

Sage Automotive Interiors Partners with US startup NFW

Strategic cooperation to deliver scale in the field of plastic-free, plant-based, fully circular leather alternatives for automotive interiors.

GREENVILLE, SC, UNITED STATES, October 24, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Sage Automotive Interiors has partnered with US-based startup, NFW, a producer of a plastic-free, plant-based leather alternative for car interiors. This strategic partnership between Sage Automotive Interiors, part of the Asahi Kasei Group, and NFW, a leading global provider of innovative and functional materials for the automotive interior—enables another major step to support global automotive OEMs in reducing the environmental burden of the automobile lifecycle.



Panels of black MIRUM® from NFW in multiple textures and finishes.

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Dirk Pieper, Chairman of the Sage Automotive Interiors Board of Directors

Based in Peoria, Illinois, NFW was founded in 2015 and has developed the only platform capable of producing precision-engineered, all-natural (zero plastic) leather, foam, and textiles to replace animal and petrochemical-based materials. MIRUM®, the company's patented leather alternative, is made from natural rubber, natural fibers, plant oils, natural pigments, and minerals. MIRUM® is bio-neutral and can be safely returned to the Earth or recycled by NFW at the end of its lifetime. The material offers superior durability and quality that can replace traditional animal-based or synthetic leather products without the use of any polyurethane or other coatings.

Sage Automotive Interiors (Sage) is engaged in the development, manufacturing, and sales of innovative functional materials used in automobile interiors globally. Since its acquisition by

Asahi Kasei in 2018, Sage has continued to strengthen its business activities in Europe and China through mergers and acquisitions in parallel to expanding its lineup of growth-potential materials such as suede and synthetic leather. As one of the leading global suppliers in automotive interior materials—seating, door panel surfaces and headliners, Sage has a strong presence among automakers and suppliers.

Luke Haverhals, CEO and founder of NFW, said: “Over time, our partnership with Sage will allow consumers to

apply the same decision-making process that they use in their homes, in their cars as well – the most sustainable option will be available to them. The kind of impact that matters to the planet has to happen at scale, not just around the edges.”

Dirk Pieper, Chairman of the Sage Automotive Interiors Board of Directors and Lead Executive for the development and growth of Asahi Kasei’s overall automotive product offering, stated: “The cooperation with NFW will enable Asahi Kasei and Sage to assist global automakers in reducing the environmental burden of their cars. By jointly bringing MIRUM[®], a plastic-free, plant-based, and fully circular leather alternative to the market, Asahi Kasei, Sage & NFW take a leading position in revolutionizing the market for interior mobility materials.”

The cooperation with NFW is part of Asahi Kasei’s “Care for Earth” investment framework, which was announced in April 2023. Asahi Kasei has committed itself to investing \$100 million worldwide in early-stage startups that aim to solve issues in environmental fields such as hydrogen, energy storage, carbon management, and bio-based chemicals over a 5-year period up to the fiscal year 2027. As introduced in its medium-term management plan titled “Be a Trailblazer” in April 2022, the car interior material business is one of Asahi Kasei’s “10 Growth Gears” that are to drive future company growth and provide more than 70% of operating income around 2030.

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About Sage Automotive Interiors

Sage Automotive Interiors (www.sageautomotiveinteriors.com) is one of the world’s leading providers of automotive interior materials—seating, door panel surfaces, and headliners—to automotive Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs). Global offices and manufacturing locations include North America, South America, EMEA, and Asia. Sage’s core strengths are



consumer research, sustainability, and innovative problem-solving for OEMs. Sage's vision is to continually lead the market in design, engineering, and technical capability, supported by world-class manufacturing. Sage Automotive Interiors is an Asahi Kasei company. For more information, visit <https://www.sageautomotiveinteriors.com/>.

About NFW

NFW is a platform for plastic-free performance materials spanning sheet goods, textiles, molded composites, and foams. NFW follows three ground rules in everything they develop: start well, stay clean, and end well. The multi-material platform serves a wide range of industries, from fashion and footwear to automotive and upholstery. NFW technology seamlessly embeds into existing supply chains, enabling the world's most iconic brands to design and scale products with high-performance, naturally circular materials. NFW makes global brands more sustainable, empowering them to create without plastics. Alongside the boldest brands and visionary designers, NFW is pioneering a post-linear, post-oil economy. For more information, visit <https://www.nfw.earth/>.

About Asahi Kasei

The Asahi Kasei Group contributes to life and living for people around the world. Since its foundation in 1922 with ammonia and cellulose fiber businesses, Asahi Kasei has consistently grown through the proactive transformation of its business portfolio to meet the evolving needs of every age. With more than 48,000 employees worldwide, the company contributes to a sustainable society by providing solutions to the world's challenges through its three business sectors of Material, Homes, and Health Care. Its Material sector, comprised of Environmental Solutions, Mobility & Industrial, and Life Innovation, includes a wide array of products, from battery separators and biodegradable textiles to engineering plastics and sound solutions. For more information, visit <https://www.asahi-kasei.com/>.

Asahi Kasei is also dedicated to sustainability initiatives and is contributing to reaching a carbon-neutral society by 2050. To learn more, visit <https://www.asahi-kasei.com/sustainability/>.

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