



INSPIRING  
PLASTICS  
PROFESSIONALS

2023

# ANNUAL REPORT



When I started my term as SPE president in January 2024, my first official act was to call and congratulate each of the newly elected Fellows and Honored Service Members. While it might be self-evident to say that sharing good news is an enjoyable activity, the phone calls (not emails!) I had with these dedicated SPE members remain among the highlights of my year so far. Each recipient was moved, grateful, and thankful to have received the recognition of their peers. As an individual-based organization committed to volunteerism in service of the science of plastics and polymers around the world, SPE continues to shine.

Over the course of the past year, our organization again proved how a grassroots focus on knowledge, networking, and education plays a valuable role in the wide and wonderful world of plastics. What other organization offers such a variety of geographic sections, regional interest groups, and technical divisions to share new developments from the molecular to the market level? A perk of being SPE President is that you get the most comprehensive view of volunteer activities around the world, from golf outings in Milwaukee, to plant tours in the Carolinas, to topical conferences in Amsterdam, Mumbai, and Melbourne. We are part of an extremely diverse and dedicated group! There are few better feelings than walking into a massive conference room and seeing the SPE logo displayed prominently, particularly when it's a section or division outside your "home" group (that's Thermoforming for me, by the way).

While these highlights indicate to me that our Society is thriving, it is also true that we continue to face challenges in a relentlessly changing world. We are clear-eyed about the shifting nature of membership-based organizations and volunteerism in general. Some of these changes are generational, some are due to the fast pace of the evolution of technology. And we cannot understate how much has changed because of the global pandemic.

So, what does this mean for 2024 and beyond? One important shift that I foresee is related to the Board of Directors of SPE. Historically, this group of dedicated volunteers has served an important role as a critical node of information flow between the membership at large and the SPE operational team. Much has been achieved in terms of communication, standardization, accessibility of resources, service requests, chapter leader roundtables, etc. With an experienced HQ staff team supporting SPE programs and Chapter activities, SPE is well-placed to manage this part of the business. As a network of plastics industry professionals, however, SPE's board represents the company's links to the wider world. In other words, board members are called upon for strategic guidance and fiduciary responsibility. It is this element of board service that, in my opinion, has become critical given the aforementioned challenges we face.

Furthermore, the SPE Foundation will continue to grow in size, reach, and influence. The expressly stated need, by numerous international organizations, for objective, scientific, educational programming represents a massive opportunity for SPE including through PlastiVan and an expanding roster of scholarships.

It is a privilege to serve in this role of President and Chair of a society that has been integral to my career as a plastics professional. I look forward to meeting as many members as I can on this journey because the energy, passion, and dedication of volunteers reminds me why I first joined, and why I will continue to serve.



**Conor Carlin**  
SPE President 2024



As I think about SPE's work while preparing this report, it's impossible to ignore the magnitude of both the challenges and opportunities that plastics professionals face globally. It is no exaggeration to say that this past year has been transformative for our entire industry, and as we look to the future, it's essential to recognize both the obstacles we must overcome and the immense potential for innovation and leadership within our field.



The scrutiny surrounding plastics, particularly their environmental impact, has never been more intense. Governments, businesses, and the public are calling for more sustainable practices, and as plastics professionals, we face increasing regulatory pressures, demands for reduced carbon footprints, and the push for greater circularity in material use. These challenges, though significant, are critical to the long-term success of our industry. The need for change is clear: we must embrace sustainable solutions and rethink how we design, manufacture, and dispose of plastic products. While no easy task, plastics professionals are uniquely equipped to meet these demands, using creativity and technical expertise to develop biodegradable plastics, improve recycling technologies, and design longer-lasting materials. This moment offers us the opportunity to shape the future of our industry with both progress and responsibility in mind.

This is also a time of great opportunity for plastics professionals. The role that plastics play in the modern world cannot be overstated, and the demand for advanced materials is growing across industries such as healthcare, automotive, aerospace, and consumer goods. Innovations in medical plastics, for example, are saving lives, while lightweight and durable materials are helping to reduce emissions in transportation. Plastics professionals are central to these advancements, and the potential for innovation is endless.

One of the most exciting opportunities on the horizon is the continued integration of plastics engineering with digital technologies. We are seeing a rise in the use of artificial intelligence, machine learning, and data analytics in materials science, which is transforming how we approach product design and manufacturing. Smart manufacturing, additive manufacturing, and digital twins are just a few examples of how these technologies are reshaping our industry. For plastics professionals, the challenge is to leverage these tools to improve efficiencies, reduce waste, and enhance product performance. As these technologies evolve, so too must our skills and expertise.

At the Society of Plastics Engineers (SPE), we are committed to supporting you—our members—as you navigate these challenges and opportunities. Over the past year, we have focused on providing resources, education, and networking opportunities to empower engineers across the globe to take on these new demands. Our technical programs, webinars, and conferences are focused on sustainability, circularity, and innovation, ensuring that our members stay at the forefront of the industry. We understand that to meet these challenges, plastics professionals need to be equipped not only with cutting-edge knowledge but also with a strong network of peers and collaborators.

In a nutshell, SPE is dedicated to ensuring our members are ready for this new era of plastics engineering. Through our partnerships with leading companies, academic institutions, and government bodies, we are constantly exploring new ways to provide value to our members. Our education programs are evolving to reflect the latest industry trends, and we are committed to offering opportunities for lifelong learning. Whether you are a student just starting your journey or an experienced professional looking to stay ahead of the curve, SPE is here to support your growth.

Looking ahead, I am optimistic about the future of our industry. The world is changing rapidly, and while there are undeniable challenges ahead, there are also unprecedented opportunities for us to make a positive impact. As we confront issues like environmental sustainability, we also have the chance to revolutionize how we think about and use plastics. We are moving towards a future where plastics will not only be more sustainable but also more efficient, more versatile, and more critical to the technologies that will shape our world.

In closing, I want to express my gratitude to all of you—our members, partners, and supporters—who continue to drive this industry forward. Your dedication, expertise, and passion are what make SPE a global leader in the plastics industry. Together, we have faced significant challenges, but I am confident that we will continue to rise to the occasion, finding innovative solutions that benefit both our industry and the world at large.

Thank you for your commitment to excellence and for being part of this journey. The road ahead may not always be easy, but it is full of possibility. I look forward to continuing to work with you as we shape the future of plastics engineering together.

**Pat Farrey**  
SPE CEO



# SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS

SPE enhanced its educational outreach by expanding our program offerings in 2023. We developed and launched a variety of new educational programs, including courses, webinars, workshops, and conferences, to address emerging trends and meet the needs of the plastics professionals. SPE provided more value to our stakeholders through the following programming:



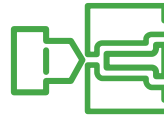
Twenty three new webinars, providing timely content on industry-specific topics, with a focus on digital transformation and emerging technologies.



Two new conferences focused on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAs), which brought together experts to share cutting-edge research and best practices.

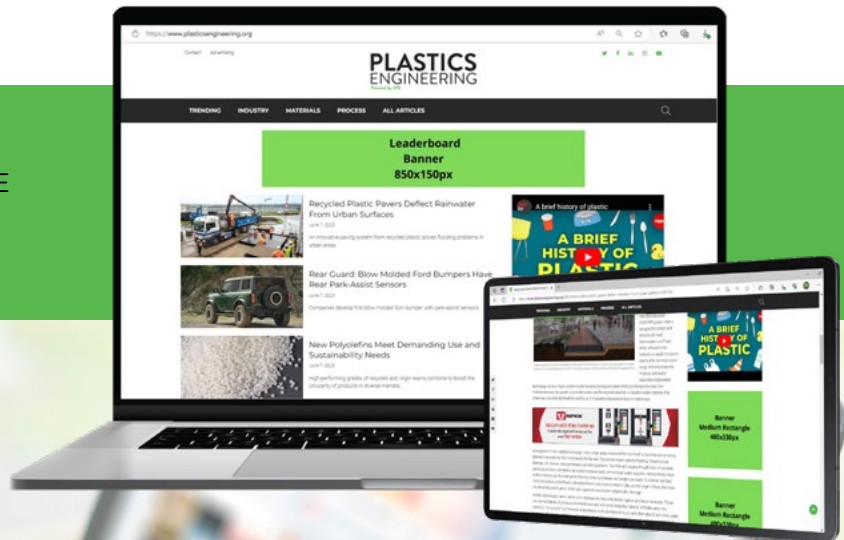


Five online educational Technical Workshops. They are designed to help plastics professionals gain deeper understanding of plastics technologies and applications through participation and collaboration, focusing on in-depth processes.



One National Week of Injection Molding Program. Experts from the industry explored some of the most popular trends, techniques, and technologies that make Injection Molding one of the most versatile molding options.

*Plastics Engineering* (PE) transitioned to a fully digital format in 2023, showcasing the publication's flexibility and adaptability. SPE is committed to staying ahead of industry trends. Available in ten languages, readers can access diverse articles anytime, anywhere.



By developing a strategy to increase followers, boost engagement, and increase brand visibility, we boosted our social media presence on LinkedIn by 20% and YouTube by 25%.

SPE acquires 3Dnatives, a French company that produces a media platform and international events for professionals in 3D printing, additive manufacturing, and their related market applications. SPE also acquired ImplementAM, the frontrunner in educational one-day workshops focused on 3D printing and additive manufacturing technologies. Together, the shared goal of the three businesses is to bridge the gap between traditional manufacturing-based businesses and the transformative world of additive manufacturing and 3D printing, offering innovative ways to enhance manufacturing processes.



#### Joined “Molding Workforce Inclusion” Program as Partner

The “Molding Workforce Inclusion” program builds upon the successful two-year project funded by the Indiana Department of Education. This initiative effectively connected job seekers with disabilities to plastics companies and other employers nationwide. Now, with the collective efforts of SPE, Blue Star Recyclers, Earlywood Educational Services, Aspire of Johnson County, and James Emmett & Company (JEC), this program will establish a national model for disability inclusivity, which can be replicated in every county across the United States.

SPE offers new and renewed memberships at no cost for one year, for those faced with sudden loss of income due to unemployment or other financial hardships.





# SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS



What other organization offers such a variety of geographic sections, regional interest groups, and technical divisions to share new developments from the molecular to the market level? A perk of being SPE President is that you get the most comprehensive view of volunteer activities around the world, from golf outings in Milwaukee, to plant tours in the Carolinas, to topical conferences in Amsterdam, Mumbai, and Melbourne. We are part of an extremely diverse and dedicated group! - Conor Carlin, SPE President 2024

In 2023, SPE added the India Medical Plastics and East Africa chapters.



SPE also hosted a variety of events around the world.

## JANUARY

ADDITIV Medical Francais

## MARCH

SPE Additive & Color Europe Conference - Brussels, Belgium

Manufacturing - Gearing for Sustainability - Mulgrave VIC, AU

ADDITIVE Medical 2.0 Espanol

## APRIL

SPE ANZ Microplastics Series #1

## MAY

Plastics and Medical Applications - South Wharf VIC, AU

## JUNE

SPE India 40 Years Celebration - Mumbai, India

SPE ANZ Microplastics, The Effects and Solutions Series #2

ADDITIVE Medical

ADDITIV Design 2.0 Francais

## AUGUST

SPE ANZ Safety the Science We Should Know

## SEPTEMBER

SPE ANZ Annual General Meeting and Education Night

## OCTOBER

ADDITIV Polymers

Plastics and Circular Economy Conference - Melbourne VIC, AU

SPE Flexible Packaging Conference - Montreal, Quebec

Emerging Trends in Medical Plastics MiniTec-Zlin, Czech Republic

Le Plastiche Two Materiali Sostenibili Per La Calzatura Sportiva - Italy

ADDITIV ITALIA

## NOVEMBER

SPE Quebec Technical Conference on Flame Retardants - Longueuil, QC

## DECEMBER

ADDITIV LATAM 2.0 Espanol

Economic Outlook for 2024 - Kooyong VIC, AU

# JOURNALS

SPE's four peer-reviewed journals keep stakeholders apprised of the technical advances in the industry.



**1.1 million**  
full text article downloads  
(Up 16% from 2022)



**8,223**  
current 2-year citations  
(Up 25% from 2022)



**1,330**  
articles published  
(Up 13% from 2022)



**159**  
hybrid online open  
access articles  
(Up 47% from 2022)



**4,030**  
new submissions  
(Up 7% from 2022)



**93**  
days from submission  
to publication  
(Down from 98 in 2022)



Article downloads increased compared to 2022 across all SPE journals: SPE Polymers 36%, JVAT 34%, Polymer Composites 15% and Polymer Engineering and Science 10%

The 2023 impact factor of all three legacy journals remains high while many journals saw a decline:

- » Polymer Engineering and Science: 3.2
- » Polymer Composites: 4.8
- » Journal of Vinyl and Additive Technology: 3.8

The 2023 CiteScore places all of our journals in Q1 category in plastics and polymers:

- » Polymer Engineering and Science: 5.4
- » Polymer Composites: 7.5
- » Journal of Vinyl and Additive Technology: 5.4
- » SPE Polymers: 4.8

# SPE FOUNDATION



**\$27,795**

raised from SPE membership renewal donations (1,241 individuals)

**\$234,225**

in scholarships awarded to  
64 students at 35 universities



**8 3D printers**

awarded to schools in Alabama, Michigan, and Colorado

**\$758,000+**

generously given to support the work of the SPE Foundation



65 donors gave more than

**\$40,800**

for the SPE Sustainable Packaging Girl Scout Patch on Giving Tuesday

**450**

Girl Scouts earned their Color Your World with Polymer Science! patch

PlastiVan® and PlastiVideo® served over

**17,000**

students in 17 states and 58 cities

**3**

After-School SPE STEM Clubs

**10**

SPE Junior Researchers



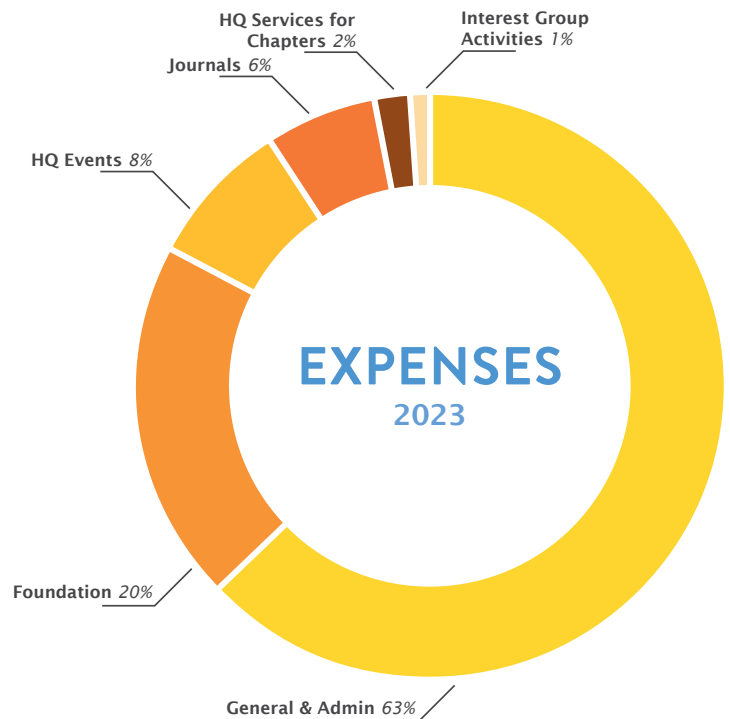
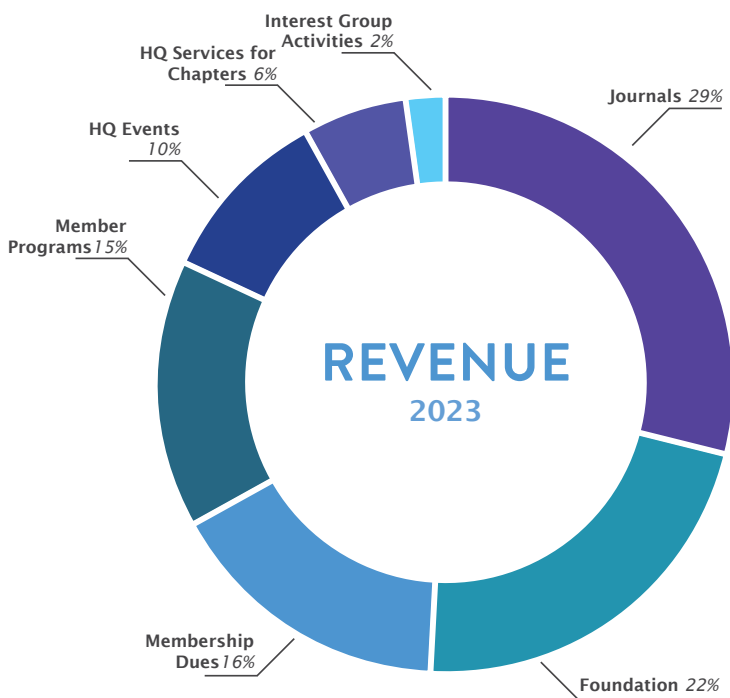
# FINANCIALS

## Financial Report 2023

	2023	
<b>Revenue</b>		
Membership Dues	\$	536,893
Member Programs	\$	496,946
Journals	\$	988,219
Foundation	\$	747,829
HQ Events	\$	339,048
HQ Services for Chapter Events	\$	205,882
Interest Group Activities	\$	53,823
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>3,368,640</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
General & Administrative	\$	2,443,566
Journals	\$	252,477
Foundation	\$	794,095
HQ Events	\$	323,587
HQ Services for Chapter Events	\$	79,430
Interest Group Activities	\$	19,367
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>3,912,522</b>
<b>Operating Profit (Loss)</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>(543,882)</b>
<b>Investment Income (Loss)</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>566,073</b>
<b>Total Profit (Loss)</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>22,191</b>

## 2023 Balance Sheet Comparison

Assets	2023	2022
Current Assets	\$590,993	\$424,035
Fixed Assets	\$5,847	\$10,405
Other Assets	\$6,568,430	\$6,250,692
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$7,165,270</b>	<b>\$6,685,132</b>
Liabilities	2023	2022
Current Liabilities	\$167,591	\$117,560
Long-Term Liabilities	\$3,620,088	\$3,099,293
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$3,787,679</b>	<b>\$3,216,853</b>
<b>Equity</b>	<b>\$3,377,591</b>	<b>\$3,468,279</b>
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Equity</b>	<b>\$7,165,270</b>	<b>\$6,685,132</b>



# AWARDS

SPE celebrates the tremendous efforts and achievements of members in recognition of their many contributions made on behalf of the Society and to our industry.

## Fellow of the Society



**Dr. Vivek Rohatgi**  
Pipe Resin & Applications Technical Service Manager,  
Chevron Phillips Chemical



**Dr. Uday K. Vaidya**  
Chief Technology Officer, IACMI-  
The Composites Institute

## Honored Service Members



**Bradley G. Johnson**  
Professor, Penn State Erie, The Behrend College



**Elizabeth J. Puckerin**  
Color Technology Global Manager, Ampacet



**Dr. Wei Zheng**  
Professor and Program Director of the Plastics  
Engineering Program, University of Wisconsin-Stout

## SPE President's Cup Award

It is a privilege as SPE President to honor one person with the SPE President's Cup. The Cup was first awarded by Peter Simmons in 1958 and continues to be awarded each year by the President for outstanding and meritorious service to our society. One of the honors, and perhaps the best honor, of holding this office is the awarding of this cup. This honor is decided solely by the President.



**Mark T. MacLean-Blevins**  
2023 recipient of the Society's  
President's Cup Award.

"Mark encompasses everything that I like and admire in an SPE colleague. He is passionate about SPE and fulfilling roles without expecting anything in return. The President's Cup award was something I could do to acknowledge his outstanding accomplishments to SPE."

- Bruce Mulholland  
2023 SPE President

# PRESIDENT'S CUP

# 2023 SPE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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BRUCE MULHOLLAND  
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Chief Executive Officer  
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