

Press Information

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PRESS RELEASE

Lightweight Forging TechDays continue – this time at Volkswagen TechDays of The Lightweight Forging Initiative continue their success

Hagen, 06.02.2018

On January 17, 2018, the Lightweight Forging TechDay took place at Volkswagen AG in Wolfsburg. The one-day event with a total of 17 exhibitors and 17 presentations from the companies participating in the project met with a pleasing response.

Feedback from both the exhibitors as well as the participants from Volkswagen AG was highly positive. The visitors came from various areas of Design and Engineering. The TechDays of The Lightweight Forging Initiative, which are held directly on site at OEMs and Tier 1/2 suppliers, provide these companies with the opportunity to talk to steel manufacturers and forging companies about the lightweighting potential of steel forgings in the powertrain and chassis, and about possible forms of implementation at their own company. This lightweighting potential was determined by the Initiative in 2 studies carried out between 2014 and 2016. They revealed possible weight savings of 42 kg during Phase I (passenger car) and 99 kg in Phase II (light commercial vehicle up to 3.5 t). TechDays provide The Lightweight Forging Initiative with an ideal platform for presenting the results directly and for highlighting the lightweighting potential in an optimum way.

The event in Wolfsburg began in the morning with a presentation of the Initiative and ended in the afternoon with an outlook on its future activities during Phase III. An extended lunchbreak provided sufficient opportunity for hands-on discussions with the experts on site and for visiting the accompanying exhibition. The presentations focused on the engine, transmission, chassis and powertrain.

“Reducing the CO₂ emissions and weight of vehicles is one of the most important topics for the automotive industry and thus also for the forging companies and steel manufacturers which supply to it. At the same time, when producing a forged part many companies are involved in sequence, leading to a supplier chain which is very long and divided up. This has made joint development efforts crucial for generating more innovation,” explains Dr. Hans-Willi Raedt, Vice President Advanced Engineering of the Hirschvogel Automotive Group and Chairman of the consortium for the forging partners.

“We have shown that modern steel materials in forging technology can make a decisive contribution to the lightweight design requirements of the vehicle industry. Our studies in Phases I and II verify that new ideas generate very tangible competitive advantages over rival production processes and materials,” says Dr. Thomas Wurm, Head of Technical Customer Support and Application Development at Georgsmarienhütte GmbH as well as Chairman of the consortium for the steel partners.

Additional lightweight forging TechDays at OEMs, Tier 1/2 suppliers and system suppliers are planned for 2018 and 2019. The current Phase III has gone international, with 39 forging companies and steel manufacturers participating from the US, Japan and Western Europe, all of whom are focusing on the lightweighting potential in the powertrain and chassis of a hybrid passenger car as well as in the transmission of a conventional truck.

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The Lightweight Forging Initiative

Since 2013, a total of 35 steel manufacturers, forging companies and an engineering service provider have joined forces under the auspices of the German Forging Association (Industrieverband Massivumformung e. V.) and the Steel Institute VDEh (Stahlinstitut VDEh) to form The Lightweight Forging Initiative. The goal of this Initiative, which is unparalleled worldwide, is to achieve weight-savings in cars and light commercial vehicles using innovative components made of steel. During Phase I, which took place in 2013 and 2014 with 24 participating companies, a medium-sized passenger car was analysed and the lightweight design potential of forged components identified. In total, a weight-saving potential of 42 kg was achieved in the powertrain and chassis. The Initiative entered Phase II in 2015 and 2016 with 28 companies and focused this time on a light commercial vehicle up to 3.5 t. Phase II was able to build on the success of Phase I by identifying a feasible lightweight design potential of 99 kg in the powertrain and chassis. Phase III of the Initiative kicked off at international level in summer 2017 with 39 companies from the US, Japan and Western Europe. The focus of this phase is on the lightweighting potential in the powertrain and chassis of a hybrid passenger car as well as in the transmission of a conventional truck. Further information may be found at: www.massiverLEICHTBAU.de/en/startseite/

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Industrieverband Massivumformung e. V. (German Forging Association)

Industrieverband Massivumformung e. V., with its 120 members, represents the interests of the industry with sales of 6.7 billion euros and almost 30,000 employees. A core task is organising collaboration across the member companies, most of which are medium-sized businesses, with the aim of working together to increase the competitiveness of the individual firms. Germany is the technology leader when it comes to forging and, after China, is the world's largest producer of forged parts.

Stahlinstitut VDEh (VDEh Steel Institute)

The association promotes cooperation among engineers on projects of a technical or scientific nature, or a combination of both, with the aim of further developing steel technology and the material steel. Stahlinstitut VDEh focuses on collaborative research and information exchange. In international collaborative work, system manufacturers and suppliers are also involved. Today, Stahlinstitut VDEh members include around 5,300 university graduates in technical, scientific and commercial subjects or those in leading positions in industry and trade. Besides this, 150 companies have joined the association from the areas of iron, steel and associated materials.