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Nexteer Automotive Plants in Poland Set World Standards in Steering Systems Manufacturing

Tychy, Poland – Over 6,000 modern steering systems produced each day is the result achieved by Nexteer's Automotive specialists in Tychy and Gliwice-based production plants of the concern in Poland. The global supplier of wheel-to-wheel advanced steering and driveline systems is planning to rationalize production processes in 2010 and improve active safety of the world's most popular car models thanks to the implementation of unique systems.

In 2009, the Tychy-based Nexteer Automotive production facility (formerly Delphi) employing 1,200 people started manufacturing single pinion electric power steering (EPS) systems, a modern steering system installed in the latest model of the PSA group – Citroen C3. The technology improves a car's driving performance and therefore safer steering. Moreover it lessens the weight of the car and reduces gasoline levels up to 4 percent.

"Increasing output last year and starting new projects are evidence Nexteer's plants in Poland have a strong market position, allowing us to boldly look into the future," said Gonzalo Herrera, head of the Tychy-based Nexteer Automotive production facility. "Further confirmation is starting production of one of the most advanced steering systems designed for the new, technologically advanced version of Citroen C3."

"Though for many plants from the automobile branch, also the ones placed in Poland, the previous year brought the necessity of limiting some of the investments or even suspending some of their current projects because of the world's crisis, this situation did not concern our plants. The best confirmation for these words are new projects implemented by Nexteer Automotive in Gliwice for General Motors and Fiat," adds Wojciech Brzegowy, head of the Gliwice-based Nexteer Automotive production facility.

New Nexteer Automotive projects in Poland include:

- The EPSILON II project, implemented in Gliwice, where steering systems for the new models of Opel: Insignia and the successor of recent Corsa (model 2013) and Saab – current 9⁵ model are produced.
- Production of hydraulic steering gear for the new Fiat Doblo in Gliwice as well.
- And still in Gliwice, Nexteer Automotive has implemented the production process of Hydraulic Steering Gear for New Fiat Doblo (model 2009).
- In the Tychy plant, the EPS systems for the current Ford Ka model and successor models of Opel Corsa (similar project as in Gliwice) and Lancia Epsilon in Tychy (model 2011).

In order to increase reliability of elements produced in the Tychy-based plant, advanced production control systems were introduced at the end of 2009. The most important ones include RFID (Radio Frequency Identification), which enables gathering data at every stage of the production process and finding possible mistakes, and AOI (Automatic Optical Inspection), the system of visual control enabling detailed inspection of each part at individual stages of the production process. The changes implemented in the Tychy-based plant were part of the process that cost nearly 40 million Euro.

“As one of the leaders in our industry, we cannot afford design flaws,” said Herrera. “That is why we have decided to implement specialist control systems that enable even more detailed supervision over each production stage to assure our clients get a reliable product that has been thoroughly checked and tested.”

Electric power steering systems are among the most modern systems of this type in the world. Since the beginning of the production activities until today, 12 million cars featuring the technology created in Nexteer’s Automotive engineering centres have appeared on the roads around the world. The models with EPS systems produced in Tychy and Gliwice include: Alfa Romeo MiTo, Fiat 500, Fiat Panda, Lancia Ypsilon, the new Ford Ka or Opel Corsa and Insignia. From the very beginning the plants in Tychy and Gliwice have also produced hydraulic power steering systems.

Currently there are two Nexteer Automotive plants in Poland: Tychy (with the area of 13,666,000 sq m) and Gliwice (with the area of 12,200,000 sq m). Their joint annual output is about 3 million power steering systems and steering columns, with a team of 1,400 people working on them. The Tychy-based plant also features an engineering centre that develops specialist solutions for passenger cars produced by global manufacturers.

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About Nexteer Automotive

Nexteer Automotive is a multi-billion dollar global steering and driveline business solely dedicated to electric and hydraulic steering systems, steering columns and driveline products for original equipment manufacturers. Its 6,200 employees serve more than 60 customers in every major region of the world. The company has 22 manufacturing plants, six engineering centers and 14 customer service centers strategically located in North and South America, Europe and Asia. Nexteer Automotive’s customers include GM, Fiat, Ford, Toyota, Chrysler and PSA Peugeot Citroen, as well as automakers in India, China and South America. www.nexteer.com

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