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The Smithers Report

A News Digest of Activities in the Tire Industry

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WHAT'S NEW IN TIRES

Mitas extends earthmover tire line

Mitas will unveil an ERL-30 earthmover tire at the International Exhibition for Equipment and Techniques for Construction and Materials Industries (INTERMAT) in Paris April 20-25, 2015. The company says the new size 29.5R25 ERL-30 tire will be available for worldwide sales in June 2015.

The ERL tire line is used on loaders, dozers, and graders in mining operations. Made with an all-steel radial construction, the new size is designed for large wheel loaders, such as the Liebherr L 586 and Caterpillar 980.

Andrew Mabin, sales and marketing director for Mitas, said: "Mitas has massively invested in new production facilities for industrial tires at its plant in Zlin, the Czech Republic. The range extension of ERL-30 is proof that we will grow stronger in the industrial tire segment."

(Mitas - Prague)

Goodyear adds Fuel Max retread for regional fleets

Goodyear Tire and Rubber has introduced a new PreCure retread option for regional fleets. The G682 RSD Fuel Max is designed for drive applications and offers a balance of fuel efficiency, traction, and long mileage, the company said.

The retread uses fuel-saving compounds and a tread design to lower rolling resistance and promote greater fuel efficiency. It offers outstanding traction at all stages of wear and resistance to excessive wear, chunking, cracking, and chipping, said Goodyear.

Tread depth for the G682 RSD Fuel Max is 24/32".

Currently available is the 225mm width, with 215mm and 235mm widths entering the market in June 2015, Goodyear said.

(Goodyear Commercial Tire Systems – Fort Smith, AR)

RELATED MATTERS

Double Coin disputes antidumping determination

Double Coin tires and the China Manufacturers Alliance (CMA) are speaking out against the US Department of Commerce's (DOC) antidumping determination for its off-the-road tires. The final rate imposed by the DOC for Double Coin's OTR tires is 105.3%, which the companies said is "grossly wrong." The company said it is actively preparing for an appeal.

Dan Porter of Curtis, Mallet-Prevost, Colt and Mosle, lead counsel for CMA's review of the antidumping duties, said Double Coin has a very strong case for appealing the final determination to the Court of International Trade.

Porter commented: "The DOC made this decision entirely because CMA's largest shareholder (Double Coin) is a publically traded company in China whose largest stockholder (Huayi) is a state-owned company. The DOC assumed that this state-owned company influenced CMA's US sales of Double Coin tires. However, the DOC's own investigation confirmed that CMA alone determines the US selling prices for Double Coin's OTR [...] The Commerce Department's legal conclusion that the Chinese government controls Double Coin's export activities is both wrong and unlawful."

(Double Coin – Monrovia, CA)

Pirelli tops performance sport segment in JD Powers study

For the second consecutive year, Pirelli has scored highest in the performance sport category of the JD Power 2015 Original Equipment Tire Customer Satisfaction Study, the company announced.

Pierluigi Dinelli, chairman and CEO for Pirelli Tire North America, commented: "It is a true honor to be recognized once again as the highest ranked tire in the performance sport segment in this year's JD Power OE study. We're thrilled that Pirelli tires have received that vote of confidence from consumers in North America, where we have been strongly committed to bring Pirelli's trademark R&D, technology, and premium quality into products that are relevant for their driving needs and the market."

Pirelli has come in first in the performance sport segment four out of the last six years, the company said. The 2015 Original Equipment Tire Customer Satisfaction Study is based on responses from about 29,000 original owners of 2013 or 2014 model-year vehicles. The study was conducted in November and December 2014.

(Pirelli North America – New York)

Study finds rubber-producing potential in prickly lettuce

The common weed prickly lettuce is a potential source for rubber, according to a study conducted by scientists at Washington State University.

In an article for the Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry, the researchers describe regions of the plant's genetic code that are linked to rubber production. Study findings show potential for breeding the desired traits for developing a new crop source for rubber in the Pacific Northwest, according to Ian Burke, scientist and study author.

Breeding prickly lettuce plants with multiple stems would allow for multiple harvests and maximum rubber yields, Burke said. Selection of other traits, such as water use efficiency, would allow the plant to be grown with minimal rainfall and in rotation with other crops, the researchers said.

(Washington State University – Pullman, WA)

RELATED MATTERS

New campaign goes beyond Dunlop's race heritage

Dunlop has announced the launch of a new brand campaign with the slogan "Forever Forward." The campaign is built around the theme of exciting driving, which includes Dunlop's high-profile motorsport history and future initiatives.

Guillaume Carli, Dunlop's marketing manager for Europe, the Middle East and Africa, said: "We spend a lot of time talking to drivers and driving enthusiasts, listening to them, and understanding what makes them tick. And it's a lot more than motorsports. Life is full of exciting challenges. People who are ready to accept challenges have found their personal road to success -- and Dunlop is here to support them on their way." The campaign was developed by Dunlop and agency partner Leo Burnett, and will roll out across all media in Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) beginning in April.

(Goodyear Dunlop – Brussels)

Michelin offers tips for reducing soil compaction

To combat the heavier weight of farm tractors, sprayers and combines, Michelin says one of the most effective ways to improve crop yield is to minimize soil compaction by using tires that can operate with lower air pressure.

Harper Adams University in the UK recently completed a three-year study involving Michelin's Ultraflex Increased Flexion (IF) and Very High Flexion (VF) tires that demonstrated a yield increase of up to 4% compared to standard radial agriculture tires.

Michelin said it is planning similar research for the US market that demonstrates how lower pressure tires can help farmers increase their yields and productivity.

James Crouch, farm segment marketing manager for Michelin Agriculture tires, said: "Lower-pressure tires produce a larger tire footprint, which distributes the weight of the machine over the largest area possible to reduce compaction. In addition, a larger tire footprint provides excellent traction in the field, which can improve fuel economy by reducing slippage."

(Michelin – Greenville, SC)

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