

Plastics News

TOP 10

NORTH AMERICAN FILM AND SHEET RANKING 2020

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| 1 Amcor Flexibles North America
\$2.80 BILLION* | 4 Sigma Plastics Group
\$2.10 BILLION | 8 Printpack Inc.
\$1.08* BILLION | *PLASTICS NEWS ESTIMATE
(P) = PUBLICLY HELD COMPANY |
| 2 Berry Global Inc. (P)
\$2.73 BILLION* | 5 Sealed Air Corp. (P)
\$1.67 BILLION* | 9 ProAmpac
\$990 MILLION* | |
| 3 Inteplast Group
\$2.69 BILLION* | 6 Novolex
\$1.40 BILLION* | 10 Wipak Ltd. (P)
\$845 MILLION* | |
| | 7 Dupont Co. (P)
\$1.25 BILLION* | | |
| | | | |

MORE COVERAGE ON PAGES 9-18

Polymer Packaging invests millions in equipment, building and infrastructure

By Sarah Kominek
Plastics News Staff

Massillon, Ohio-based flexible and protective packaging maker Polymer Packaging Inc. is expanding with a three-phase investment in machine purchases and a physical plant expansion due to heightened blown film demand from new and existing customers.

The first phase included the firm's initial launch of two blown film lines, a \$10 million investment in its existing 100,000-square-foot facility, Larry Lanham, CEO and owner, told *Plastics News* in an emailed statement.

That facility, Lanham said, "was already set up with high bay, rail and electric to house up to a maximum of six extrusion lines."

Those two new lines are already in production, with a third expected to be up and running by the end of September, part of phase two, another \$10 million investment, he said.

A fourth machine is scheduled to be delivered in January, President Chris Thomazin told *Plastics News*.

The third phase is a \$7.5 million investment for a 100,000-square-foot building expansion and an additional \$3 million infrastructure upgrade including additional rail siding, silos and increased chilling and electrical capacity. It will allow for up to 12 new extrusion lines, Thomazin said, bringing the firm's total to 18.

"All of the wheels are in motion for a physical plant expansion," Eric Howard, Polymer
See **Polymer**, Page 38

Step2 resumes rotomolding in Georgia with acquisition

By Catherine Kavanaugh
Plastics News Staff

Streetsboro, Ohio-based Step2 Co. LLC is ready to return to rotational molding in Georgia by acquiring manufacturing, distribution and shipping assets in Decatur, where it will employ 150-175 people at a new plant there.

The site previously housed CI Rotomolding USA Inc., which had announced in October 2019 that it was looking for a joint venture partner or to be acquired.

Step2 didn't acquire the business or enter into a JV, but it did purchase the manufacturing

equipment and it is subleasing the 132,000-square-foot facility, Step2 CEO Tony Ciepiel told *Plastics News* in an email.

Everything from rotomolding machines, quality control systems and power tools to office, assembly and maintenance equipment were acquired to meet "exceptional" demand for toys and home products brought on by the pandemic, Ciepiel said.

In addition, Step2 plans to hire another 100 employees for its two Ohio plants, in Streetsboro and Perrysville, to boost production of the popular products, such as
See **Step2**, Page 34



General Motors Co. worked with Ventec to make ventilators for the health care industry. GM workers have now transferred back to auto production. Industry watchers say the auto industry has recovered faster than expected, but they worry about midsized companies. General Motors and Ventec photo

NAVIGATING FINANCIAL TROUBLES

By Sarah Kominek
Plastics News Staff

As plastics processors navigate changing markets due to the COVID-19 pandemic, "poorly run" businesses could face financial troubles toward the end of the fiscal year, despite their end markets, analysts say.

A "culmination" of things are offsetting a "tidal wave" of those processors selling or filing for bankruptcy protection, Ted Morgan, partner and manage-

ment consultant at Plante Moran PLLC, told *Plastics News*.

"The patience level of banks has been a bit higher, especially for smaller manufacturers," Morgan said. "There's too much at risk for them to be overly aggressive and start calling on what they've lent to the market ... and that has effectively delayed some of this."

While the automotive market has recovered "pretty nicely," he said, "it's not totally recovered." Bigger plastic processors

are generally better positioned with enough capital to make it through a financial downturn, Morgan said.

"Plastics processors who were operationally sound and on the right vehicle platforms prior to COVID are doing OK, have cash flow, can pay their vendors, are getting paid by customers," Morgan said. "But a growing number of those not on as solid ground going into the pandemic are really
See **Covid**, Page 35



No Shortcuts
— Blending Equipment —

Learn More
on Page 5

Engineering thermoplastics

Key: I - Annual volumes greater than 1 million pounds
II - Annual volumes of about 300,000 to 500,000 pounds

Resin/Grade	Volume category	
	I	II
ACETAL		
Homopolymer	137-144	148-154
20 percent glass	—	179-194
Copolymer	115-125	130-139
20 percent glass	—	160-175
NYLON		
Type 6	130-140	143-147
Type 6/6	157-165	169-180
POLYESTER		
PBT, injection	119-124	129-134
30 percent glass, FR	154-159	164-174
PET, injection	118-123	128-138
30 percent glass, FR	155-165	165-175
POLYCARBONATE		
Blow molding	157-167	188-198
Injection, general-purpose	141-150	145-170
20 percent glass	157-167	188-204
Structural foam	139-148	175-192
Flame-retardant	172-189	200-210
Extrusion, sheet	140-149	152-180
Optical media	123-132	133-152
POLYURETHANE		
Ester type, injection	189-206	213-222
Extrusion	216-238	252-270
Ether type	252-265	297-306
TPE		
Polyester	—	325-400
Olefinic (compounded)	80-115	120-135
Styrenic	160-190	220-270

For pricing information on virgin thermoplastic or thermoset resins, call Frank Esposito at 330-703-7290.

Recycled plastics

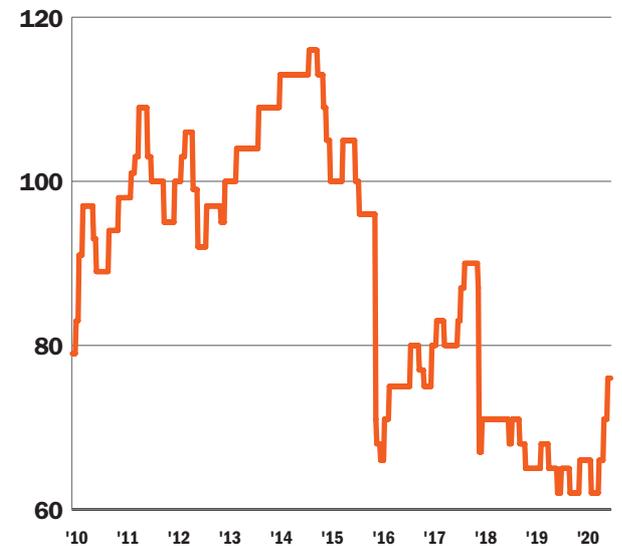
Resin/Grade	Clean regrind or flake		Pellets
ABS			
Mixed colors, industrial	■ 30-34		75-79
POLYCARBONATE			
Clear, industrial	86-96		—
Mixed colors, industrial	83-87		91-97
POLYETHYLENE			
HDPE:			
Natural, post-consumer	51-55	■ 102-106	
Mixed colors, post-consumer	■ 21-25	■ 36-43	
Mixed colors, industrial	■ 23-28	■ 36-40	
HMW HDPE film, post-consumer	—	■ 29-33	
LLDPE stretch film	—	■ 20-34	
LDPE film:			
Clear, post-consumer	—	■ 26-30	
Colored, post-consumer	17-21	■ 28-32	
PET BOTTLES			
Clear, post-consumer	34-46	■ 58-68	
Green, post-consumer	18-26	■ 25-33	
POLYPROPYLENE			
Industrial	■ 26-30	■ 43-47	
POLYSTYRENE			
Industrial	19-24	54-70	
High-heat, crystal, post-consumer	■ 19-25	■ 63-69	
PVC			
Clear, industrial	■ 17-23	—	

For pricing information on recycled resins, call Frank Esposito at 330-703-7290.

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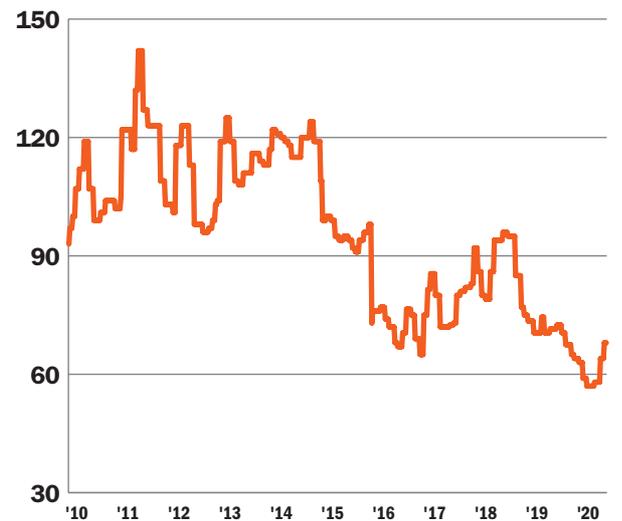
Historical resin pricing

LDPE, Extrusion Clarity Film
Large-volume average, in cents



PP, Extrusion Sheet

Small-volume average, in cents



Source: Plastics News research

Polymer

Continued from Page 1

Packaging's film and bag division president, told *Plastics News*. "We are currently in discussions regarding the fifth line, which may end up being a barrier line. We have room in the current facility for that equipment."

Polymer Packaging is currently in talks with builders and architects for its physical expansion, Thomazin said.

"We hope to have design work completed by the end of this year and are thinking that there might be a potential groundbreaking next summer," he said.

In 2018, the company hoped to identify target areas for growth for converter products like Inno-Lok pre-applied zipper products, stand-up pouching and several proprietary specialty film and bag products, Thomazin said.

"After surveying our existing printer and converter customers, as well as food packaging end users and distributors, we found a

common theme indicating a need in the market for a highly flexible regional supplier of custom co-ex sealant films and bags," he said. "Our team kicked it around a bit and decided to move forward."

The three-layer Windmüller & Hölscher lines have widths up to 110 inches, Thomazin said. Polymer Packaging has also purchased three high-speed, individually cut Hudson Sharp bag machines with zipper attachments and perforated bags on a roll capability.

"We are very fortunate that we have experienced a great deal of growth over the last several months," he said. "We certainly understand all of the difficulty facing so many in the world today. We are very grateful that we have been able to create over 20 new jobs and currently are working to fill an additional 15-20 positions hopefully before the end of the year."

"One of the biggest challenges we have faced and certainly will continue to face is staffing with the right core value employees," Lanham said.



Polymer Packaging Inc. is expanding with a three-phase investment in machine purchases and a physical plant expansion due to heightened blown film demand. Polymer Packaging Inc. photo

Saint-Gobain

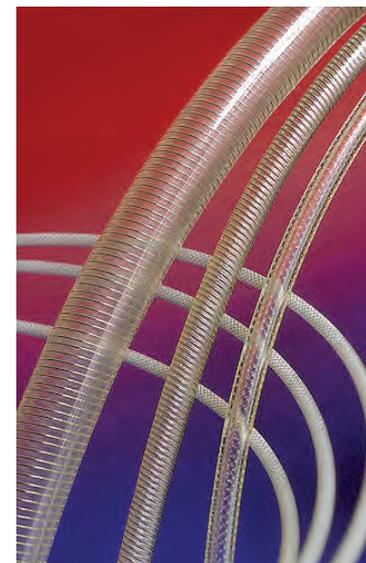
Continued from Page 3

Etienne Malher, president of MS Techniques, said in a Sept. 14 news release.

"Joining a global medical organization with the size and tremendous legacy of Saint-Gobain makes it possible to carry forward what we have worked so hard to build over the last 28 years," Malher said. "With more resources and the Saint-Gobain brand supporting our efforts, we pave the way for future innovation and the co-development of new medical solutions with our customers."

MS Techniques' owners will stay on through the transition process, Gagnon said.

Saint-Gobain and MS techniques both have customized, co-development models and similar corporate cultures, the



release said.

"We believe the best way to work with our customers and the OEMs is to have that proximity in Europe," Gagnon said. "We want

Solon, Ohio-based Saint-Gobain Life Sciences will use MS Techniques and Transluminal as the foundation of its new European Medical Center for Excellence.

MS Techniques and Transluminal photo

to make sure that this continues to feel like a big family ... What our and their customers are used to, they're going to continue to see the same."

Saint-Gobain will also invest in an expansion of MS Techniques transluminal unit, which Gagnon said is "the design, expertise arm that provides support from the concept all the way to the industrialization of the catheter."

"We'll go step by step based on the customer need and look to have an investment plan based on that strategy," she said.

Saint-Gobain did not disclose the terms of the acquisition.

Braskem

Continued from Page 3

had a couple of tough months in durables, but [demand] has come back with vengeance," he added. "It's been a V-shaped recovery. Some of that is inventory build, but some of it is a change in how people are consuming."

Braskem's Texas operations in La Porte and Oyster Creek avoided major damage from Hurricane Laura, which made land near the Texas-Louisiana border in late August.

"We shut down Oyster Creek and La Porte for 48 hours, but we were among the fortunate ones," Nikolich said. "We had no major damage and were able to start back up. It caused some additional delays with Project Delta but didn't impact our ultimate goal."

Braskem also plans to open a major export hub in Charleston, S.C., later this year. That location will be able to export 450 million pounds of PP and specialty resins per year.

"North America has become an export hub for polyethylene,

and polypropylene will flip from importing to exporting," Nikolich said. "We'll be part of that."

He added that the new line in La Porte — the first new PP production site in North America since 2008 — increases Braskem's production in the region by 30 percent and "affirms our polypropylene leadership in North America."

Braskem ranks as one of the largest polyolefins makers in the Americas and a leading producer of biopolymers. The firm employs 8,000 and posted sales of \$13.3 billion in 2019.