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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Fulcrum Composites Inc awarded SBIR by NSF for the development of lightweight sandwich panels**

**Midland, MI – 28<sup>th</sup> November 2007** - Fulcrum Composites Inc. announces that it has been awarded a Small Business Innovation Research Award (SBIR) from the National Science Foundation (NSF) for the development of lightweight sandwich panels. Fulcrum will be working closely with the scientists at Michigan Molecular Institute (MMI) to develop and test improved adhesives and bonding techniques for the production of lightweight sandwich panels

Chris Edwards, President of Fulcrum Composites Inc explains:

“The benefits of sandwich panels are well understood by designers and structural engineers: Rigid skins combined with lightweight cores allow sandwich panels to offer stiffness and strength comparable to solid structures but at a fraction of the weight. Advances in materials and techniques for manufacturing sandwich panels offer benefits to multiple industries and applications including automotive, freight and transport. In these markets the weight savings translate directly into higher payloads and lower fuel consumption.

However, the use of sandwich panels is still in its infancy compared to more traditional materials mainly because the cost of existing sandwich panels limits their use to fairly exotic structures. It is easy to pay a little extra for weight saving on a plane or a million dollar yacht but the real benefit comes when these technologies can be applied to everyday problems such as reducing the weight of trucks and cars. Additionally most techniques for manufacturing sandwich panels are limited to producing flat panels, which restricts their use in many applications.

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With this in mind, Fulcrum set out to develop both curved and flat sandwich panels at moderate cost without increasing the weight or giving up the structural advantages of the more exotic sandwich panels. Multiple prototype panel structures have been developed and are under evaluation by several national truck manufacturers as well multiple other applications such as furniture, signs, concrete forms, even wind turbine blades. However in spite of the initial successes a lot of work remains. The NSF award will allow Fulcrum, together with the scientists at MMI to work on simpler and more cost effective adhesive systems for manufacturing the sandwich panels.”

## Background on companies

Fulcrum Composites Inc. was formed in 2004 as a spin-off from The Dow Chemical Company to develop and commercialize technologies related to composites. It is one of several Michigan based technology companies funded by North Coast Technology Investors. Dow also remains a shareholder in the company.

MMI, founded in 1971, is a not-for-profit research and educational institute dedicated to advanced research and development. MMI's mission is to identify, develop, and implement advanced and enabling technologies in order to create new business opportunities.