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Sumitomo Rubber South Africa (SRSA), manufacturer of the popular Dunlop, Sumitomo and Falken tyre brands, has yet again been awarded the prestigious KZN Exporter of the Year Award title, for their entry in the "Large" company category.

Award winners were announced at the 2018 KZN Exporter of the Year Award Banquet held at the iNkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre in Durban on Thursday, 04 October 2018 as part of KZN Export Week.

"We are honoured to achieve this win – and be nominated as finalists in the "Africa" and "Manufacturing" categories. We have previously won in the "Large Companies" category in 2013 and 2016 and were nominated as finalists in 2014 and 2015 in the "Large Companies" and "Africa" categories," said Riaz Haffejee, CEO of Sumitomo Rubber South Africa.

"This announcement has come at a significant time for SRSA. Not only are we set to celebrate the 130-year anniversary of the Dunlop brand this month, but on Tuesday 2nd October, we officially launched our world-class Truck and Bus Radial (TBR) factory in Ladysmith," said Haffejee.

With a fast-growing retail footprint, SRSA currently exports into more than 40 countries on the African continent. The company anticipates further growth due to South Africa signing the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement which is set to be a game changer opening doors for increased intra-African trade opportunities.

The more than R2-billion investment since 2014 by parent company, Sumitomo Rubber Industries (SRI), has seen an upgrade of the existing Ladysmith factory into a state-of-the-art facility and the construction of the performance driven TBR factory.

The investment has resulted in significant increases in output in the passenger car radial and SUV tyres and will enable SRSA to meet the needs of the passenger, SUV, truck and bus tyre markets in both South Africa and on the African continent.

As part of the company's ongoing winning streak, this achievement follows SRSA's win, for the 6th year running, of the Tyre Brands Category in the 2018/2019 Target Group Index Icon Brand Award, and the clinching of two prestigious awards at the 5th Annual South

African Premier Business Awards where SRSA was lauded for its business excellence in the categories of Investor of the Year and Enterprise Development Programme of the Year.

The 2018 Exporter of the Year Awards were run by The Durban Chamber of Commerce in partnership with Trade and Investment KwaZulu-Natal, the Small Enterprise Development Agency and the **Export Credit Insurance Corporation**.

The awards event was hosted by the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry, in partnership with Transnet Port Terminals, a key enabler of exporters and the country's leading terminal operator responsible for commercial import and export operations.

The "Large" company category, in which leading automotive manufacturer Toyota, and paper and pulp magnate Sappi were also finalists, measures companies that have a turnover more than R101 million per annum.

Nominees for the "Africa" category included shoe manufacturing giant Bata, as well as Toyota South Africa and Sappi who were also amongst the finalists in the "Manufacturing" category.