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March 2008

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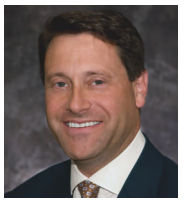

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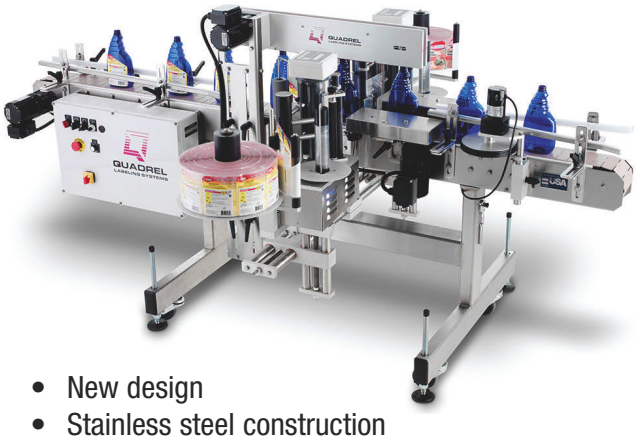

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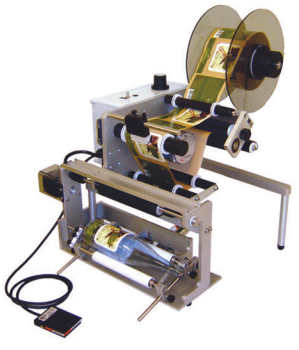

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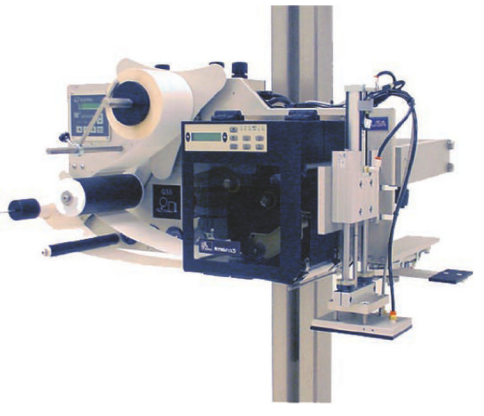

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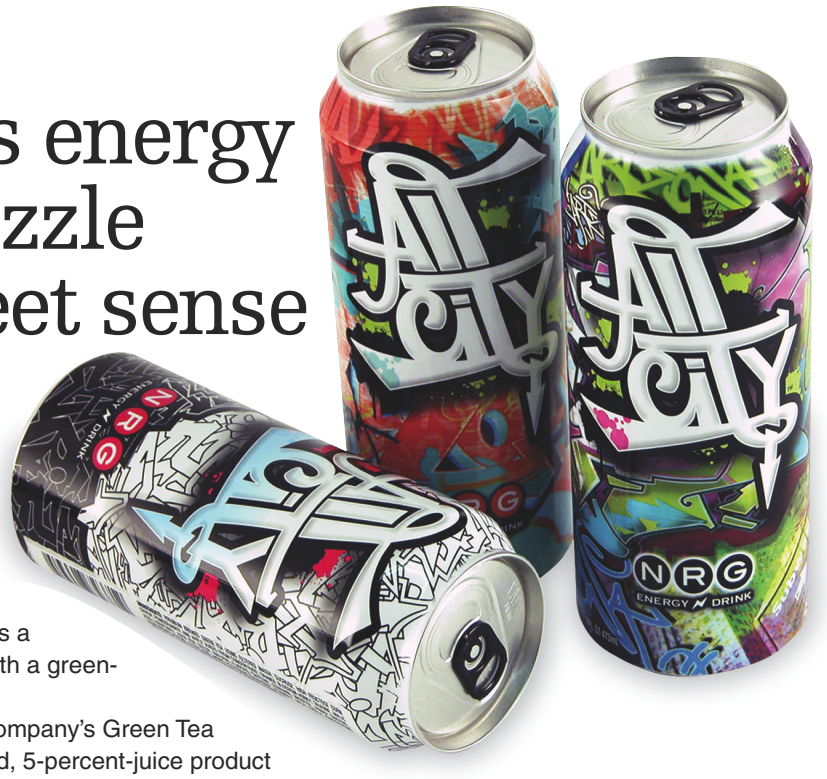
design trends

Chevon caps off auto lubricants

Chevron Intl. Pte Ltd. now tops its bottles of Caltex and Chevron brands of automotive products for Asian distribution with 40-mm screw caps from **Bericap's (www.bericap.com)** Asia business. The new angular consumer package contains automotive products including Super 4T. Chevron's contract covers regional supplies of caps to plants in China, Thailand, Singapore, Vietnam, the Philippines, India and Sri Lanka.

Based on Bericap's standard SK40/24 PV Bericap closure design with a customized knurl finish and an embossed Caltex star or Chevron logo on top, the cap design was developed by Bericap's R&D center in Germany. Converting an existing mold, Bericap began supplying the closure in February 2007. An induction heat-seal membrane is reverse-printed with the Caltex logo on a white background on PET film laminated to foil. The heat-seal membrane adds tamper-evidence and an anti-counterfeiting feature. The shell of the cap incorporates "fixing" lugs that give it a modular design. Chevron says one reason it chose Bericap was that its capping process was optimized through specification and control of bottle neck finishes. The caps also has a uniform quality, it says.

AriZona's energy drinks sizzle with street sense



AriZona Beverages hits the streets with All City NRG, a ready-to-drink green tea energy drink, in the urban test markets of New York, Chicago and Florida. While no flavor is indicated on the cans, the product, AriZona reports, is a pomegranate flavored drink with a green-tea base.

The fourth addition to the company's Green Tea Energy line, the noncarbonated, 5-percent-juice product has started moving into the national scene and comes in an impactful 16-oz can from **Rexam (www.rexam.com)** that carries the pop of three separate graffiti-inspired graphic designs created by **Mpire Creative (www.mpirecreative.com)**, New York. Dubbed the "subway series," by AriZona, the tall, slim cans also feature a black-pigmented pull-tab that complements the wild spray-paint colors of the visuals, which include city subway signs, iconic graffiti writers' lettering and a white-on-black All City logo. **Multi Color Corp. (www.multicolorcorp.com)** gravure-prints the urban graphics in nine colors on a polyvinylchloride shrink label that completely covers each can. Containing the antioxidants of pomegranate, the tea blends vitamins, minerals and herbs and contains no preservatives, artificial colors or artificial flavors. Says Wes Vultaggio, creative director for AriZona: "All City is a term used to describe New York street artists who have made their mark in all five boroughs of New York. AriZona actually originated in Brooklyn, so wanted to 'go all out' to pay tribute to the passion and creativity of these artists with a bold new energy infused beverage." The 16-oz can sells for $1.99 to $2.49.

Fluted can hits the right note for soup

When German soup manufacturer Stockmeyer AG introduced a new premium soup line in the U.K., it used fluted cans from **Crown Food Europe (www.crowncork.com),** to rise above the cacophony of canned soup products on grocery shelves.

Manufactured at Crown Food Europe's plant in Seesen, Germany, the 400-g steel can uses a lithographic decoration that focuses on the vertical fluting of its EOLE III™ easy-open end.

"We wanted a package that would evoke the premium quality of these soups to help us capture market share," says Klaus Weber, marketing manager of **Buss Fertiggerichte GmbH. & Co. KG (www.buss.de)**, filler of the Stockmeyer soups for the U.K. market.

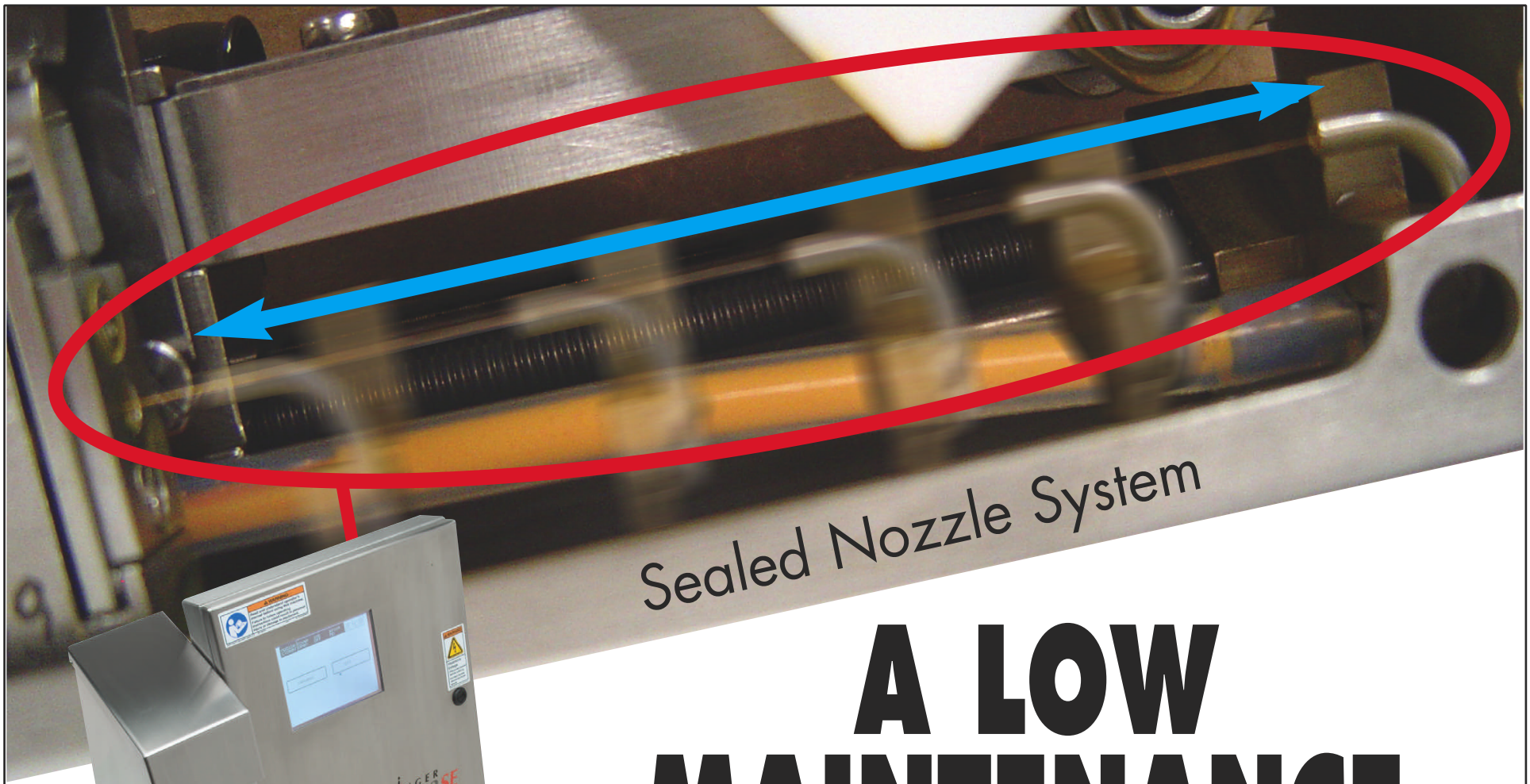
Says Weber, "Crown's unique flute-shaped can panels offer a refreshing take on the traditional straight-walled soup can. Beautifully decorated, the shaped cans differentiate the soups at the point of sale and reinforce the high value of the Stockmeyer brand." The can size is designed to be fully compatible with the company's pre-existing filling, handling and distribution operations, including full interchangeability with virtually all current continuous or static retort systems.

Dual-handled bottle offers ergonomics

The advanced engine protection offered by Shell Rotella® T motor oil with Triple Protection™ technology is now available in a new ergonomic bottle featuring two handles—one on the side and one on the top that make it easier to handle and pour. The top handle makes carrying easier, and the side handle makes pouring easier and more comfortable. The new bottle is more environmentally friendly as well. The bottle, which is made by **Graham Packaging Company, L.P. (www.grahampackaging.com),** uses less plastic and no longer includes a foil seal, making it convenient to recycle, Shell says.

"The distinctive new bottle for Shell Rotella T motor oil with Triple Protection is a great look that reflects the advanced technology of the motor oil inside," says Patty Lanning, brand manager for heavy-duty engine oils at Shell Lubricants. "We believe customers will appreciate that we've designed a bottle that is easier to use and recycle."

Shell Lubricants also has launched a three-in-one case that contains three 1-gal bottles for easier pickup and handling. The new case also makes storage easier for owner/operator truckers and the growing number of diesel pickup-truck owners.



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design trends

Heat-shrinkable sleeve debuts for VO5

Alberto Culver USA has introduced its VO5 Extreme Style hairspray in a spray bottle with a polyethylene terephthalate glycol (PETG) heat-shrinkable sleeve from **Ameri-Seal, Inc. (www.ameri-seal.com).** The product is a styling/conditioning spray that is available in retail grocery, drug and chain stores across the country. Ameri-Seal printed the metallic shrink sleeve in five colors on rotogravure presses. A PETG heat shrinkable film was used for this application because the bottle narrows toward the top, and PETG has a higher shrink value, making this type of film effective for the Alberto-Culver application than other films. The sleeves are applied to the bottles at Ameri-Seal's Contract Sleeving Division in Chatsworth, CA. Ameri-Seal converts PVC, PETG and oriented polystyrene films at its factory in Chatsworth.

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Diesel doesn't always mean motor fuel

In this case, we're talking about Italian fashion house Diesel's introduction of new Fuel For Life fragrance for men and women in stylish glass flacons from **Gerresheimer (www.gerresheimer.com)**. Despite a high level of coordination, two completely individual, gender-specific perfume personalities are revealed by the Diesel design: "In a young, very playful and creative way they communicate strong messages for

the brand—reflecting the sensuality of its fashion, its love of detail and the casual individuality of its female and male wearers," says Burkhard Lingenberg, director of marketing and communication for the Gerresheimer Group. The unusual, ornamental oval bottle comes wrapped in a rustic, faux-leather, vintage bag for the mens' cologne and an open-mesh, woven lace encapsulates the women's cologne container.

For both bottles, sloping shoulders fall from the neck to a narrow base to create an old-world sensibility.

The striking visual and textural features created by Diesel also include an embossing treatment on the front of the 50- or 75-mL bottles that admonishes, "Use with Caution." Completing the elegant presentation are metal caps, particularly one in shiny gold for the women's fragrance bottle that features the Diesel logotype debossed on top.

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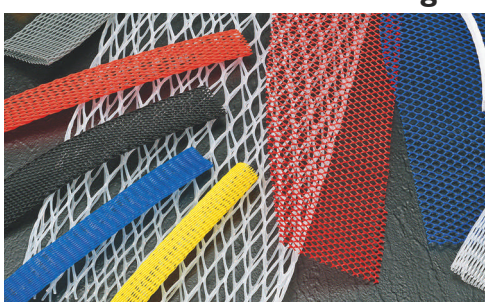

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design trends beverages

XX marks the spot on Dos Equis' aluminum bottle

Cervecería Cuauhtémoc Moctezuma, part of the Fomento Económico Mexicano, S.A.B. de C.V., the leading beverage company in Latin America, is making history. Dos Equis XX Lager has launched its signature brand in a new aluminum bottle produced by **CCL Container (www.cclcontainer.com)**, becoming the first Mexican-manufactured beer to offer its beverage in this package. "The new 12 oz aluminum bottle is an innovative and trendy design in the Mexican beer industry that will increase the brand value of Dos Equis," says José Manuel Juárez, XX Lager brand manager. "It will reinforce the position of Dos Equis in the super-premium market as an original and unique beer that projects status."

"Dos Equis wanted an interesting alternative to the glass bottle that would propel it even further in the Mexican market," says Juan Carlos Bernal, manager at CCL Container. "The aluminum bottle provides an element of elegance to the brand." The company also selected the aluminum bottle for benefits that extend beyond just piquing consumer interest. Aluminum bottles are unbreakable and resealable, they cool faster and are 100-percent recyclable. Also appealing to Dos Equis was the fact that CCL's aluminum bottles can be decorated around their entire circumference, combining color and design to create an entirely unique way to make its mark with XX Lager.

"Since our founding in 1884, Dos Equis has always excelled at bridging tradition with the modern world. In fact, the first XX lager, 'Siglo XX,' was created by founding father Wilhelm Hasse, to usher in the 20th century," says Juarez. "Since then, we've been on the forefront of new innovations in beer distribution. The aluminum bottle is the next phase in our evolution."

Bernal says that Dos Equis worked together with CCL Container to create a constructive synergy that produced a modern, sleek and functional package that will surely attract attention in the targeted beer market. He adds that though the company's packaging will change through the years, what the Dos Equis signature XX design represents will remain the same. "The two symbols on the bottle of both XX Lager and XX Amber—the XX, which literally represents the Dos Equis name, and the face of Moctezuma, the 16th century Aztec ruler who was conquered by Hernan Cortez—will continue to work together to represent both Dos Equis history and its propensity for leading the way in change," relates Agla Gabilondo, a Dos Equis manager of new product development.

Overlid keeps cans of sparkling water clean

It was Leonardo da Vinci who first made the town of Sanpellegrino famous, but it's the delicious, thirst-quenching properties of the area's natural mineral water that made the San Pellegrino name famous worldwide. Sanpelligrino Aranciata, a variant sparkling orange beverage of the natural mineral water by the same brand, which has 12-percent fruit juice, is imported from Italy by Nestle Waters North America complete with pulp. Available in 11.15-oz cans, the carbonated orange flavored beverage is topped by a separate foil overlid. Everyone knows that the tops of aluminum beverage cans aren't always the most sanitary; so that's why Nestle Waters Italy covers the cans with the deftly printed foil overlid, which acts as a dust cover and makes the cans look as premium as possible. Securing each can without lifting, the precut, 68-mm embossed foil seal called Eco cap has an easy-removal pull-tab.

The Eco cap lidding is flexo-printed in the same orange, blue, green and black color scheme as the labels on the can body. A lacquer coating adds gloss and protects the ink. The cans are tray-packed and film-wrapped for distribution. The covered-can introduction generated a 30-percent sales increases in Europe, according to Nestle Waters' Italian Business Unit.

As of presstime, Nestle Waters wasn't able to relate supplier details on the Sanpellagrino Eco cap lidding, but does say the lidding has become quite a hit. Notes Joe Juliano of Nestle Waters North America, "Market research shows that the Eco cap lid is receiving a very positive consumer perception and that it conveys a premium image and prevents the can from becoming dirty (therefore allowing you to put your mouth on a 'preserved,' more hygienic surface). In Italy, Sanpellegrino was the first company to launch the Eco cap, and now, competitors are starting to imitate it. We also have very positive feedback from Australian consumers, too because of the hygienic aspects of the lidding."

new products equipment

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comment

John Kalkowski, Editorial Director

Impact of Wal-Mart scorecard creates concerns

There is always risk when you're an innovator. That's why many persons experienced both excitement and trepidation when Wal-Mart officially implemented its packaging scorecard on Feb. 1. The company is using the scorecard to help achieve its sustainability goals of reducing waste, using renewable energy and selling sustainable products.

The scorecard requires suppliers to enter data into a program that allows Wal-Mart buyers to compare each supplier's sustainability credentials. It has become a key tool for the retailer's buyers to use when they make purchasing decisions.

As of the start date, Wal-Mart estimates that so far, nearly 6,400 of its vendors have submitted data on more than 97,000 products. In becoming the first major U.S. retailer to initiate such a sweeping sustainability program, Wal-Mart deserves praise. However, in the early weeks of its implementation, a lot of concern is being expressed.

Some say Wal-Mart's primary goal is to reduce its own supply-chain costs. Others claim the scorecard will drive up suppliers' costs as they redesign packaging and logistics. One estimate put Procter & Gamble's cost of complying at $200 million. By Wal-Mart's own estimates, about 20 percent of its suppliers have not yet submitted scorecard data. Most who haven't complied are smaller vendors.

The scorecard includes several key metrics: greenhouse gas emissions; product-to-package ratio; space utilization; the amount of renewable energy used in package production; and emissions related to the distance the packaging materials are transported.

One industry consultant expressed concern that some of the metrics on which the scorecard is based are not finalized, yet buyers are making decisions based on the scorecard results. He pointed out that some materials definitions are still listed as "draft" on a website for suppliers. He also said use of renewable energy was supposed to be extra credit, yet it's being given a 10-percent weight in each supplier's score, which could exclude them from purchases.

Despite a yearlong testing stage before the Feb. 1 launch, Wal-Mart admits that it will need to continue refining the metrics.

Perhaps the biggest concern about the whole process is the fact that no matter what Wal-Mart does, this sustainability program will become a de facto standard for the industry—the global muscle of this retail giant commands that much attention.

So, it is important that Wal-Mart gets it right. That's the responsibility of being a leader.

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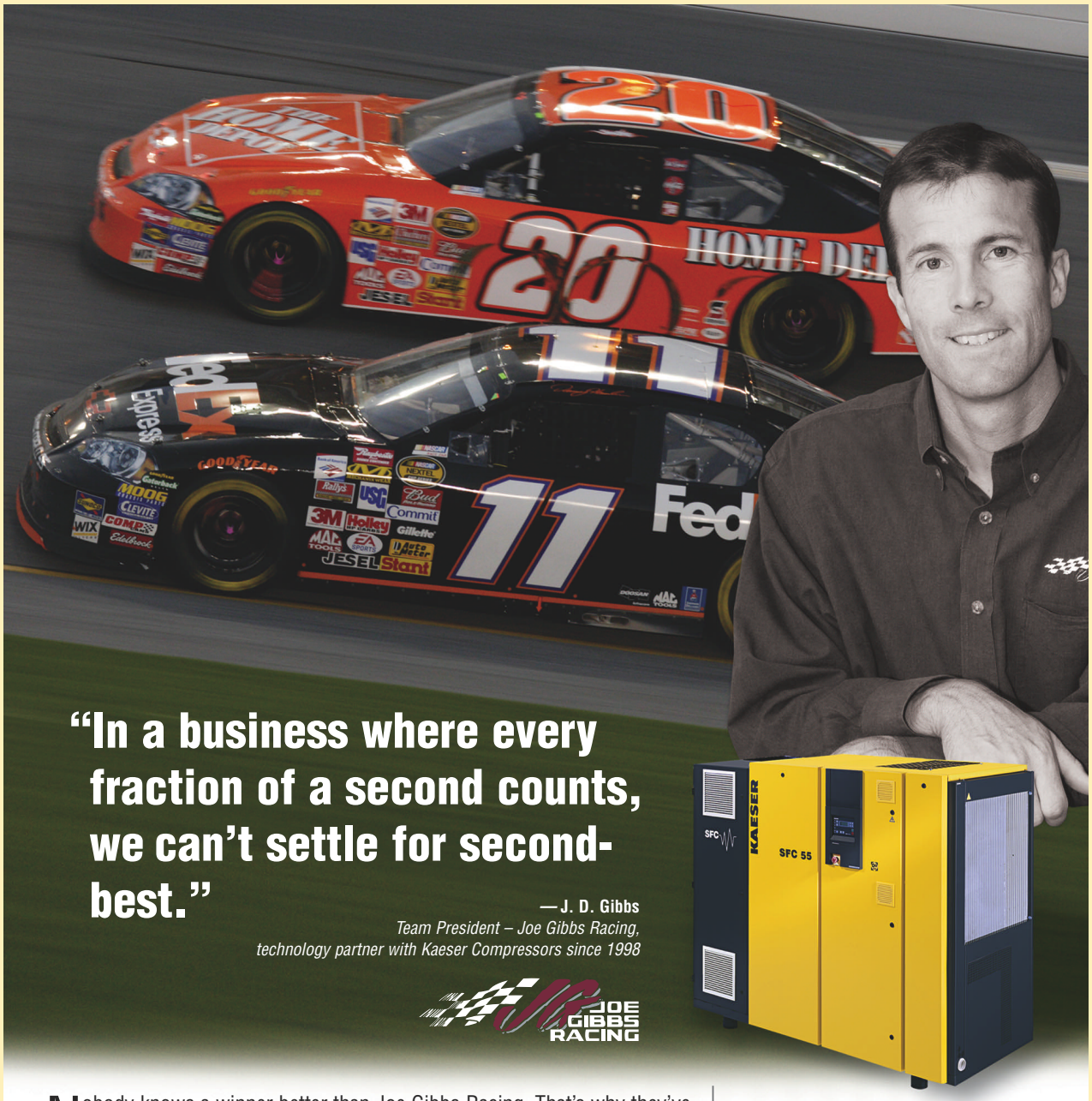

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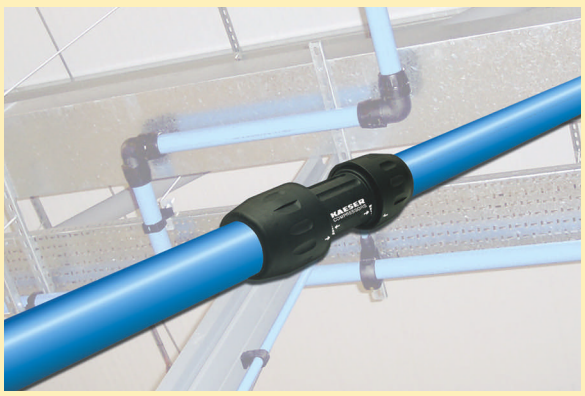

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Cermex, Inc., 678/221-3570
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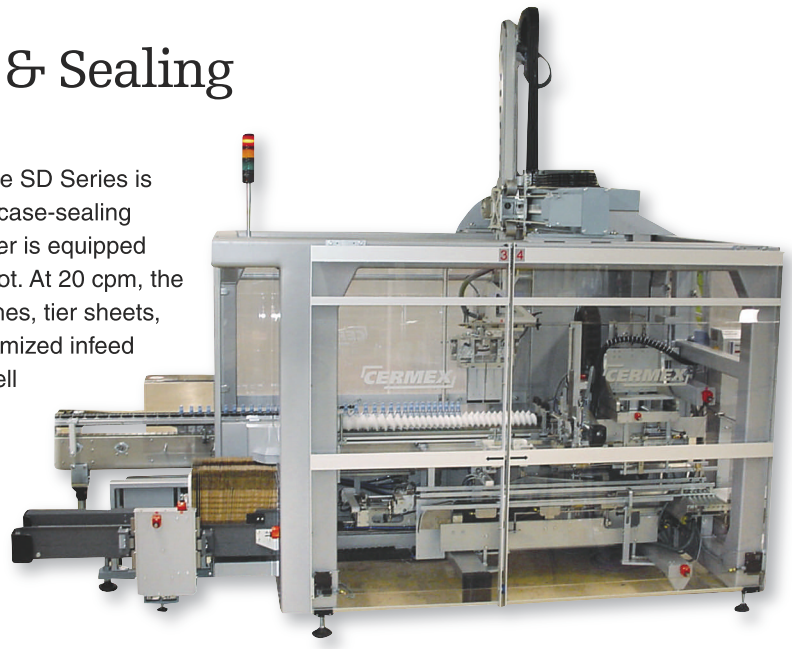
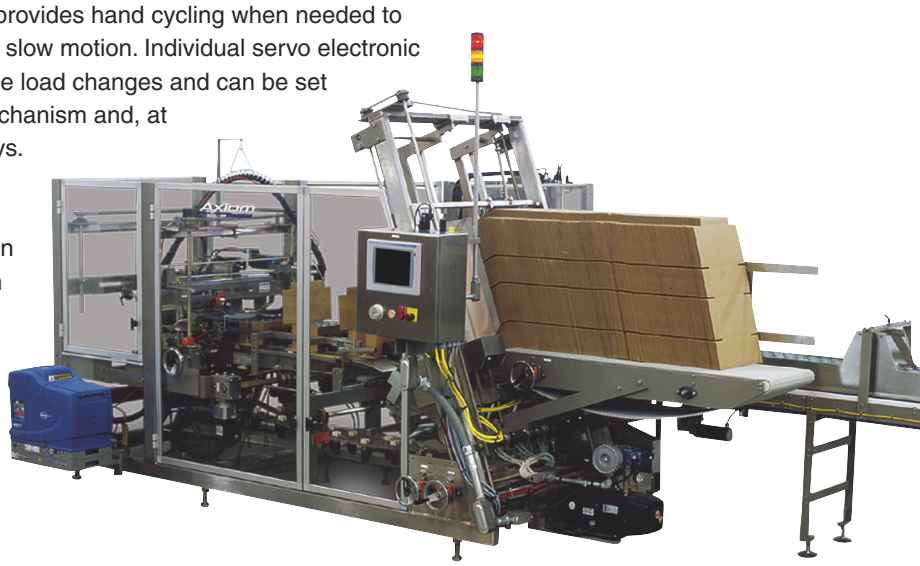


Small format blister machinery The KBS-GS small-format, blister-packaging machine is designed to handle rapid-paced, fast changeover demands for moderate production needs. The product is ideal for package development, startup volumes and small-batch production facilities, the co. says. The blister-packaging machine supports a maximum forming and sealing format of 250×150 mm in the index direction and operates at a rate of up to 15 cycles/min. The servo-controlled drive maintains precise control of machine movements and station positioning while an IPC machine control allows process parameters to be set and stored through the touchscreen operator interface.
Koch Packaging, 973/541-7312.
www.kochpackaging.com

Case/tray packers The Axiom® IM Series case/tray packers feature next-generation electronic motion control technology. The product features an open design for convenience when cleaning and accessing machine components. New product sizes are easily added through the HMI and an electronic handwheel provides hand cycling when needed to view the entire machine function in slow motion. Individual servo electronic overloads are easily adjusted as the load changes and can be set sensitive enough to protect the mechanism and, at times, even the product, the co. says. The product features changeovers that are completed in minutes with minimal change parts and operation speeds up to 45 cases or trays/min (application dependent).
Douglas Machine, Inc.,
320/763-6587.
www.douglas-machine.com

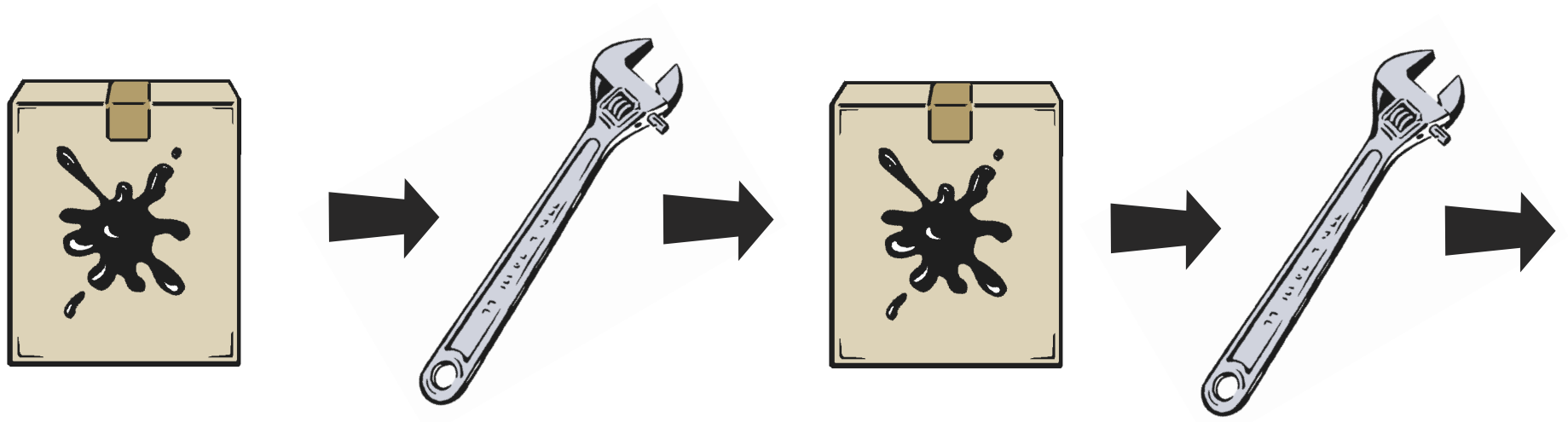


new products equipment

Communication modules The co. releases PROFIBUS-DP communication modules as the fourth communication option for the SMVector drive. The streamlined pop-in modules can be factory-installed or simply inserted into an already existing SMVector. As a result, the SMVector becomes compatible in many machine environments, and users can maintain their own communication preferences, the co. states.
Lenze-AC Tech, 508/278-9100.
www.lenze-actech.com

Thermal-transfer printer The S-107 HS high-speed thermal-transfer printer features two printheads, one mounted at the edge of the web and the other in the middle. The printer can operate at speeds up to 500-mm/sec and offers a cost-effective alternative to using preprinted labels for generating variable information such as lot numbers, date codes and scannable bar codes. The printer incorporates a new preheat mechanism that releases ink and transfers imagery to the package or product at high speeds.
Greydon, Inc., 717/848-3875.
www.greydon.com

Horizontal motion conveyor The co. releases the FastBack 260E horizontal-motion conveyor, with no operator adjustments, flexure or variable speed tuning required. The full washdown drive handles conveyor pans up to 35-ft long and can be used with different pan sizes and configurations for economical changes in equipment layouts. The conveyor resists pan cracks, requires no frequent adjustment and features a quiet, 70-dB operation, the co. says. The motion conveyors are also available for fresh-cut and frozen vegetables and fruit.
Heat and Control, Inc., 510/259-0500.
www.heatandcontrol.com



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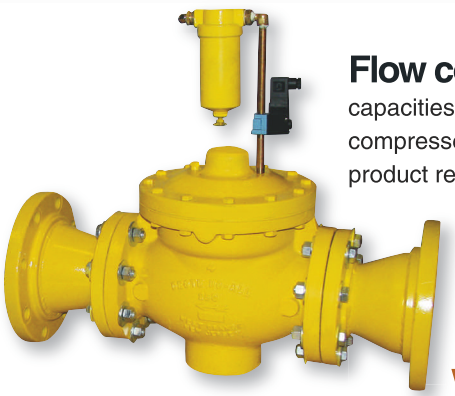

Flow controller The co. announces the Kaeser Flow Controller, which is available for system capacities from 250 to 6,200 scfm. The flow controller creates more effective storage by accumulating compressed air in the receivers and only delivering air that is needed for production, the co. states. The product responds to fluctuating demand and actively maintains constant system pressure downstream. More stable air pressure helps eliminate artificial demand and substantially reduces air losses through leaks. The controller stores compressed air to be used to satisfy air demand spikes without a pressure drop at the point of use and is easy to install in new or existing systems without reconfiguring existing piping.

Kaeser Compressors, Inc., 800/777-7873.
www.kaeser.com

Photoelectric sensors Series 31 Opti-Vue photoelectric sensors have a compact 35×62-mm footprint. These small sensors offer a built-in SPDT relay with AC/DC models and 4-in-1™ output with DC models. The relay eliminates the need for a separately mounted and wired relay, and the 4-in-1 technology allows a single sensor to operate with four different output configurations, automatically selected by the sensor based on the connected load. The sensors also feature visible front-status LEDs, ambient light immunity and an IP67-rated housing. The sensors can be used for closing edge monitoring of gates and industrial doors, object detection, assembly and packaging, material handling and general automation.

Pepperl+Fuchs, 330/486-0001.
www.am.pepperl-fuchs.com

Pouchmaker The installation of the new Mamata Vega 610 at the co.'s Cary, IL, facility aims to increase the range of pouches from 3-side-seal flat styles to unlimited sizes that do not without requiring new tooling for the machine. The pouchmaker also produces Doyen-style, stand-up pouches with plowed-in bottoms as well as zippers and tear notches. The new pouchmaker is all-servo driven, with a speed range of 1,500- to 5,000- cycles/hr, depending on the pouch type and configuration. It will handle a maximum web width of 1,220-mm, and a sealing width of 8-mm.

Ampac Flexibles, 513/671-1777.
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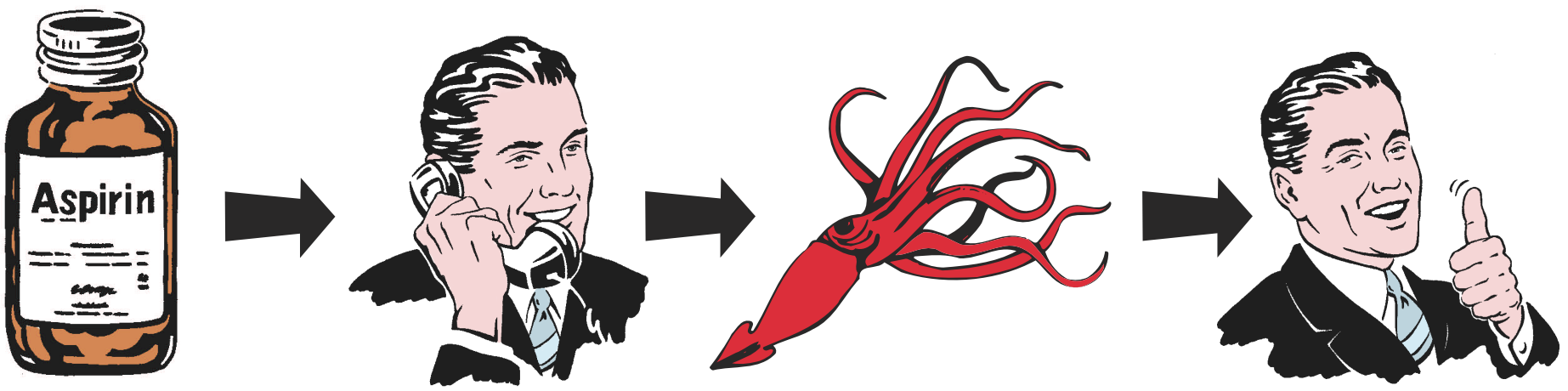

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CMS, 866/769-1500.
www.cmsflavorseal.com

Shrink films Form-Tite™ films are said to be engineered for optimum performance on high-speed Multivac FormShrink machines, reportedly maximizing the equipment's potential to triple productivity and lower total costs, compared with rotary chamber shrink systems. The co. cites the printable films' substantial gloss and clarity as well as high shrink characteristics, while offering patented EZ Peel® opening technology.
Curwood, 800/544-4672.
www.curwood.com

Polyester lidding films LumiLid® makes its bow as a line of heat-sealable, solvent-free polyester lidding films that are environment-friendly and FDA-compliant. The co. says the films for frozen and refrigerated food applications are made using its proprietary extrusion coating technology, eliminating potentially dangerous VOCs, and can be used for microwaveable and dual-ovenable applications. They seal cleanly and securely and resist shredding, according to the co.
Toray Plastics (America) Inc., 732/229-4131.
www.TorayFilms.com

Reflective films FMG (field marking grade) glass bead-coated reflective cast vinyl film and PG (promotional grade) glass bead-coated reflective polyester film join the co.'s REFLECTamark® Series. The former is said to offer 7-year outdoor durability; the latter 2-year. Both are 4½-mil thick and are coated with a high-performance permanent p-s acrylic adhesive, backed with either 50# kraft roll liner or 90# layflat sheet liner. The co. says the adhesive bonds well to ABS, low surface-energy plastics, aluminum and stainless steel, with films cited for bar-code scanning, emblems, promotional labels and other uses.
FLEXcon Co., 508/885-8300.
www.FLEXcon.com

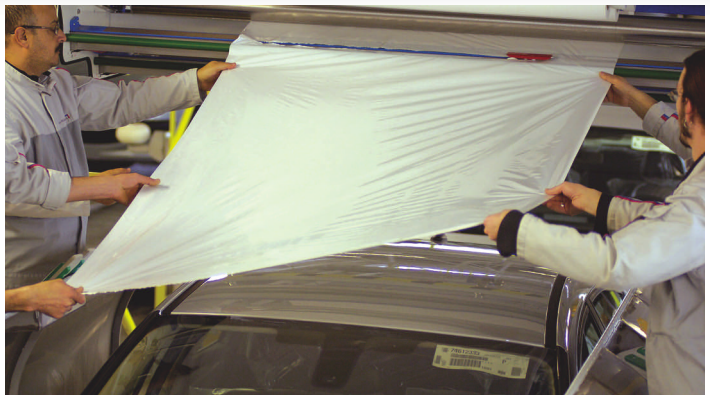
Thermoplastic elastomer A phthalate-free thermoplastic elastomer is introduced as Versaflex™ CL E95, part of the co.'s TPE line. Said to address recent regulations limiting phthalate-based plasticizers as well as market demands for low extractable TPEs, the plasticizer-free elastomer offers clarity while being suited for a variety of extruded tubing and films, blow-molded bags and other containers.The elastomer is also autoclavable and gamma-radiation stable, the co. notes.
GLS Corp., 815/385-8500.
www.glscorporation.com

PET wine bottle With the cylindrical silhouette, pronounced shoulder and concave bottom of the traditional Bordeaux bottle, made of PET, is introduced. Closed with an aluminum closure having a finish like those used for threaded caps, the new 50-g bottle grows out of the co.'s collaboration with Constar Intl., aimed at using a monOxbar® monolayer material for adequate shelf life and organoleptic features. The co. says the PET bottle can run on ordinary bottling lines, and ensures resistance to axial load during bottling.

PET Eng., 39 (43) 840-3069.
www.petengineering.com
Constar Intl., 215/552-3700.
www.constar.net

Freeze-tolerant resin
What's called the first-ever freeze-tolerant resin, CP-INJ-13, reportedly retains rigidity in freezing temperatures, so is suitable for frozen food applications including ice cream containers. The PLA-based resin provides structural integrity to –35-deg C, the co. says, with tensile elongation about 10 times greater.
Cereplast, Inc., 310/676-5000.
www.cereplast.com

Protective film Said to be designed on the basis of polyolefins, NOVAGUARD® 9377 is introduced as an opaque white surface protection film to guard parts against external aggression, including acid rain and marks during assembly, transport and storage. The 2.4-mil film, with a rated 9-month exterior weather resistance, reportedly is made with solvent-free adhesive and, if unsoiled after use, can be incinerated or recycled, the co. claims.
Novacel, 33 (0)2 32 82 72 33.
www.novacel.fr



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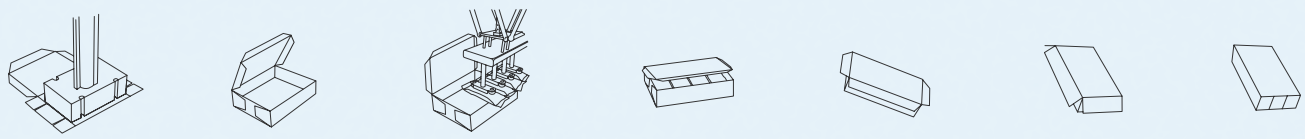

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NatureWorks LLC, 952/742-0571.**www.natureworksllc.com**

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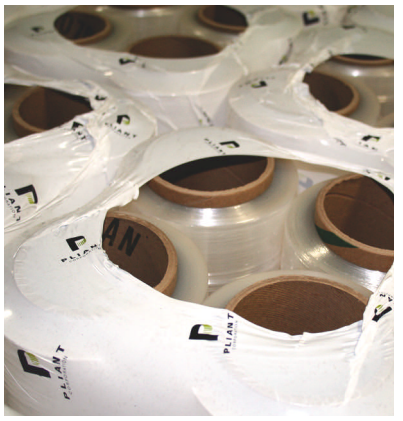


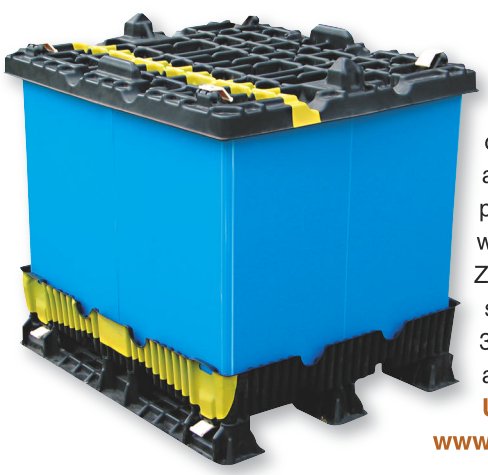
Machine films Stratos™ soars to the top as a family of what the co. calls ultra-high-yield machine films for automated pallet-wrapping applications. The co. says its latest stretch film innovation provides significantly lower costs per pallet, and can be used in many high-speed and high-volume applications, improving on a benchmark set by its own Revolution® films. Offerings include 42- and 45-ga films with load containment properties of much thicker films on the market, and material reduction ranging from 15 to 50 percent, depending on current film usage, the co. adds.
Pliant Corp., 888/475-4268.
www.pliantcorp.com

Eco-friendly sheet

EcoStar™ HS 1000 is offered as a PET-based eco-friendly material, reportedly comparable in cost to PVC but with better clarity, that can be sealed with existing machinery and tooling using a broad variety of substrates. The co. says that the material's sealing efficiency offers energy savings of eight to 10 percent by reducing the duty cycle on RF machines, is easier to weld, with 100-percent fiber tear on blister-to-card seal and better plastic to plastic welding.

Placon Corp., 800/541-1535.
www.placon.com

PET lidding Rocklid GP PET debuts as a peelable, dual-ovenable lidding for foil containers. The co. says the lidding allows the end user to keep the film on a foil tray during cooking in a conventional oven. The film, the co. adds, acts as a slow-release steamer film and self-vents in the oven, with cooked product retaining a higher amount of moisture and color, since no piercing of the lidding is necessary. It reportedly conforms to FDA regulations and EC directives.
Rockwell Solutions, 44 (0) 1382-622122.
www.rockwellsolutions.com



Self-contained pallet box New Step-Pak™ is designed as a self-contained pallet/sleeve/lid combination with an aim of reducing loss and damage as well as human wear and tear. Foot latches on the pallet deck handle locking/unlocking are made of ABS, while the pallet base and lid are 2.5-mil HDPE. The Z-shaped plastic corrugated sleeve folds down. The standard 1,00031,200-mm footprint calculates to a 35-in. sleeve height, 42-in. total assembled height and about 12 ½-in KD.
Universal Package Systems, 866/875-9918
www.universalpackage.com

Food containers Reportedly lined with a corn-based plastic barrier, ecotainer™ food containers are available in 8- and 16-oz sizes. The use of this kind of liner rather than a petroleum-based moisture barrier means, the co. asserts, that ecotainer products are made from fully renewable materials and are commercially compostable.
International Paper, 800/223-1268.
www.ecotainerpackaging.com

APET sheet Setting its sights on the grocery and food packaging industries, the co. says it is investing in APET sheet production capacity of 300,000 tons, targeted to support brands and grocers seeking to boost their sales. The co. says this capacity will increase in June when a new PET resin and APET sheet complex will be completed in Oman, noting its products are sold to thermoformers who supply the global grocery and food-packaging industries.
Octal, 972/985-4370.
www.octalglobal.com

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Fascination with flexibles

The 2008 **FLEXIBLE PACKAGING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD WINNERS** focus on looks, convenience features, high performance, cost, advanced materials and print technologies.

1.

Lauren R. Hartman, Senior Editor

If the winners of the **Flexible Packaging Assn.'s (www.flexpack.org)** 2008 Packaging Achievement Awards competition are any indication, flexible packaging continues to flourish, as the FPA's 52nd packaging competition underscores plenty of innovation taking place in the flexible packaging market. Judged on outstanding converting and packaging in four categories: packaging excellence; technical innovation; environmental achievement; and printing achievement, the winners feature new combinations of materials, inventive structural designs and applications that have amplified the use of flexible packaging within the retail, institutional, and industrial markets.

Announced on March 5 in Orlando, FL, the competition generated 75 entries and 99 competition category entries this year, with 26 receiving a total of 29 Achievement Awards.

The winners make the most of looks, ease of use, functionality and sustainability – a key buzzword of the new millennium, which is prevalent here, with winning packages that use less fossil fuel, produce less CO_2 emissions and represent a reduction in solid waste. Environmental achievements are seen in many winning flex-packs, such as a pouch that replaces rigid packaging for carpet cleaner tablets and a compact, retortable package for ready-to-heat sauces.

Technological improvements to a vegetable steaming package result in a microwaveable cook-in bag with improved venting systems. Printing achieves bright colors, superior registration and large billboard display space for an easy-open/resealable bag containing frozen chicken, and resealable features are welcome attributes for bags of gourmet cat food.

The top winners include nine gold awards and two Highest Achievement winners in two categories, as well as two gold winners in the Environmental and Sustainability Achievement category. All are described here. The entire article, which also details the silver award winners, can be found on our website at www.packagingdigest.com/silver08.

Top achievements

A curvy pouch that conveys what's inside and how it's used, the Royco Sauce Pouch **(1),** submitted by **CLP Packaging Solutions, Inc. (www.clppackaging solutions.com),** took the Highest Achievement Award in the Packaging Excellence category. A microwaveable package with a secure-grip, "no-heat" handle that performs well in a retort chamber, on the shelf and in the kitchen, the shapely pouch holds 200 mL of Royco heat-and-serve sauces and gravies, a new product entry from Masterfoods South Africa Ltd., Cape Town, South Africa. The heat-and-pour sauce pouch is Masterfoods' first departure from dry-food packaging and protects the contents with outstanding barrier properties.

The nonfoil, four-ply adhesive-laminated construction allows the stand-up pouch to remain stable during heating while its heat-free handle avoids the discomfort that often accompanies grasping a hot pouch from the microwave oven.

The pouchstock comprises polyethylene terepthlatate, a high-barrier PET layer, a biaxially oriented nylon layer that adds puncture-resistance, elasticity and thermomechanical performance and a layer of white polypropylene, which creates a rich backdrop for the reverse-printed graphics on the PET top layer without requiring a thick layer of white ink on-press. This saves money and makes printing and drying more efficient, says CLP Packaging Solutions president of U.S. operations, Ehud Safrai. The package uses adhesives and nylon from Italy's **CFP Flexible Packaging S.p.A. (www.www.cfp-flex.it/),** adhesives from **Rohm & Haas (www.rohmhaas.com),** PET from **Kolon Industries (www.ikolon.com),** a PET Alumina Barrialox barrier PET layer (that allows the pouch to be retorted without the need for a foil layer, which also makes it microwavable) from **Toray Intl. (www.toray.co.jp),** polypropylene from Israel's **Polyon Industries Ltd. (www.polyon.co.il/),** and inks from **Siegwerk Druckfarben AG (www.siegwerk.de).** It is said to offer a cost-effective alternative to its rigid counterparts.

CLP designed the value-added structure with a large contoured handle area for a comfortable grip. The handle is sealed so that hot sauce can't come in contact with fingers during transport and pouring. The gravy-pitcher shape of the package makes use very intuitive, enhances eye appeal and facilitates pouring while the handle makes it easier to pick up the heated pouch. The shape communicates an important brand message and easy cues to the package's functionality. A hole die-cut into the handle allows consumers to get a good grip, and allows retailers to display the sauces on a rack.

Produced in Israel by parent company, CLP Industries Ltd., the pouch is 139 microns (5.4 mils) thick overall. CLP Industries gravure-prints the pouch material on a **Cerutti (www.cerutti.it)** press, which makes strong use of bold fields of color, elegant color grades and lifelike, halftone graphics. The pouchstock is laminated on a system from **Valmet Rotomec (www.valmet.com).**

Lightweight and easy to store, the pouch eliminates the need for washing and drying gravy boats and saves more energy in transport, than comparably sized rigid containers, according to CLP Packaging. It's shipped to the packager as a preformed pouch, so it can be filled and sealed quickly and reliably. "The pouch represents the

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best attributes of flexible packaging—reliability, performance, convenience and outstanding consumer appeal," sums up Safrai.

Souped-up membrane

The second Highest Achievement award winner—this one in the Technical Innovation category, is the Ultra Peel retortable membrane end, entered by **Watson Standard Adhesives (401/225-5260)** for Campbell Soup Co.'s Soup at Hand containers **(2).** Adopted for Tomato and Creamy Chicken varieties, the entry is also a gold winner in Technical Innovation. The membrane end is said to be the first retortable, peelable membrane end in the U.S. market and represents significant advancements over existing retortable end technology in an economical, easy-to-use, safe-to-open format. Equipped with a handy pull-tab, the proprietary reverse-printed membrane structure comprises a three-layer adhesive laminate of polyester/foil/polypropylene with superior opening initiation and an even draw, as well as a controlled peel, according to Watson Standard.

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Able to withstand saturated steam retorting at temperatures of at least 250 deg F for 1 hr, the flexible membrane is peeled away by the consumer and is considered safer and more easily disposable than a sharp-edged alternative, says Bill Allen, manager of market development at Watson Standard. "The lacquered rings sealing to the peelable membrane make up the end. When the consumer peels the membrane away from the ring, they have a flexible piece of laminated film and foil with no sharp edges."

The Ultra Peel ends for retort packaging represent a market expansion possibility for flexible/rigid package hybrid designs, notes Allen. The lidding is made of a film laminate while many other can membrane lids are made of heavy-gauge aluminum, often coated with an extruded polymer, he explains.

"The alternate membranes are usually less flexible and have a more aggressive peel," he adds. The Ultra Peel membrane has a more even and consistent peel than a rigid aluminum EZO end and has no sharp edges once the container is open." A distinction between Ultra Peel and flexible film membranes often used outside of the U.S. is that they are primarily made of aluminum and use polymer-coated rings, not lacquered rings, he says.

Eliminating sharp edges is accomplished with a retortable heat-sealable polypropylene dispersion in a solvent-based lacquer used on the Ultra Peel ring that allows for a controlled peel between the ring and the film laminate membrane. The lidding's patented construction is designed to withstand the demands of the retort environment while offering superior shear-resistance during the retort process. While attached to the rigid can, it won't flex or impart severe stresses on the flexible laminate, according to Watson Standard. The laminate structure also has strength, a superior initiation and an even draw for opening easily spillable liquid containers, and it's puncture-resistant and printable. Lacquers on the ring stock provide for heat sealing and protection of the retort curl.

The Ultra peel membrane etook more than two years to develop. Allen says that the end is assembled in Canton, OH, at **Sonoco's (www.sonoco.com)** Sonoco-Phoenix Packaging plant and is reverse-printed by flexography on the polyester layer in a single color with heating instructions and Campbell's logo. Allen adds that while Ultra Peel is currently commercialized for use as the lidding material for Campbell's, several other soup and food producer/marketers are expected to use it for applications requiring peelable lidding. Originally in a test rollout in 2007, the Soup at Hand containers featuring the new lid will expand distribution in 2008, notes Allen. PD hears that Campbell's will implement a more extensive conversion to the new end for production in 2008.

Gold awards

For tea with no strings or loose leaves floating in your cup, the Sugart iTea Wand, marketed and distributed by Sugart Group USA, Manchester, NH **(3),** in conjunction with Bistrotea, is a new "designer" product that offers a unique way to brew tea. Functioning as a tea infuser, the wand-like stick-pack has a built-in, mechanical filter system that restricts the bitter components within a tea "pod," while releasing a perfectly brewed tea serving.

Launched in mid-2007, the teas are available across North America. Just drop the pod, or stick-pack, into hot water. Perforated all over for optimum brewing performance, the iTea Wand is a fresh design for the modern, on-the-go tea consumer, according to Sugart Group. It eliminates the need for a teaspoon and minimizes dripping. Natural tea is usually contained in a filter bag where water can interact with the leaves to brew. But the tube-shaped stick-pack, developed over the course of six years, provides excellent performance and is convenient for on-the-go consumers.

Continued on page 26

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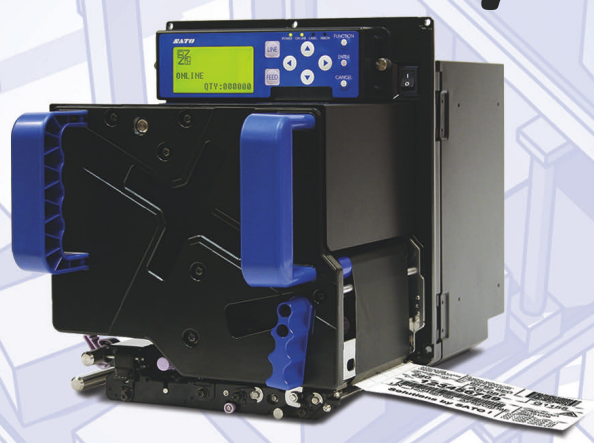

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Converted by **Alcan Packaging (www.alcanpackaging.com),** the package won a gold award for Packaging Excellence. Comprising an integrated mechanical filter system the stick-pack shows no interaction during the release of the tea liquor with the flavor, resulting in a richly flavored tea beverage. Each slender "stick" contains a single serving of Premium Single Estate Ceylon Earl Grey, Bistro Ceylon Green Tea or Single Estate Ceylon Black Tea and contains 1.5 g of loose tea leaves.

Made by Alcan in Germany, which developed the film for the package in conjunction with Germany's **Bistrozucker (www.bistrozucker.de.**)The stick-pack film is a proprietary multilayer adhesive laminate of PP and foil, incorporating thousands of microperforations. Alcan Food Americas is facilitating the material's commercialization in North America. It can be filled on equipment from **Bosch Sigpack Systems AG (www. pa.bosch.com/sigpacksystems/eng/index.asp),** according to Alcan.

Printing of the color-coded flavor description on one end of each stick is performed on conventional equipment, Alcan says. The metallized look promotes a premium image for the tea while the glassine-like envelope in which the tube is inserted is printed with the same color scheme and a large, brightly colored tea leaf in the center, which is not only eye-catching but intricately detailed.

Adds an Alcan spokesman, "The perforation process and the laminate have to be compatible." Measuring about 5-in.-long and 5/8 in. wide, the stick-pack uses a minimum of packaging material per serving versus a rigid container or the conventional tea bag/overwrap/carton package often found in the retail market.

Each stick is housed in a colorfully printed, translucent paper envelope designed by Germany's **Sihl GmbH (www.sihl.de)** to incorporate moisture- and tear-resistance and aroma protection.

Label this deli pack reclosable

Value-added features such as an easy-to-open device and a strong repeat closure are found in Daniele, Inc.'s Delizia Presidents Prosciutto package **(4).** Using less packaging material than comparably sized rigid tubs and deli clamshells, the space-efficient package fits the bill as an environmentally friendly package. Incorporating Re-Seal-It™ technology from **Printpack, Inc. (www.printpack.com),** the reclosable pack won a gold award for Packaging Excellence.

Printpack says the header space is reduced by as much as 1¾ in. versus a slider and a zipper package because it reduces the size of the stockkeeping units that can be put into the same space on a store shelf.

Combining proprietary label technology with high-performing barrier films, the new deli pack was designed and engineered with consumers, retailers and food processors in mind. The package holds 4 oz of sliced prosciutto. The resealable device is a label, made with a glossy polypropylene film facestock and a proprietary, removable acrylic-based adhesive that functions effectively with meat and other wet/fatty foodstuffs, says Printpack. The label is applied to a printed PET-based barrier film.

"Most zipper and slider packages require a large header to accommodate that resealable feature, so they require extra packaging film," explains Printpack's market development manager Tony Alvarez. "Re-Seal It uses no slider or zipper closure, so the package can hold as much but reduces a lot of header space."

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The Re-Seal It easy-open label provides a repeat reseal for thermoforms like the Daniele prosciutto package, which, is made of Neobar,™ a coex APET/ethylene vinyl alcohol/polyethlyene forming film made by **Neoplastica (www.neoplastica.com.br).**

To open the package, the user peels back the Re-Seal It label on the top. The label opens like a flap, providing full access to the product, with no "throat-opening" constraint, no scored film headers and no additional peel-seal films to break through. A swipe of the label recluses the package. The flap of the film sticks to the back of the label.

The peel-and-reclose label is part of a Printpack packaging system, which includes a label "applicator" that can be mounted onto an existing thermoform/fill/seal line. The applicator makes a fine perforation in the packaging film and then

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places a label precisely over the perforation without removing any part of the film. The package is gas-flushed and packaged under modified atmosphere to preserve freshness and shelf life.

Alvarez adds that the food-grade/meat-grade label material can be used with Printpack's PerformX™ barrier films or the Neobar rigid sheet, which both perform well with vacuum-packed or modified atmosphere packaging thermoform barrier applications.

Macfarlane Group (www.macfarlanegroup.net), a strategic supply partner of Printpack's in Kilmarnock, Scotland, produces and provides the label to Daniele's exclusively through Printpack, which gravure-prints the package graphics in eight colors at its Elgin, IL, facility, in a red, black and gold color scheme.

The package has a clear film window on the front panel to enhance product visibility. For the Pascoag, RI-based Daniele, Inc., which produces assorted Italian-style gourmet meats and other foods, the labels provide the opportunity to differentiate its prosciutto with an easy-to-use convenience feature. The new package was launched in September 2007 on the East Coast at ShopRite stores and Grace's Market in New York City.

Enviro-friendly cleaner package

The Drop 'n Go Deep Cleaning Tablets carpet cleaner pouch **(5)** marketed by Milliken Chemical, Spartanburg, SC, won a gold award for Environmental & Sustainability Achievement for **North State Flexibles LLC (www.nsflexibles.com).** Representing an environmentally friendly move through the use of nonvolatile water-based adhesives, the package, designed by Milliken, holds 60 g of concentrated cleaner tablets. The pouch material is described by North State Flexibles as a 4.-5-mil solventless metallized polyester adhesive lamination comprising PET and an undisclosed sealant.

Designed to dissolve in the water reservoir of most steam cleaners, each cleaning tablet makes the equivalent of 1 gal of cleaning solution. A reduction of energy, water and material waste, along with an improved product formulation and a user-friendly, press-to-close resealable feature made by North State Flexibles, are all bonuses for Drop 'n Go. The pouch significantly reduces weight and cube dimensions., while saving approximately eight times the warehouse space of its one-gal predecessor, described as a high-density polyethylene liquid container that weighed more than 50 lb and consumed eight times the landfill spac. Millliken also realizes lower packing materials costs, freight savings and markedly lower energy consumption.

North State Flexibles flexo-prints the pouchstock in eight colors with instructions, product features and a carpet steam cleaner vignette that conveys product usage.

The pouch uses less than half of the packaging as its predecessor, reducing the package weight by 98 percent versus comparable products

Continued on page 28

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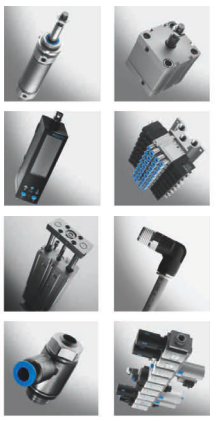

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available on the market, says North State Flexibles' director of sales Dennis Wine. Occupying less cube space, the new package requires less secondary corrugated shipping packaging, which reduces disposal costs, the company reports. The product was launched in the fall of 2007 by Milliken through retail cleaner-rental outlets and institutional channels. Wine says the product is copacked automatically on a vertical f/f/s system.

Rotisserie pouch gets 'green' marks

And speaking of environmentally-friendly, the Hot N Handy Rotisserie Pouch **(6)** is also consumer-friendly, with its built-in handle and a resealable zipper.

The windowed pouch claims to use "92-percent less fossil fuels, produce 84-percent less CO_2 emissions" and represents a "66-percent reduction in solid waste, compared with rigid containers. Significant environmental and sustainable features built in by **Robbie Mfg., Inc. (www.robbiemfg.com),** earned the package is a gold award in Environmental & Sustainability Achievement and a silver award in Packaging Excellence.

The handle of the all-in-one pouch is large, for easy carrying, while the slim structural profile is designed to store leftovers in a refrigerator door.

Incorporating a proprietary, coextruded construction, the pouch has strong, leak-resistant and moisture-resistant characteristics.

A built-in bottom gusset holds the package upright and helps to prevent spills. A proprietary, heavy-duty zipper is also provided at the top of the pouch for reliable closing. The pouch is also microwaveable.

Says Robbie's communications manager Penny Sweeney, "Flexible packaging is the best sustainable solution for rotisserie chicken in the market today."

A stock item for supermarkets, convenience stores, foodservice and food processors, the pouch was developed to replace rigid two-piece tray-and-lid containers used in the hot display cases at retail locations for rotisserie chicken, says Sweeney.

Commercialized in 2004, the bag was developed in part based on a survey conducted by Market Research Institute. The top three concerns consumers had about in-store rotisserie pouches were spillage while carrying the container, a container that opens unexpectedly and containers that leak liquid.

Venting to keep fried foods crisp, chicken and other rotisserie products moist and for special wet products like ham and ribs, the Hot N Handy pouch, according to Robbie's preliminary Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) comparisons with a domed rigid container with a lid, the flexible Hot N Handy pouch saves about 85 percent in CO_2 emissions during production versus a rigid two-piece rotisserie container.

Robbie can process-print or line-print the package in up to 10 colors, depending on requirements.

With the ability to maintain the high heat temperatures of a warming case, the pouch is can stay fog-free for several hours yet is cool to the touch, which prevents potential burns or spills. Sweeney says that Hot N Handy Pouches are available in more than 5,000 retail stores.

Purrfect structure, printing for cat food

A handsome stand-up bag called the FlexBox was selected by Nestle

Continued on page 71

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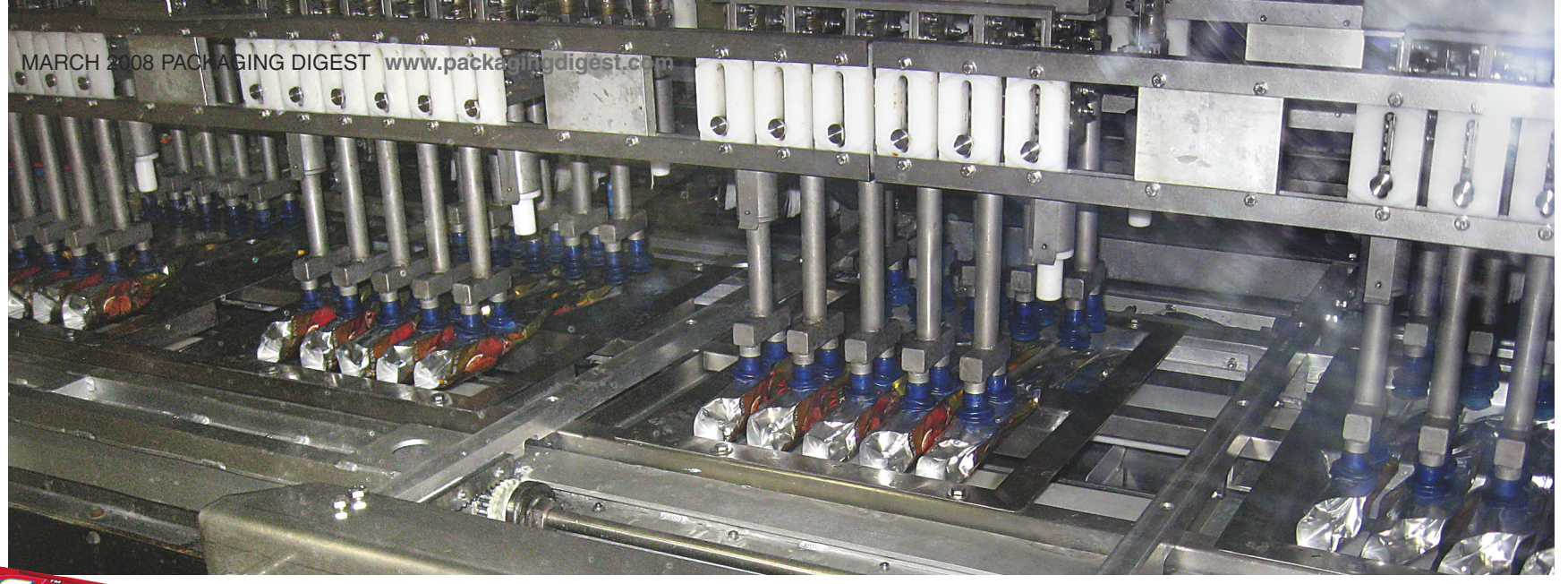


A dual-headed robot composed of five sets of 10 pickup heads, each equipped with vacuum cups, picks up 50 pouches at a time from infeed trays and moves them to five shuttles. “Bombay” doors in the bottoms of the shuttles open and gently drop the pouches onto the carton blanks.

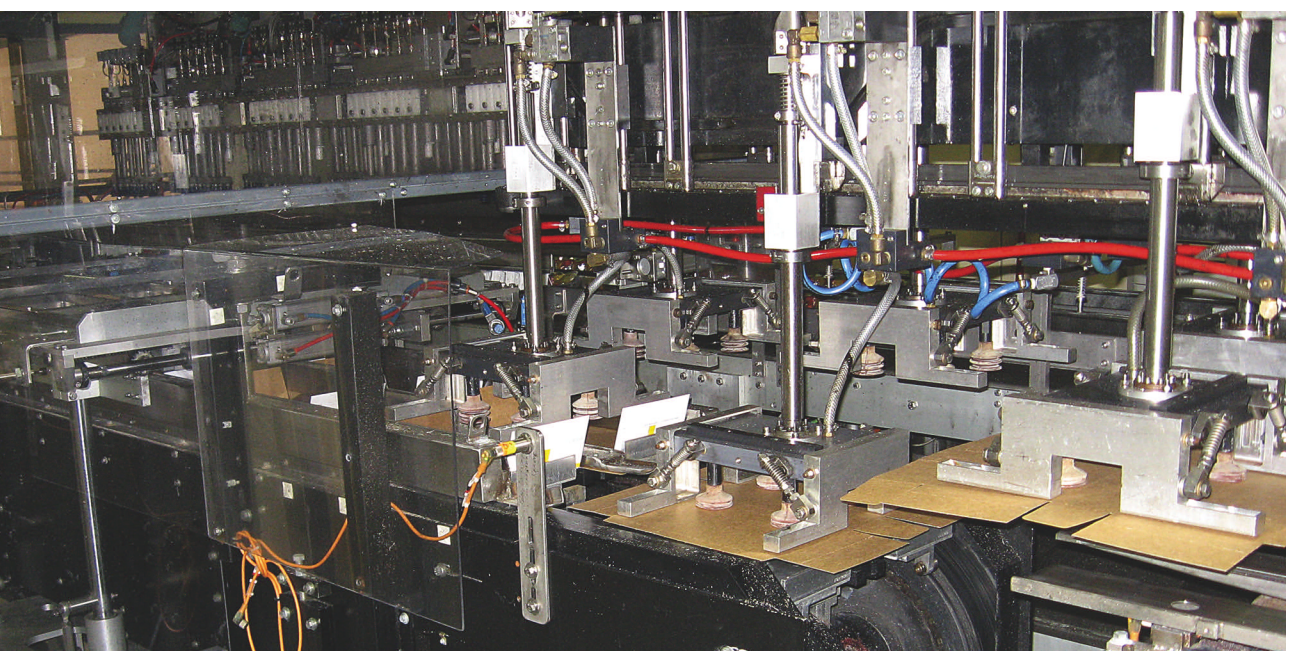
Cartoner runs standup pouches

A new first-of-its-kind cartoner at **FARIBAULT FOODS** runs 600 cartons/min and uses half the material of a standard B-flute corrugated carton.

Jack Mans,
Plant Operations Editor

Advanced Nutritionals Corp. started in 1992 as a manufacturer of sport drinks. In 2001, the company changed its name to SoftPac Industries, Inc., and built a $12-million plant in Elk River, MN to produce juice drinks in standup pouches to compete with Kraft’s Capri Sun 10-percent juice products. The plant was bought by contract-packing giant Faribault Foods in 2005, and with three high-speed lines running 300 pouches/min each, it is the largest private-label packager of 10-percent juice in standup pouches in the country. Its customers include top national retailers, including leading grocery chains, mass merchandisers and specialty outlets. As the company has continued to expand and grow, it has moved beyond 10-percent juice products into 100-percent juice and organic beverages. It also markets some pouches under its own brand name.

“We’re built for speed and our base line is a 200-milliliter, standup, foil-laminated pouch,” says plant manager John Anderson. “We’ve designed this plant around the hot-fill product and and package. Within that package, customers have their choice of their own product formulation and customized pouch and carton graphics.”



The cartoner picks up flat carton blanks using vacuum cups on a rotating arm and places them flat on a conveyor. The cartons go through a 180-degree folding operation, after which the carton is rotated 90 degrees and is indexed forward onto a carrier system that transports, folds and reopens the carton to accept pouches from the pickup heads.

Half the carton material

The company initially packaged its pouches in standard corrugated cartons, but by 2003 it needed to add capacity and it was also looking to optimize packaging materials. “We wanted a cartoner that could handle the output of two of our pouch fillers, about 600 pouches/min, at ninety-five percent efficiency or better, with one percent or less scrap,” says Anderson.

The company began talking to **MeadWestvaco Corp. (www.meadwestvaco.com)** about its new FlexiTECH™ technology, which includes a unique carton design as well as a high-speed cartoner to run the new carton. The FlexiTECH carton requires only about half of the material of a standard B-flute corrugated carton, because when the end flaps are folded, they form a supporting structure inside the carton that provides additional strength. Because of this, 6,000 FlexiTECH carton blanks fit on a pallet versus 4,800 standard blanks, so it cuts the pallet inventory for cartons by 20 percent for the same quantity of cartons.” Labor utilization is another benefit, says Anderson. “In addition to meeting our production and efficiency requirements, the FlexiTECH machine is very labor effective. It requires only two operators for 600 pouches/min, compared to three operators for our standard cartoner that produces 250 pouches/min.” Faribault leases the machine technology, and it was the first FlexiTECH machine in the U.S.

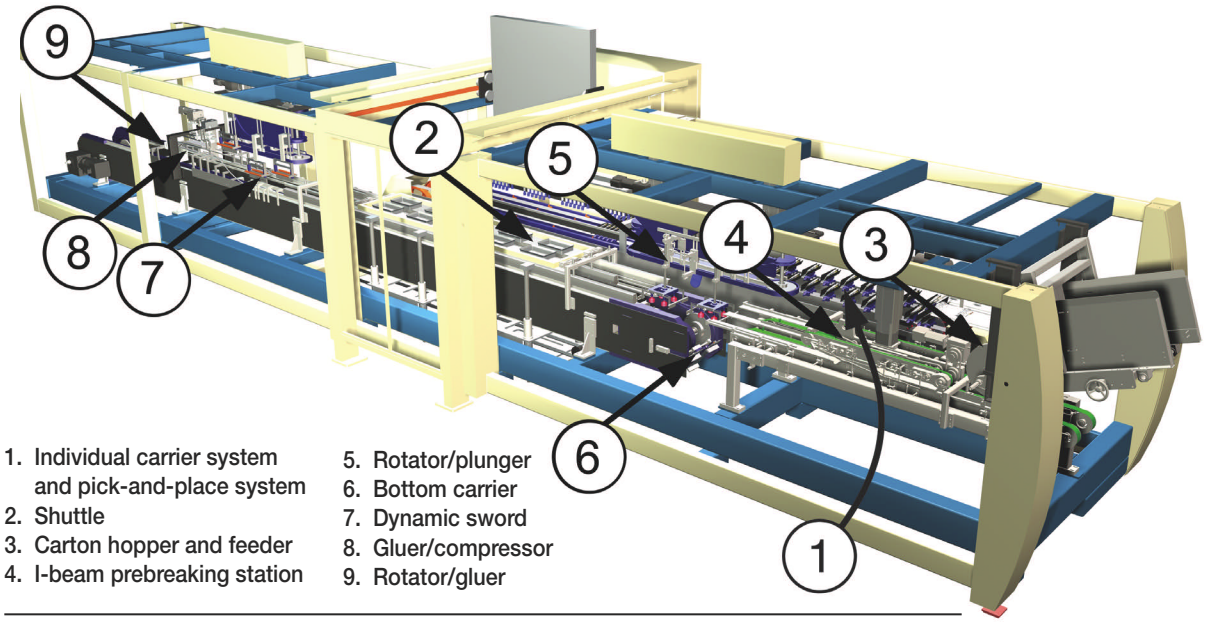
The cartoner manufacturer's support has been outstanding. It's how I always envisioned a partnership between two companies working.

when it was installed in early 2005.

"It turned out that the FlexiTECH cartons could be shorter on their front panels than our standard cartons," says Anderson, "but it made the transition easier for our customers and stores if the front panel was the same, so we kept it the same. Where the dimensions really changed is in the side panels, which can be smaller. I can get 385 of these cartons on a pallet versus 320 of our standard cartons, the stacking pattern is more stable and the customer can get more boxes in the same shelf space."

One problem that Faribault discovered with the new carton is that they can't do display pallets with it. The narrow cartons fall over when the shrink wrap is removed from the pallet load. "Some of our customers, use display pallets with three different flavors on a pallet," says Anderson. "This is the biggest thing holding us back from converting everything to the FlexiTECH carton. The carton holds 10 pouches per box, and our primary requirement for MeadWestvaco was to design it to match our current face panels, so the store displays didn't change. From a customer standpoint, they also get more cartons on a shelf in the same amount of area, because the carton is narrower."

The pouches at Faribault are produced on three form/fill/seal machines (PD will describe the packaging lines before and after the FlexiTECH cartoner in a subsequent issue).



1. Individual carrier system and pick-and-place system
2. Shuttle
3. Carton hopper and feeder
4. I-beam prebreaking station
5. Rotator/plunger
6. Bottom carrier
7. Dynamic sword
8. Gluer/compressor
9. Rotator/gluer

Proper pouch spacing is critical

The MeadWestvaco cartoner requires very precise spacing of the pouches entering the machine. As part of the cartoning project, Faribault installed two automatic feeding machines from **Intellifeed, Inc. (www.intellifeed.com)** with a capacity of 300 pouches/min each that provide this spacing. Each of these machines is actually a dual unit with two identical systems rated at 150 pouches/min each.

Each system consists of a series of roller sections

Continued on page 32

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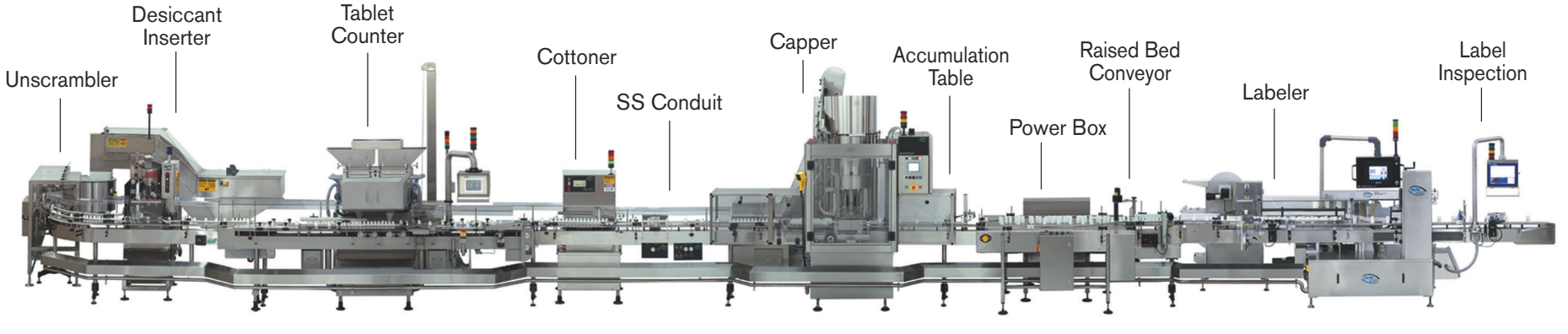

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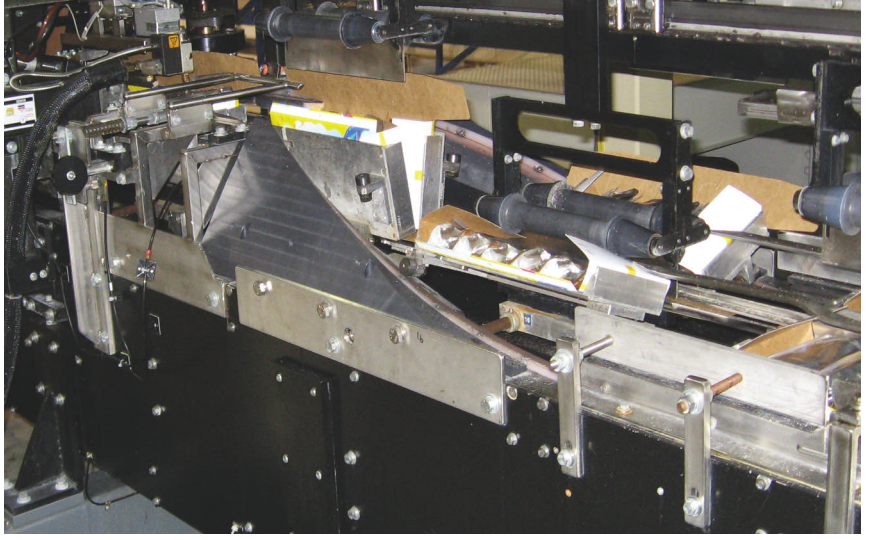
driven by computer-controlled stepper motors. The motors are triggered by sensors that detect the gaps between the pouches and adjust the speed of the individual roller sections to separate the pouch according to the required spacing. This computer program allows each section to communicate with all of the other sections to control the flow of the product along a roller array. The program also empowers the stepper motors to perform like servo motors as they speed up and slow down to push and pull the items away from each other. As the pouches proceed through the feeder, each is gradually spaced in relation to the pouch ahead of it, allowing an ordered stream of product to discharge from the machine.



The pouches are placed in two parallel rows of five pouches each, all facing the same direction. Next, the two halves of the carton are folded together while retaining the pouches inside.

Different products require different feeder designs. The units at Faribault have 114 individual rollers that are grouped into 19 six-roller sections.

Sixteen of these sections are driven by dedicated stepper motors that are controlled by dedicated sensors. One section has two sets of motors and rollers wired together with a sensor. The remaining two sections do not have a sensor and run at a constant speed.

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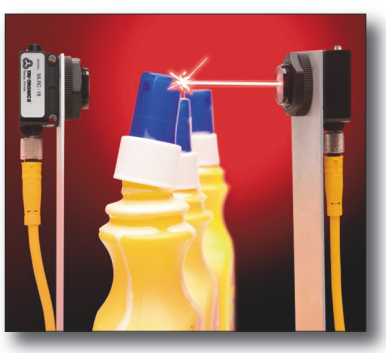

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Pouches are inspected

Each feeder discharges the pouches onto a conveyor that transports them to the FlexiTECH cartoner. On the way, pouches on both conveyors pass machines from **Shrink Packaging Systems Corp. (www.shrinkpackaging.com)** that apply straws from reels to the sides of the pouches using double-sided adhesive tape.

Next, the pouches travel beneath a proprietary inspection system that checks to see that every pouch has a straw attached, and that the pouches are not skewed on the conveyors. The pouches are then conveyed to the cartoner, where they drop into individual trays on the two parallel carrier systems. At this point, if sensors detect that a

tray is missing a pouch, the system computer prevents one end of the appropriate carton from having glue applied and it will be pushed out of line. A worker will place a pouch in this carton and manually glue the end. The computer also uses data from these sensors to determine the rate at which pouches are entering the cartoner and regulate the speed of the continuous-motion cartoner accordingly.

Dual-headed robot

The trays are then released in groups of five to the individual carrier system (ICS). The ICS indexes the trays forward on a flexible conveyor to a pick-and-place system, where a dual-headed robot composed of five sets of 10 pickup heads, each equipped with vacuum cups, picks up 50 pouches at a time from the trays and moves them to five shuttles. If pouches are not available from one of the horizontal belts, the robot may pick from the other belt to fill demand. Five cartons, each containing 10 pouches, are assembled during each cycle. The FlexiTECH platform was a joint development of MeadWestvaco and **Vortex Systems (www.ctpack.com/VS/)**, which is expert at handling flexible pouches.

Simultaneously, with the pouch handling, the cartoner picks up flat carton blanks with vacuum cups on a rotating arm and places them flat on a parallel conveyor. The cartons go through a 180-degree folding operation on each of the I-beam score lines, after which, the entire carton is rotated 90 degrees and indexed forward onto a metal carrier system. The carrier system transports, folds and reopens the carton to accept pouches. At this point, "bombay" doors in the bottoms of the shuttles containing the pouches open and gently drop the pouches onto the carton blanks.

In each carton, the pouches are placed in two parallel rows of five pouches each, all facing the same direction. In the next machine station, the two halves of the carton are folded together while retaining the pouches inside. To ensure that the pouches remain in alignment, a metal plate that Mead Westvaco calls a dynamic sword descends between the two sides of the carton as it is folded and holds the pouches in place. The interesting feature of this arrangement is that alternative pouches in the folded carton are upside-down so that the

Continued on page 34

The MeadWestvaco cartoner requires very precise spacing of the pouches entering the machine, so Faribault installed two feeding machines. Each consists of a series of roller sections driven by computer-controlled stepper motors that are triggered by sensors that detect the gaps between the pouches and adjust the speed of the individual roller sections to separate the pouch according to the required spacing.

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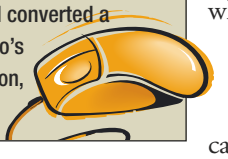

bottom of one pouch is against the top of the next pouch.

This nesting arrangement is what enables the FlexiTECH carton to be narrower than a standard carton, which allows more product to fit on the pallet and on the retail shelf. The cartons go through a series of hot gluing, compression and rotation stations, after which they discharge from the cartoner. The hot gluing operations utilize systems from **Nordson Corp. (www.nordson.com)**.

The FlexiTECH is a modular, servo-driven machine. The control system uses a touchscreen panel to give operations and maintenance personnel quick, intuitive access to critical data. Other components include a PLC from **SoftPLC Corp. (www.softplc.com)** and **Bosch Rexroth Corp. www.boschrexroth-us.com)** servo systems. MeadWestvaco's Intelligen® software captures torque data for every subassembly and compares this data to past performance and ideal specifications. From unbalanced assemblies and lubrication problems to bearings, belt and chain wear, the Intelligen software can remotely pinpoint the source of a possible failure without disrupting regular operation.

We wanted a cartoner that could handle the output of two of our pouch fillers, about 600 pouches/min, at 95-percent efficiency or better.

Outstanding support

"This was a beta machine for MeadWestvaco, and we went through some struggles to get it started," says Anderson. "But, we had a whole army of people here from MeadWestvaco during the installation and shakedown, and I really take my hat off to them in terms of their support. Kenny Greggs, their chief technician for this project, was with us for the better part of a year as we went through the installation and training and debugging of this first-of-its-kind machine. Their support has been outstanding. It's how I always envisioned a partnership between two companies working. They did a phenomenal job. For example, the infeed was not long enough, so they made it longer. With things like that, you need to have someone standing behind you to make sure it will work."

More information is available:

MeadWestvaco Corp., 404/897-6564. **www.meadwestvaco.com.**
Bosch Rexroth Corp., 800/739-7684. **www.boschrexroth-us.com.**
Intellifeed, Inc., 651/423-7220. **www.intellifeed.com.**
Nordson Corp., 770/497-3700. **www.nordson.com.**
Shrink Packaging Systems Corp., 603/889-6678. **www.shrinkpackaging.com.**
SoftPLC Corp., 512/264-8390. **www.softplc.com.**
Vortex Systems, 39-0532-879600. **www.ctpack.com/VS/.**

Speiron launches Lambda, a pricey, hand-extracted, extra-virgin olive oil from Greece in an **UPSCALE GLASS BOTTLE,** available by direct mail to individuals around the world.

Olive oil revisited

Linda Casey, Associate Editor

In 2007, Speiron Co. launched Lambda, an upscale extra-virgin olive oil from Greece, sold by direct mail. "The package targets carefully selected individuals around the world who represent the upscale audience that we're interested in," remarks Speiron's creative director Corinna Michaelidou.

For $104/liter, consumers get a hand-extracted olive oil from Koroneiki olives with very low acidity, intense fruity notes and a well rounded aftertaste. Explaining Lambda's packaging cachet of conveying that the olive oil as a gift, Michaelidou says: "Our package design is as exquisite as the product itself. There are many products that were revised to meet the expectations of a new and upcoming target group that not only wants good-quality products, but also has an eye for premium packaging design."

Lambda's sleek, modern glass flask is supplied by **Vetro Elite (www.vetroelite.com)**. Each bottle holds 500 mL (16.9 oz) and according to Michaelidou, the flask's shape and use of glass help preserve the tastes and aroma of the oil while allowing consumers to view the oil.

Emphasizing the oil's rich green color, the minimal yet modern design with a black and white scheme lets the color of the olive oil dominate, Michaelidou explains. A white collar cap adds a straightforward, memorable visual. **Forlabels (www.forlabels.gr)** screen-prints the labels using black and white inks on a clear stock. Unlike round bottles, the front of flask only has the branding elements of the product visible on the front. A clear sticker with mandatory ingredients and nutritional information is added to the back of the flask but is hidden behind the circle on the front. For an additional $78, two bottles of Lambda can be ordered in a Plexiglas gift box.

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In-line cheese-bagging systems at Mullins Cheese accept blocks of product made in a set of towers and churn out two packs/min.

An automatic cheese block turner/orienter/bag-loading system replaces manual packing at family-owned Mullins Cheese Co., saving labor and time. The six systems handle 40-lb blocks of cheese with **SUBSTANTIALLY LESS WASTE.**

Cheese bagging with a twist

Lauren R. Hartman, Senior Editor

A family-owned operation in business since 1970, Mullins Cheese, Mosinee, WI, is producing blockbuster results with its new cheese block-packaging/handling equipment from **Sealed Air's Cryovac Food Packaging Div. (www.cryovac.com).** A commercial cheesemaker that specializes in producing cheddar, Colby, Monterey Jack, Jacko (marbled) and Parmesan cheeses, as well as "the best Wisconsin cheese curds around," according to promotions on the company's website, Mullins sells most of its cheeses in bulk 40-lb blocks to large cheese processors' cut-and wrap operations coast to coast that repackage the cheese under various brand names and private labels. It also sells through foodservice companies and sells smaller portions of its cheese in its bustling retail store and has another cheese-production facility in Marshville, WI, that makes 640-lb blocks of cheese.

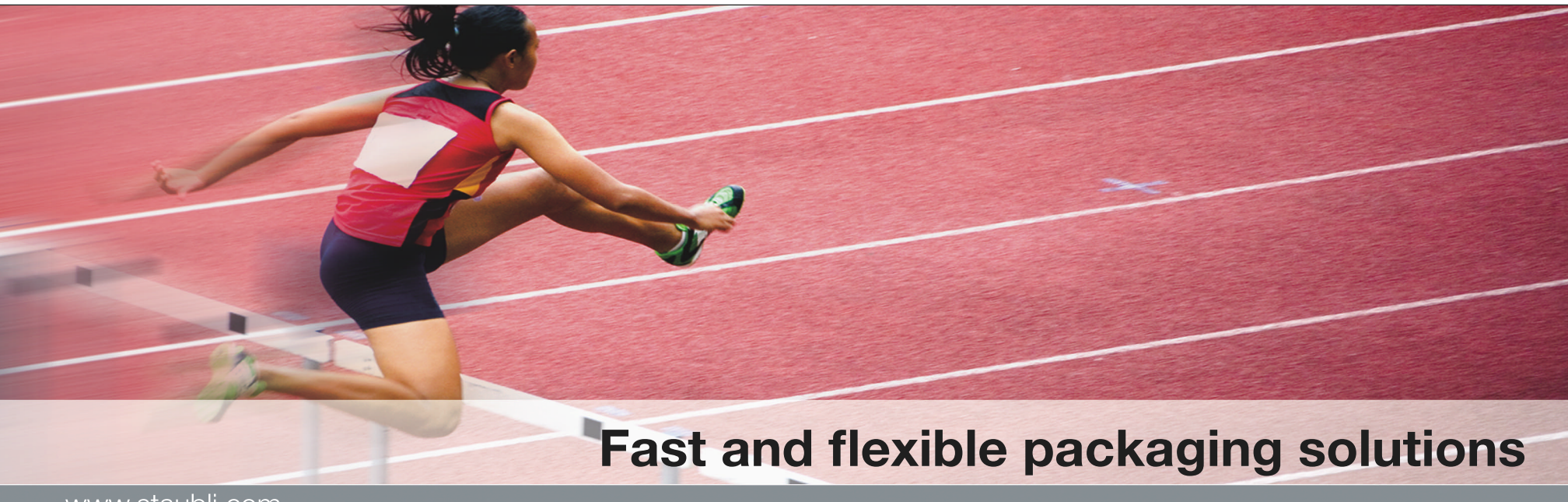
Big changes in cheese

Cheesemaking and packaging processes at Mullins have really changed in the last few decades, with more automatic equipment being added all the time. "I remember when we made all of the cheese in the same vat," recalls Bill Mullins, one of the owners of the company. "We would manually pour the milk into the vats, manually coagulate it, cut it and drain it all in the same vat, pail it out by hand and them put it in forms and seal everything in waxed paper and, before that, in wooden boxes. There was so much manual labor."

With its cheeses shipped to some 80-plus customers coast-to-coast, Mullins goes through a whopping 1.1 million lb of milk per day. That milk is collected from 900 dairy farms. So Mullins is automating things considerably.

But despite the large volumes and the changes it has made, its block-cheese packaging operation was still a bit more labor-intensive and time consuming than it would have liked. Mullins' workers had to manually load the 40-lb blocks into bags, after the blocks were formed, which was a time-consuming and back-straining task.

Automatic bag loaders seemed to be the next logical move in Mullins' packaging operation. So in August, 2007, Mullins added six of Cryovac's Model CL-20 bag loaders—a solution that has made better use of employees' time and keeps the production lines humming more efficiently. Cryovac designed the CL-20 bagger to enhance operational efficiency, and Mullins knew that automating its loading process could help streamline the operation.



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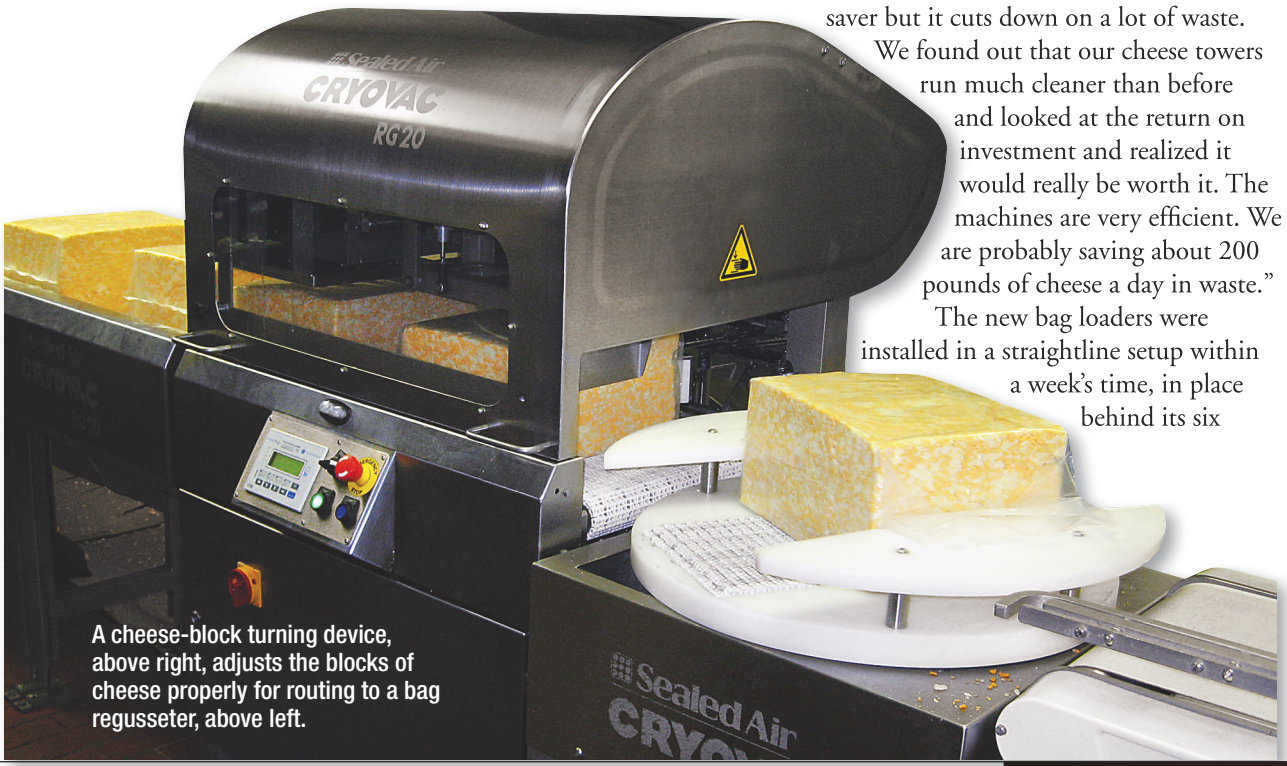
"We use other Cryovac equipment for our cut-and-wrap products and have their vacuum chamber and their barrier bags, so adding bag loaders was the logical next step," Bill Mullins adds. "We began adding some new equipment last year. Cryovac showed us a video of the CL-20 system running, and we thought it was very unique."

Recalls Stan Johnson, a Cryovac sales representative for the Northeastern Wisconsin region: "We approached Mullins Cheese about bag-loading systems and after several years of consideration, it chose the CL-20. The driving force behind the decision was labor savings."

Bill Mullins agrees. "It's not only a real labor-saver but it cuts down on a lot of waste. We found out that our cheese towers run much cleaner than before and looked at the return on investment and realized it would really be worth it. The machines are very efficient. We are probably saving about 200 pounds of cheese a day in waste."

The new bag loaders were installed in a straightline setup within a week's time, in place behind its six cheese blockforming towers. Earlier, two operators had to load the cheese into bags and run the towers. Now, the operators can perform other tasks while the patented CL-20 systems accept the large blocks of cheese from the towers and pack them automatically into premade bags (made of gusseted nylon-based film and also supplied by Cryovac) up to 25.5 in. wide and 19 in. long. pulled from the machines' stainless-steel cassette. Designed with plug-in modules for quick servicing and product changeovers (though Mullins only uses the machines for the 40-lb size blocks only), the systems operate at speeds up to 2 bags/min, saving what Bill Mullins says is a significant amount of labor versus the previous manual bagging method.



A cheese-block turning device, above right, adjusts the blocks of cheese properly for routing to a bag regusseter, above left.

The blocks of cheese are "injected" into the bagger's chutes and directly into the opened, gusseted bags.

The removable bag cassettes each store more than 300 bags—enough for at least four hours of unattended operation, depending on tower cycle

Continued on page 38

Cryovac provided a vertical pouching system to **PEPPADEW INTL.** in South Africa that helps prolong the shelf life of its piquant peppers and enhances efficiency. Read about it at **www.packagingdigest.com/peppadew**

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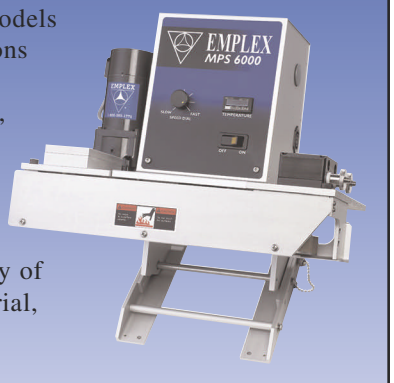

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The regusseter automatically folds the bags and prepares the bagged blocks for vacuumizing and sealing, cycling every 9 sec.

times. The machine door can be opened so that an operator can load the bags onto spreader plates, which are activated by a start/stop button on a control interface. A warning light on the door tells the operator that a bag cassette is about to run out of bags.

The company likes that an empty cassette can be easily removed and replaced with a fully loaded one. "We're bagging on six machines that hold 1,800 bags at a time," Bill Mullins says. "We go through about 5,500 blocks of cheese each day, so the cassettes work well."

Designed with simplicity and modularity in mind, the loaders maximize uptime and ease maintenance. The CL-20 is integrated with the block towers' control panel. Operator-interface options include a dedicated alphanumeric display with centrally displayed status and diagnostic information.

Mounted inside the door are two panels that house pneumatic and electric controls that allow for easy access and are protected in harsh washdown environments.

We are probably saving about 200 pounds of cheese a day in waste.

Turner, regusseter added

To eliminate pinch points with neighboring conveyors and to improve product flow, Mullins also added Cryovac's UBT20 block turner to the operation, which Cryovac designed for use on bulk-cheese production lines to smooth rotation of the cheese by 180 degrees so that the blocks align properly with the seal bar of a three-compartmented BetaVac® vacuum-chamber vacuumizing system. Distributed by Sealed Air, the BetaVac accepts three blocks of cheese at a time. The turner works in conjunction with a Cryovac RG-20 bag-regusseting machine that automatically folds and prepares the bags for vacuumizing and sealing on the BetaVac.

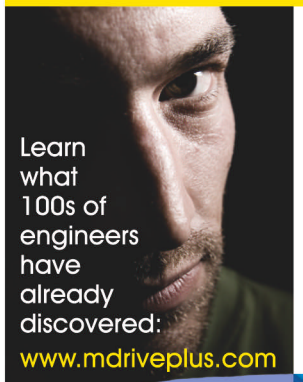
Explains Cryovac's Kirk Huxtable, technical sales representative for the Northeastern Wisconsin region: "One end of the bag is gusseted at the factory. The open end must be refolded properly so that there that no wrinkles are present in order to create a proper seal in the Betavac system."

Packaging begins once the cheese is ejected from the cheeseforming towers, and the blocks convey to the six in-line bag loaders without human intervention. The bag loaders then pneumatically lift the loose bags from their cassettes using a pickup device and transfer them into a guide chute that releases them so that the open end of the bags easily slide into a bag-opening mechanism.

Cheese packing in action

The opening device has an upper and a lower section and applies vaccum to both top and bottom faces of the bag. The lower section swings into position and presents the bag to grippers that apply vacuum to side faces of the bag. Spreader plates align with these grippers and the bag and the gripper travel over the spreader

Continued on page 40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plates, which spread apart to open the bag. The spreader plates and the bag then lower into position for the block of cheese to be inserted from the tower, which takes about 6 to 8 sec, depending on the type of tower and its speed. A red light on the top of the loading machines flash to let workers know when the system is low on bags.

After the block of cheese has been inserted into the bag, the bag is pushed onto an eject conveyor to the UBT20 turner, which has tall guards that fit the height of each cheese block, and can be easily lowered to gain access to maintenance and cleaning. The turner is controlled by the RG20 regusseting machine constructed with all critical parts treated to withstand corrosion. The regusseter cycles every 9 sec and refolds and prepares up to 360 bags/hr.

"The regusseter gives our bags a smooth finish," Bill Mullins explains. Next, the bags are vacuumized and heat sealed, which protects the cheese from oxygen and helps retain its moisture levels while reducing trim waste from mold growth.

The finished, sealed bags then convey through a Cintex metal detector from **Loma Systems (www.loma.com)** before they're case-packed

After the bag of cheese exits the regusseter, top, it is vacuumized for a snug fit and the block of cheese is case-packed, above, and palletized. The wraparound cases are erected, loaded and glue-sealed at a rate of about 12 blocks/min.

a new case erector/packer/sealer that Mullins added to the end of the line.

Made by **Massman Automation Designs (www.massman-adi.com),** the wraparound packer can reach speeds as high as 42 cpm, but at Mullins assembles corrugated blanks into cases automatically before glue-sealing them at rates of about 12 blocks/min. The cases of cheese are then palletized in-line, 54 cases/load, on an existing palletizer from **A-B-C Packaging Machine (www.abcpackaging.com)** and the loads are stored in a cooler before being distributed throughout the U.S. The cheese line operates three shifts (20 hr total) a day, six days a week and produces about 330,000 lb of cheese each day. Bill Mullins praises the equipment and says it has made the firm more productive.

"We have already seen a return on our equipment investment," he points out. "We saw it on Day One because we save two people per shift that packed cheese, so that's quite a bit of labor. The new machines are very low-maintenance and are reliable. We've really improved our efficiencies and the loaders give us very good-looking blocks of cheese. As far as sales are concerned, they'll go up as long as we can keep pace. So we're very pleased."

More information is available:

Cryovac Div., Sealed Air Corp. 800/391-5645. **www.cryovac.com.**
A-B-C Packaging Machine Corp., 727/937-5144. **www.abcpackaging.com.**
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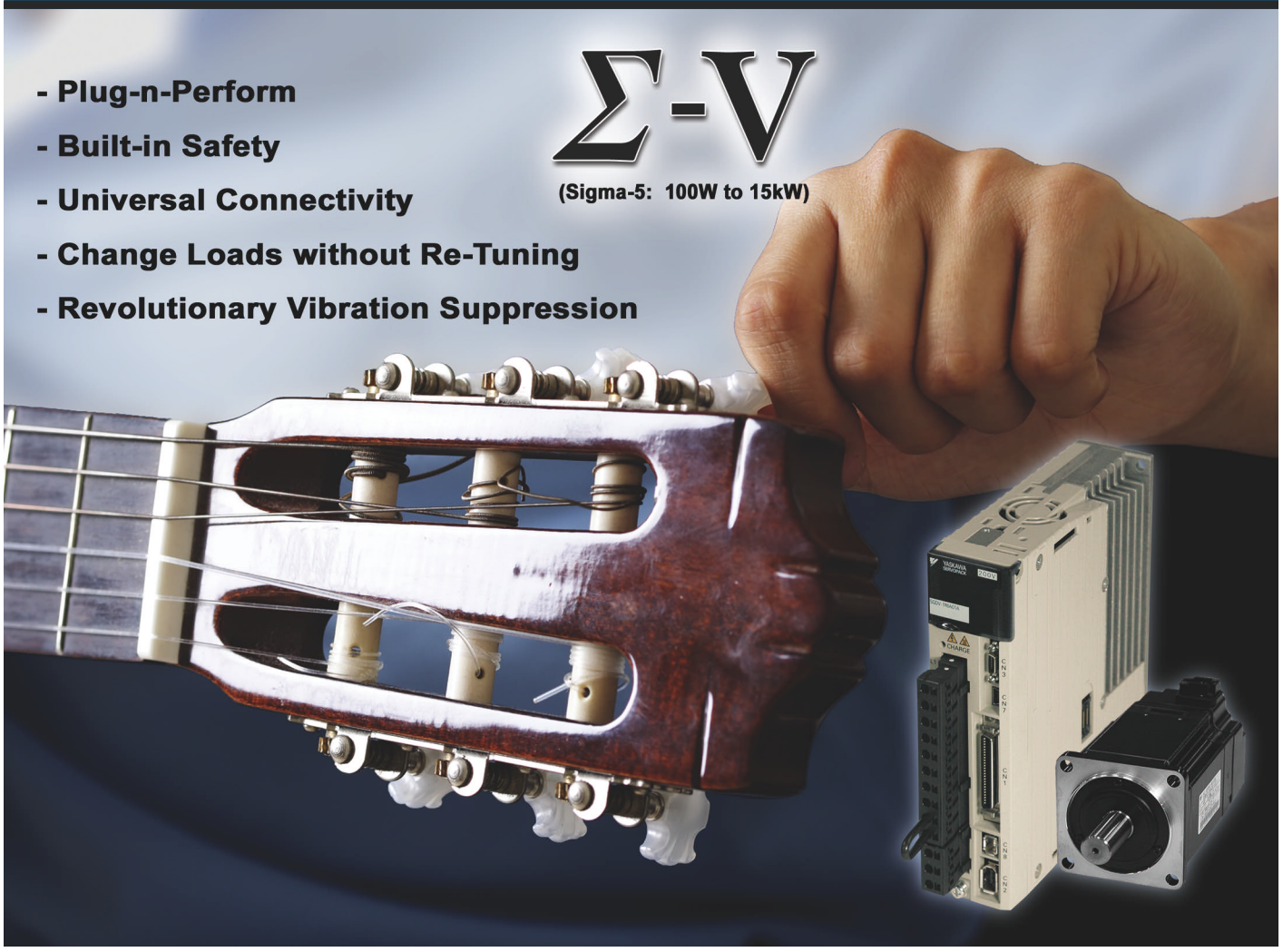

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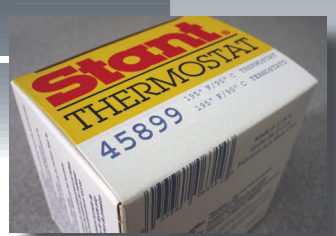

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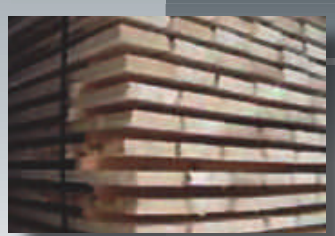

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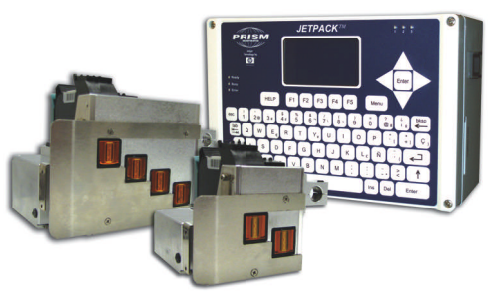

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Case coding is on a roll

The Original Philadelphia Cheesesteak Co. eliminates downtime and trims the fat from material costs with four **LARGE-CHARACTER INK-JET PRINTERS** for cases of its thin slices of beef.

Lauren R. Hartman, Senior Editor

To some, especially those in the Eastern part of the U.S., a Philly cheesesteak sandwich is a real culinary treat. Originating in Philadelphia, the sandwich includes savory, thin slices of beef, chicken or pork, usually piled high on a roll with onions and melted cheese, and has gained so much popularity, that it now can be found in sandwich shops all over the world.

Many of those establishments are owned by Philadelphia natives who relocated but couldn't find an authentic cheesesteak sandwich in their transplanted city and thus decided to set up their own sandwich-making shop. If they stay authentic when creating the sandwiches, chances are they use tender, thin slices of meat supplied to them by The Original Philadelphia Cheesesteak Co., a niche manufacturer of the Philly-style sandwich steak product. With two processing facilities located in the heart of the City of Brotherly Love, the company has for years used a two-step process to code its corrugated shipping cases of product, printing date and lot codes directly on the cases with a dot-matrix ink jet printer. A Universal Product Code (UPC) bar code was applied to one corner of each case using a print-and-apply labeler.

In 2007, the company consolidated the somewhat laborious, two-step case-coding/labeling process with a move to four Model 2330 large-character continuous ink-jet printers from **Videojet Technologies Inc. (www.videojet.com),** with tasty results. The new printers have virtually eliminated coding-related downtime, and the cost of using labels. And the printheads' self-cleaning system keeps them free of dust and other debris, resulting in consistently clear codes, a welcome benefit, says Jim Trivelis, president of The Original Philadelphia Cheesesteak Co. The systems' patented micropurging process maintains the printhead with every print without affecting production speed or throughput.

Cases of cheesesteak convey past one of four large-character coders

"Crisp, clear codes are important to us and to our distributors with regard to tracking and tracing, warehousing and inventory, reordering, billing and order fulfillment, which are all inter-related," Trivelis notes. "If we keep up with preventative maintenance and cleaning, our

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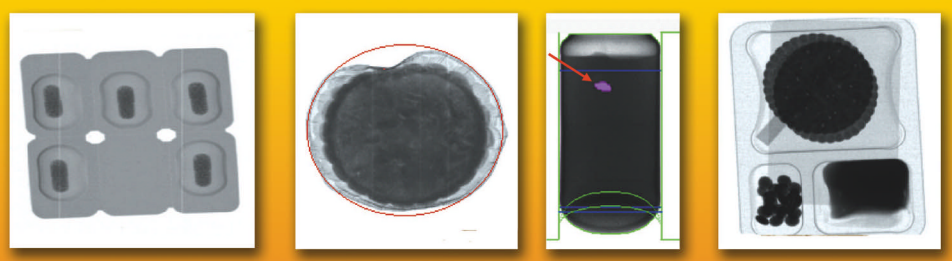

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The printers provide variable data on up to 30 cases/min, or 12,000 cases/8-hr shift.

uptime is about ninety-five percent. We're also seeing a UPC bar-code label-stock savings of approximately $40,000 per year. The [case] codes help companies identify the product, store it, track inventory, pick and verify orders and ship and bill. Clear codes set the tone for the entire supply-chain process."

Products sold through different channels

The Original Philadelphia Cheesesteak Co. manufactures two raw, frozen and fully-cooked sandwich steak meats, sold through several channels, including through national and regional distributors that sell to sandwich shops, mom-and-pop delicatessens and foodservice companies that accommodate stadiums and college campuses.

Production takes place in the two processing plants—one, a 40,000-

Clear codes set the tone for the entire supply-chain process.

sq-ft facility that manufactures the fully-cooked version and a second 80,000-sq-ft counterpart facility that processes the raw meat, which also houses the company's headquarters and the Model 2330 ink-jet printers.

Boneless boxed beef, boneless/skinless white-meat chicken and boneless boxed pork are sourced through major contract meat packers. The company then seasons and/or marinates the meat before packing, freezing and tempering it.

The raw processing facility portion-packs the meat after slicing it while the other plant cooks the product prior to packaging. Orders are prepared and shipped from either plant.

But shipping had been concerning the company, as the earlier two-step case-coding method proved to be somewhat inefficient, according to Trivelis. The former case codes were often blurry or the codes could bleed, while the print-and-apply labelers experienced extensive downtime, which required workers to hand-apply labels, which took them away from other tasks.

"All of our customers were requesting higher quality UPC bar codes and product information, which was one reason we were using print-and-apply labeling," Trivelis recalls. "More and more distributors are moving to automated scanning systems, and there are monetary penalties and the potential to lose business when codes are unreadable, so we needed to address that."

Merging coding, labeling

Realizing that it would be efficient and cost-effective to combine the two processes into one, Trevelis and his

Continued on page 44

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manufacturing and engineering staff began to search for large-character ink-jet case printers that are reliable, offer high resolution, can handle frequent code changes and are consistent and speedy. They chose the four Videojet 2330 systems, which are designed for generic carton coding at preprinted quality levels and have a 180-dpi resolution.

Installed in the raw-processing facility, they generated positive results immediately. Three of the printers can each receive product from three separate sliced-meat lines all producing the same product—or nine lines total—while the fourth machine is mounted on a single sliced-meat line that's used for small batches of product. Currently, the printers are each mounted on a custom-designed and fabricated four-wheel cart that slides from line to line, allowing them to be moved easily, providing an added measure of convenience.

All of the printers provide variable data such as dates, lot codes, product codes and UPC bar codes on up to 30 cases/min, or 12,000 cases/8-hr shift or 60,000 cases/week.

Read how snackmaker **UTZ QUALITY FOODS** uses thermal-transfer overprinters for potato chip bags and canisters to save a bundle, keep pace with line speeds and 'sack' downtime at **www.packagingdigest.com/utz**

"Our former labelers and printers just couldn't keep up with those speed requirements," adds Trivelis. "The older dot-matrix systems had less sophisticated technology and didn't possess the software needed to generate UPC bar codes. The labelers took time to set up and several minutes to execute a code change. When we began to consider consolidating coding and labeling, we knew that the variable data on the cases had to be legible, particularly the UPC bar code, and printing had to be fully automated."

The Original Philadelphia Cheesesteak Co. has nearly 200 stockkeeping units, and often changes case codes as much as 10 times a day. The cases measure either 15 x 9.l x 3.5 in. or 15 x 9 x 7 in. The printers produce one line of print from ¼- to 1 in. high, including a UPC product code date, a month and year, a batch/lot number and a case count. All of the SKU data is loaded from a laptop computer that maintains the company's global database of SKUs onto the four 2330 printers.

A new SKU can be added via the laptop and be transferred via USB memory drive to the printers. From there, an operator may select a desired case code from the printer's color touchscreen with LCD touch-panel CLARiTY interface.

But it was the printers' self-cleaning/self-maintenance system that most impressed the company, as it eliminates ink waste and downtime. Production speeds have improved on the lines because operators no longer have to stop a line in order to prime, purge and clean a printhead.

All of the ink used during the self-maintenance process is automatically recycled for re-use without creating waste or spillage. Trivelis says he expects the fleet of printers should pay for itself in about a year and this year, plans to add the printers to two lines at the "fully-cooked" plant.

Our uptime is about ninety-five percent. We're seeing a label stock savings of about $40,000 per year.

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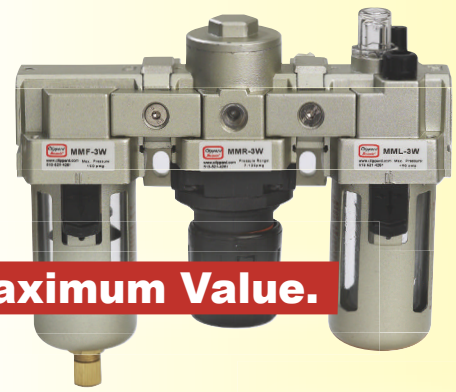

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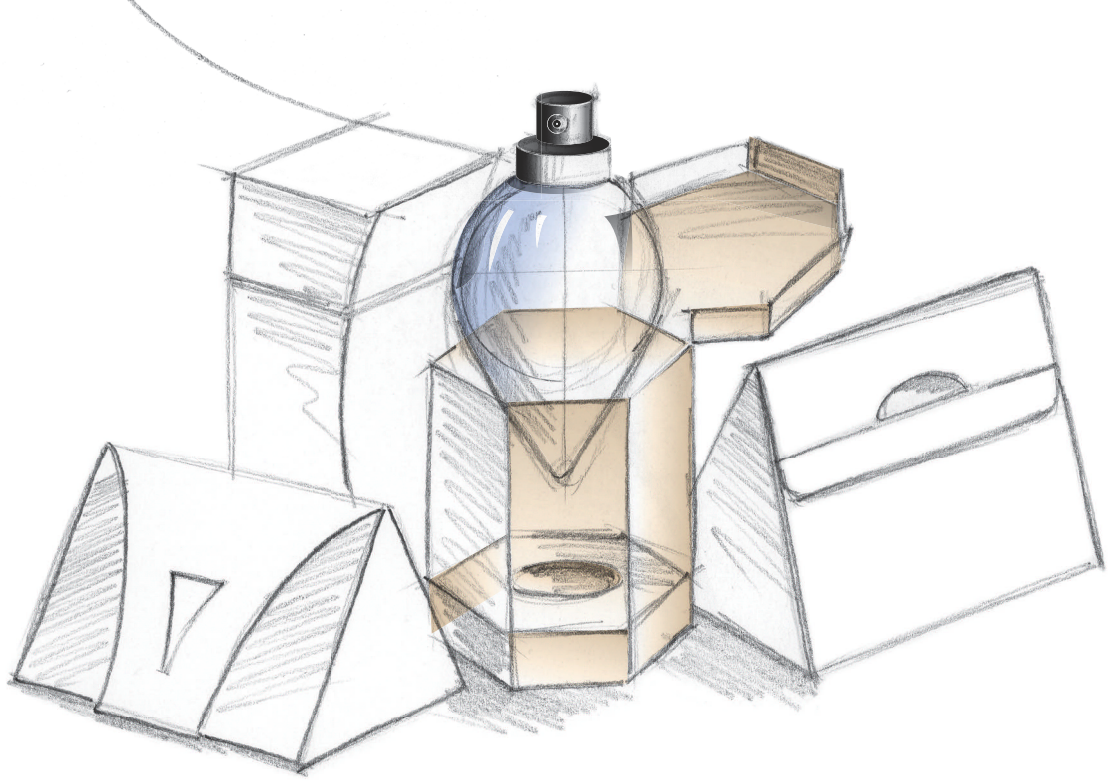

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Canisters are received on pallets and a cable conveyor transports them to twisting chutes in the filling area that lower them to the packaging line. Air jets located along the twisters blow any dust out of the canisters as they descend. The canisters are then conveyed to a scoop inserter.

Packaging protein **powders**

New packaging line at **LAKE COUNTRY FOODS** runs paperboard canisters of powdered milk products at speeds to 180 canisters/min.

Jack Mans, Plant Operations Editor

Founded in 1920 as part of the Carnation Co. to produce malted milk powder and other dry mixes, the Lake Country Foods facility went through several ownership changes in the past 20 years. The last one in 1993 resulted in the formation of Lake Country Foods, which is a privately held company specializing in the contract manufacturing of malted milk powder, hot cocoa mix and bakery mixes.

It is a major packager for a number of large companies including Slim-Fast products for the Unilever Co. The plant has three packaging lines running standup bags, plastic jars and cans and canisters, respectively. The newest line, which was installed last fall, runs 401- and 502-diameter spiral-wound composite cans from **Sonoco (www.sonoco.com)** that range in height from 4 to 8.5 in. and contain from 12 oz to 2.5 lb of product. The cans are made from two plys of recycled paperboard with an inner barrier layer, and the top is sealed at the factory with Sonoco's Ultraseal® peelable foil membrane that includes a pull tab for easy removal.

The line, which runs 180 canisters/min, incorporates a combination of existing equipment and new equipment bought specifically for the new line. During PD's visit, the line was running a 401 can containing 12 oz of Slim-Fast product at a speed of 180 cans/min. "I've worked with Rich May, president of **Richpak Machinery, Inc. (312/225-1207)**, for a number of years, and he gave us some good suggestions for equipment to include on the new line," says Tom Gnewuch, vp of operations. "In particular, he suggested we talk to **All-Fill, Inc. (www.all-fill.com)** about the filler and checkweigher and to **Confab Systems, Inc. (www.confabsystems.com)**, which supplied all of the conveyors on the entire line, including the cable conveyors, twisters and the table-top conveyor, as well as the accumulation table after the filler. Confab also provided system integration and all of the controls for the complete line, as well as mechanical installation and startup assistance."

Filler/checkweigher system maintains correct weights

Cans are received stacked nine layers high on a pallet, and a depalletizer pushes one layer at a time onto an unscrambler that single-files them onto a cable conveyor that transports them overhead to the filling line. From there, they go down through twisting chutes from Confab that set them on the conveyor feeding the filler. The plant has four twisters, two for each can size, and gates at their inlets are manually opened or closed depending on what size can is being run. Air jets located along the twisters blow any dust out of the cans as they descend. Because the cans are provided with Sonoco's foil Ultraseal membrane across their tops, product is filled into the open bottom. Therefore, the chute is designed to place the cans upside-down on the flat conveyor chain with the open bottom facing up.

After the cans are placed on the conveyor, they pass through a centrifugal bowl feeder from **Palace Packaging Machines, Inc. (www.unscramblers.com)** that places a scoop into each can. In this operation, the scoops are dumped into a floor hopper from which an inclined cleated conveyor lifts them up to the sorter bowl where they are oriented with the open side down and the handle trailing. They then transfer into a rotating accumulation hopper that maintains the orientation and drops them into a two-level rotating starwheel. The scoops drop into sections in the upper level, while canisters

Eighteen funnels are mounted around the top of the rotating filler turret and discharge into the containers that travel synchronously beneath them. Cans then enter the checkweigher. This filler and checkweigher combination holds the weight within +/-10 grams on a 12-oz can.

travel synchronously through the lower level. At the discharge of the starwheel, the scoops drop into the open tops of the canisters. A sensor at the inlet of the scoop feeder detects the presence or absence of canisters and turns the feeder on and off accordingly.

The canisters are then conveyed to the 18-head All-Fill rotary filler, where a helical feedscrew meters them into the infeed starwheel, which in turn, meters them into the filler turret. A sensor monitors containers on the conveyor to the

An ink-jet printer applies code dates on the metal bottoms of the canisters.

filler, and shuts the machine off if no cans are present. The conveyor continues past the front of the filler and picks up the filled cans as they discharge.

Eighteen funnels are mounted around the top of the rotating filler turret and discharge into the containers that travel synchronously beneath them. Sealing pads at the bottoms of the funnels sit on top of the cans and create a tight seal for dust control. The dry powder discharges from an overhead tank into a hopper containing a rotating auger that discharges the powder into the funnels as they pass beneath it. The proper weight of product in a container is achieved by coordinating the respective rotating speeds of the turret and the auger. The filled cans discharge through a star wheel onto the same conveyor that delivered them to the filler.

Cans then enter the Alpha checkweigher, which incorporates three weight zones–under, accept and over. Out-of-spec cans are rejected as they leave the checkweigher. The electronic control system for the checkweigher includes an alphanumeric LCD display plus an individual LED weight display, up to 25 programmable product setups, sample and hold display functions, automatic setup of static and dynamic calibration, startup and dynamic self-diagnosis with error messages, auto zero to compensate for product spillage and digital automatic feedback control to the filler. The standard statistical data package looks at the last group of 50 packages, and calculates long-term average-weight data and standard deviation. Based on these results, the checkweigher adjusts the speed of the augers on the filler to maintain the weight of product in the cans within the set limits. "The filler and checkweigher are running very well for us," says Gnewuch. "They hold the weight within plus/minus 10 grams on a 12-ounce can."

After filling, the cans pass through a can seamer that applies a metal bottom. The plant has two seamers—one for each diameter—and gates divert the cans to conveyors that deliver them to the appropriate unit. The cans then continue past a **Videojet Technologies (www.videojet.com)** ink-jet printer that applies the date to the metal bottom. Next the cans go through a roll-through cold-glue labeler that wraps a label around the circumference. Both of the can seamers and the labeler are older

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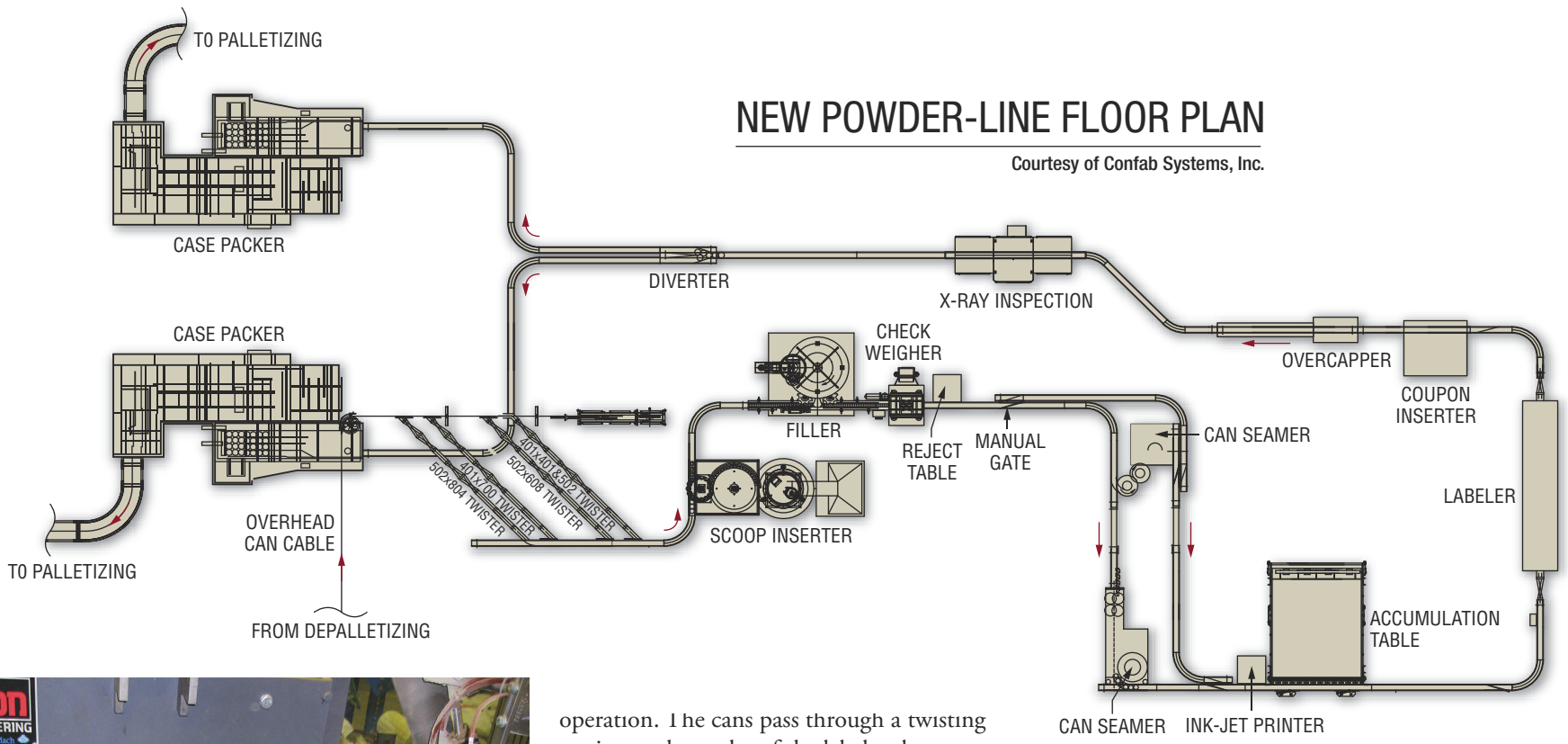
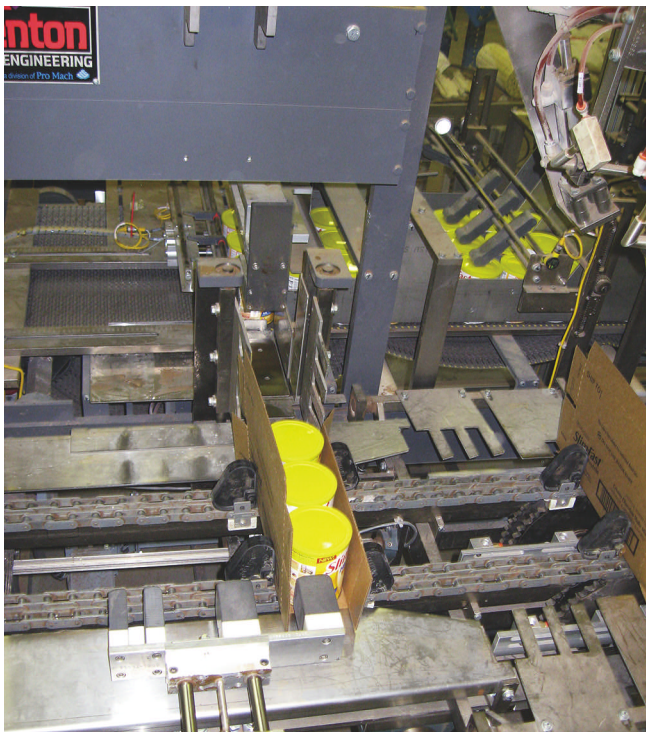




operation. The cans pass through a twisting section at the outlet of the labeler that sets them upright on the conveyor so the peelable membrane is on the top, after which they are conveyed to a machine from **Del Packaging, Inc. (www.delpackaging.com)** that snaps plastic overcaps over the foil membranes on the tops of the cans.

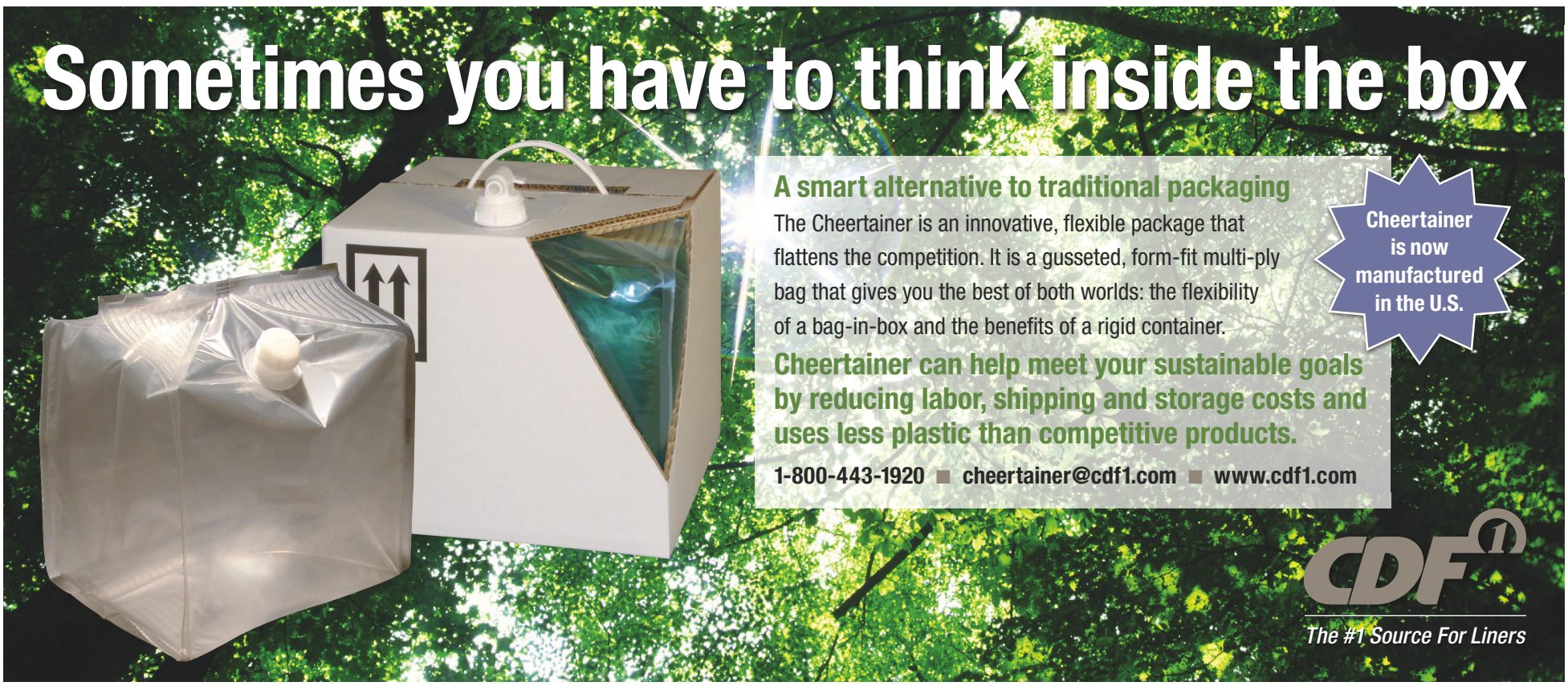
Next, the cans pass through an x-ray inspection unit from **Smiths Detection (www.smithsdetectionpid.com)** that checks them for contaminants.

Two wraparound case packers

After the x-ray inspection system, the canisters go through a diverter that splits the flow to two wraparound case packers from **Brenton Eng. (www.brentonengineering.com), a division of Pro-Mach**. "We had a Brenton Series 32 case packer that we bought in 2005 for another application that has done an excellent job for us," says Gnewuch. "We decided to move it to the new packaging line, but the new line runs sixty three-pack cases of canisters/min, which is too fast for one machine, so we bought a second Brenton unit for the new line. The existing machine was a left-hand unit, so we bought the new packer in a right-hand configuration, so the controls face each other, which makes it easy for one operator to handle both packers.

"It was an easy decision to buy another Brenton," says Gnewuch. "They really stand behind their products. Right from the beginning, they told us, 'Tell us what you want, and we'll make it do it.' I can't say enough good

Lake Country Foods has two wraparound case packers, each of which runs 30 three-pack cases of canisters/minute.



A diverter splits the flow of canisters to the two casepackers.

things about them."

Lake Country runs 24 stock keeping units in seven pack patterns on the line, including three-, six- and 12-count patterns. During PD's visit, the line was running three packs of 12-oz canisters. The intermittent case packer operation is powered by a line shaft and begins with vacuum cups removing case blanks from a magazine and placing them on a set of flight chains initially forming the leading and trailing sides of the box while the bottom major flaps are trapped and contained in preparation of the product being loaded into the case.

Simultaneously, the cans of product enter a flood-feed-style infeed and are assembled into the appropriate number of rows. A servo-driven loader then pushes the cans into the waiting, partially formed case. The servo motor used allows for a very fast, but controlled movement that enables the casepacker to maintain the needed seed and product containment. The loader plate is then raised to allow the next rows of product to collate, while the loader assembly returns to its home position.

The case packer indexes the loaded case through the process of folding in the minor flaps, applying the glue to these flaps and then compressing the major flaps onto the glued areas and holding them in this position long enough for the glue to set. The completed case then discharges from the machine, ready for shipment.

The theme of this Brenton casepacker is high efficiency accomplished through precise control of all inputs. Canisters are tightly controlled to ensure they are in the right place at the right time. Most importantly, the case blanks are tightly controlled, so they never interfere with product loading.

Changing from one canister size or pack size to another is very easy. "Most of the changes required to run different canister and pack sizes can be handled through the menus that reside in the machine controls," says Gnewuch, "and the mechanical changes are done by cranks with numerical readouts. A changeover only takes about 10 min."

More information is available:

All-Fill, Inc., 610/524-7350.
www.all-fill.com.
Brenton Eng. Co., 320/852-7705.
www.brentonengineering.com.
Confab Systems, Inc., 708/388-4103.
www.confabsystems.com.
Del Packaging, Inc., 281/653-0099.
www.delpackaging.com.
Palace Packaging Machines, Inc., 610/873-7275.
www.unscramblers.com.
Richpak Machinery, Inc., 312/225-1207.
Smiths Detection, 865/379-1670.
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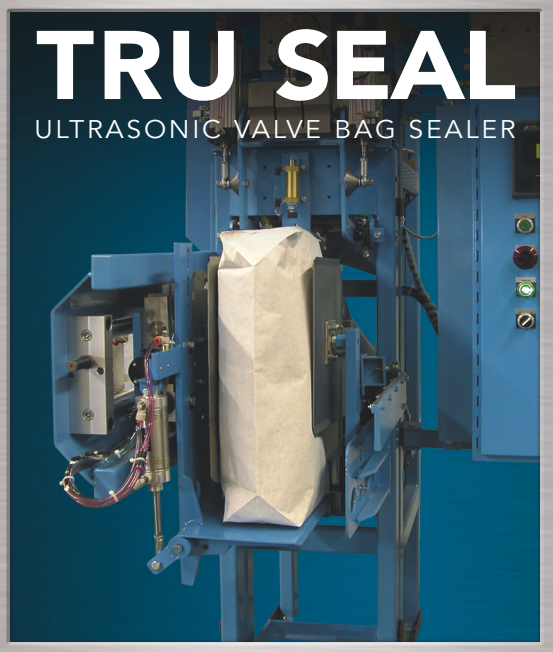

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bag coding

Whelen Eng. needed a printer that could work with 8-in. widths and found one just as it was being introduced to the U.S. market. Below, bags of warning lights require plenty of printed data.

Printers signal benefits for bags

Whelen Eng., a manufacturer of lights, beacons, sirens and other warning equipment, adopts large-format thermal-transfer coding for its bagging operation. The results INCREASE THROUGHPUT.

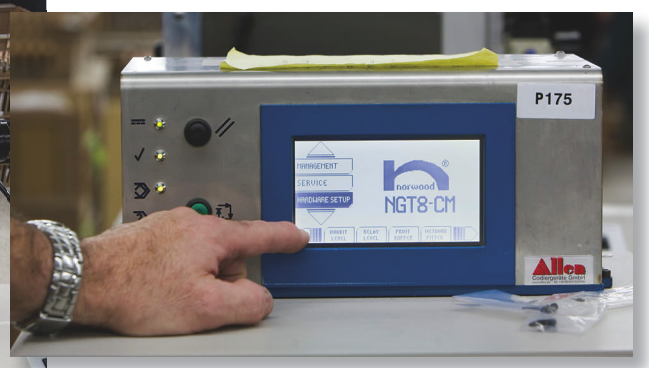
Whelen Eng., Chester, CT, designs and manufactures lights, beacons, sirens and other warning equipment for emergency vehicles such as police cars, ambulances and fire trucks. Dedicated to manufacturing in the U.S., Whelen stays competitive in the world market by leveraging automation in creative ways to minimize operating costs while maximizing product quality.

To eliminate the need to insert instruction manuals into each of its packages, Whelen searched for an in-line printer that could print the instructions directly on the packages during the bagging operation. To impart the needed information, they needed to achieve an 8-in.-W print area. The company found the NGT Series of large format thermal-transfer coding systems from **Norwood Marking Systems/Allen Coding Systems (www.itw-norwood.com).** Capable of producing the largest print area of any thermal transfer coder in the world, the NGT printers have allowed Whelen to reduce manufacturing costs and improve production flexibility while also increasing its throughput.

Large-format a must

"We went looking for a thermal-transfer printer that could do large-format printing," notes Jon Hardy, supervisor of manufacturing engineering at Whelen. "We found several systems that produced two- and four-inch widths and a couple that produced five-inch widths. But we wanted a printer that could achieve an eight-inch width. We came to Norwood/Allen just as they were introducing their NGT printers in the U.S."

The NGT 8 C that Whelen selected can produce a print area up to 8.4 in. wide and 19.68 in. long.



Bag rollstock, left, is printed on-demand. The back side is clear, while the front is white to produce a sharp backdrop for black type. Touchscreen interface control box, above, enables operators to recall images and edit at print time.

Whelen manufacturers several thousand different products at its Charlestown, NH plant. Each product requires instructions that provide users with the information needed to assemble and mount the part. Prior to installing the Norwood/Allen printers, operators at the bagging operation inserted preprinted instruction sheets into each bag, sometimes folding the 8½×11-in, sheets in half or in quarters to fit inside the package.

Says Hardy, "We were motivated to print the instructions on the bags in an effort to reallocate labor to more productive tasks. With three in-line printers installed so far, we've managed to move three people handling the printing, storing and folding of the instruction manuals to more productive tasks."

Whelen's initial decision to install the new printers was economic in nature, he adds. "We didn't fully anticipate the many benefits that would come from this shift to printing on-demand."

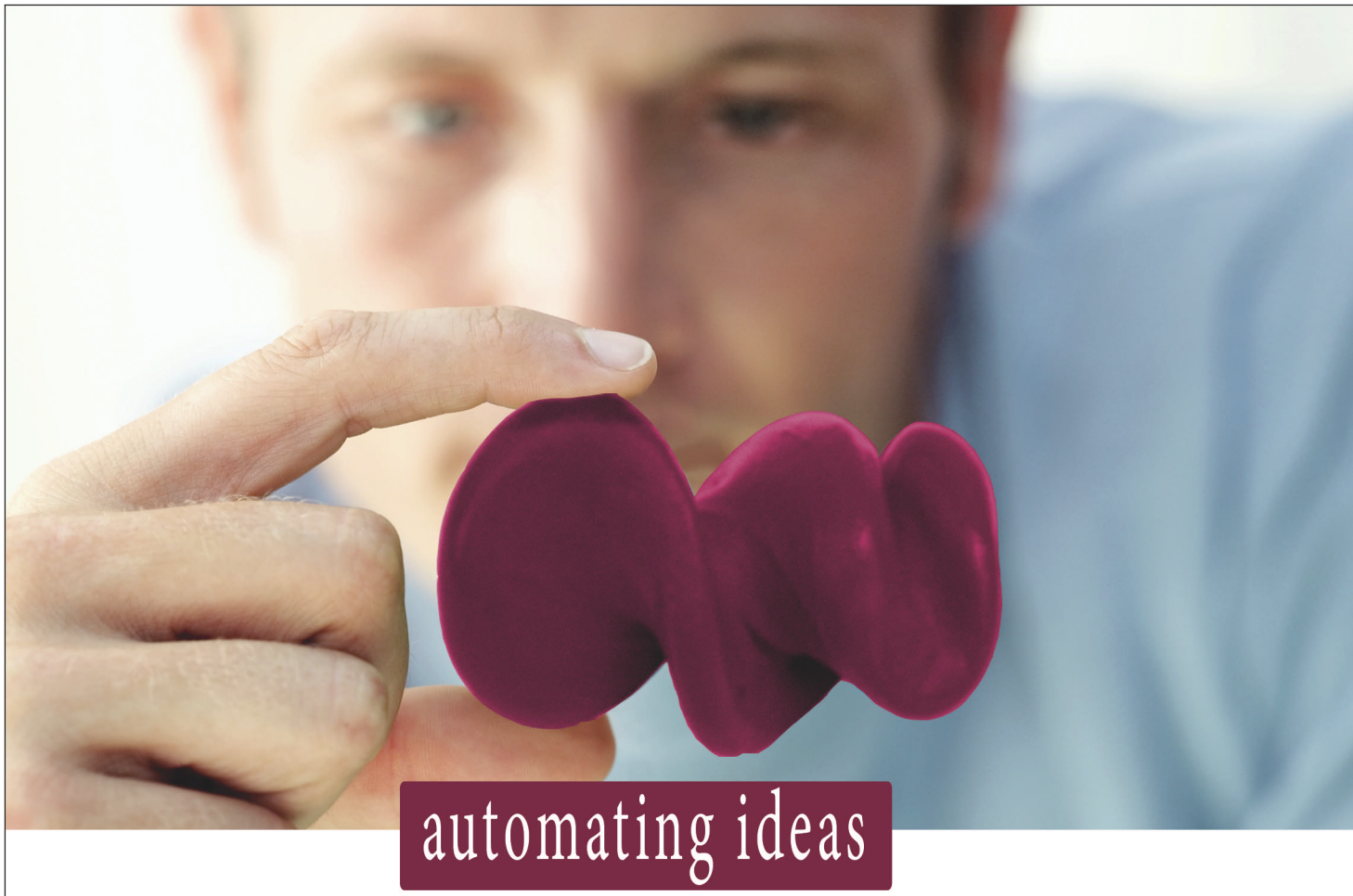
Our move to automated printing potentially increases the bagging rate by three times.

Boosts operator throughput

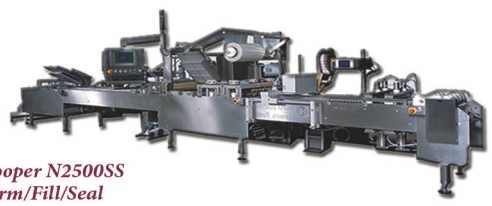
Eliminating the need to fold and insert preprinted instruction sheets into each bag enables the operators at the bagging station to increase their throughput. "It only takes two seconds to bag and seal a product, but it could take four seconds to fold the paper," says Hardy. "Our move to automated printing potentially increases the bagging rate by three times."

The change also eliminates the repetitive task of folding

Continued on page 52



G. Mondini EVO Tray Sealer



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and inserting the papers, which makes the operators' job easier.

"We were printing several million instruction sheets per year," adds Bob Dubois, manufacturing engineer at the Charlestown, NH plant. "Eliminating as many of these sheets as possible helps save valuable resources and this new approach is better for the environment. It also gives us more production flexibility."

Printing on-demand allows Whelen to ensure that the instructions are absolutely current. It eliminates the possibility that out-of-date instruction sheets or an incorrect sheet is inserted into the package. Whelen is also now able to easily customize the print on the package for a particular customer, which is especially valuable in today's environment where bagging to-order is increasingly preferred in an effort to reduce finished goods inventory, says Hardy.

We didn't fully anticipate the many benefits that would come from this shift to printing on-demand.

In addition to printing the lengthy instruction manual onto the polyethylene bags, Whelen prints the product description, a bar code and the date. These elements are automatically formatted by **Teklynx® (www.teklynx.com)** Sentinel™ Software, which also allows the Norwood/Allen printers to be integrated with Whelen's plant-wide network via the NGT's integrated Ethernet card.

As of presstime, Whelen says that it has developed and formatted more than 100 instruction images, which replace almost 800 unique printed pages by consolidating various connector and lens color variations. With batch manufacturing that typically includes 500 to 1,000 units per run, Whelen often changes the printer over 30 times a day.

When an operator prepares for a new product run, they enter a job number into Whelen's software running on a local PC. This triggers the network to access the instruction sheet for that product, which is saved as a jpg file on one of Whelen's network servers.

The network sends a jpg file to the

Continued on page 54

The PE film bags are printed at 300 dpi resolution, both horizontally and vertically, and can incorporate a wide choice of font styles. Whelen can change the printers over as many as 30 times a day.

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[1]Boustead I, Eco-profiles of the European Plastics Industry, PlasticsEurope, Avenue E van Nieuwenhuyse 4, B-1160, Brussels, Belgium. http://www.lca.plasticseurope.org

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software, which integrates the image in real-time with the product's text description, bar code and the date of manufacture, appending the file and sending it to the appropriate printer.

The polyethylene bags are supplied to Whelen preformed on rolls. They are transparent on the back so that the product is visible through the package. They have a white front panel to produce crisp black-on-white printing. The bags, which range in size from 5×7 in. to as large as 10½×15 in., are printed in-line with a resolution of 300 dots/in., both horizontally and vertically. An unlimited choice of TrueType font styles and a wide range of font sizes are available with the NGT. Six fonts come standard and there is space for 44 more.

The NGT Series of thermal-transfer printers are available in several different models—both intermittent and continuous-motion—for a variety of applications and to achieve different maximum print areas and print speeds. Whelen's continuous-motion NGT 8 C can produce the largest print area

of the series—up to 8.4×19.68 in. at speeds up to 9.8 in./sec.

Manufactured by Norwood/Allen's distributor, **AC Codiergeräte GmbH (www.ac-coding.com)**, in Germany, with robust mechanics and superior components, the durable NGT Series of coders improves reliability to maximize production throughput. A pivoting frame provides operators with easy access for maintenance and adjustments.

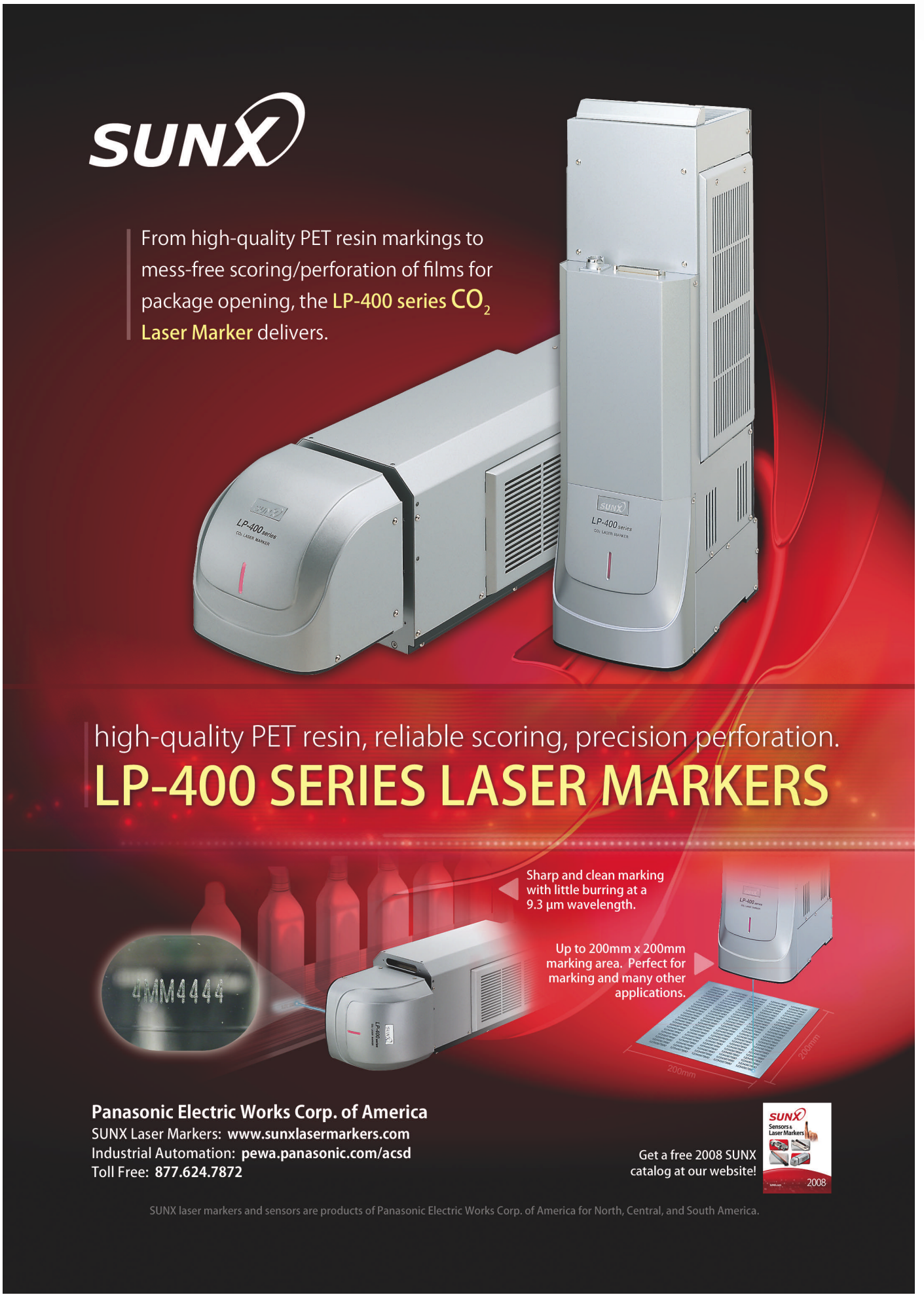
We found several systems but wanted a printer that could achieve an eight-inch width.

Whelen installed its first NGT printer in January 2007 and a second in March 2007, followed by a third in November 2007. "We measure the success of the printers based on print quality, reliability and ease of use, notes Dubois. "We're very satisfied with the NGT printers."

Adds Hardy, "The bottom line is that the printers have allowed us to move three people to more productive tasks. So the project was a home-run hit. The rest is icing on the cake."

More information is available:

Norwood/Allen, 630/968-0646.
www.itw-norwood.com.
AC Codiergeräte GmbH,
43 (0)1 699 26 40.
www.ac-coding.com.
Teklynx, 414/535-6200.
www.teklynx.com.



Green sales for green bottles

Shrink-sleeve converter Packstar shines when it comes to creating sustainable labels.

Packstar tests the PLA film on all of its lines, such as this Aquaflex press, to ensure that the substrate can be used on all its machinery.

Jorina Fontelera, Converting Magazine

It's only fitting that Garnier Fructis haircare products from Maybelline are in bright green bottles, given its campaign to use sustainable packaging. The cosmetics giant teamed up with flex-pack converter **Packstar Flexible Packaging (www.packstargroup.com)** in Buffalo, NY, to create polylactide-acid-based (PLA) shrink labels for the shampoo and conditioner containers.

"Maybelline jumped in head first," says Andy Sharp, chief executive officer of Packstar. "They chose with to go with PLA labels because it was easier to add sustainability in its manufacturing process with labels than with bottles."

In 2007, Packastar produced 20 million PLA labels for Maybelline. Because the customer switched to using PLA instead of a polyvinyl chloride (PVC) or polyethylene terephthalate glycol (PETG) label substrate, it saved the equivalent of 17,500 gal of gasoline, according to Sharp's report from Packstar film provider **Plastic Suppliers (www.plasticsuppliers.com).** "This is a good true-life situation that really shows the quantifiable savings of oil," Sharp says.

Along with Maybelline, Packstar also ran 1 million

Continued on page 56

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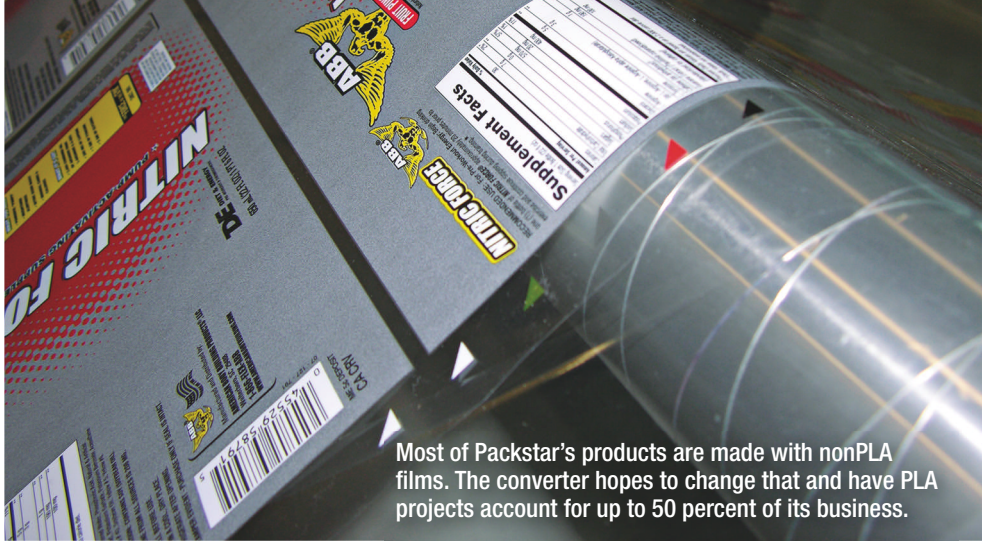
PLA shrink labels for a Coca-Cola campaign in Mexico in 2006. Coke also used PLA shrink labels for its World of Coke interactive stores this past summer and will continue to do so. The converter, which now has 20 percent of its business coming from PLA projects, plans to continue working with Maybelline, Coke and others, to expand its sustainable labels and packaging business up to 50 percent in the next two years.

Seeds of sustainability

In two and a half years, Packstar has modified its machinery to work with PLA and has done significant research and development to find end markets and uses for PLA. It is now looking to further expand its sustainable packaging expertise by looking into compostable inks to make a fully-compostable label.



Most of Packstar's products are made with nonPLA films. The converter hopes to change that and have PLA projects account for up to 50 percent of its business.

It all began at PACK EXPO Las Vegas 2005 when Packstar heard about **Natureworks (www.natureworksllc.com),** which makes the PLA resins. Natureworks provided Packstar with a life-cycle assessment that goes from the plant to the pellet/resin and showed that creating PLA shrink film produced fewer carbon-dioxide emissions and required less energy than making shrink film from PETG or PVC.

Using PLA doesn't require wholesale changes. You just need an understanding of the film.

Devoted to moving its converting operations from polyester to PLA and changing the impact of PLA on the packaging market, Packstar pursued cobranding with Natureworks. The converter also cobrands with Plastic Suppliers, which extrudes the Natureworks resins and creates the EarthFirst® film for Packstar.

"We've been very excited (about sustainability) and learned to set our converting operations to run (PLA)," Sharp says.

PLA takes root

Packstar began testing the film on its existing equipment and making modifications on all its lines so that PLA can be used with all machinery. "Using PLA doesn't require wholesale changes," Sharp explains, "you just need an understanding of the film and learn to adjust the

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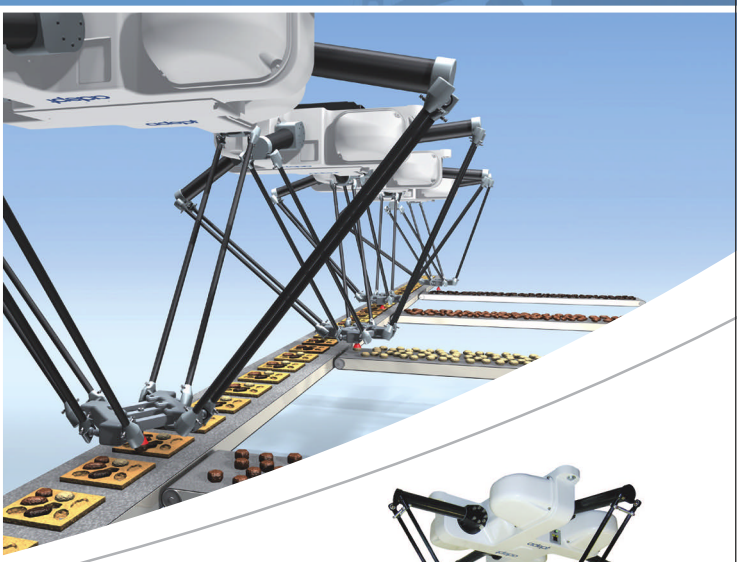

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PLA film takes ink very well using flexo or gravure presses, such as the units above. Packstar currently uses non-recyclable ink but is looking to change that.

settings—and at that, you don't have to analyze much."

Packstar does printing, slitting, seaming and rewinding applications with the PLA. In addition to its renewable characteristics, PLA's other benefits became clear to Packstar after working with the film. The converter found that PLA takes ink very well using flexographic and gravure presses. And because of its rigidity, PLA is not only good as film, but it's also good for building strength in thin-walled plastic containers, Sharp adds.

As an added bonus, PLA can be stored in temperatures up to 104 deg F and will not shrink, but at the same time it takes less heat to shrink it onto a package. "Once it is beyond the 104 deg, it shrinks quickly," Sharp says. "Once it starts, it keeps going. Not only does it save energy on its production, but it saves energy being used as film."

Branching out

Currently, the inks used for shrink-film printing are typically not recyclable. Packstar, however, is looking to change that. "We are currently looking into compostable inks," Sharp explains. "We use water-, UV- and solvent-based inks right now. Having fully-compostable inks is the next evolution. There's certain R&D needed, and as the market continues to evolve, the demand (for compostable inks) will force ink vendors to find a solution."

To stay in touch with the latest research findings regarding sustainability, Packstar joined the **Sustainable Packaging Coalition (www.sustainablepackaging.org),** which studies the different theories about sustainability, how to put them into practice and how to capture savings.

"People want the truth, what is known fact and what is theory, and what the impacts of these are," Sharp says. "We can't convert the mass of consumer products to materials that require less petroleum, but it has to start somewhere. We feel we're doing our part."

Perhaps like PLA shrink-film shrinking, once it starts, it keeps going. PLA has been Packstar's fastest-growing segment with double-digit growth in the last seven years, and Sharp sees no slowdown.

More information is available:

Packstar Flexible Packaging, 716/853-1688. **www.packstargroup.com.**
Natureworks, 800/664-6436. **www.natureworksllc.com.**
Plastic Suppliers, 800/722-5577. **www.plasticsuppliers.com.**
Sustainable Packaging Coalition, 434/817-1424 x309. **www.sustainablepackaging.org.**

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sustainability

Recently, I participated in a panel discussion on sustainable packaging at the first Environmental Sustainability Summit, hosted by the Grocery Manufacturers Association. During the week of the meeting, I scanned the *New York Times* and found several articles that reflect how profoundly different today's operating conditions for business are versus those of previous decades. This highlighted the timeliness of a sustainability summit for global consumer packaged goods companies.

A changing world changes packaging

For a relatively small portion of the world's population, abundant natural resources have fueled vigorous economic growth for more 200 years. Over the same time, in agricultural-based parts of the world where the quality of life falls significantly shy of that enjoyed by industrialized countries, there has been tremendous population growth. Today, we are witnessing the industrialization of these countries. In 2007, the United Nations estimated that for the first time in human history more people live in urban centers than in rural areas. This shift reflects a significant improvement in the quality of life for many and a commensurate increase in consumption habits. It also marks the end of the era of abundant natural resources.

The headlines that caught my attention captured the essence of why sustainability is growing in importance to companies and users of packaging: "Chinese and U.S. demand drives commodities surge;" and "New, global oil quandry: Costly fuel means costly calories." Growing global demand for energy and other resources is hitting home. Companies are experiencing not only increasing energy prices, but also increasing commodity prices, from metals to corn.

As Michael Lewis of Deutsche Bank said in the *New York Times,* "You are trying to feed people, cattle, and cars, so you have this global fight between food and energy."

There is a tendency to think of the three pillars of sustainability—people, profit, planet—as independent of each other. But now, we are in an era where commercial profitability and human well-being are inextricably linked to effective stewardship of limited resources.

As demand for resources grows, the role of packaging becomes more important and materials more valuable. Packaging must become more efficient because it competes for the same energy and materials used in products. Packaging also must become more effective because the products it protects are becoming more precious. The situation demands more sustainable packaging.

It is clear that we need to pursue energy and material efficiency, but we are fatally handicapped if we don't address our reliance on fossil fuels and continue to landfill valuable material resources.

The fact that companies, which play a global role in economics, demand for resources and influence on consumer behavior, are collectively taking up the challenges facing a more sustainable world is an encouraging sign.

Anne Johnson is the director of the Sustainable Packaging Coalition, a project of GreenBlue (www.greenblue.org). For additional information, email info@sustainablepackaging.org.

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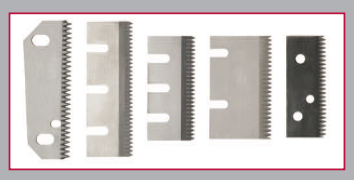

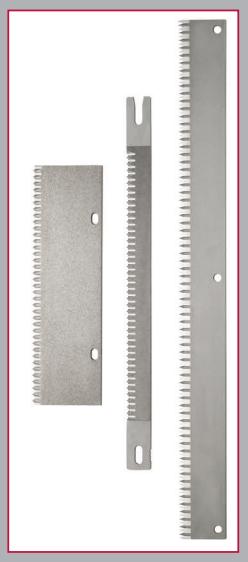

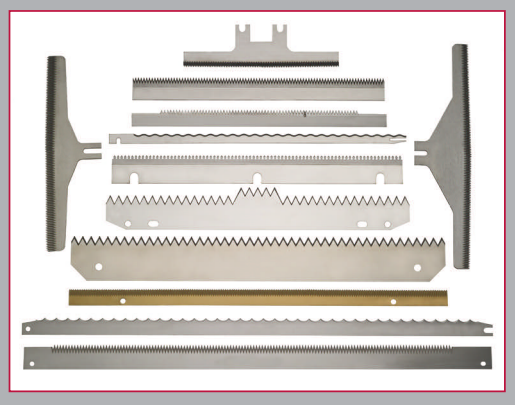

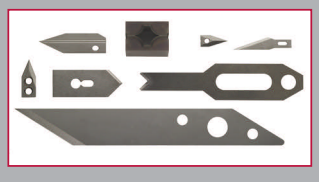

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www.sustainability-in-packaging.com

Sustainability conference emphasizes action items

Sessions offer a comprehensive agenda **FOR PACKAGERS** interested in implementation.

Most businesses now recognize the need for sustainability in packaging but question exactly how to successfully build it into their processes. That's the goal of "Sustainability in Packaging 2008," to be held March 12 through March 13 at the Royal Plaza Hotel in Orlando.

The conference, sponsored jointly by **IntertechPIRA (www.interechpira.com)** and *Packaging Digest*, has a lineup of respected leaders in packaging sustainability, featuring leading brands like Mars, Hasbro, Whole Foods, Burts Bees, Nestle, Kimberley Clark, Coca-Cola and Stony Fields Farms, as well as packaging players like International Paper, Amcor and MeadWestvaco. The full agenda is available at **www.sustainability-in-packaging.com.**

"Sustainability is not a new consideration for the packaging industry, but a massive rise in interest from consumers, retailers and other industry stakeholders means that it's now a board-level priority across the industry," says Ciaran Little, events leader for IntertechPIRA. "The next challenge is the practicality once companies have commited to sustainable packaging. How do they choose from the wide range of material and process choices available?"

The conference program has more than 40 speakers, representing the entire supply chain. It includes tracks dedicated to all aspects of sustainability, giving it a comprehensive agenda. Nearly 300 attendees are expected to attend.

On March 11, a pre-conference workshop offers individuals who are newer to sustainable concepts a chance to get up to speed prior to the conference. The workshop will include the fundamentals of lifecycle analysis and carbon footprint assessments. Attendees will have access to experts, positioning them for maximum benefit during the conference.

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Winning one competition, then another, then another...

The New Jersey Packaging Executives Club's Package of Year is a 'toothed' wheel displaying art to merchandise a soft drink.

Bernard Abrams, Contributing Editor

Spinning your wheels often means getting nowhere. For **Integrated Display Co. (www.idcdisplay.com),** it becomes a matter of winning one competition and then capturing a top spot in another competition.

And the rationale for the first competition leads to yet another one.

Shedding enlightenment on the whole situation is Charles Blecker, senior production manager at Pepsico in Purchase, NY. He explains that the first competition traces to a promotion of Pepsico's Mountain Dew® brand carbonated soft drink to submit original label designs, with few holds barred.

The winning designs would go into production as limited edition 16-oz impact extruded aluminum bottles made and printed via dry offset by **CCL Container (www.cclcontainer.com).**

With the top designer reportedly also winning $10,000 in what is dubbed the Green Label Art program, consumers select the designs they like best. In last year's competition, a host of finalists, from professional artists to cheerfully creative doodlers, was shaved down to a quartet of designs, each of these then moved to the production phase.

To help generate interest in the program and orders for the limited-edition bottles, Blecker tells PD: "We requested among several suppliers ideas for a test-market display kit for the four bottles with winning label designs. It would go to key buyers, store managers and others who could have it as a keepsake, and would also serve the brand as a public relations tool."

Submitting what became the winning display

The 2007 NJPEC competition featured the **LUCKY BRAND FRAGRANCE** line and an intriguing eye shadow compact from Bare Escentuals. Read about them at **www.packagingdigest.com/njpec07**

design, Integrated Display took advantage of its own extensive production facilities and equally impressive capabilities of its parent, **Integrated Packaging Corp. (www.ipcboxes.com),** for an omnibus solution.

The total presentation was then submitted to the annual competition of the **New Jersey Packaging Executives Club (www.njpec.com)** where it was first

We requested among suppliers ideas for a test-market display kit for the bottles with winning label designs.

selected for the gold award in the promotional packaging category and then voted the 2007 Package of the Year.

Inspired by the Lazy Susan concept, the display is a black, acrylic laser-cut gearwheel with 29 teeth. It is resin-bonded to a clear, rigid, extruded acrylic tube, a thumb-width-high, that is similarly attached to a rotating black polystyrene turntable with four equidistant, rubber nonskid pads.

Screen-printed in green with the words "green label art," the gearwheel is also lasered to include two holes to accept the caddy—a Stardust silver, powder-coated, rigid wire carry handle with four rings each at two different heights that support and contain the aluminum bottles. The handle has threaded ends attached to the gear wheel by washers and nuts.

When loaded with the bottles, the dramatic display can be rotated manually for viewing. When more that one display is required, the gear wheels interlock for coordinated movement. Either way, it's art in motion.

Protecting the fully loaded display is a custom-fabricated, circular foam insert that locks onto the carry handle and bottle necks. The unitized load then is inserted into what is basically a highly decorated mailing tube.

This six-piece, full-telescope style canister from Integrated is a neat feat. Inner spiral-wound board tubes give heft to the structure, the bottom one fitted with an E-flute corrugated ring to support the display's weight in-transit. The outer board cylinders are wrapped with paper printed with a satiny PMS 277 silver. The polypropylene end caps are hot-melt-glued to the cylinder. Decorating the lid is a circular die-cut paper pressure-sensitive label that Integrated offset-prints in three colors. Graphics include the Mountain Dew logo and the words, "green label art."

"Using the gearwheel was an approach we considered from the start of the program," Integrated Display president Stu Kaitz informs PD. "The wire caddy facilitates viewing of the label designs from all sides and all angles." It's also a way to help turn a soft drink's numbers. For details on yet another NJPEC winner, see p. 62.

More information is available:

New Jersey Packaging Executives Club, 973/429-2177. **www.njpec.com.**
CCL Container, 724/981-4420. **www.cclcontainer.com.**
Integrated Display Co., 212/924-6400. **www.idcdisplay.com.**
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...then another

Taking the air out of **micro dosing**

AGI DERMATICS 'pens' a new way to dispense a microcirculation skin cream in metered quantities.

Bernard Abrams, Contributing Editor

It's getting pointless to be upright, especially since AGI Dermatics of Freeport, NY, is discovering the benefits of all-position micro dosing for its newest microcirculation, or skin-stimulating, cream.

Fred Carr, president of Remergent Line/AGI Dermatics, recalls developing an immediate interest in the dispensing system when it was first introduced about two years ago. "We felt that it was unique, provided dosage metering, was compact and offered other features we wanted in a package," he informs PD.

And so last year, after stability and other studies, Carr dedicated its new Remergent™ Microcirculation Therapy skin cream to the pioneering package, the Airless Metered Dose Pen from **Lucas Packaging Group (www.lucaspackaging.com).**

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Executives' Club (NJPEC) competition, the over-the-counter product is sold, Carr explains, in between 600 and 700 physicians' offices and through the SkincareRx website. "It is being extremely well-received," he notes.

He says that he sees the package, measuring just under 6½-in.-long, as an excellent vehicle for the cream, which reportedly bolsters the skin's microcirculation, relieves the appearance of under-eye fatigue and helps to encourage optimum balance of the skin.

With the 15-mL version of the package AGI uses, each package is designed to deliver 150 metered doses. The label copy suggests twice-a-day use.

Fabricated of polypropylene and high-density polyethylene components, the package functions by evacuation of air via an airless pump system. During the pumping action, air draws on a diaphragm in the product chamber. This in turn dispenses a metered quantity of the cream through an orifice at the container's upper end, where cleanliness is assured by a friction-fit PP overcap.

At the other end, a pushbutton cap opens with a counter-clockwise twist and alignment of two molded-in arrows. It closes by reversing the movement to prevent accidental dispensing.

The system enables all-position dispensing; the package can be used with lotions, gels, serums and liquids.

The white Remergent container is decorated in two colors by a heat-transfer label.

The enclosed, airless system, says Lucas president Frank Francavilla, "enables all-position dispensing and means that the package can be used with active ingredients for formulations including lotions, gels, serums and liquids." He also notes that the container is fillable by traditional methods.

Appreciation for the level of innovation of the Remergent package is the double award presented in the annual NJPEC competition. It captures the Technical Innovation award and then wins the gold award in the Pharmaceutical Packaging category.

Francaville says he sees a tremendous potential product range for the package, in that active ingredients can be readily used in its airless environment.

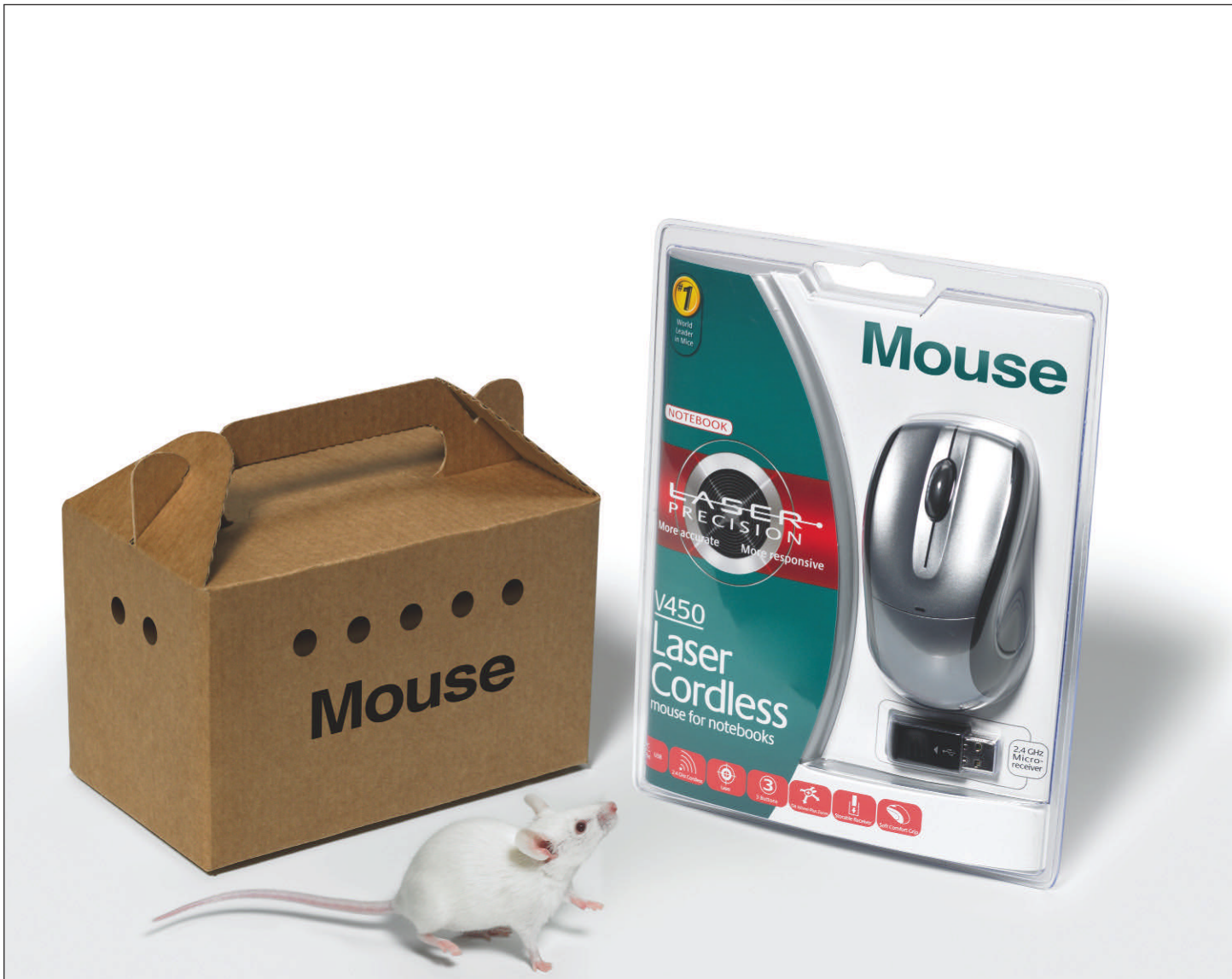
Along with the Remergent cream, the package dispenses serums, gels, ointments and lotions.

This is possible not only through the nature of the structure itself but also because the orifice is customizable, he confirms.

The company is also introducing two additional capacities to the 15-mL size used by AGI, and says the outer container can be molded in any PMS color and accepts a variety of decoration processes including heat transfer, hot stamping or screen printing.

More information is available:

Lucas Packaging Group,
973/903-3561.
www.lucaspackaging.com.



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system integration

The **Control System Integrator Association (CSIA at www.controlsys.org)** has announced that its membership has reached 300 companies, one-third of which have achieved certified member status. The CSIA's certification audit looks at an integrator's business procedures to assure an end user that the integrator actually has defined procedures and has documented them thoroughly.

Hiring a CSIA-certified integrator is a safe bet, but certification isn't the only criteria to consider when choosing an integrator for an automation project. Familiarity with the packaging industry is an obvious plus. Here are some additional questions to ask a candidate:

Ask many questions of potential system integrators: Here are a few examples

•How long has your firm been doing integration work in the packaging industry? Many integrators can transfer their skills from related industries, but there's no substitute for direct experience.

•Are your engineers knowledgeable about the specific applications involved in our project? Virtually all automation engineers know how to program a PLC, but do they know how to configure a checkweigher or a metal detector?

•Can you demonstrate successful completion of past projects? Don't just read references the integrator provides. It's wise to contact their previous clients directly.

•Are your engineers up to date on the latest technologies and standards? Many vendors offer certification programs for engineers who can demonstrate a thorough understanding of a vendors' products.

•How far into our plant's business systems can you integrate information flowing to and from the automation system? Some integrators are better at extracting and presenting useful information.

•Do you have the necessary strategic partners for this project? System integrators affiliated with some vendors can get special training, support and product pricing.

•Do you have experienced engineers and project managers who are available to commit to our project? The best personnel won't do you any good if they're assigned to someone else's project.

•Do you have resources local to our plant(s)? Some tasks can be undertaken from afar, but having an integrator nearby is handy.

•Is your project methodology suitable for our project? Be wary of integrators who think they have a one-size-fits-all solution.

•What kind of documentation and training can you provide? Automation is useless if no one knows how to use it.

•Can you assume complete turnkey responsibility for the entire project? Some specialized integrators can only address specific tasks.

•Will you be available to handle follow-up work? CSIA certification is an indicator of an integrator's potential longevity.

Steve Clouther of the ARC Advisory Group contributed to this list.

Consulting Editor Vance J. VanDoren, Ph.D., P.E., contributes articles on process control, advanced control and systems integration and edits Control Engineering's and Packaging Digest's annual Automation Integrator Guide.

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Parts feeder The DS1100 eliminates hand loading of injection-molding equipment and helps reduce repetitive motion. A seven-axis articulating robotic arm provides greater dexterity for unloading parts from trays to conveyors and reloading them. The product improves the over/under conveyor design that delivers parts to the machine and takes completed parts or empty trays from the machine. The product's primary function is feeding parts to assembly operations, but it also can be specified as a compact machine tool loader.
Distech Systems, Inc., 585/254-7020.
www.distechsystems.com

Vertical feeder The co. announces the introduction of the Model NEVF vertical feeder. This design is ideal for feeding containers directly into a puck or a starwheel; if supplied with its own starwheel, the feeder will discharge onto the customer's conveyor. The vertical feeder integrates well with a filler, feeding the containers precisely into the filler's starwheel. Small and/or unstable containers can be fed easily into pucks. The product offers a small footprint and has an integrated hopper and the machine's belt-less design is perfect for pharmaceutical applications, the co. says. The machine can be changed over to run a wide range of products.
New England Machinery, Inc., 941/755-5550.
www.neminc.com

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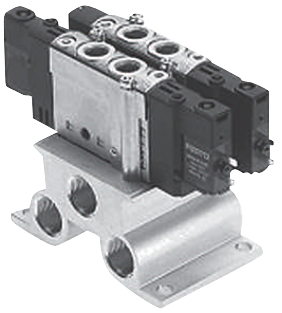

Solenoid valve The CPE solenoid valve offers aluminum manifolds and M8 solenoid connections. The CPE can be used as an individual valve or can be mounted on a sturdy aluminum manifold to simplify installation. The valve features flow rates of 350-, 800- and 1,500 L/min, a low power consumption of 1 or 1.5 w and switching times as low as 12 ms. The aluminum manifold comes in lengths of 2, 3, 4 and 10 valve positions. The positions can be covered by a blanking plate for future expansion. The co. says it has a long service life. **Festo Corp.,** 800/993-3786.
www.festo.com/usa

Sanitary conveyor The co. announces that its flexible screw conveyor for bulk foods, pharmaceuticals, dairy products and other contamination-sensitive materials meets 3-A sanitary standards. A coupling design specific to the 3-A unit, positioned beyond the point at which material exits the discharge spout, virtually eliminates the potential of contamination while allowing quick disconnection of the screw from the motor drive for washdown. The only moving part contacting material is a flexible inner screw that self-centers as it rotates, providing clearance between itself and the tube wall and creating a gentle rolling action said to prevent the separation of blended materials.
Flexicon Corp., 888/353-9426.
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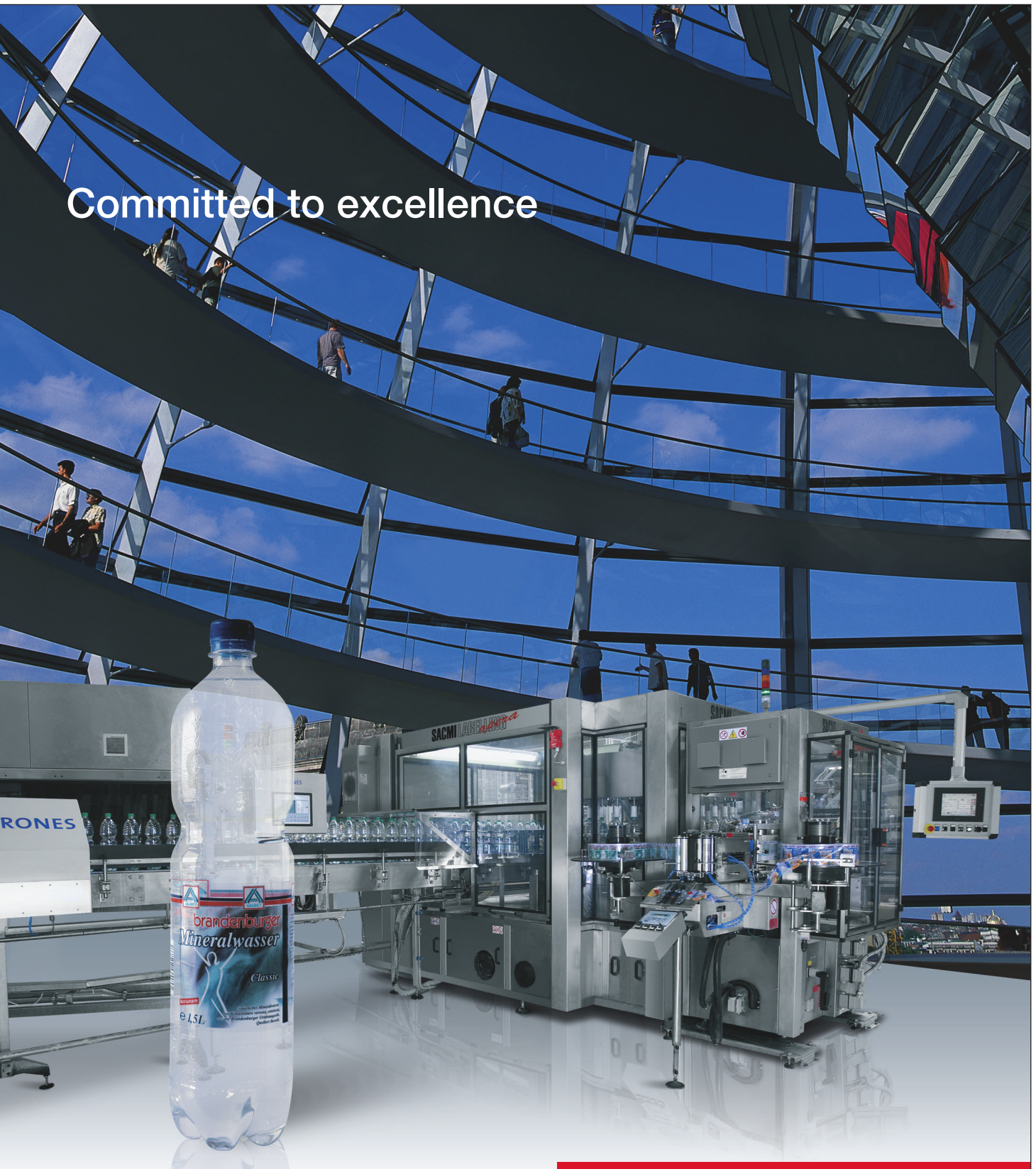

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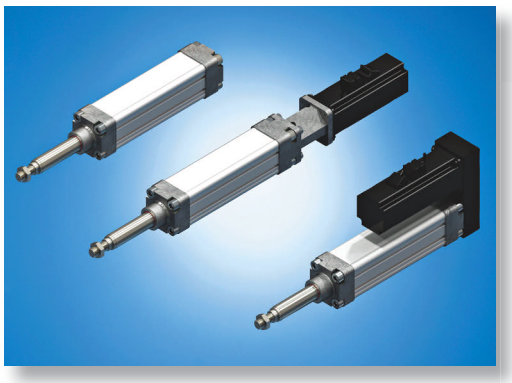

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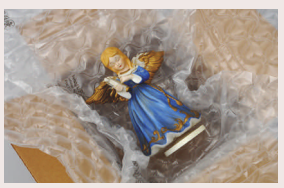

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Continued from page 28

Purina Pet Care, St. Louis, for its Fancy Feast Gourmet Gold dry cat food (7). Converted by **Nordenia U.S.A. (www.nordeniausa.com),** the FlexBox earned a gold award for Printing Achievement. Nestle, which launched the bag in mid-2007, reports that it achieved an upgraded brand image and minimzed flex cracking by moving from a paper sack to the side-gusseted glossy film bag, which offers a proprietary, resealable tape closure and protection from infestation.

The PET/PE laminated bagstock also keeps grease and moisture inside and guards against punctures and damage from handling. The bag maintains Purina's brand identity with high-impact graphics and additional billboard space that allows for improved visual communication with the consumer.

Nestle uses the premade film bag in 3- and 7-lb sizes. The resealable tape also helps to keep the package fresh after opening and it prevents infestation. In fact, the film bag maintains freshness so well that consumers no longer need to transfer the food to a secondary container.

Nordenia produces the high-performance, multilayer barrier bag structure at its plant in Jackson, MO, using film printed on a **Windmoeller & Hoelscher (www.whcorp.com)** press. Designed by the **Thompson Design Group (www.ttdg.com)**, the value-added package is reverse-gravure-printed in six colors using MX inks furnished by Germany's **Siegwerk Farbenfabrik (www.siegwerk-group.com).**

Thanks to a single web design, the sides and bottom of the bag are covered in wraparound graphics for optimal presentation at point-of-sale, which improves brand identity and adds billboard space for more visual communication to consumers. The luxurious white cat pictured in the main photo vignette appears lifelike against a draping background while the food itself is illustrated in a crystal bowl, conveying sophistication and a quality image that differentiate the product from competitors.

The bag is made on a side-gusset machine from **B&B-MAF (www.bub-maf.com).** Nordenia indicates that the bag is so durable and moisture-resistant that it may actually be stored outside without fear of damage, and thus helps

minimize reclaim costs and bad product. Pet owners are able to scoop or pour the dry food right from the bag and reseal it using the reclosure tape on the back.

Nestle modified existing filling equipment to accommodate the FlexBox style of packaging. With minimal downtime and training of operators, the company was able to meet targeted efficiencies and speeds on its filling lines, PD is told.

The consistent size and shape of the package make it highly cube-efficient, neat and attractive on store shelves. The seal seams along the sides make the FlexBox stable and help it to retain its shape. The Purina Fancy Feast Gourmet Gold FlexBox is made of a laminated PET/PE structure with reverse-printed graphics that protects the printed surface. The glossy PET adds shine that gains shelf impact and brand distinction while the gravure printing is in tight registration. Nordenia developed the new PET/PE

Continued on page 72

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bagstock specfically for pet foods like Fancy Feast, to improve grease and moisture barriers.

Artfully printed chicken pouch flies high

A stand-up film pouch perks up Perdue's Bourbon Chicken **(8)** with its large billboard that readily displays the 26-oz cooked chicken contents. A gold winner in Printing Achievement for Alcan Packaging, the pouch represents a unique use of a 10-color ink press sequence (process and PMS colors) to reproduce photography and a vignette that achieves amazingly realistic graphic imagery and captivates consumers by focusing on the compelling product visual of glazed chicken pieces. A deep blue background reinforces the luxurious presentation while the bright blue and yellow Perdue brand logo supports the generous dose of brand recognition communicated through the graphics.

The quality flexo-printed imagery was a difficult vignette to produce, according to Joyce Musgrave, market manager at Alcan, who describes the pouchstock as an adhesive lamination of 48-ga polyester and a proprietary sealant film.

"The proprietary LaserTear technology adds value to the Perdue package with consistent separation of materials and a clean, easy-open package with no 'renegade' tears or a compromise of resealable zippers [closures]. In the last decade, consumers have become familiar with it through shredded cheese packaging. Laser technology yields a very precise score to a controlled depth and is capable of extremely tight tolerances. As the film is converted to the final package, this virtually undetectable score becomes a precise tear path."

The premade gusseted pouches, available in various sizes, are 3.5-mils thick and consist of a reverse-printed PET outer web and a proprietary, "self-manufactured," or white sealant that Alcan coextrudes. The complete lamination from outside layer to sealant is: PET/reverse printing/adhesive/white sealant film.

Musgrave says, "The improved structure reduced waste, and consequently costs, throughout the system." Although she says Alcan declines to reveal specific equipment being used to produce and convert the bag, she does say it utilizes 10-color digital flexographic printing technology in its Boscobel, WI, facility to achieve fine, uniform printing featuring outstanding dot shapes. "The quality of the digital printing was particularly evident in the consistency of the Perdue farm vignette, which helps to uniformly reinforce Perdue's brand image. The high-contrast benefits of digital also increases shelf appeal and showcases the product's serving suggestion," she tells PD.

Additional graphic elements communicate the pouch's functionality, and on the header state the use of Alcan's LaserTear™ technology teamed with a patented Slide-Rite® slider zipper closure from **Pactiv Corp. (www.pactiv.com).** The Slide-Rite closure is applied in-line during pouchmaking. While zippered packages have become the norm on many consumer packaged-goods since their development in the early 80s, the slider zipper opening/reclosing feature is a welcome device for such a chicken package, which is often used on several occasions; not just once, when the chicken is removed and the package is replaced back in the freezer.

Microwavable veggie bag steams and vents

SteamQuick™ Packaging **(9)** won a gold award in Technical Innovation for **Pliant Corp. (www.pliantcorp.com).** The freezable/microwaveable SteamQuick package technology allows frozen foods to steam-cook in a microwave oven right in the bag. As the 12-oz pillow-style bag builds steam when heated in the microwave, it helps cook the food and vents near the end of the cooking cycle. The technology gives consumers both a quick and easy way to have tasty, uniformly heated foods that are ready for mealtime in an easy-to-handle package.

Says Mark Dawson, vp of marketing at Pliant, "The streamers package requires no piercing or removal of the vegetables from the package to complete the cook cycle." Launched in June 2007, the pouch took 14 months to develop and is currently used by private-label marketers, Dawson says. To meet the requirements of freezable microwavable food packs, the packaging materials must withstand subzero temperatures and high microwave temperatures.

Dawson says the three-layer coex film sealant has excellent seal strength in both high and low temperatures. The sealant's core layer concentrates on the high temperature-resistance while the outer layer utilizes polymers with good cold-temperature durability, he explains. The 2.5- to 3.5-mil rollstock lamination with the proprietary coex sealant is laminated to biaxially oriented PET. Flexo printing is in up to 10 colors. Frozen vegetables typically are microwaved to 212 deg F**.** The self-venting package features a registered series of vent holes on the back panel that are applied by Pliant. The proprietary technology allows the pouch to self-vent in minutes without the need for a pre-inserted valve. The results afford even cooking throughout the pouch, Dawson notes.

More information is available:

Flexible Packaging Assn., 410/694-0800. **www.flexpack.org.**
Alcan Packaging, 773/399-3538. **www.alcanpackaging.com.**
CLP Packaging Solutions, Inc., 978/808-4441. **www.clppackagingsolutions.com.**
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North State Flexibles, LLC, 800/688-7391. **www.nsflexibles.com.**
Pliant Corp., 847/969-3323. **www.pliantcorp.com.**
Printpack, Inc., 404/691-5830. **www.,printpack.com.**
Robbie Mfg., Inc., 800/255-6328. **www.robbiemfg.com.**
Watson Standard Adhesives, 401/225-5260.

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MOVERS & SHAKERS

Tom Apple
Windmoeller & Hoelscher

Windmoeller & Hoelscher Corp. hires Tom Apple as technical sales manager—Midwest Region. **Bemis Co., Inc.** elects Henry J. Theisen president and CEO to succeed Jeffrey H. Curler, who continues as executive chairman, and elects Holly Van Deursen to the board of directors. **ABB** appoints Greg Scheu, currently senior vp of ABB's Automation Products Div. in North America, as head of ABB's Power Products Div. in North America and Rick Hepperla, who currently serves as a local business unit manager of ABB's North American low voltage drives unit, to fill Scheu's vacancy. **Crown Holdings, Inc.** names Brian Rogers vp of its CROWN Bevcan Europe and Middle East business unit. Rogers previously served as area manufacturing manager for Crown's beverage can operations in North America.

Greg Scheu
ABB

Rick Hepperla
ABB

Package Development Co., Inc. hires Matt Mustachio as executive vp. **Prism North America** appoints David Noll to its sales force. **Screen (USA)** appoints Jeff Skolnik as southern regional sales manager. **Unisource Worldwide, Inc.** appoints Jeff Small to oversee sales and business development operations in Atlanta; Jeff Hoeppner to direct packaging and facility-supplies sales and business development efforts in Columbus and Cincinnati. OH and Jim Stoll, stretch film specialist, responsible for stretch-film segment sales and business development in Columbus and Cincinnati. **Westfalia Technologies, Inc.** names James Miller to business development and Bill Daniel as account executive for automated storage and retrieval systems. **The Visual Pak Companies** appoint Dan Brosseau vp, sales. **Sonoco** elects M. Jack Sanders as executive vp, industrial. **FP Intl,** promotes Joe Nezwek to president and Jim Taylor, COO and CFO. Arthur Graham remains chairman of the board and becomes CEO.

James Miller
Westfalia Technologies

Bill Daniel
Westfalia Technologies

GROWING AND MOVING

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Continued on page 75

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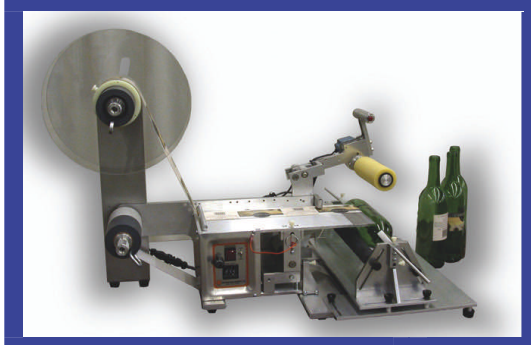

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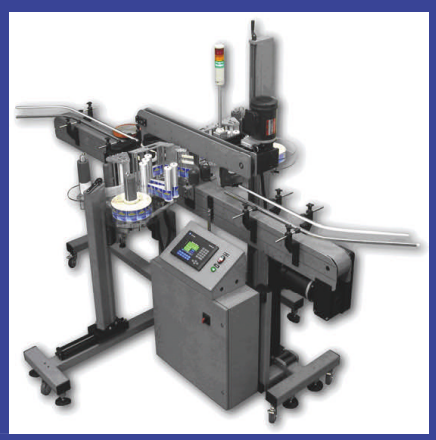

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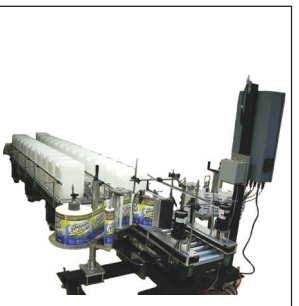

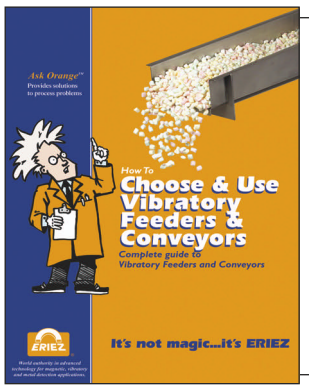

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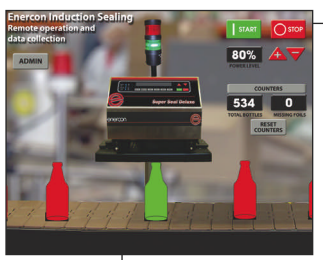

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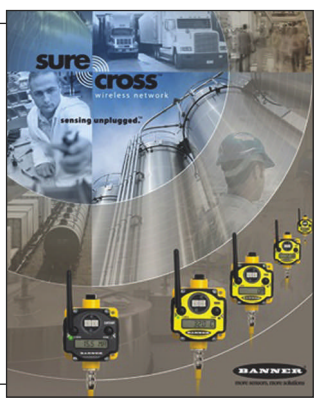

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newsmakers

of Stora Enso North America Inc., its North American subsidiary, to NewPage Corp., and establishes a new sales office in Stamford, CT, to serve North American customers with paper produced in Europe. Peter Mersmann continues to head the sales office and Packaging Papers products are represented by Michael Walsh.

Toray Industries, Inc. establishes Toray Films Europe S.A.S. in France to construct a facility to produce Torayfan® (biaxially oriented polypropylene, high-barrier, metallized film). Toray plans to invest approximately 10 billion yen in this project, and the facilities are expected to start operations in April 2010.

Arkay Packaging Corp. adds a 62,000-sq-ft, $4.5-million expansion, essentially doubling the size of its Roanoke, VA, facility.

BUYING AND SELLING

Naturally Iowa, Inc. acquires PLA Supply Co,

Gerresheimer acquires the Spanish company EDP for an undisclosed amount. EDP, which specializes in PET containers for the pharmaceutical industry, has production plants in Zaragoza and Valencia, Spain and Buenos Aires, Argentina.

DE-STA-CO, an operating company within the Material Handling platform of Dover Corp.'s Industrial Products segment, acquires Industrial Motion Control.

Graphic Packaging Corp. combines with Altivity Packaging, LLC.

Multi-Color Corp. acquires Collotype Intl. Holdings Pty., Ltd., for approximately $175 million plus an additional $10 million upon achieving certain financial targets.

Sumitomo Heavy Industries, Ltd. acquires Demag Ergotech GmbH and Van Dorn Demag Corp. Demag and Van Dorn are group companies of MPM Holdings.

W. P. Carey & Co. LLC announces that its REIT affiliate, CPA®:16–Global, and its newest fund, CPA®:17–Global, have jointly acquired three facilities from Berry Plastics Corp., for approximately $87 million. This transaction follows a $33-million sale/leaseback CPA®:15 completed with Berry Plastics in 2003 and includes its headquarters and largest production facility in Evansville, IN, a manufacturing facility in Baltimore, and a facility in Lawrence, KS. All facilities are being leased back to Berry Plastics on a long-term basis.

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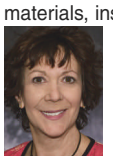

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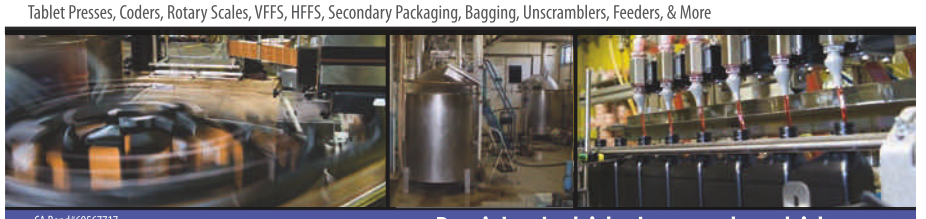

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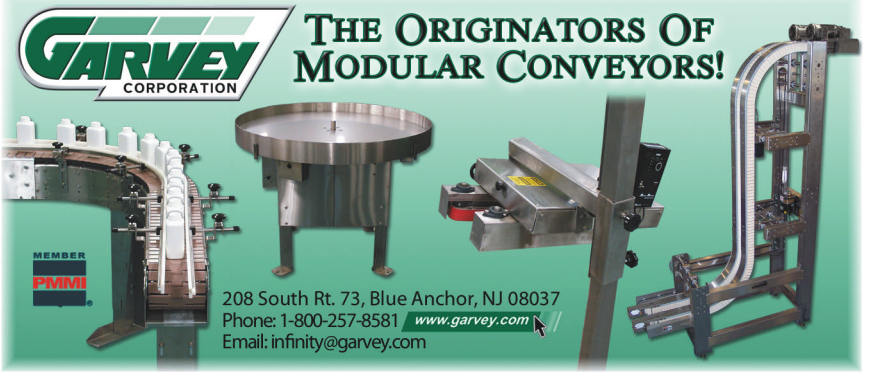

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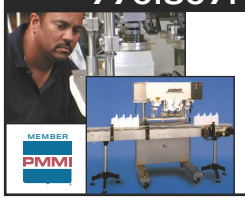
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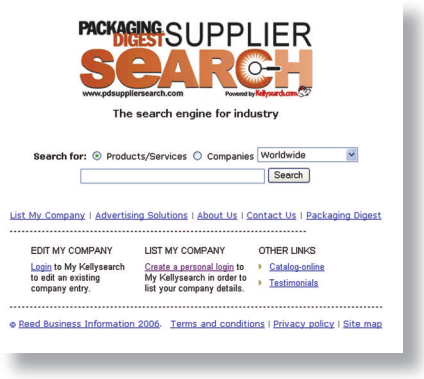

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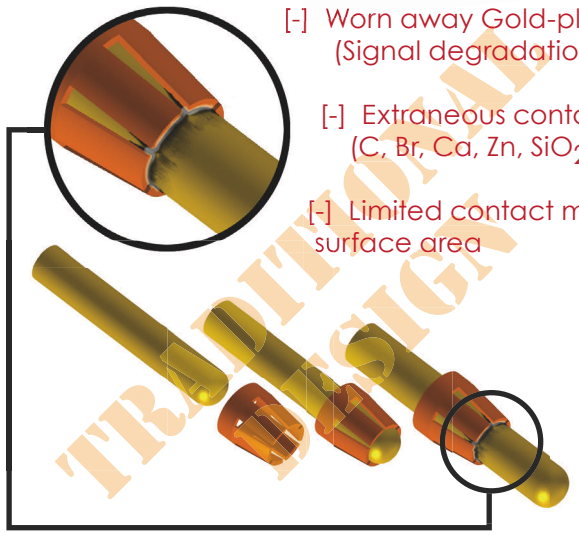
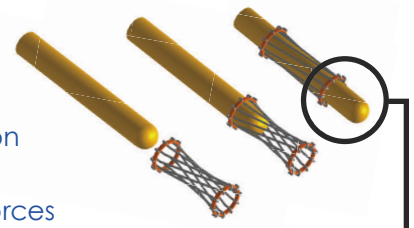


[-] Worn away Gold-plating (Signal degradation)

[-] Extraneous contamination (C, Br, Ca, Zn, SiO_2)

[-] Limited contact mating surface area



[+] Immunity to shock and vibration
[+] Lower contact resistence
[+] Low insertion and extraction forces
[+] Contact area extends 360° around the pins
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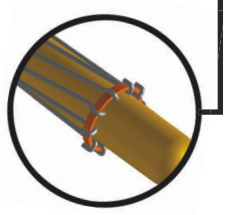

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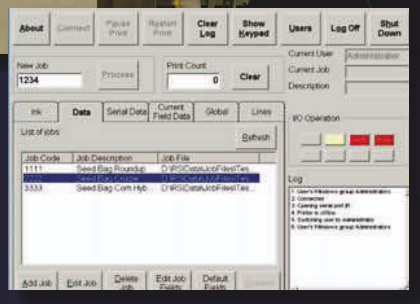

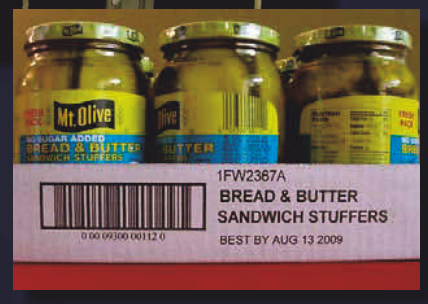

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