

EXPERT WISDOM

ON THE CUSP OF CELEBRATING ITS 80TH ANNIVERSARY, SAE-SMB CONTINUES TO RELY HEAVILY ON NEW AND INNOVATIVE PRACTICES TO REMAIN A VANGUARD OF INDUSTRIAL EXPERTISE AND AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE COMMERCIAL TRANSPORT SECTOR.

A steady eye and concentration are needed in the SAE-SMB plant.
Image: SAE-SMB.

As SAE-SMB prepares to celebrate eight decades of operation, expertly serving the road transport industry, this Ardennes-based company that specialises in the manufacture of axles and suspensions for commercial vehicles, continues to highlight that performance is not solely based on innovation.

The industrial axle manufacturer has consistently proven throughout the years that its success is also on consistency, reliability and responsiveness to market needs.

Founded in 1947 by three mechanical engineering technicians, the Société Ardennaise d'Essieux (SAE) established itself as an essential player in the road transport industry in France and Europe.

Its expertise, forged in the post-war era, has enabled SAE to become a leader in the production of industrial axles, renowned for their durability, robustness and quality.

In the 1970s, the SMB company, specialising in “turnkey” mechanical and pneumatic bogies, distinguished itself among manufacturers of special trailers, dump trucks, tankers and forestry vehicles.

The complementary activities of SAE and SMB led to a strategic, symbiotic merger in 2007 of the parties.

Thus, SAE-SMB was born, creating a stronger entity better equipped to meet the challenges of the European market.

The SAE-SMB Industries' plant is located within a key industrial zone in Ham-les-Moines in the Ardennes department of France, near Charleville-Mézières - an area renowned for its rich history and scenic beauty.

In 2013, SAE-SMB joined the ADR Group, a global leader in agricultural axles, benefiting from an investment of over €8 million.

This integration marked a turning point in the history of the SAE-SMB brand, which then expanded its international reach through sales and production integration with ADR subsidiaries in India, the Middle East, China and Brazil.

Today, SAE-SMB offers a complete and proven product range of axles suitable for all trailers and semi-trailers, including stub axles, fixed axles, self-steering axles, steerable axles, drive axles, oscillating axles, and bogies.

Its extensive product range is designed to meet the most specific needs, even in challenging environmental conditions, and are known in the industry as solutions that guarantee performance, reliability and ease of maintenance.

A prime example of this is its smart design DSOKH7 axle that allows for simplified and quick maintenance, reducing downtime.

The company provides its products for a range of industry sectors, including tankers, freight transport, public works, general and specific transport, including military transportation, forestry and cable spool holders.

The company has also developed pneumatic suspension solutions in an allied-industry partnership with Dutch manufacturer VDL Weweler that has been in operation since 1924 and specialises in the development and production of air suspension systems, axle-lifts systems and parabolic springs.

A recent outcome of this partnership was

the MBS OMEGA, a modular solution and the latest revolutionary range of air suspensions that works in combination with SAE-SMB's nine tonne AIRMAX axles.

The combination has resulted in what has been described as one of the lightest combination of axles and pneumatic suspension for general purpose trailers, cutting at least 100 kilograms in trailer weight compared to traditional solutions.

This combination leads to improved stability, adaptability to varying loads, and a reduction in CO₂ emissions of up to 2 per cent per tonne transported.

SOLUTRANS 2025

SAE-SMB will have a strong presence as an exhibitor at SOLUTRANS 2025 trade show in Lyon from November 18 to 22, 2025.

While not featuring any major new product launches, SAE-SMB sees Solutrans as an opportunity for it to reaffirm its commitment to the transport industry, highlighting the reliability of its products, the strength of its partnerships, and the quality of its technical support.

This pragmatic approach reflects SAE-SMB's core values - offering proven, durable solutions that meet the real-world needs of its customers.

The company aims to reinforce its role as a trusted industrial partner, capable of meeting the demands of transport operators without succumbing to the pressure to constantly introduce new technologies.

R&D

In addition to forging lasting industry partnerships, SAE-SMB has undertaken an ambitious program of investment in research and development, resulting in innovative and high-quality products.

SAE-SMB continuously invests in research and development, with the goal of offering ever-more efficient, environmentally friendly, and easy-to-maintain solutions. Its axles meet ECE-R13 standards and are recognised in all industrialized countries.

The modularity, lightweight design, and robustness of its components allow transport operators to optimize their operating costs while improving the safety and manoeuvrability of their vehicles.

Conclusion

From its humble origins in 1947, SAE-SMB continues to embody an industrial vision based on technical expertise, adherence to its core values, and continuous adaptation to market trends. As a result, it has been a pioneer in the production of high-quality truck axles and suspensions, for loads ranging from 5.5 tonnes to 20 tonnes, combining tradition and innovation to meet the evolving needs of the transportation industry.

In renowned engineering fashion, SAE-SMB has combined its commitment to providing solution-driven results with cutting-edge research and innovations, to forge a future-resilient business that boasts a global reach and resilient, collaborative partnerships. **GT**

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