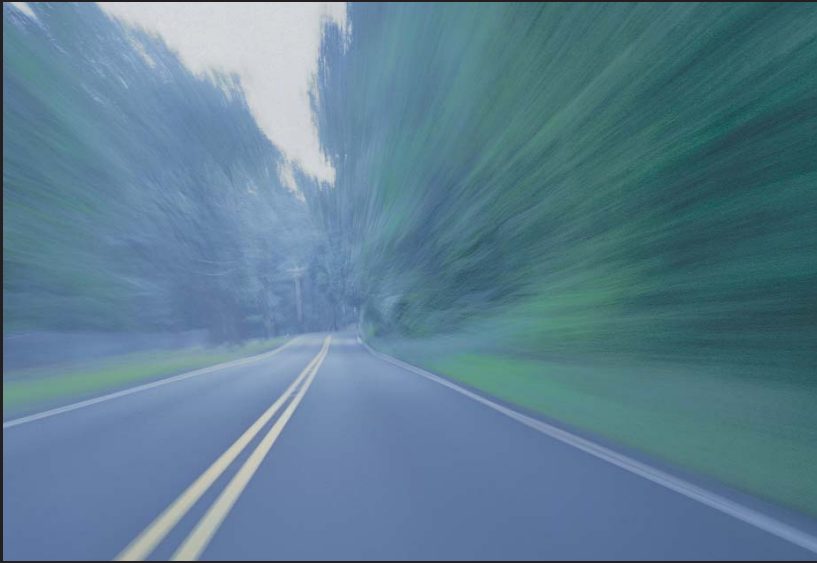


**MERIDIAN AUTOMOTIVE SYSTEMS INC.**



**WHERE QUALITY, INNOVATION AND SERVICE CONVERGE**





## A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE



**Meridian Automotive Systems supplies interior and exterior components for 15 of the top 20 best-selling vehicles in North America.**

*- J.D. Power & Associates*

**M**eridian Automotive Systems, Inc. strives to be the worldwide leader for quality products, engineered systems and services for front end and rear end modules, exterior systems and selective interior modules for automotive vehicles.

This goal is clearly spelled out in our corporate mission statement. We are dedicated to understanding our customers' needs and striving to surpass those needs by continuously improving our products through creativity, technology and the Meridian Business System (MBS).

We have spent the past few years rededicating ourselves to innovation, quality and productivity, all in the safest possible work environment.

In the experienced and capable hands of H. H. "Buddy" Wacaser and the rest of our management team, Meridian is focused on providing solutions to the challenges of the 21st Century by delivering value through continuous improvement and concentration on our Famous Five of Quality, Cost, Weight, Function and Delivery.

We will strive to exceed our customers' expectations through our dedication to these principles. With our eyes on these goals, we have brought together the most innovative, creative and determined people, working in the most efficient and technologically advanced facilities to help our customers achieve their ambitious targets for the new century.

Welcome to Meridian Automotive Systems, Inc.

Robert H. Barton III

*Chairman, Meridian Automotive Systems, Inc.*

## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



**H.H. "Buddy" Wacaser brings more than 34 years of automotive industry experience to Meridian Automotive Systems**

Supported by the insight and guidance of our excellent Board of Directors, Meridian has grown in the past five years into a World Class automotive supplier. We have received the highest honors from our customers for our quality, our reliability and our innovation.

Our company has achieved this leadership position by assembling a broad array of operating capabilities, manufacturing technologies and engineering specialties, and bringing them all to bear on our mission to serve our customers.

This diversity of expertise allows Meridian Automotive Systems to design and produce parts to exceed our customers' requirements and expectations.

As part of our ongoing continuous improvement effort, we have developed the Meridian Business System (MBS) to map out challenges we face on the corporate level as well as at each

one of our operating facilities. By identifying these challenges and including the specific solutions in our Business Plan, we are able to further improve our quality, safety and productivity.

We have been at the forefront of developing modular components that bring together multiple materials and technologies, bringing value to our customers and enhancing their finished products.

Meridian is recognized as a leader in the development of Front End and Rear End Modules, which include bumper beams, molded fascia coverings, trim elements, lights and other components.

We're also a leader in the design and production of interior console modules, which combine storage and comfort features with the latest in audio and video components.

**As part of our ongoing continuous improvement effort, we have developed the Meridian Business System to map out solutions to the challenges we face on the corporate level as well as at each one of our operating facilities**

Meridian is capable of supplying parts in a wide variety of materials, from steel to plastics to state-of-the-art composite materials for interior and exterior applications.

One of our great strengths lies in our approach to product development. Teams of engineers, working closely with our sales and marketing groups, work hand in hand with customers to identify market trends and develop innovative solutions and groundbreaking results.

At our dozens of operating facilities around North America, we are able to manufacture parts using numerous production processes, including steel stamping and rolling, and a variety of injection molding, compression molding and blow molding for plastics and composite materials.

Products range from simple "shoot and ship" to very complex hood assemblies for products like the Dodge Viper and Freightliner

trucks. Plastic boxes for pick-up trucks will be molded in composite materials for tough, durable performance.

We have facilities to chrome-plate, paint and coat steel bumpers, and we operate numerous high-tech paint facilities to paint and coat plastic and composite components large and small.

Meridian has led the development of ultraviolet treatment of composite materials to improve surface quality and reduce defects. This has opened new avenues for the use of composites in exterior applications, providing advantages in cost, weight and performance.

We have been leaders in the development of technology to support In-Line Vehicle Sequencing, and are now leading the way in Sequencing-to-Broadcast capabilities which will

enable us to plan for delivery of modules to a specified production window. This will allow our customers to rely on us for modules which meet their specifications for color, trim and accessories as the vehicle scheduled to receive the module emerges from the paint shop.

Innovation is one of the cornerstones of our business. We participated in the production of the first engine valve cover produced from bulk molded composites, and introduced plastics as a "first time" material on many powertrain and underhood commodities including water inlets and cross members.

Our geographical scope enhances our ability to serve the delivery needs of individual plants on a just-in-time basis. Meridian is on the cutting edge of electronic data interchange technology allowing our plants to sequence modular components into



**Headquartered in Dearborn, Michigan,  
Meridian Automotive Systems operates  
more than 30 facilities throughout  
North America**

customers' assembly plants with to-the-minute precision.

Meridian Automotive Systems is uniquely qualified to add value to our customers through in-house design, static and dynamic part validation, program management, vertical manufacturing capabilities and locations throughout North America that enable the smoothest distribution of our products.

Our strategic plan parallels customer expectations resulting in realized expectations for our customers as well as our shareholders.

Perhaps most importantly, Meridian Automotive Systems puts people first. A safe, efficient, well-run company is necessary to keep good people. Given the right tools, good people will make great products.

We aspire to operate world-class facilities. We fund our engineering activity to develop advanced technology, fully test and validate designs for cost optimization and ease of production. We believe that success breeds success.

This is the new Meridian Automotive Systems—Where Quality, Innovation and Service Converge.

H.H. "Buddy" Wacaser

*President and Chief Executive Officer  
Meridian Automotive Systems, Inc.*

**MERIDIAN AUTOMOTIVE SYSTEMS IS A LEADING SUPPLIER OF**

**FRONT AND REAR END SYSTEMS, COMPOSITE BODY PANELS AND**

**STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS, SIGNAL LIGHTING, INTERIOR CONSOLE**

**MODULES AND OTHER INTERIOR TRIM ELEMENTS TO ORIGINAL**

**EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURERS AND OTHER TIER ONE SUPPLIERS.**



## FRONT END AND REAR END MODULES

**Our product development teams work closely with customers to identify marketplace trends, while also taking into consideration sales & marketing goals and engineering objectives**

**M**eridian has established itself as a vertically integrated manufacturer of Front End and Rear End Modules. Through intensive engineering efforts we have developed concepts to incorporate multiple components into designed modules, thereby improving weight and manufacturing efficiency as compared to designs on similar vehicles.

Meridian has a strong heritage of providing the automotive industry with truck and sport utility vehicle bumpers that are the benchmark in quality for stamping and nickel-chrome plating.

Through an evolutionary process, Meridian has developed new programs to accessorize these stamped bumpers with plastic ornamentation, brackets, fog lamps, back-up sensors, and integrated Class IV trailer hitches.

This accessorization led to the development of highly engi-

neered modules incorporating the most desirable elements of advanced function and style in a single unit.

Modular designs offer a tremendous opportunity to an OEM to achieve efficiencies in design and manufacturing. Modularity makes a competent supplier accountable for the efficiency of an overall vehicle system, and drives quality, cost and weight solutions that might not otherwise be attained.

Modularity also enables advances in the realm of niche vehicles. With modular design and supply, the OEM can focus on the total vehicle, producing multiple vehicles from the same platform, in the same plant.

As niche vehicles become a larger part of the global auto business, modules will only continue to gain in importance, and Meridian has already established its leadership position in the design and manufacture of modules.





Meridian Automotive Systems has proven itself as an industry leader in the development and application of advanced materials benefiting end users with excellent surface quality, lighter weight and reduced costs



**Meridian's approach to systems dictates that all engineering and design work is performed in concert with all adjacent components under one roof. Savings are generated through intensive up-front engineering activity and production efficiency**



Weight and cost reductions have been achieved through the design of bumpers through optimized design features and material enhancements. The designs have evolved from steel blanks at .120" to the latest designs which meet requirements for crashworthiness at .070" — nearly half the thickness.

Meridian's approach to systems dictates that all engineering and design work is performed in concert with all adjacent components under one roof. Savings are generated through intensive up-front engineering activity and production efficiency.

Our product development teams work closely with customers to identify marketplace trends, while also taking into consideration sales & marketing goals and engineering objectives.

Meridian's multiple engineering facilities are capable of receiving and fully utilizing a broad range of computer generated data, electronically linking us directly

to our customers and suppliers. A fully integrated system results in optimized product design, performance and manufacturability.

Production efficiency and reliability are enhanced by the implementation of the Meridian Business System, which combines the four keys of standardized work, pre-specified flow paths, continuous improvement and the pull system of production.

By focusing on these fundamentals, Meridian ensures that customers receive finished products of the highest quality and value, which exceed expectations for delivery and overall satisfaction.

In addition to stamped and roll-formed bumpers, Meridian has the capability to manufacture painted fascia, forward lighting, tail lamps, fog lights, center high mount stop lights and expanded polypropylene foam energy absorbers.



**Meridian associates are encouraged to work individually and in teams to develop and manufacture innovative products of the highest quality and to exceed customer expectations for service and delivery**



## EXTERIOR PRODUCTS

Full service capabilities at Meridian include product design, program management, testing, material development, decorating and manufacturing.

Meridian is currently the world's largest compression molder of composite materials. Our primary focus is on molding materials such as sheet molded composites (SMC), bulk molded composites (BMC), structural reaction injection molding (SRIM) and thermoplastics.

Meridian holds more than 50 percent of the exterior SMC market for light trucks and passenger cars, with the ability to mold products requiring compression from 50 tons to 4,400 tons in presses at production locations located throughout North America.

Products range from simple "shoot and ship" to complex assemblies for the most advanced vehicles. Products include hood and door assemblies, deck lids, body panels, fenders, roof panels, spoilers, step assists, cargo boxes and back panels.

Meridian is a leader in the development of molding and ultraviolet sealing technology to produce outstanding surface quality, durability and paintability.

Innovation has long been a tradition at Meridian. Development of applications such as station wagon tailgates, valve covers for engines, structural IP components, and tri-door systems were all pioneered here, and have created new automotive market applications for composites.

Our advanced engineering group is constantly working with material suppliers to investigate new and refined manufacturing processes which will provide improved performance, quality, cost and weight.

Once a new process or material has been identified as providing improved value, the manufacturing team gets involved to further develop the technology into a robust production process.

As the world's largest manufacturer of composites, we have



As the world's largest manufacturer of composites, we have developed materials that can replace aluminum castings and even cast iron. Composites also are ideal for under hood applications where light weight, function and good looks are required.





Meridian is routinely pursuing new business opportunities, which, when combined with our solid portfolio of awarded business, will drive our expected growth through 2007.



**Meridian's customers have presented us with several prestigious awards:**

- **General Motors Supplier of the Year for Interior Components – 1998, 1999, 2000**
- **Ford Motor's Gold World Excellence Award For Metal Bumpers – 2000, 2002**
- **Ford Motor's Silver World Excellence Award – 2001**
- **Toyota's Quality and Value Improvement Award – 2001**
- **Honda's Service Parts Delivery and Quality Award – 2001**
- **Subaru's Quality Award – 2001, 2002**

developed materials that can replace aluminum, castings and even cast iron. Composites also are ideal for under hood applications where light weight, function and good looks are required.

We participated in the production of the first BMC engine valve cover, and introduced plastics as a "first time" material on many powertrain and underhood commodities, including water inlets and cross members.

Meridian produces the largest molded composite element used in an automotive application—a tonneau cover for a luxury pickup truck—which requires a combination of consistent

structural integrity and prime surface quality.

Meridian produces body panels and other exterior parts molded from composite materials for numerous heavy truck manufacturers. Our capabilities include molding and assembly of hoods, fenders, roofs and smaller parts. Other products include wheel-houses, cowl panels, firewalls, grilles, doors, bumpers, roofs and other parts.

Working closely with a customer, along with material and equipment suppliers, Meridian became the first company to produce a composite box for a full-sized pickup truck.

This truly innovative product is an example of how advanced technology and new processing techniques—supported and enabled by a strong manufacturing team—can open the door to even more innovative uses of composite materials in future models.

Specially developed SMC, BMC and thermoplastic materials, in conjunction with our advanced sealing technology, yield excellent results for items such as engine valve covers, heat shields, water inlets, oil pans, beauty covers and surge tanks.

Full service capabilities at Meridian include product design, program management, testing, material development, decorating, and manufacturing.



## INTERIOR PRODUCTS

**The roots of Meridian Automotive Systems, Inc., date back for more than 30 years as a leader in reliable delivery of quality automotive components and innovative use of a wide range of materials.**

**A**cting as a systems integrator, Meridian produces a wide range of interior modules and components, including low-content entry level consoles through high-content luxury consoles with integrated shifter and parking brake, and state-of-the-art integrated audio and video systems, overhead consoles, lower instrument panel assemblies with integrated glove box, innovative adjustable ratcheting cup holders, trim plates, valance panels and other highly functional and decorative interior components.

Meridian combines elements produced in-house with the highest quality parts and sub-assemblies from Tier Two suppliers to produce outstanding modular assemblies to meet our customers' increasing demand for advanced systems meeting the highest standards of performance.

Meridian's award-winning interior components are known for their innovative design and functionality. Multiple manufacturing

process capabilities provide flexibility to suit customer needs for cost, weight, strength and appearance.

Manufacturing processes used at Meridian's Interior Products locations include reaction injection molding, compression molding, blow molding, vac-forming, metal stamping, sonic welding and heat staking.

Meridian also is a leader in the application of decorative finishes on its interior products, pioneering processes for soft-touch paint, in-mold appliqué, wood grain and other high-tech finishes.

Manufacturing efforts are supported by robust engineering activity including research & development, full design, and program management capabilities.

Modular designs offer a tremendous opportunity to an OEM to achieve efficiencies in design and manufacturing. Modularity makes





**Meridian has developed these key competitive strengths that allow us to capitalize on industry trends and provide us the opportunity to execute our operating and growth strategies:**

- **Broad Product Offering**
- **Strategic Vehicle Profile**
- **Balanced Customer Base and Strong OEM Relationships**
- **Experienced Management Team**
- **Comprehensive Design, Engineering and Production Capabilities**

a competent supplier accountable for the efficiency of an overall vehicle system, and drives quality, cost and weight solutions that might not otherwise be attained.

Modularity also enables advances in the realm of niche vehicles. With modular design and supply, the OEM can focus on the total vehicle, producing multiple vehicles from the same platform, in the same plant.

As niche vehicles become a larger part of the global auto business, modules will only continue to gain in importance, and Meridian has already established its leadership position in the design and manufacture of modules.

These extensive technological capabilities enable us to provide full service design, engineering and development support to our customers, both domestically and internationally.

Once the modules are designed for function, weight, cost, quality, and manufacturability, Meridian is

able to provide the majority of the components from in-house manufacturing facilities.

We also offer our customers the latest innovations in both forward, interior and signal lighting technology. Products include complex faceted reflex for forward and signal lighting with or without optics, segmented reflex without optics, center high mount stop lamps, fixed lenses with movable reflectors integrated with park and turn functions, light emitting diode snap lead technology for direct and indirect systems, poly-ellipsoid forward lighting systems, Fresnel thin lamp technology, and headlamps utilizing the latest harmonized systems.

Meridian lighting products are manufactured using the latest production processes—including injection molding and electroforming plating—to produce highly reflective elements.

Finished products are built using a combination of automated systems and efficient associate work cells.

Meridian is one of the few suppliers to manufacture the electroform tools used in the production of our lenses, thus controlling all phases of product development through production.

Meridian is one of the few companies in the world with the capability to produce four-color tail light lenses—clear, amber and two red sections—in a single tool with two shots.

Meridian engineers use state-of-the-art computerized drafting software to develop designs ensuring that the desired optics will be achieved once tools are cut.

This predictive software shortens time to market and ensures that products meet the strict quality and performance standards required in today's global marketplace.

## PROCESS CAPABILITIES

**Metal Stamping** – Meridian has a full range of metal stamping capability with tandem press lines from 1200-ton capacity to 75-ton stationary presses. Our Class-A stamping ability is highlighted on truck and SUV bumpers, for which we are considered the quality benchmark. Much of our stamping capability is utilized internally where we support our systems and module business by manufacturing the components utilized in end-item assemblies.

**Rollforming** – Meridian has been involved in rollforming metal beams for front and rear end bumper applications since 1988. We utilize ultra-high-strength-steel (UHSS) and aluminum in an in-line process that pre-notches holes, forms the section, welds, sweeps and trims the finished product. Secondary welding is also utilized to add brackets. This process has grown in popularity due to its high strength-to-weight ratio and low cost.

**Injection Molding** – Fifty-ton to 3,000-ton presses are utilized in our operations in the manufacture of interior console modules and trim as well as exterior applications on front and rear end systems. Meridian also utilizes state-of-the-art injection molding machines capable of injecting three colors simultaneously in the manufacture of lenses for tail lamp applications.

**Compression Molding** – Meridian has perhaps the largest tonnage capacity in North America with presses ranging from 600 tons to 4,500 tons. With the larger presses, entire front ends (hoods and fenders) can be manufactured in one piece. Technologically advanced, Meridian utilizes the latest in controls to monitor pressure, temperature, and cycle times to produce quality class-A surfaces.

**Steam Chest Molding** – Meridian Automotive Systems, with partner Lorro, Inc., is the leading manufacturer of steam-chest-molded Expanded Polypropylene (EPP), used primarily as energy absorption in front and rear end bumper systems applications.

**Reaction Injection Molding** – Meridian utilizes RIM and S-RIM in the manufacture of large exterior components where applications require varying degrees of structure.

**Vacuum Metalizing** – Utilized to obtain a mirror-like finish on housings for exterior lamps in order to meet FMVSS standards for reflectivity.

**E-coat** – Used as an end-item finish and an in-process prior to A-gloss application, Meridian's tanks are large enough to handle all of our metal stampings.

**A-gloss Paint** – Partnering with Dupont, Meridian has developed capabilities to paint body color finishes on large steel and plastic components. This capability vertically supports the manufacture of front end and rear end systems.

**Soft Touch Paint** – Used primarily for applications on interior trim components and in support of the floor console module business.

**Chrome Plating** – Meridian's nickel-chrome plating facility is the largest of its kind in the world and truly world-class. In addition to two full-time production lines, Meridian reserves tanks specifically for continuous improvement and R&D.

**Vacuum Forming** – Utilized in the manufacture of both small interior components and in conjunction with compression molding in the formation of large exterior components.

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