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Contact:
Drew Walker
AGY
1.803.643.1120
Drew.Walker@agy.com

**Affordable High Performance Reinforcement
Enables New Marine Application**

*Chris White Design Atlantic 57 Catamaran
Uses Unidirectional Fabric with ZenTron® Roving*

PARIS, FRANCE, April 3, 2007 – Boat makers have known about the benefits of S glass for many years but the cost of reinforcing fabric made with the material forced most of them to keep using E glass. That changed recently with the availability of unidirectional fabric made with ZenTron® roving from AGY. The price has passed a tipping point that where S glass is now a viable option for marine applications.

A beautiful result of that change is taking shape in Bristol, R.I. where a 57-foot sailing catamaran is being built with the material. Chris White, founder and principal of Chris White Designs, South Dartmouth, Mass., and a well-known multi-hull designer, created the Atlantic 57™ catamaran, and Bill Koffler, founder and owner of Aquidneck Custom Composites, Bristol, is building the boat.

White and Koffler were introduced to the S glass fabric by Rich O'Meara of Core Composites, Newport, R.I. O'Meara said the two were fans of high performance glass but were not aware of the new fabrics now available with *ZenTron* roving.

“They remembered the prices of high performance glass fabrics from 10 years ago,” said O'Meara, “so they ruled it out. When I told them about fabrics made with *ZenTron* roving they were very interested.

“*ZenTron* roving is a single-end product made directly from the bushing with an epoxy-compatible sizing,” he continued. “*ZenTron* roving is less expensive than assembled S glass yarns and the fabrics made from the product are also competitively priced. The two men decided to use the product after Bill made several test panels and confirmed that the material would provide the performance White demanded.”

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According to Koffler, their quest for new material began when he wanted to switch to a unidirectional fabric. He and White had collaborated on another 57' catamaran and were determined to make the second one even better.

"I wanted to use a unidirectional fabric to optimize the laminate, reduce the amount of resin and avoid fairing out humps caused by overlapping fabric," he explains. "Rich recommended a unidirectional fabric with *ZenTron* roving that would also allow us to add stiffness to the hull and save additional weight. We thought it would cost too much but when we heard the price and considered all of the other benefits, we decided to go with the S glass fabric."

Koffler said he didn't need to see test results to know the test laminates were strong. "I was impressed. You could tell the difference on the shop floor. We were bouncing up and down on them."

He said such strength is important when the big ocean-going catamarans set sail.

"Fully equipped, these are 25,000 pound structures," explained Koffler. "They are 28 feet wide and 57 feet long. They plow through ocean waves at 25 miles per hour. They get pretty loaded with stress but I am absolutely confident that the S glass laminate is up to the challenge."

Boat designer White said S glass has always been around but never at what he considered reasonable prices for boat building. He had been attracted to the material's higher modulus and better impact resistance but the increase in cost was always much higher than the improvement in boat performance. Now the two are more aligned, he said.

"With competitive prices for unidirectional fabrics made with *ZenTron* roving," White concluded, "I expect to see expanded use of S glass in boat production."

AGY is a leading global producer of fiberglass yarns and high strength fiberglass reinforcements used in a wide variety of composites applications. Headquartered in Aiken, S.C. (USA), AGY has a European office in Lyon, France, and manufacturing facilities in Aiken, S.C., and Huntingdon, Pa. Additional information may be found at the company's website, www.agy.com, or by email at info@agy.com.

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