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## **Bridgestone to Begin Production of Large and Ultra-large Off-the-Road Radial Tires for Construction and Mining Vehicles in North America** **-Quick Response to Customer Needs through Localized Production-**

Tokyo (September 22, 2011)—Bridgestone Corporation announced today that its subsidiary, Bridgestone Americas Tire Operations, LLC, will begin production of large and ultra-large off-the-road radial tires for construction and mining vehicles (“large and ultra-large ORR tires”) at a new plant in Aiken County, South Carolina, U.S. The decision was made to quickly respond to the strong global demand for these products seen particularly centered on North, Central, and South America. In addition, the Bridgestone Group has decided to boost its production capacity of steel cord, which is a key component in large and ultra-large ORR tires. To this end, it will increase the steel cord production capacity of its Saga Plant and its Clarksville Plant\*1 located in Tennessee, U.S.

A total investment of approximately ¥82.5 billion (USD 970 million) will be used to complete all aspects of this project. The new plant will begin production of large and ultra-large ORR tires in the first half of 2014, and the project will be completed in the first half of 2020, bringing the plant’s large and ultra-large ORR tire production capacity to approximately 130 tons per day.

Previously, large and ultra-large ORR tires had been produced exclusively at Bridgestone’s Shimonoseki and Kitakyushu plants. However, Bridgestone believes that it can further strengthen its supply systems by utilizing the ORR production technologies developed in Japan in the new plant in Aiken County. In addition, it will enable the global Bridgestone Group to enhance its supply systems and respond more rapidly to the needs of customers globally. In addition, establishing production bases outside of Japan will enable the Bridgestone Group to have multiple options for possible future expansions, which will improve its flexibility in responding to changes in the operating environment.

Going forward, the Bridgestone Group will continue to strengthen its supply systems for large and ultra-large ORR tires, which play an important role as strategic products, while stepping up its efforts to raise customer satisfaction.

\*1. The Clarksville Plant is operated by Bridgestone Group company Bridgestone Metalpha USA, Inc.

<Outline of the new large and ultra-large ORR tire Plant>

1. Location :Aiken County, South Carolina
2. Products :Large and ultra-large off-the-road radial tires  
for construction and mining vehicles
3. Plant Site :Approximately 2,210,000 square meters
4. Start of Operation :First half, 2014
5. Number of Employees :Approximately 550 employees (planned by 1st half, 2020)
6. Production capacity :Approximately 130 tons/day (planned by 1st half, 2020)

<Outline of the Clarksville Plant>

1. Location :Clarksville, Montgomery County, Tennessee
2. Products :Steel Cord for radial tires
3. Plant Site :Approximately 340,000 square meters
4. Start of Operation :April 1996
5. Number of Employees :410 employees (as of August, 2011)
6. Production capacity :Approximately 165 tons/day (as of August, 2011)

<Outline of the Saga Plant>

1. Location :Miyaki-gun, Saga Prefecture
2. Products :Steel Cord for radial tires
3. Plant Site :Approximately 230,000 square meters
4. Start of Operation :March 1982
5. Number of Employees :498 employees (as of June, 2011)
6. Production capacity :Approximately 250 tons/day (as of June, 2011)

*About Bridgestone Corporation:*

*Bridgestone Corporation, headquartered in Tokyo, is the world's largest tire and rubber company. In addition to tires for use in a wide variety of applications, it also manufactures a broad range of diversified products, which include industrial rubber and chemical products and sporting goods. Its products are sold in over 150 nations and territories around the world.*

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