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SOUTHERN AUTOMOTIVE CONFERENCE ANNOUNCES PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Micheline Maynard, Laurie Harbour to be featured on conference agenda

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. – The programming for the opening day of the Southern Automotive Conference (SAC) added two key pieces with today’s announcement that Micheline Maynard will deliver a keynote on the future of the automotive industry and that Laurie Harbour will lead a supplier excellence panel.

“There are major opportunities and challenges on the horizon for the automotive manufacturing industry,” said Ron Davis, Alabama Automotive Manufacturers Association (AAMA) president. “We will be taking an in depth look at both with the addition of two leading industry experts to our program, Micki Maynard and Laurie Harbour.”

Maynard, a former *New York Times* senior business correspondent and bureau chief, will look at how consumers are using a “transportation portfolio” rather than relying solely on cars. She will explore the impact on the auto industry of new alternatives such as Uber, bike sharing and expanded public transit programs.

“Today, drivers have more choices than ever on how and what they use to get from point A to point B,” said Davis. “SAC attendees will hear from Maynard on how automakers can play a role in this evolution.”

Maynard, who is the director of the Donald W. Reynolds National Center for Business Journalism at Arizona State University’s Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, will deliver her keynote during Thursday’s luncheon session.

As an added benefit, Maynard’s new Forbes eBook “Curbing Cars: America’s Independence from the Auto Industry,” will be available to all SAC attendees free of charge.

Harbour, the president and CEO of Harbour Results, will lead Thursday’s Supplier Industry Outlook during the first day of the conference, which will be held Oct. 8-10 at the Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex in downtown Birmingham.

Harbour, a consultant with extensive experience working alongside automotive original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) and major suppliers, will review the results from her 2013 Automotive Vendor Tooling Study, and discuss how the industry – particularly in the South – might manage the \$6 billion impending capacity gap.

Following her presentation, Harbour will welcome representatives from some of the region’s top suppliers to the stage to spearhead a conversation about managing challenges related to supplying OEMs in the South, including capacity demands and low-cost pressures.

Other conference highlights include:

- The release of the Center for Automotive Research’s Southern Automotive Research Agenda, featuring Alabama Governor Bentley and Mississippi Governor Bryant;
- An OEM panel discussion featuring representatives from Honda, Mercedes, Kia, Toyota and Nissan;
- A showcase of effective workforce development solutions from across the South;
- A presentation on the “safety first” approach to autonomous driving; and
- A deep dive into safety and compliance issues that are top of mind for OSHA inspectors.



Based upon early projections, conference organizers are expecting a record turnout for this year's event. For more information on the 2014 SAC, and to register online, visit the conference's official website at www.saconf.com. Questions may also be directed to Sally Parker at sally@hallstrategies.com or 615-242-8856.

About the Southern Automotive Conference

The SAC, which annually rotates between Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee, has emerged as the South's leading automotive event, attracting more than 500 industry professionals each year. The conference provides a forum for top executives from original automotive manufacturers (OEMs) and major suppliers to showcase new product developments, collaborate on best practices and discuss strategies to strengthen the region's burgeoning automotive industry. The Alabama Automotive Manufacturers Association (AAMA) is organizing this year's event along with its SAC partner organizations from Mississippi, Tennessee, Georgia and South Carolina. The theme for the SAC is "*Geared for Growth: Accelerating the Global Automotive Industry*," and the conference's general sessions and breakout panels will emphasize the need to improve operational excellence, strengthen the workforce and increase process and product innovations.

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