

Up to the mark

Sectors such as automotive are using a greater number of complex parts, all of which need fast, accurate identification. **Julia Pierce** looks at the latest technology on offer



AS PRODUCTS become increasingly complex and require a greater number of parts during assembly, operators need to be able to identify items quickly and correctly. This is particularly true in the automotive industry, where companies are making use of the latest marking and traceability systems.

Norwegian-owned Kongsberg Automotive of Burton-on-Trent specialises in seating comfort. Manufacturing is organised using production cells, each of which may produce a family of parts. The range encompasses seat heating and pneumatic configuration systems for incorporation into the seats in upmarket and luxury cars built by a variety of predominantly European manufacturers.

To mark and identify components, the company is using a Technifor TD410 laser marking system featuring short pulses for high peak power and high beam quality, providing optimum marking precision on metal and plastic parts.

The unit is air cooled with a low maintenance fibre-coupled diode that is claimed to have a lifetime in excess of 10,000 hours. The unit features an adjustable head with 360° orientation, allowing for greater flexibility and versatility.

Solenoid valves are key components

airflow into the cells. The process relies on the seat builder to easily identify the correct component for the application.

In a totally different field, Pryor Marking Technology has this year supplied a fully-automated tag marking machine to Caterpillar, the world's leading manufacturer of earth-moving

'The larger spot size and flatter profile of our new fibre laser means more even heating and processing is possible' **Robin Bell, SPI Lasers**

of the system, which also comprises an electric pump and one or more inflatable air cells. The technology provides drivers and passengers with the means to customise their seats using inflatable bolsters, while providing massage by modulating

vehicles and specialist heavy plant.

And over the past 24 months, Pryor has supplied marking systems to Caterpillar in the UK, Belgium, Japan and the US, along with semi-automated systems to China and the US. The company is also using *continues 44* →