

Press release

Cutting-edge Low Density Aluminum Products contribute to the success of SpaceX Falcon 9 launch vehicle

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Alcan Global Aerospace Transportation and Industry (Alcan Global ATI), part of Alcan Engineered Products – a business unit of Rio Tinto – congratulates SpaceX on the recent successful inaugural flight of its Falcon 9 launch vehicle from Cape Canaveral, Florida. The Falcon 9 and its Dragon spacecraft are designed to re-supply the International Space Station under contract with NASA.

“Our company has a long lasting leadership in developing cutting edge technologies for the aerospace industry”, said Christophe Villemin, Alcan Global ATI President. “To be chosen by SpaceX for the Falcon 9 represents a new launch pad for our most recent aluminium-based solutions. It shows how much our Low Density Alloys combine both reliability and innovation thus contributing to the success of critical space programs”.

Alcan Global ATI supplies low density aluminum sheet and plate for the tank barrel and domes of the Falcon 9 to help SpaceX meet its objective of providing reliable, efficient and cost-effective transport of cargo, and potentially human crew to low-earth-orbit destinations.

“Alcan helps us meet our goal of increasing access to space by providing the advanced aluminum-based solution that enables our Falcon 9 first stage to be both highly durable and lightweight,” said Chris Thompson, VP of Structures at SpaceX. “This is a key factor in developing launchers that are both reliable and cost efficient and we are pleased to have Alcan as our supplier.”

To achieve its goals of providing long-term reliable and affordable space transportation, SpaceX makes extensive use of Alcan Global ATI materials. Rolled products come from both Alcan’s facilities in Ravenswood, US, and Issoire, France. By working together, these plants are able to supply an optimized suite of low density aluminum alloys to aerospace customers in sheet, plate, extrusion or ingot form.

Alcan Global ATI has a longstanding record of providing adapted materials to the demanding space industry. The external liquid oxygen fuel tank used to boost NASA’s space shuttle into orbit has been built using Alcan Global ATI aluminum solutions since 1998. Our materials are also used to make engine parts for the European Ariane 5 launcher.

Through close technical collaboration with designers and manufacturers of space systems, Alcan Global ATI is able to provide material solutions that help ensure safe and reliable space flight.

About Alcan Global ATI

Alcan Global ATI employs approximately 3.500 people and has manufacturing plants in Europe and North America. A world leader in the production of aerospace plates, Alcan Global ATI provides its customers with its entire portfolio of advanced lightweight aluminium solutions. Thanks to its global R&D, manufacturing and commercial reach, Alcan Global ATI is able to build long-term supply and innovative technology partnerships with major aerospace leaders.

About Alcan Engineered Products

Alcan Engineered Products is a global sector-leader strongly committed to developing innovative, value added aluminum products for a broad range of civil and defense markets and applications, including aerospace, mass transportation, automotive, packaging, energy and building. With around 11.000 employees located in 27 countries and a commercial presence in more than 60 markets across Europe, the Middle East, Africa, the Americas and the Asia-Pacific region, Alcan Engineered Products is organized around businesses dedicated to performance materials in the areas of aluminum rolled products, extrusions and automotive structures, aluminum cable and international trade. Alcan Engineered Products is headquartered in Paris, France.

About Rio Tinto

Rio Tinto is a leading international mining group headquartered in the UK, combining Rio Tinto plc, a London and NYSE listed company, and Rio Tinto Limited, which is listed on the Australian Securities Exchange.

Rio Tinto's business is finding, mining, and processing mineral resources. Major products are aluminium, copper, diamonds, energy (coal and uranium), gold, industrial minerals (borax, titanium dioxide, salt, talc) and iron ore. Activities span the world but are strongly represented in Australia and North America with significant businesses in South America, Asia, Europe and southern Africa.

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