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FIRESTONE INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS OFFERS INTEGRATED AIR SPRING AND DAMPER SUSPENSION DESIGN FOR OEM SPECIFIC APPLICATIONS

Provides high-performance suspension solution for space-restrictive applications

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. (July 25, 2007) — For more than 15 years, the team of engineers at Firestone Industrial Products Company, LLC (FSIP) has been developing and refining leading-edge integrated air spring over damper and strut designs to accommodate high-performance suspension needs in specific OEM applications.



Firestone supplies integrated air spring/damper with reservoir for Lincoln Continental



Firestone designs, tests, and validates ride of prototype air spring/damper for North America SUV



Firestone supplies air spring to Delphi for LandRover



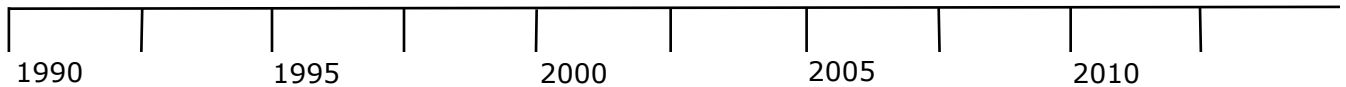
Firestone spring/damper with side-load compensation to reduce "stiction"



Firestone showcases air/damper for heavy duty vehicles at Mid-America Trucking Show

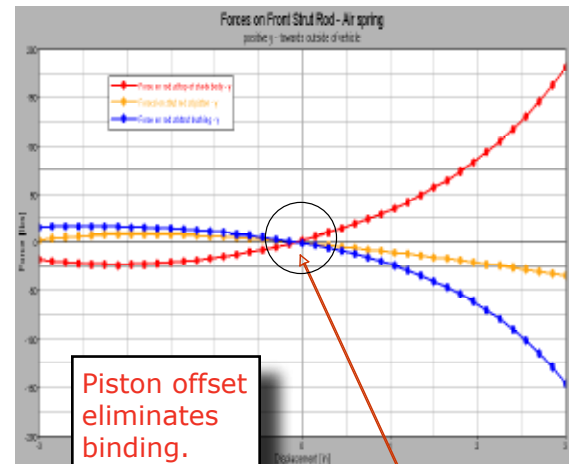


Near-future: Intelligent air spring with integrated accelerometers, height sensors, damper and ability to communicate with vehicle systems.



"Creating integrated air spring and damper solutions addresses a true market need," said Graham Brookes, technical director, FSIP. "We continue to work closely with a number of OEMs and damper manufacturing partners that have very demanding suspension specifications. Our integrated approach makes sense, not only for delivering on the overall performance requirements, but also for meeting technical challenges inherent in these applications, not the least of which is designing an integrated solution that works in small packaging envelopes."

Firestone's experience with air spring and damper integration began in 1992, when the company developed an application for the Lincoln Continental. Since that initial design, Firestone engineers have progressed in creating more automotive and heavy duty applications, ranging from axial spring force to side-load compensation designs.



"From luxury automobiles to high-profile SUVs and commercial trucks, we have a lengthy history of experience in creating successful integrated applications for a broad range of vehicles," said Brookes.

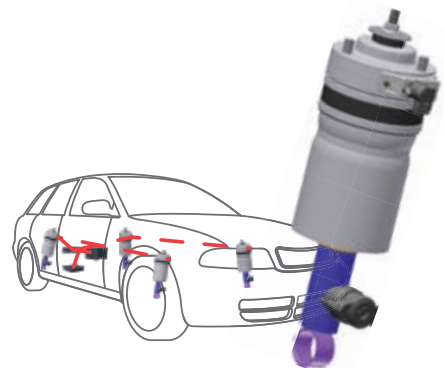
"Our Land Rover product is a great example of how this integrated air spring/damper design process delivers on specific OEM needs," said Brookes. "Land Rover chose to work with FSIP because of our experience in solving technically and physically arduous suspension demand problems." Prototype springs were designed by FSIP engineers following consultation with Land Rover on suspension needs for its Discovery 3 and Range Rover Sport models. These, and continuing integration efforts also demand strong partnerships with fellow automotive suppliers. For the Land Rover application, Firestone worked hand-in-hand with shock supplier Delphi during the project's development process.



"Land Rover was an engineering challenge. Our application had to deliver a luxury ride with enhanced handling worthy of Range Rover. In addition, the air spring/damper combination had to be robust enough to live in extreme off-road scenarios. Finally, knowing this vehicle was built to survive anywhere in the world presented an added dimension to the more standard automotive air over design," said Brookes. "That meant our team of engineers had to create an air spring with minimum harshness for ride quality, but with the ability to survive potential damage from dirt, snow, mud and sharp objects that may get into the working areas of the rolling lobe from no-compromise, off-road driving. We accomplished the task of meeting all those needs and are proud that Land Rover received an award for 'Best Riding' 4x4. That's teamwork!"

FSIP's engineers utilize a broad range of high-tech modeling and analysis techniques and testing methods to specifically determine how changes in the compounds, construction and application of the air springs used in the integrated product affect interaction with the damper and vehicle. "Using technology in this manner provides a time- and cost-savings benefit to our partner OEMs and damper manufacturers," said Brookes. "Producing the highest quality product, while controlling costs for our partners, is always a top priority."

Even as FSIP continues to refine new, technology-infused integrated applications, engineers are eyeing the future. The group is currently developing an "Intelligent Corner" unit, which will feature data gathering sensors within the integrated air spring/damper, allowing it to function as a data generator that will communicate with other systems of a vehicle's total suspension control system. The logic behind this new technology, according to Brookes, lies in streamlining technology design: why blanket the vehicle with sensors, when the 'necessary' corner modules can supply all the intelligence data needed for height, damping, brakes, steering, roll control, load and accident avoidance.



"We are constantly working to advance the technology of these components, allowing OEMs to introduce vehicles with the highest-quality performance," said Brookes.

About Firestone Industrial Products Company, LLC:

Firestone Industrial Products Company, LLC, a subsidiary of Bridgestone Firestone Diversified Products (BFDP), specializes in air spring manufacturing and technology with a history of more than 60 years of research and development of technologically advanced air springs. With headquarters in Indianapolis, Indiana, and six manufacturing plants located on four different continents, the company produces suspension products enhancing the driving experience for drivers of heavy truck/trailer, buses, rail vehicles, passenger cars, sport utility vehicles, light trucks, minivans, vans, and motor homes.