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SSA & Co. Helps Cooper Tires Achieve ASQ's Automotive Division 'Quality Leader of the Year' Honor

Leading operations consulting firm helps Cooper Tires establish lean six sigma program, achieving 34% more than expected savings

STERLING HEIGHTS, MI (June 15, 2010) – Mr. Carl Montalbine, Vice President of Operational Excellence, Information Technology and Global Quality, Cooper Tire and Rubber Company, will be honored today at the ASQ Automotive Division Annual Awards Event as the “Quality Leader of the Year.” Montalbine will receive the award for his process improvement work with SSA & Company establishing a lean six sigma program at Cooper and achieving 34% more than expected savings.

The Quality Leader of the Year Award is presented annually to recognize the quality leadership contributions of an outstanding automotive industry leader. The recipient must be an executive who has consistently demonstrated a customer-focused quality philosophy and a defect-prevention oriented vision that is universally applied to every aspect of the business.

“It is truly an honor to be recognized among the top quality leaders of the automotive industry” said Ha Dao, Chairman of the ASQ Automotive Division and Director at SSA & Company. “Quality leadership must be the overriding goal. Carl was selected for this award for his visionary leadership and transformational change in driving quality improvement”, said Ha Dao.

Ha said Carl was nominated for his visionary leadership, ability to drive transformational change, demonstration of customer focus, demonstration of the quality philosophy, demonstration of sustained results and building of organizational capabilities.

Ha noted that Carl's accomplishments include establishing a lean six sigma program at Cooper; achieving 34 percent more than expected savings; achieving ISO 9000 certifications in all plants globally; implementing a global enterprise resource planning initiative; driving a cultural change that embraces continuous improvement; and sharing best practices to spread the quality improvement.

About SSA & Company

Founded as the Six Sigma Academy in 1994, SSA & Company has continuously led innovation in the business process improvement industry. Its Strategic Process Management (SPM) approach to business improvement was developed in response to feedback and input from some of the world's leading CEOs and business thought leaders, including Jack Welch and Ram Charan. SPM delivers results in 90 days and generates returns of five to ten times the size of the initial investment. The approach is rapidly becoming a new standard for process improvement, helping industries that have not historically focused on process improvement, such as insurance, private equity, retail and media services, uncover and mitigate major sources of waste. www.ssaandco.com

About ASQ Automotive Division:

ASQ Automotive Division is committed to be recognized as the global leader for automotive quality. The organization facilitates continuous improvement and customer satisfaction by identifying, communicating, and promoting ways to advance quality-related learning and knowledge exchange to improve business

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results. ASQ Automotive Division is part of the **American Society for Quality** (ASQ), the world's leading authority on quality since 1946. For more information, visit www.asq-auto.org