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Bridgestone Breaks Ground on New Facility, Announces Start-up Team

GRANITEVILLE, S.C. (Oct. 31, 2011) — Ground was broken today for the recently announced Bridgestone Americas Tire Operations, LLC (BATO) new off-road radial tire (ORR) manufacturing facility.

During an event on Sept. 21, Bridgestone Americas, Inc. (BSAM), a subsidiary of Bridgestone Corporation, announced the construction of a 1.5 million-square-foot Aiken ORR manufacturing facility at a greenfield site in the Sage Mill Industrial Park in Aiken County, S.C. The facility will manufacture large and ultra-large ORR tires. At the same time, the company announced an additional 474,000-square-foot expansion of the existing passenger (PSR) and light truck (LTR) tire plant in Aiken County. The company had previously announced a 266,000-square-foot expansion of the PSR/LTR plant in July of this year.

When fully completed, the three projects will total a \$1.2 billion investment and will increase Bridgestone Americas' workforce in Aiken County by more than 850 direct and contractor positions.

During the ceremony on Sept. 21, Governor Nikki Haley declared that this was the largest, one-time economic investment ever made to date by a company in the state of South Carolina.

"We're all looking forward to the day in 2020 when we're at full capacity at Bridgestone Group's only large and ultra-large off-road radial facility in the world outside Japan, but there's a lot of work to be done before we can roll off that first tire in 2014," said Steve Brooks, Chief Project Officer, BATO. "We look forward to working with the people, companies and service providers in the region to get our operation up-and-running, and are excited to be able to provide a much needed economic boost to the area in doing so."

More than 700 construction workers will be put to work during Phase 1 construction alone for the collective Bridgestone projects.

Bridgestone also announced today the start-up team that will take the helm in overseeing construction and hiring efforts to ensure the timely completion and successful start-up of the new ORR facility. The core team is as follows:

Steve Brooks, Chief Project Officer – Brooks will lead the team through the entire construction and start-up process. He was part of the start-up team for the existing passenger and light truck tire facility built in Aiken County in 1997, and was named Plant Manager there in 2000. In 2002, Brooks was named Vice President of Quality Assurance for Bridgestone Firestone North American Tire, LLC (the predecessor company to BATO) at its Nashville, Tenn., headquarters, and then accepted the position of Vice President of Manufacturing Operations in 2003 before being named President of U.S., Canada & Monterrey Manufacturing Operations for BATO in 2007. Most recently, Brooks was Chief Information Officer for BSAM.

Fran Jones, Vice President, Administration Services Division – Jones will oversee human resources, hiring and people development for teammates at the new ORR facility. She will also lead the Transportation Services Division during start-up, which includes both receiving and warehousing functions. Prior to her current role as VP Human Resources Business Partners for BSAM, Jones led BATO's human resources function and BSAM's talent management and development programs. Jones was a part of the start-up team for the company's Warren County, Tenn., commercial tire plant, and has previously held the role of HR manager in Aiken County.

Norvel Smith, General Manager – Smith will support Brooks in leading and coordinating the overall Aiken ORR construction project and the manufacturing systems installation. Norvel joined The Firestone Tire & Rubber Company in 1972. He has held various engineering positions throughout the company, and was also a part of the core team for the startup of the company's Warren County, Tenn. commercial tire plant where he was Plant Engineer. Smith has since served in various leadership roles in both the company's consumer and agricultural tire plants, including holding the role of Plant Manager at BATO's Des Moines, Iowa facility.

Adam Barfoot, Operations Manager – Barfoot previously held the role of Operations Manager at BATO's LaVergne, Tenn., commercial tire facility. Prior to his current role in LaVergne, he worked in both Warren County and LaVergne in the Production Control and Industrial Engineering Divisions.

Mitch Mussetter, Plant Engineer – Mussetter started with BATO at the Des Moines agricultural tire plant as an Environmental Engineer and also has experience working in the Aiken County PSR facility both as Engineering Team Leader and as Environmental Engineer. Among other activities, he will manage the timing of varied installation projects.

Ground was broken for the Aiken County PSR/LTR plant expansion on Oct. 17.



About Bridgestone Americas Tire Operations:

Nashville, Tenn.-based Bridgestone Americas Tire Operations (BATO) is a business unit of Bridgestone Americas, Inc., whose parent company, Bridgestone Corporation, is the world's largest tire and rubber company. Reporting into the BATO business unit are the company's Latin American tire operations; the U.S. and Canadian consumer and commercial tire businesses; and Bridgestone Retail Operations, LLC, which operates the largest network of company-owned automotive service providers in the world. BATO develops, manufactures and markets Bridgestone, Firestone and associate brand tires. The commercial tire division is focused on retail, wholesale and original equipment markets, supplying tires to passenger, light truck, commercial vehicle, off road, motorcycle, agricultural and retread markets.

About Bridgestone Americas, Inc.:

Nashville, Tenn.-based Bridgestone Americas, Inc. (BSAM) is the U.S. subsidiary of Bridgestone Corporation, the world's largest tire and rubber company. BSAM and its subsidiaries develop, manufacture and market a wide range of Bridgestone, Firestone and associate brand tires to address the needs of a broad range of customers, including consumers, automotive and commercial vehicle original equipment manufacturers, and those in the agricultural, forestry and mining industries. The companies are also engaged in retreading operations throughout the Western Hemisphere and produce air springs, roofing materials, and industrial fibers and textiles. The BSAM family of companies also operates the world's largest chain of automotive tire and service centers. Guided by its One Team, One Planet message, the company is dedicated to achieving a positive environmental impact in all of the communities it calls home.

Additional information about Bridgestone Americas, including current featured releases, video and still images can be found at: www.BridgestoneAmericasMedia.com

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