

The Smithers Report

A News Digest of Activities in the Tire Industry

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WHAT'S NEW IN TIRES

Continental's new loader tire suitable for construction and agricultural use

Continental has launched the CompactMaster EM, a new telehandler and compact loader tire, which is designed for demanding conditions. The tire features a new tread technology and twisted steel cord that prevent cuts and damages while offering stability.

Telehandlers and compact loaders make stationary turns on hard surfaces which increases the lateral pressure on the tire. The twisted steel cord construction is part of Continental's Turtle Shield design beneath the rubber, which protects the tire shoulder area from damage like cuts and penetration from foreign objects.

The CompactMaster EM has a higher amount of rubber with a finely structured block to offer better mileage and easier stationary turns, Continental said. It is ideal for vehicles that work on paved surfaces, asphalt, sand and gravel, either in agriculture or construction. The new tread pattern withstands the lateral forces of stationary turns making it more resistant to punctures from foreign objects. It is also capable of operating at speeds of up to 50 kilometers per hour.

(Continental – Hanover, Germany)

Volkswagen ID.4 USA Tour sets EV distance record on Hankook tires

Hankook Tire has completed the Volkswagen ID.4: Great Roadshow through the US with its electric vehicle-specific tire Kinergy AS EV. The tour team set a Guinness World Records title for the longest journey by a non-solar electric car in a single country, breaking the previous record set in 2019.

From July 13 to October 18, the VW ID.4 EV traveled across all 48 contiguous US states in all-electric mode. The vehicle was fitted with Kinergy AS EV tires in size 235/55R19 on the front and 255/50R19 on the rear.

The tour started at VW headquarters in Herndon, Virginia and then made its way through the northern part of the US to the West Coast. The VW ID.4 visited 622 Volkswagen dealerships and three Hankook Tire dealerships before crossing back via a southern route to reach Volkswagen Group of America's Virginia facility as its final destination.

The vehicle and its team made 208 stops at Electrify America charging stations by the time the tour ended. Upon the arrival at the last stop, Guinness World Records announced that the team was awarded the title for the longest continuous journey by electric vehicle (nonsolar) in a single country. It broke the previous record set by "Volkswagen ID.3 Germany Tour" by bypassing the driven mileage by more than double.

Hankook Tire's Kinergy AS EV tire provides a hyper-low noise environment and uses a special block design for superior driving performance. The tread maintains grip force to deliver the high instant torque of an electric motor to the road without loss. Furthermore, a new compound and silica reinforcement with increased dispersibility improves the tire's wear resistance.

(Hankook Tire - Nashville, TN)

WHAT'S NEW IN TIRES

Tatneft producing and testing ATV tires for use in oil fields

Russian oil company Tatneft is developing the KAMA Quadro ATM tire, an experimental fitment for ATVs in size 25x8-12. Under development at the company's Nizhnekamskshina factory, the tire will be used on its all-terrain vehicles used in oil fields; it will also be available to makers of Russian ATVs and through the aftermarket.

The tire line for ATVs and other four-wheelers was developed using digital technologies. It is equipped with a self-cleaning tread pattern that provides traction in mud and snow, as well as in field conditions. The design and composition of the rubber compound is designed for high reliability and traction, Tatneft said. Before going into production, the prototype tire will complete testing to determine reliability. The first batch of tires will go for pilot testing to Tatneft subdivisions that operate off-road special vehicles.

Nine tire sizes of the KAMA Quadro ATM are currently in development with diameters ranging from 12 to 14 inches. Nine additional sizes will complete the range over the next year, the company said.

When production begins, the company plans to produce more than 30,000 tires per year.

(Tatneft - Tartarstan, Russia)

Battlecross X31 motocross tire tackles challenging terrain, Bridgestone says

Bridgestone has launched a new motocross tire, the Battlecross X31, that will be available in six sizes in Q1 2022. The tire increases speed and provides riders with strong traction and grip on difficult terrain, as well as increased stability and working range, the company claims.

The Battlecross X31 applies technology to the shoulder blocks of the front tire and all the blocks on the rear tire, which through a convex section in its block, enhances traction using an extra edge effect. The technology increases contact pressure and gives a secure contact feel on slippery ground. It also improves grip and consistency on changing surfaces. The additional edge effect provides higher cornering grip and traction on different types of terrain, according to Bridgestone.

The tire's new pattern design, with an asymmetric block pattern for the rear, improves the Battlecross X31's traction performance, together with a lower block ratio for increased working range. A redefined bunker groove size and positioning increase contact touch, enhance the tire's bite feel, grip and traction, and create lower tread rigidity for stability, according to Bridgestone.

The addition of a cooling fin on the sidewall creates air turbulence through the sidewall protrusions and enhances the cooling effect on the tire surface. This leads to less degradation and more consistent performance throughout the tire's life, Bridgestone said.

(Bridgestone – Brussels, Belgium)

FINANCE

Fenner Precision Polymers acquires Lumsden Corporation

Fenner Precision Polymers, a Michelin Group company and provider of reinforced polymer technology, has acquired Lumsden Corporation, a manufacturer of industrial conveyor belting and wire cloth for the quarry and mining industry. The company also produces products for use in food processing, heat treating, mining, glass treating, printing and canning environments.

The deal strengthens Fenner's position as a supplier of specialized conveying products and introduces new opportunities like metal screening for infrastructure, mining, and road applications.

Lumsden Corporation has three brands: Hoyt Wire Cloth, Wiremation Conveyor Belting and Flexx Flow.

Hoyt Wire Cloth is largely used in crushed stone, sand and gravel, concrete and asphalt, coal, and recycling applications. Wiremation is focused on food processing, heat treating, fiberglass, glass, and steel applications, and Flexx Flow serves food processing markets identical to Wiremation. Under the acquisition, all product brands will be retained and will fall under the Fenner Precision Polymers portfolio of belting and high-value components.

The acquisition of Lumsden Belting supports Fenner's growth strategy, which supports Michelin's objectives to expand in markets beyond tires.

(Fenner Precision Polymers – Manheim, PA)

FINANCE

Maxam Tire announces full ownership of Latin America joint venture

Maxam Tire Latin America (LATAM) has announced it will acquire and control the full equity interest in its LATAM Joint Venture (JV) with Gustavo Lima and Marco Zigni effective October 31, 2021. The financial details of the acquisition were not released.

Created in 2015, the joint venture was intended to expand the equity of the Maxam Tire brand within the Latin America region and to help establish a new strategic partnership in the specialty tire business.

“We truly appreciate all of the work done by our Maxam LATAM partners in the region. The business has done extremely well under their leadership, but we feel the time is right to transition the management of this business in-house to realize our long-term strategic objectives,” said Troy Kline, president of Maxam Tire North America.

(Maxam Tire - Danvers, MA)

Wacker increases prices for polymeric binders and resins

Due to rising energy, raw material and logistics costs, German chemical group Wacker said it will adjust prices for its polymer dispersions, dispersible polymer powders and resins. The price increase of up to 20% will apply to all Wacker Polymers products shipped on November 1. The temporary surcharge for dispersible polymer powders in Europe will increase to €590 per metric ton.

The price adjustment will help the company continue to provide customers with quality products, technological innovations, customer service and technical support, along with supporting investment to secure future growth.

Wacker Polymers produces binders and polymeric additives based on polyvinyl acetate and vinyl acetate copolymers and terpolymers. These take the form of dispersible polymer powders, dispersions, solid resins, and solutions. They are used in construction chemicals, paints and surface coatings, adhesives, sealants, carpet applications and nonwovens, as well as in fiber composites and polymeric materials based on renewable resources. The company has production sites in Germany, China, South Korea and the US.

(Wacker – Munich, Germany)

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