John R. Dorgan

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The right chemistry to power the future

John R. Dorgan is one of the newest endowed chair holders at Michigan State University. An expert in polymeric materials and a nationally recognized leader in developing composite materials for manufacturing, he is the first David L. and Denise M. Lamp Endowed Chair in Chemical Engineering at MSU. Dorgan was recruited through MSU’s Global Impact Initiative, designed to address the grand challenges through the creation of over 100 new faculty positions in some of the most promising – and critical – fields of research.

Dorgan came to MSU from the Colorado School of Mines, where he guided a successful effort to organize C2B2 — an industry-sponsored research center involving four institutions. He also served as a technical lead for the federal Institute for Advanced Composite Manufacturing Innovation, developing composite materials for wind turbines.

MSU is a key partner in IACMI with an emphasis on lightweighting to improve performance and reduce costs.

"In my project, we are trying to drive down costs by reducing the time it takes to mold a turbine blade; at the same time, we are developing new resin systems that make the wind turbines easier to recycle," Dorgan said.

He has received more than $10 million in research funding from federal sources and is a past president of the Bioenvironmental Polymer Society.

He received a BS in chemical engineering summa cum laude from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst (1986) and a PhD in chemical engineering from the University of California at Berkeley (1991). While studying at Berkeley, he was awarded a Hertz Fellowship. He completed postdoctoral studies at the Max Planck Institute for Polymer Research in Mainz, Germany.

President Lou Anna K. Simon said endowed chairs are helping MSU to accelerate its impact on campus and beyond.
“Endowed chairs enable us to build a base of highly regarded faculty who are considered leaders in research and teaching,” she says. “There is a ripple effect as these stellar faculty members help us to attract the brightest students. We are profoundly thankful to Dave and Denise Lamp for investing in our students and for advancing our college in such significant ways.”

Dorgan will be celebrated at MSU’s 2017 faculty investiture ceremony in September along with a cohort of endowed faculty recently recruited to MSU.