

Gates Carbon Drive Celebrates 10 Years of Belting Bikes at Eurobike 2017

- *White belt, plus products for Bosch, Rohloff and Pinion*
- *Focusing on Europe and eBikes for future growth*

FRIEDRICHSHAFEN, GERMANY (for immediate release) – It has been ten years since Gates Corporation, the world’s leading seller of belts for automotive and industrial uses, entered the bicycle market with Gates Carbon Drive, a belt system that reduces maintenance and simplifies cycling. At Eurobike 2017, Gates will celebrate a decade of innovation in the bike industry by launching a full suite of new products and telling the story of how far its bicycle belt drive system has advanced over the past decade.

Early prototypes of Gates belt drives were first seen at Eurobike 2007 in the Nicolai booth on a hard tail mountain bike that attracted many spectators. In the decade since, Nicolai has become an important R&D partner with Gates, helping push belt drive designs, frame engineering and component integrations with its aggressive testing. At Eurobike 2008, Gates again made a splash when Fixie Inc and Gates won a Eurobike Gold award with the Five Star bicycle, a singlespeed with a Gates belt that judges called “a winning solution.”

“Ten years ago, many people were skeptical that a belt drive could work on bikes. Now we have proven it not only works but that people want it, and for one simple reason: Gates Carbon Drive belts are a clean, strong, no-rust, no-stretch, low-maintenance alternative to chains,” says Todd Sellden, Global Director of Gates Corporation’s bicycle division. “Everyone loves bicycles and wants to ride more, but in modern life there are many barriers to getting on a bike. Maintenance is one of those barriers that we eliminate.”

A decade after launching, Gates Carbon Drive belts are now on virtually every style of bicycle: high-powered electric bikes, mountain bikes, cyclocross and BMX and fixed gear track bikes, touring and trekking rigs, water bikes, cargo bikes and more. Introduced on just a couple bike models 10 years ago, Gates Carbon Drive is now used by approximately 500 bike brands worldwide. European product managers tell Gates that despite challenging economic times for the bike industry their models with Gates Carbon Drive often sell better than their bike models with chains and derailleurs in the same class.

“Our product line has expanded every year, with 15 belt lengths in our premium CDX line and six in our affordable CDN urban line, plus Carbon Drive Red and color options with blue or black fabric linings—a total of 32 belt options to meet all the most common OEM requirements,” Sellden says. “In addition we now offer sprockets in stainless steel, aluminum and reinforced composite—all engineered to interface with the leading internally geared hubs from Shimano, NuVinci, Rohloff and Sturmey-Archer, as well as with Pinion gearboxes and all of the leading electric bike systems from Bosch, Shimano STEPS, Bafang, Brose, MPF, Go SwissDrive and many more. We have worked incredibly hard over the past decade, and we are proud of the innovation we have brought to the bike industry.”

White Belts, New Products for Bosch, Rohloff and Pinion

Gates (booth A2-204) is commemorating the 10-year anniversary of Carbon Drive by announcing a special edition Carbon Drive White belt, which adds a touch of clean style to bicycles and eBikes while highlighting the grease-free, rust-free attributes of the Gates system. The white belt is available for OEM production orders with a 120-belt minimum order. “Just like our red belt, the white is an eye-catching application for OEMs that want to bring extra bling to their premium models or special edition bikes,” Sellden says.

To tell its 10-year story, Gates will distribute free copies of its 10-year photo book to all dealers who visit the Gates Carbon Drive booth. Gates will also show one of the earliest prototype belt drive bicycles using Carbon Drive. This early Nicolai used an 8mm pitch belt and first-generation sprockets. Field testing of this original belt system quickly showed that a larger belt designed specifically for the bike market was needed, leading to the creation of the 11mm pitch belt, and the subsequent development of the patented CenterTrack sprocket design. Gates Carbon Drive belts are the only belts made specifically for bicycles, and combined with CenterTrack sprockets they offer industry leading durability and can be used on the widest array of bike designs.

Success Through Partnerships

From the beginning, Gates knew that success would depend on its ability to integrate with all the leading internally geared hub (IGH) and eBike drive systems, both hub and mid-motor. For 2017, Gates continues its close partnership with Shimano, NuVinci, Bosch and others by launching new products that integrate with the world’s leading alternative drivetrain technologies. New products shown at Eurobike will include:

- CDX:SL, a new line of lightweight aluminum sprockets designed to work with the Pinion C-Line gearbox and at a lower cost than stainless rear sprockets.
- A new splined sprocket for Rohloff hubs.
- An offset sprocket for use with Rohloff E-14 electronic shifting and Bosch Gen2 motors that provides perfect beltlines.
- A new suite of products for Bosch Gen3 including spider sprocket assemblies that support standard and previous motor positions, and provide perfect beltlines for all the leading internally geared hubs including Rohloff, Shimano Alfine and Nexus, and NuVinci.

Other 10-year anniversary initiatives include a new award-winning website (www.gatescarbondrive.com) designed for easier use by product managers, and a growing team of engineers and technicians in the United States and Europe devoted to solving the needs of bicycle brands and consumers.

Focusing on Europe

“While our sales continue to grow in the United States and Asia, Europe remains the largest and most popular market for Gates Carbon Drive,” Sellden says. “We owe much of that success to our highly talented European distributor, Universal Transmissions, and its

founder, Karlheinz Nicolai. Karl was an early adopter of the Gates belt drive and his expertise and passion for innovation helped Gates commercialize the product and make it a success.”

Due to the growth of Gates Carbon Drive in Europe, Universal Transmissions (UT) has opened a new facility in Muhlhausen to house its growing number of employees and its increasingly large inventory. The new UT facility has an R&D center for product testing and new bike integrations, allowing product managers to send in frames to be modified with Gates drives.

“When I first began working with Gates I was attracted to its core principles: Integrity, accountability, initiative, collaboration, curiosity and quality,” Nicolai says. “I have found that Gates remains fully committed to these principles of high quality rather than simply chasing the bottom dollar. That is why we remain such good partners. I am immensely proud of the hard work we have done to bring innovation to the bicycle market and to prove that belt drives are and will continue to be an important part of the global bicycle revolution.”

Challenging Work, Future Reward

Winning acceptance for Gates Carbon Drive, and building out the product line and global supply chains, could be compared to climbing Alpe d’Huez. It is hard sweaty work, not for the faint of heart. “Gates and UT have invested a huge amount of work, manpower, engineering time and field and laboratory testing to get where we are today. In addition, we have had to build complex supply chain management systems, with factories in Europe, the United States and Asia,” Sellden says.

“Even with all that work over ten years, our product is still used on less than one percent of the eBike market, which we see as the greatest opportunity for our products. We have worked incredibly hard to get where we are today, but we are not even close to reaching our potential in terms of OEM spec,” adds Sellden. “We believe that in another decade Gates belts and products will be a common and visible component among leading brands on eBikes, and on urban bikes of all sorts. It is our goal to help drive innovation and make bikes and electric bikes an important transportation solution for cities around the world.”

Reinventing Gates Through Bicycles

Entering the bicycle market has allowed Gates Corporation, a 106-year-old company based in Denver, to rejuvenate its image and appeal to a new generation of consumers. Gates Corporation has made its bicycle application a large part of the company’s marketing in other automotive and industrial business segments. The reason is simple: Bikes are universally loved by all, and they touch consumers in a fun and practical way.

Engaging with bicyclists both young and old has allowed Gates Corporation to reconnect with consumers who may not know that Gates products are inside many of their favorite

products, from motorcycles and automobiles to wind turbines and vacuum cleaners and even wrist watches.

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Media Opportunities:

- To interview Todd Sellden and Karl Nicolai at Eurobike, contact paul.tolme@gates.com
- All visiting journalists will receive a Gates 10-year commemorative baseball hat and a copy of the Gates Carbon Drive photo book.

About Gates Carbon Drive

Consisting of two sprockets and a belt with carbon fiber tensile cords, Gates Carbon Drive is a no-rust, no-grease, clean, strong and simple alternative to high-maintenance chains. Gates Carbon Drive was created by Gates Corporation, a 106-year-old Denver company with facilities worldwide that is the leading supplier of belts for automotive and industrial uses. www.gatescarbondrive.com

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