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Johan Alfthan awarded prestigious scholarship

The 2006 Alf de Ruvo scholarship will be awarded to researcher Johan Alfthan. In its citation, the Memorial Foundation said: "Johan Alfthan's research is an important example of the application of research within the area of solid mechanics known as the mechanics of materials." The amount of the scholarship is SEK 500,000.

Johan Alfthan's doctoral thesis at the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH) and his current research work at STFI-Packforsk are important contributions towards understanding the mechanisms that cause mechano-sorptive creep in paper and board. This knowledge can be of decisive importance, for example when assessing the useful life of corrugated board boxes subjected to loading during simultaneous changes in moisture content.

In his work Johan Alfthan has developed a micromechanical model that shows how moisture variations lead to stress redistributions in the fibre network. This in turn contributes to a dramatic acceleration of creep deformation compared with when the material is exposed to constant humidity.

Johan Alfthan has developed a formula within solid mechanics which in practice makes it possible to calculate when a corrugated board box will collapse. This can then be applied commercially in production of packaging which in turn helps to ensure that the contents, such as fruit, remain fresh for a longer period – just to give one of many examples.

The scholarship will be awarded at a ceremony on 30 January 2007 in conjunction with the Swedish Pulp and Paper Industry's Ekman Days in Aula Magna, Stockholm.

Alf de Ruvo (1938-2000) was well-known and highly respected in the forest and paper industry. He held leading positions for many years including Executive Vice President of SCA. Alf de Ruvo was also chairman of the Forest Products Industry Research College at the Royal Institute of Technology, KTH. He conducted broad research within wood-fibre based materials and contributed to the development of world-class paper engineering research. In packaging, his work included the mechanical properties of packaging and their significance at conversion and end-use.

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The Alf de Ruvo Memorial Foundation was formed from funds donated in memory of Alf de Ruvo. The purpose of the Foundation is to support forest industry education and research activities that promote technical and scientific progress within the industry.

The Board of the Foundation, deciding on the scholarship, comprises Professor Tom Lindström, KTH/STFI-Packforsk, Anders Nyberg, Senior Vice President, SCA, Ingemar Croon, consultant and researcher within the forest industry and a research council with Professor Gunilla Jönsson, Principal of the Technical University of Lund, Professor Gunnar Svedberg, CEO STFI-Packforsk, Professor Myat Htun, Mid Sweden University and Christer Söremark, consultant and researcher within the forest industry.

Scholarships have previously been awarded to Matti Ristinmaa (2001), Magnus Berggren (2002) and Magnus Norgren (2004).

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