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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AMBA Announces 2021 Mold Builder and Tooling Trailblazer of the Year Award Recipients

The American Mold Builders Association (AMBA), Indianapolis, IN, proudly presented Ray Coombs, Westminster Tool, Inc., Plainfield, CT, with the 2021 Mold Builder of the Year Award and Wepco Plastics, Middlefield, CT, with the Tooling Trailblazer of the Year Award during the AMBA Conference 2021, June 22-24, Grand Rapids, MI. The awards, sponsored by Progressive Components, include a \$5,000 endowment to each for continuing education in mold building, to be presented to the educational institution of the recipient's choice.

Ray Coombs has been a leader and mentor in the mold manufacturing industry for nearly 25 years. After starting his business out of his home, in 1999 he opened his own full-scale facility where he advanced from building tool components to complete plastic injection mold systems. Sixteen employees and seven years later, the company moved to its current facility, adding capabilities such as in-house tool validation, tool sampling and low-volume part production. Today, 35+ employees strong, Westminster Tool has embraced its role as a leader in the industry, leading an internal culture transformation to address the pressing skills gap in 2013 and in 2020, investing considerable funds in updating, replacing and expanding equipment across the shop, thereby increasing capacity and freeing up more machines to allow for training and cross training. Additionally, Coombs has also been a long-time advocate in Eastern Connecticut and continually invests back in the community through projects like the local Makerspace program in elementary schools and the joint-development of the Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative.

Wepco Plastics, Inc. was awarded the AMBA Tooling Trailblazer of the Year Award, established to recognize AMBA member accomplishments that have resulted in a notable impact in the area of education. Wepco Plastics was recognized for its efforts in workforce development, apprenticeships and exposing the next generation to manufacturing and STEAM-related career paths. Whether through participating in collaboratives with the National Fund for Workforce Solutions collaboratives, volunteering on local manufacturing group boards, helping to found pre-apprenticeship programs in local schools or engaging with local students in the state of Connecticut, becoming spokespeople for manufacturing and quality jobs has become a part of Wepco's daily culture.

For more details on the AMBA Mold Builder of the Year and Tooling Trailblazer of the Year Awards, visit AMBA.org.

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About AMBA

The American Mold Builders Association (AMBA) is the only organization dedicated to elevating the competitive advantage of U.S. mold builders. AMBA provides workforce development initiatives, networking, benchmarking opportunities and industry promotion. AMBA members receive a variety of additional benefits, including access to cost-reduction programs, visibility to mold buyers and problem-solving resources that give members a competitive advantage.

To learn more about AMBA membership and ongoing initiatives, visit AMBA.org.