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NEWS RELEASE

VISION, CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT APPROACH AID IN RES MANUFACTURING'S EARLY TS 16949 CERTIFICATION

MILWAUKEE, Wisc., Apr. 13, 2004 — In successfully undertaking the rigorous process to acquire TS 16949 certification, Milwaukee-based Res Manufacturing called upon the same corporate culture that guided them through other automotive certification processes.

It was a fortuitous approach, as they were awarded the TS 16949 quality certification in March – one of just a handful of suppliers to complete this process.

"We've always been a very forward-thinking company," explained Joe Erato, quality coordinator at Res Manufacturing and leader of the certification process. "As we qualified for QS-9000 and ISO 9000 certification, we undertook a continual improvement process that linked all our company's operations. It gave us a huge foundation of excellence as we began planning for TS 16949 certification."

TS 16949 is an ISO Technical Specification that aligns existing U.S., German, French and Italian automotive quality system standards within the global automotive industry. Certification is available only to manufacturers that are part of the automotive supply chain (providing products that ultimately reach the world's automakers). While the certification replaces the QS-9000 standard currently in place, many elements of the certification system are different.

DaimlerChrysler AG has requested that their suppliers be TS 16949 certified by July 2004. Ford Motor Company and General Motors Corporation have set a deadline of December 2006. Res Manufacturing Company supplies components and assemblies for automotive powertrain, interior and exterior applications. These applications include baffles, windage trays, interior and exterior brackets, seating components, sunroof frame assemblies and cable assemblies.

"TS 16949 certification is different from other certification processes in many ways," said David Tomczek, Res vice president of marketing and sales. "Most significantly, it takes a process approach to measuring customer satisfaction and achieving our quality objectives. Our approach to continual improvement involves virtually every employee here at Res. That made the TS 16949 process an easier one for us than at many other companies – because we already had most of the systems in place."

Erato said that the company identified and analyzed customer-oriented processes for procedure, workflow and documentation. These included such diverse areas as marketing, order acceptance and billing to new product launch, prototyping and manufacturing. "The approach is to monitor not only the hard facts of customer satisfaction, but also to include our customers' perception of how we're meeting their requirements," he said. "We consider the processes we take in accomplishing these goals, not by studying just the individual steps we take along the way but really looking at the big picture of what we're trying to accomplish and the results we get. It encompasses every element of our operations – from making our employees quality-aware to implementing waste reduction programs.

"Quality is a milestone for the modern industry, and also has been the base for the progress of our civilization," said Ruben Rebolledo, head of supplier quality assurance for a Tier 1 supplier to DaimlerChrysler, Ford Motor Company and General Motors, and a customer of Res. "An ISO TS certified supplier means continuous quality, continuous challenge for innovation and improvement. There is only one way to do quality, and that is doing things in the right way."

"If you're not sincere about your quality system you're not adding value to your overall operations," Erato said. "It's considerably more important than just flying the (certification) flag over the building. We've really embraced the process as fundamental to our operations."

Res Manufacturing is a supplier of metal stampings for automotive and consumer product applications. From headquarters in Milwaukee, Wisc., the company provides engineered solutions in the manufacture of progressive die metal stampings and subassemblies, offering full tool design and prototyping. For more information about Res Manufacturing, visit www.resmfg.com.