

## PRESS RELEASE - JULY 2008

### Welsh firm puts road safety first

A Mid-Wales road safety solutions provider is pioneering a new locking device that is set to put an end to wheels coming off trucks, buses and vans resulting in injury an even death across the world.

Welshpool-based VisiLok introduced the VisiLok locking wheel nut after years of rigours laboratory and road trials to ensure that the device was fully fit for purpose.

The device, which 'locks' the movement of wheel nuts on heavy goods and commercial vehicles and 'flags' the attention of the operator, is also understood to be the only global market solution currently available that can be both included in the initial customer order specification or successfully applied as a retrofit feature.



Mr Barry McGowan, Managing Director at VisiLok

Barry McGowan, Managing Director at VisiLok said:

"Each year the UK has over 11,000 wheel fixing defects and around 7 fatalities which can be attributed directly to accidents caused by wheel fixing defects and losses.

"Subsequently we set out to develop a comprehensive and safety-critical device which would not only help to prevent wheels from coming off, but could also help to save lives. With the recent introduction of the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act in April, this aspect has become even more critical."

After turning to Finance Wales and then xénos, the Wales Business Angel Network, VisiLok was able to raise a total of £300,000 funding, including £150,000 debt investment from Finance Wales and a syndicated investment of £150,000 by three business angels.

This enabled the company founders to secure a manufacturing base in Wales and finalise the original design concept and get the product ready for market.

Ron Aspinall, VisiLok Operations Director explains:

"After going through a number of development stages which included proving the basic integrity of the design concept and function, we needed to ensure that the VisiLok nut and stud was robust in all operating conditions.

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"By working with Hethel-based Lotus Engineering and Welshpool-based cold forming specialists, Floform, we could demonstrate, amongst others, that the device was fully robust and would work in all tested conditions; we could select the component material combinations carefully to prevent corrosion from jamming the mechanism while keeping the component count to a minimum and ultimately produce a cost-effective, universally applicable solution which would put an end to the wheel loss problem once and for all."

Lotus Engineering, which is highly regarded as a provider of world leading transport engineering solutions, was integral to the development of this system and ensured that the device met all its functional objectives.

Simon Wood, Technical Director at Lotus Engineering said: "We are delighted to be working with VisiLok to design and validate a solution to the potentially fatal problem of wheel detachment.

Using an existing VisiLok design, Lotus modified the locking device to enable manufacturing feasibility for the most effective solution for commercial vehicle operators. Lotus also carried out rigorous testing procedures to validate the performance of the road safety device under the most arduous operating conditions."

Manufacturing partner, Floform, also has a solid track record in the automotive and commercial vehicle markets.

Philip Lawrence, Managing Director said: "The product solution had to be applicable anywhere that a fastening is subject to rapid temperature change or vibration, provide an indication of the relaxation problem and arrest the movement as soon as it starts to occur. What's more the solution itself had to require no special tools for tightening or removal; hence the development of VisiLok as a conventional nut with no penalty to maintenance times, etc."

Karen Davies, Investment Executive at Finance Wales, said: "Visilok had developed a unique product and required the necessary funding to bring it to market. We were pleased to be able to tailor a package that met the needs of the business."

Richard Bonfield, xénos Regional Manager for Mid Wales, added: "The investment from the three xenos business angels formed a critical part to the overall funding package. In addition to the funding, the business angels were able to bring their own individual management expertise to Visilok's own experienced management."

The VisiLok device functions as a standard nut in all other respects and the device is currently being trialled by a number of organizations across the UK.

**For further information on Visilok Ltd,  
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