25 Years of Convertible Roof Systems from Webasto

World market leader for soft tops and retractable hardtops

**Stockdorf / Munich – September 13, 2011** – Modern convertibles are the better sedans: safe and comfortable – and, at the touch of a button, with a feel-good effect when the roof opens to let air and sunlight stream into your car. For 25 years, Webasto has been manufacturing convertible roof systems for virtually every major international automobile manufacturer; today, with a worldwide market share of 40 percent market, it is the market leader in soft tops and retractable hardtops (RHTs). In 1986, production of the first convertible roof in the company’s history started with a soft top for the BMW 3 Series convertible. By 2004, over a million convertible roofs had been made. And the two-million mark will be topped in the jubilee year of 2011. Since 1986, Webasto has equipped more than 45 vehicle models with convertible roofs. These include some real “eye catchers”, such as the Ferrari California, whose two-piece retractable hardtop is currently much admired in the super sports car class, which traditionally “wears” soft tops. Webasto manufactures the largest soft top in the world for the Rolls Royce Phantom Drophead Coupe. Its width: 2.80 meters. Among RHTs, the roof system of the VW Eos is a technical masterpiece: a sliding glass sunroof is integrated in the five-piece folding steel roof. And the most popular roadster with RHT is the BMW Z4.

The convertible market is growing – worldwide
Cruising under the open sky: a pleasure that more than 1.7 million convertible owners in Germany alone treat themselves today. According to the German Federal Motor Vehicle Office, there were exactly 93,252 registrations for convertibles in 2010. Franz-Josef Kortüm, Chief Executive Officer of Webasto, sees the company as being well positioned for the future: "With the expansion of our activities, especially in the NAFTA region, we have significantly strengthened our position as market leader in the segment of convertible roof systems."

The stuff of dreams
The classic soft top will continue to grace especially sporty convertibles and roadsters in the future – for reasons of space. In comparison to RHTs, the space for the dropped-down roof can be designed more compactly and variably for soft tops. In terms of comfort and safety aspects, a modern soft-top convertible no longer has disadvantages compared to a sedan with a solid roof. Efficient vibration damping and all-round sealing concepts optimize the driving comfort as well as the acoustics.

Retractable hardtops: considerable design freedom
A “revolutionary” development in which Webasto was a major player is the RHT. The folding roofs opened up a new vehicle segment. Back in 1993, Webasto presented a multi-part folding roof in a prototype vehicle. In 2002, the first RHT went into serial production: the Daihatsu Copen. The BMW 3
Series, the BMW Z4, the Renault Wind, the Volvo C70 and the VW Eos are among the most popular convertible models today, but the little Mazda MX5 roadster also wins people over with this variant of a fixed roof. With RHTs consisting of one to five sections, Webasto has all sizes and segments in its roof range. Today, RHT roofs are made of steel or aluminum; fiber-reinforced plastics are also used.

**Ten locations pulling together**

The Webasto Group, which has been active in the automotive sector for over 75 years, expanded its portfolio in 2000 to include convertible roof systems. With the acquisition of the Convertible Roof Systems business unit from Edscha at the end of 2009 and the North American activities of Karmann one year later – with three plants in the U.S. and Mexico – Webasto became the world’s largest supplier of convertible roof systems. “We can offer our customers the broadest product portfolio for convertible roof systems in the industry” explains Dr. Holger Engelmann, executive board member, who is responsible for the Webasto Roof Systems division.

Today, Webasto produces roof systems and components in ten locations throughout the world: in Hengersberg and Regensburg (Germany) as well as in Great Britain, Italy, Portugal, Slovakia, the U.S., Mexico and Japan. Development work takes place in the headquarters of the Webasto-Edscha division in Hengersberg (Lower Bavaria) and at the central headquarters of the Group in Stockdorf near Munich.

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**About Webasto:**

The Webasto Group, based in Stockdorf (near Munich) has been family-owned since the company was founded in 1901. The Group operates internationally in over 50 locations (including more than 30 production sites) in the Roof Systems and Heating Systems divisions. Webasto is one of the top 100 automotive suppliers worldwide. In 2010, the Group generated sales of €2 billion and had more than 8,500 employees. The core competencies include the development, production and sale of complete normal roof and convertible roof systems, as well as heating, cooling and ventilation systems for passenger cars, motor homes, boats, as well as commercial and special-purpose vehicles. You can find further information here: [www.webasto.com](http://www.webasto.com)

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