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## **Lucite® Partners with TSE to Introduce First-Ever Styrene-Free, Environmentally-Preferred Spa Reinforcement System**

**Memphis, TN** – Lucite International in partnership with TSE today unveiled a new environmentally-friendly spa reinforcement system. The groundbreaking system is Styrene-free and reduces spa manufacturers' air emissions by up to 99.9%.

The new system combines the patent-pending Lucite® Better Bond (BB) cast acrylic sheet with TSE Industries' patent-pending EcoSpray™ resin, a high modulus polyurethane spray backing. The two products were developed as part of a joint research and development program that discovered how to create an ultra strong bond between acrylic and polyurethane.

"For decades, spa's have been reinforced with a polystyrene blend," said Chris Robinson of Lucite International. "The system is dirty, labor-intensive and potentially very harmful to the environment as a whole and workers in particular. Lucite has been working for quite some time to bring a better solution to market."

That solution came in the form of a strategic partnership with TSE Industries of Clearwater, Florida. Scientists and engineers from both companies have worked closely with industry professionals to test, refine, and qualify the new and innovative technologies. Together, Lucite® BB and TSE-EcoSpray® resin represent the latest innovation in spa manufacturing materials and together they provide manufacturers with the opportunity to stream-line manufacturing operations, eliminate harmful air emissions and prepare for a more sustainable future.

"TSE-EcoSpray® resin is an alternative backing technology that provides an "environmentally preferred" solution without sacrificing the fundamental properties

required to ensure the highest quality finished product, such as adhesion, tensile strength, flexural modulus, and Tg,” said Tony Rindone, Vice President of TSE’s Specialty Chemicals Division.

### **About Lucite**

Lucite International is a global leader in the design, development and manufacture of acrylic-based products—the driving force behind two of the world’s best-known material brands, Lucite® and Perspex® from Lucite®.

Lucite’s affiliation with the spa industry began in the early nineteen-seventies when the company began to supply MMA to sheet casters for the burgeoning industry. Acrylic provided significant improvements such as ease of cleaning properties, better chemical resistance and extraordinary color retention, allowing the surface to stand up to the constant hot water chemistry. In the early nineteen-eighties, the company offered continuous cast sheet, which provided for improved colors and effects such as marble. Manufacturers were impressed with the product and began touting the Lucite acrylic advantage.

“Lucite brought legitimacy to the spa business in the 1980’s, through our national advertising program focusing on the benefits of spa ownership,” said Chris Robinson. As a result growth in the spa industry for Lucite was strong and swift. North America was the largest market and still remains so. However, growth is higher in markets like Europe and Australia.

“The spa business had an explosive growth for the company, at about 15 percent a year several years ago,” he said. “However in the last few years we have seen a turn down of almost 30 percent in the market. And with the current economic conditions, and the tight housing market, we don’t foresee a return growth until 2010.”

### **About TSE Industries**

TSE Industries was originally founded over 60 years ago and is based in Clearwater, Florida. The company is well diversified with business groups specializing in rubber or engineered polymers, plastics, UHMW, millable and specialty polyurethanes. Staffed by over 175 dedicated employees, TSE Industries operates some of the finest manufacturing facilities in the United States providing innovative solutions to difficult process, design and material problems. Among these operations are:

- The Largest specialty plastics fabrication facility in the Southeastern United States
- The fourth largest manufacturing facility for UHMWPE sheets in the United States
- The World's Largest manufacturing operation for Millable polyurethanes
- The largest manufacturing facility for reactive hot melt polyurethane adhesives in the United States

TSE's affiliation with the spa and bathware industries began approximately 5 years ago when the company was approached by Magnum Venus Products, a resin spray equipment supplier, to provide a styrene-free resin solution for one of their customers. Under threat of closure from the local Department of Environmental Quality for styrene emissions this company worked closely with TSE to convert all backing operations to the first generation of TSE-EcoSpray® resins.

Since that time, TSE Industries has formed strategic partnerships with Lucite® International, PPG Industries, and Magnum Venus Products to advance our EcoSpray™ resin and process technologies to bring to the spa industry a legitimate replacement for the industry standard styrene containing resins they are so dependant on today.

Never before, has there been an offering such as Lucite® BB and TSE-EcoSpray®. Together, these products represent a culmination in the joint development of monolithic cast acrylic sheet and styrene-free backing resins.