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Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DTI Funding for Research into the Devulcanisation of Scrap Tyre Rubber

SHROPSHIRE, UK (February 1st, 2007) - Rapra Technology, a member of the US-based independent testing, consulting and contract research organisation, The Smithers Group, is leading a UK consortium of six companies who will carry out research into the devulcanisation of scrap tyre rubber.

It is very important that uses can be found for used tyre rubber, as this material was banned from being placed into landfill sites within the EU from 1st July of last year. The aim of the project, which is termed DevulCO_2, is to develop a novel, continuous and effective devulcanisation system based on a combination of supercritical carbon dioxide, chemical devulcanisation agents and extrusion equipment. A secondary objective of the project is to evaluate the devulcanised rubber as a raw material replacement for virgin rubber in the manufacture of high-added value rubber products.

The project, which will last for two years, is funded by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) within its Design and Manufacture of Sustainable Products programme. Projects within this programme are designed to develop eco friendly and sustainable processes that will benefit SME's based in the UK. More than £420k of direct financial assistance will be provided by the DTI, with the project partners contributing another £420k between them.

Work has started on establishing the optimum reaction conditions in an autoclave system needed to achieve a high quality, devulcanised rubber product. The main R&D effort will then involve the successful transfer of this technology to an extruder based system to enable a continuous process to be set up. The devulcanised product will then be evaluated as a material for the manufacture of a variety of rubber products.

Overall, the new technology developed as a result of this project will be used to provide a cost-effective solution to a challenging environmental problem. The SME's in the project will gain the benefits for their respective businesses of having privileged access to the technology, and by the revenue generated by the granting of licences to third parties.

In addition to Rapra, the consortium partners are PJH Partnership, Martins Rubber Company, BD Technical Polymer, J Allcocks and Sons, and Charles Lawrence International. These companies bring a high degree of synergy to the project, having expertise in the recycling of rubber and the production of rubber crumb, supercritical fluid technology, and the compounding and moulding of rubber products.

For further information on DevulCO_2, contact Dr Martin Forrest on Tel : 01939 252451 or by e-mail : mforrest@rapra.net.

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About The Smithers Group Inc:

Smithers Scientific Services is the oldest of the Smithers Group. Established in 1925 as an impartial testing ground for the tyre industry, the company has evolved into a multi-discipline, independent testing, research and consulting firm. It serves a global client base in the rubber and plastics industries and throughout the automotive supply chain. The company has locations in Ohio, Michigan, South Carolina and Texas. www.smithersscientific.com

Smithers Quality Assessments was established in 1993 as an accredited third-party registrar providing quality and environmental management system certification services to ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and related standards to manufacturing companies and services providers. www.smithersregistrar.com

Springborn Smithers Laboratories specialises in contract research and regulatory compliance for the pharmaceutical, agrichemical and speciality chemical industries. A global client base is served from laboratories based in Massachusetts, North Carolina, Switzerland and Japan. www.springbornsmithers.com

Synomics Pharma Services is the latest addition to the Smithers Group. Located in the Cape Cod, Massachusetts region it offers a portfolio of high quality analytical based research services to support the development and manufacturing of pharmaceutical, biotechnology and consumer healthcare products. www.synomicspharma.com

About Rapra Technology:

Smithers Rapra Limited, trading as Rapra Technology, is an independent organisation with over 80 years of experience providing industry with technology, information and consultancy on all aspects of plastics and rubber materials.

Rapra has extensive analytical, testing and processing laboratories, which are complemented by an Information Centre, which maintains and develops the world's most comprehensive database of commercial and technical information on rubber and plastics – The Polymer Library. It publishes a wide range of technology and market-based journals and books, organises national and international conferences and provides polymer technology training courses. www.rapra.net