

Press Release

Kyocera explains the solar roof for the Toyota Prius

Kyocera solar roof with maximum quality standard for Toyota Prius

Kyoto/Esslingen, 28 September 2009 – Kyocera, one of the leading manufacturers in the solar sector, is exclusively equipping the new Toyota Prius with a solar roof. Toyota will also be presenting the optional equipment feature, which supplies the air-conditioning system of the hybrid vehicle with energy, at the IAA in Frankfurt. This system ventilates the interior of the car and regulates the temperature. Rafael Schröer, Managing Director of Kyocera Fineceramics GmbH, explains why the development of this special solar module has presented Kyocera with a unique challenge.

Schröer: “It was the first time for Kyocera that a solar module has been produced for the automotive sector. This is an area of application that places especially high quality requirements on the module. In order to develop this special product, we founded the project group ‘T-Pro’ in 2006, which consists of experts dealing exclusively with this topic.”

Special quality standards

Schröer: “A solar roof in a car calls for even higher quality standards than those required for a single-family home. Using stringent tests, we are able to guarantee the heat resistance as well as the vibration and impact strength demanded from our solar module while the Toyota Prius is in motion. During these tests, we surpass the officially required standards and are thus able to ensure an outstandingly long service life for the product. “

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Colour and shape have to be precisely adapted

Schröder: “A private car is not only a means of transport. This is why, alongside functionality and quality, design is another particularly crucial factor. Our task was to integrate the solar module harmoniously into the silhouette of the Prius. Generally the coloration within a solar module tends to be irregular and hence difficult to determine. To ensure an aesthetic appearance, we have been able to achieve an absolutely uniform navy blue coloration in our module for the Prius. The silver electrodes affixed to the surface demanded high-precision engineering. To prevent these from interfering with the appearance, thin black strips are applied to cover them. If they do not fit exactly, the strips lie above the solar cells, which has a detrimental effect on efficiency. In addition to colour, the curved shape of the module also requires attention and a special sealing laminate has been developed for this application. All in all, the Prius module is a true masterpiece of engineering.”

Kyocera products are among the most efficient on the market

Schröder: “Expertise of this kind does not appear from nowhere. More than 30 years of experience and hard work in the production of solar modules provide the foundation for our high-quality products. Kyocera is one of the few companies in the market to carry out all production steps itself, from casting the silicon to assembling the module, without buying in any intermediate products. This enables us to apply complete quality control.”

About Rafael Schröder:

The 46-year-old industrial engineer has been working for Kyocera since 2003. As the only European in the otherwise entirely

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Japanese management team, he is responsible for the company's activities in EMEA (Europe, Africa and the Middle East) for the product divisions of solar, LCD, thin-film components, applied products, automotive, technical ceramics, chemicals and microelectronics.

Caption

Rafael Schröer, Industrial Engineer and Managing Director of Kyocera

Fineceramics GmbH

Photo: C. Vohler, Munich

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About Kyocera

Headquartered in Kyoto, Japan, the Kyocera Corporation is one of the world's leading manufacturers of fine ceramic components for the technology industry. The strategically important divisions in the Kyocera Group, which comprises more than 200 subsidiaries (April 1st, 2009), are information and communications technologies, products to increase the quality of life, and environmentally friendly products. The technology group is also one of the largest producers of solar energy systems worldwide.

With a workforce of about 60.000 employees, Kyocera posted net sales of approximately €8.68 billion in fiscal year 2008/2009. The products marketed by the company in Europe include laser printers, digital copying systems, microelectronic components, fineceramic products and complete solar systems. The corporation has two independent companies in the Federal Republic of Germany: the Kyocera Fineceramics GmbH in Neuss and Esslingen and the Kyocera Mita Deutschland GmbH in Meerbusch.

The company also takes a lively interest in cultural affairs. The Kyoto Prize, one of the most prominent international awards, is presented each year by the Inamori Foundation, once established by Kyocera founder Dr. Kazuo Inamori, to individuals and groups worldwide for their outstanding human achievement (converted at present €370,000 per prize category).

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