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Bridgestone Partners with SAGMJ to Drive the Next Chapter of SA Car of the Year Competition

The South African Guild of Mobility Journalists (SAGMJ) has announced Bridgestone Southern Africa as the new headline sponsor of the prestigious South African Car of the Year (COTY) competition, marking a new chapter for one of the country's longest-running and most respected automotive awards. This partnership brings together two organisations with a shared interest in automotive safety, innovation and performance as the competition prepares to enter its 41st edition in 2027.

As a global leader in tyre technology and mobility solutions, Bridgestone brings a strong heritage of innovation, safety and performance to the partnership. Its extensive product portfolio spans motorsport, passenger vehicles, light and heavy commercial vehicles, earthmoving and agricultural equipment, motorcycles and aircraft.

Bridgestone Southern Africa's headline sponsorship comes at a time when South Africa's automotive landscape is undergoing significant transformation, driven by the arrival of new brands, advances in vehicle technology and growing consumer interest in electrified mobility.

"The South African Car of the Year competition provides an important platform for recognising automotive excellence, innovation and engineering. As headline sponsor, Bridgestone is proud to support an initiative that celebrates the industry's progress while helping motorists make informed decisions. Our involvement also reflects our commitment to advancing safer, more sustainable mobility," says Jacques Rikhotso, Regional Vice President - Bridgestone, Africa Middle East.

Established in 1986 by leading motoring journalists, the annual SAGMJ-hosted COTY competition has built a reputation for recognising automotive excellence through independent and rigorous vehicle evaluation.

Over four decades, the competition has evolved alongside the automotive industry, with experienced jurors assessing eligible new vehicles against a comprehensive scoring system. Key evaluation criteria include quality, safety, technology, performance and value for money, ensuring that the competition remains relevant to the needs and expectations of South African motorists.

Importantly, the SAGMJ retains the responsibility for administering the competition and overseeing its independent judging process, with vehicle assessments and results determined by the appointed jury in accordance with established evaluation criteria.

"We are delighted to welcome Bridgestone as the new headline sponsor of the South African Car of the Year competition. This partnership represents an important milestone as we build on four decades of recognising automotive excellence and strengthening the competition’s relevance to South African motorists," says Brendon Staniforth, Chairperson of the SAGMJ.

“With an increasingly competitive automotive market, the arrival of new brands and rapidly evolving vehicle technologies, independent and credible vehicle evaluation has never been more important. Bridgestone’s support will help us continue building on the competition’s proud legacy while ensuring that it remains relevant in a changing mobility landscape.”

The 2027 competition takes place against the backdrop of a rapidly evolving South African automotive market, characterised by growing competition from established and emerging manufacturers, expanding electrified offerings and increasingly sophisticated safety and driver-assistance technologies.

Following more than 60 new vehicle launches in 2026, the 41st edition of the COTY competition gets underway in November with the announcement of the 2027 COTY committee and jury. The semi-finalists will be announced in early December, followed by the finalists in January 2027.

The competition will culminate in intensive testing days in March, when jurors will put the finalists through comprehensive evaluations before the overall and category winners are announced in May 2027.

“As vehicles evolve, tyre technology remains critical to safety, performance and efficiency. Through leading-edge innovation and our commitment to quality, we continue to develop solutions that support changing mobility needs and help motorists drive with confidence. We look forward to contributing our expertise and strengthening our engagement with the South African automotive industry," adds Rikhotso.

With Bridgestone on board as headline sponsor, the SAGMJ looks forward to building on the competition's legacy while continuing to provide South African motorists with independent, credible assessments of the latest vehicles entering the market.

For more information, please visit www.sagmj.co.za.

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Contact Michelle York for further details or to arrange an interview with the South African Guild of Mobility Journalists / SA Car of the Year:
Email: sagmj@iafrica.com or follow our SA Car of the Year - COTY Facebook Page or visit www.sagmj.co.za.

About Bridgestone:

Bridgestone in Europe, the Middle East and Africa (Bridgestone EMEA) is the regional Strategic Business Unit of Bridgestone Corporation, a global leader in tyres and sustainable mobility solutions.

Headquartered in Zaventem (Belgium), Bridgestone EMEA employs more than 14,000 people and conducts business in 35 countries across the region.



Bridgestone offers a diverse portfolio of premium tyres, tyre technologies and advanced mobility solutions. The company's vision is to provide social and customer value as a sustainable solutions company. The Bridgestone E8 Commitment is a broad, global corporate commitment that clearly defines the value the company is promising to deliver to society, our customers and future generations in eight focus areas: Energy, Ecology, Efficiency, Extension, Economy, Emotion, Ease and Empowerment. These provide a compass to guide strategic priorities, decision making and actions throughout every area of the business.

For more information about Bridgestone in EMEA, please visit our newsroom and http://www.bridgestone.com/. Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn.