



PRESS RELEASE

Large part, small crowd punctuate contest

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VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA — A humongous slab of high density polyethylene and mineral filler dominated the Structural Plastics 2000 parts competition in a couple ways.

Physically, the 525-pound structural road mat loomed over most other products on display.

And the product, molded by Louisiana's Loma Co. and entered by mold maker FGL Precision Works Ltd. of Concord, Ontario, was the big winner, capturing both the prestigious conference award and the building and construction category.

The Structural Plastics Division of the Society of the Plastics Industry Inc. conducted the 28th annual conference, held March 26-28 in Vancouver.

Division judges chose the current winners among 52 entries, down from last year's field of 88. SPI division director Allen Weidman estimated total Vancouver attendees at 225, including 62 first-time visitors. This was sharply off from the 370 at last April's event in Boston, and even lower than the 270 reported at the 1998 conference in St. Louis.

Several observers suggested

the West Coast location, and the fact that NPE 2000 in Chicago is less than three months away, combined to hold down participation this year.

Gas-assisted molding was used on 17 parts in the 2000 competi-

tion in eight molds in a stack configuration on a custom-built, 800-ton press from Pressing Systems Inc. of Richmond Hill, Ontario.

Each mold of custom-forged, aircraft-quality aluminum measures 166 inches long and 98 inches wide. Mats are connected back to back and linked together for field use. Soloco LLC of Lafayette, La., leases the mats to oil companies, utilities and others needing a temporary driving surface on soft ground. Wood was the only option for users until the large plastic mats arrived on the market in October 1998.

• **Judges' Award: Horizon Plastics Co. Ltd.** of Cobourg, Ontario, uses low-pressure structural foam molding to make the polyethylene Radbox sectional underground access chamber. Judges liked the product's flexible design and utilitarian uses. The thin-wall modular system comes in varying heights, widths and lengths, uses secure-locking corner insert modules and can withstand a vertical

load of 80,000 pounds. The Radbox is shipped flat, cutting transportation and storage costs by 50 percent. Each unit is assembled on site, usually to protect telecommunications and other equipment. **FGL Precision Works Ltd.** of Concord, Ontario, made the aluminum tooling.



This dual-award-winning, 525-pound, structural road mat was molded by Loma Co. from a mold produced by FGL Precision Works Ltd.

Plastics News photo by Ted Kaplan

Injection molding and structural foam were the next most popular processes, used on nine parts each. Reaction injection molding and low-pressure structural foam processes were used on five parts each. Several parts used multiple processes.

The following summaries describe the winning entries:

• **Conference Award and Building & Construction Award: FGL Precision Works Ltd.** has built 24 sets of tools for use on a vertical compression press molding the HDPE structural road mats. **Loma Co.** of Carencro, La., simultaneously molds eight parts

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