



## Media Release Communiqué

[www.auto21.ca](http://www.auto21.ca)

---

### AUTO21: Strengthening Canada's Auto Industry through Advanced Research & Innovation

For immediate release

March 12, 2009

Windsor, ON: AUTO21 is Canada's national automotive research program, stretching coast-to-coast with 44 universities, 300 researchers, 500 students and more than 240 public- and private-sector partners involved. The Network currently supports 54 projects investigating topics such as hybrid and plug-in technologies, new materials such as biomaterials for use in vehicle components, advanced telematics, and challenges facing an aging population dependent on vehicles. Since 2002, AUTO21 researchers have generated more than 90 patents, licences and commercialization agreements for their industry partners. Many of these new technologies are already providing a direct benefit to Canadians.

"Companies must produce the best products fast," says Dr. Peter Frise, AUTO21 CEO and Scientific Director. "Other countries recognize an opportunity to move their domestic automotive industry forward and are investing in future success, and Canada must do the same. The way to do this is through innovative automotive R&D that enhances the viability of Canadian companies."

An AUTO21 research project led by a professor at the University of Toronto has led to numerous advances in the use of biofibres and biomaterials in automotive components. Instead of using petroleum-based plastics for parts such as interior door panels and seats, the researchers have developed strong, lightweight materials made from natural fibres such as wood pulp and hemp that can be woven into mats and moulded into weight-bearing shapes. The new biofibres components offer the same strength, mouldability and durability as traditional plastic parts plus they offer clear advantages thanks to their environmentally-friendly renewable sources, increased potential for recyclability and can help decrease the weight of a vehicle and improve its fuel efficiency. This AUTO21 project created Greencore Composites, a spin-off company that was recognized as one of Canada's top 10 Clean Tech companies by an independent panel of Canadian and U.S. venture capitalists and has partnered with numerous public- and private sector companies.

The AUTO21 Network of Centres of Excellence currently supports an annual research budget of more than \$12 million annually in combined public and private sector funding. Research is conducted in the areas of health, safety and injury prevention; societal issues; materials and manufacturing; design processes; powertrains, fuels and emissions; and intelligent systems and sensors. AUTO21 is supported by the Government of Canada through a Networks of Centres of Excellence program, and its administrative centre is hosted by the University of Windsor.

In its eight plus years, AUTO21 has funded researchers across Canada, providing an excellent return on investment for both the Government of Canada and the numerous private-sector companies that have participated in research projects.

-30-

Media Contact:  
Stephanie Campeau  
Communications Manager  
519.253.3000 ext. 4129

---