



## Preface for 8ELBC Proceedings

In September 2002, 470 delegates from 47 countries gathered in Rome, Italy, to consider the technical and commercial factors driving the use of lead-acid batteries in automotive, telecom and other applications. 8ELBC focused on four key areas:

- Recent scientific advances.
- The thrust towards 42 V car electrics and hybrid vehicles.
- Market conditions and trends.
- Improvements in battery making.

Innovation and improved understanding of the science of lead-acid batteries is resulting in a steady improvement in battery performance. The challenges and successes are very visible and it was encouraging to hear reports from R&D personnel in industry, academia and the Advanced Lead-Acid Battery Consortium concerning such topics as improvements in lead alloys, active material preparation and techniques to increase the durability of valve-regulated batteries for automotive use.

Car battery sales volumes remain generally strong and are growing, even if the business is not very profitable at present. A major challenge is the trend by the major car companies to introduce 42 V electrics in new cars in place of traditional 12 V systems. Although the potential benefits are attractive, especially for hybrids, many problems need to be overcome before affordable and effective sets of electrical components and their supporting batteries can be put into large scale production. When this occurs, lead-acid batteries will have a major opportunity to meet demand, especially if dual battery systems evolve. Two particularly topical papers considered the impact such a move is likely to have on the industry. At the strategic level, any major change in automotive electric architecture would seriously affect existing battery designs and spare part logistics. At the tactical level, such a change

would have a considerable influence on lead-acid battery manufacturers, as well as on the lead (both primary and secondary) and other suppliers.

In Rome, delegates heard about the slowing growth in the use of lead-acid batteries for industrial use, where the present downturn in telecommunications activity has hit the sector hard. It was pleasing, however, to hear that progress continues to be made in the design and manufacture of better batteries at attractive prices.

New and better ways to make lead-acid batteries are vital. 8ELBC provided an important forum for those involved in battery manufacture to improve their knowledge on equipment and on the technology options for making better batteries at lower cost.

On behalf of LDA International and its members, I should like to thank all the authors of the many papers given in Rome. It is their enthusiastic support, and that of their companies/organizations, which makes the European Lead Battery Conferences the premier events that they are.

I would also like to join delegates, exhibitors and my colleagues in thanking Dr. Pat Moseley and Dr. David Rand for their painstaking work in producing these proceedings to such a high standard.

As you know 9ELBC will be held 21–24 September 2004 in Berlin, Germany. By then more advances will have been made in battery science and the trend toward better market conditions will, hopefully, be evident.

We all look forward to seeing you there.

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