

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Continental develops pioneering technologies and services for sustainable and connected mobility of people and their goods. Founded in 1871, the technology company offers safe, efficient, intelligent, and affordable solutions for vehicles, machines, traffic and transportation. In 2019, Continental generated sales of €44.5 billion and currently employs more than 230,000 people in 59 countries and markets.

ContiTech is one of the world's leading industry specialists. The Continental business field offers its customers connected, environment-friendly, safe and convenient industry and service solutions using a range of materials for off-highway applications, on rails and roads, in the air, under and above the ground, in industrial environments, for the food sector and the furniture industry. With around 46,000 employees in more than 40 countries and sales of some 6.4 billion euros (2019), the global industrial partner is active with core branches in Asia, Europe and North and South America.

aft automotive produces and develops innovative products for media management in vehicles for the global automotive industry. The passion of employees for innovations and sustainability are the basis of numerous developments. aft aims to always be one step ahead with its own solutions. This innovation leadership offers aft customers and partners maximum reliability and forms the basis of responsible behavior and cooperative success.

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Images and captions



Future potential: Sophisticated thermal management extends the range of e-vehicles. Lines and connectors remain vital lifelines in cars – both for hybrid and electric vehicles and for IC engines which is a major contribution to the future of mobility.

Continental_pp_E_Car_Comfort



Continental and aft automotive are setting up a joint venture to manufacture couplings made of high-performance plastics to lay the groundwork for the future of mobility.

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Philip Nelles, head of the Mobile Fluid Systems business unit and therefore responsible for automotive lines and hoses at Continental.

Philip Nelles_ContiTech

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