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VISION News Consumer Products e-Report

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Welcome to Issue No. 10 of the VISION News Consumer Products e-Report. VISION is sent monthly to executives within the consumer products and nonwovens industries. Vision reviews the news and events of each month in the disposable diaper, adult incontinence, feminine hygiene, household wipes/cleaning products and filtration markets, among other end-uses that utilize nonwoven fabrics.

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BREAKING NEWS: VISION 2003 SET FOR NEW ORLEANS ...

Following the overwhelming success of the inaugural VISION 2002 Conference in New Orleans, LA last winter, INDA is headed back to the city for VISION 2003. It is the only industry conference of its kind devoted entirely to consumer products. Mark down this date: January 26-29, 2003 at the New Orleans Marriott Hotel.

... AND INDA IS LOOKING FOR A FEW PRODUCTS WITH VISION

The call has gone out to the nonwovens and consumer products industries for nominations for the 2003 Visionary Awards. The awards, sponsored by INDA, are presented annually to consumer end products that utilize nonwoven fabrics or employ nonwoven technology during their manufacturing.

Nominations will be accepted until September 1. The nominees will then be reviewed by an INDA selection committee and five finalists will be selected to make presentations at the Vision 2003 Consumer Products Conference. Last January, Procter & Gamble's Swiffer cleaning system was selected out of more than two dozen nominees as the recipient of the 2002 Visionary Award.

The criteria for the 2003 Visionary Award are simple:

1. The finished product has to utilize a nonwoven fabric or related technology during its manufacturing.
2. The consumer product has to have been introduced to the trade or to consumers in 2001-2002.

Products will be judged on their novel use of nonwovens technology, as well as on their consumer and trade acceptance. Eligible consumer product categories include disposable diapers, feminine hygiene products, adult incontinence products, household wipes and home filters, among others.

To nominate a product, email an explanation of the product to Michael Jacobsen, Visionary Awards coordinator, at mjacobsen@inda.org. or call 201-612-6601 with any questions.

LEAD ARTICLE

K-C LAUNCHES THINNER PULL-UPS

With an eye on making training pants look more like regular kids' underwear, Kimberly-Clark has upgraded its Huggies Pull-Ups. The new Pull-Ups, which K-C says were preferred by parents 64:36 over the current version, are nearly 30% thinner, feature new toddler size indicators, have Mickey Mouse and Minnie Mouse characters, and - most important - look and fit more like "big kid" underwear than any other training pant on the market, according to the company.

For added convenience, the new Pull-Ups have not only weight ranges, but are the first to come in toddler size ranges (2T-3T, 3T-4T and 5T) to make it even easier to identify the right size for every child.

According to K-C research, for toilet training, moms showed a significant preference for gender-specific items over unisex. Its most recent research showed that 87% of moms with girls and 97% of moms with boys support gender-specific roles and preferences.

INDUSTRY NEWS

STEP ONE: HAVE FOUR BABIES; STEP TWO, HIRE MARKETING AGENCY

Everyone knows that the cost of raising a child these days can stretch any budget, so imagine the Tetrick family's concern over the impending birth of two sets of identical twins. But instead of fretting, their solution to the cost of diapers, wipes, clothes and formula -- not to mention college educations -- was to market the kids. Weeks before their birth, the Tetrick quadruplets already had their very own professionally designed logo. And Web site. And advertising agency.

Before Peyton, Parker, Camden and Christian entered the world, their parents launched an unusual public relations blitz that portrays the joy of a suddenly large family and the distress of the financial burden due. (Doctors said the odds of having two sets of identical twins are 1 in 25 million.) Christina and Patrick Tetrick, who live in Wichita, KS, hired an agency to solicit corporate donations and to arrange media interviews. Their goal was simple: Use the rarity of having two sets of identical twins, the more general oddity of having quadruplets and their financial plight to lure advertisers and help the family stay afloat.

One result of the marketing blitz: A local radio station has collected thousands of diapers and baby wipes.

Coincidentally, at about the same time across town, Sondra and Eldon Headrick were also dealing with the media frenzy generated by the birth of their sextuplets one day after the Tetrick boys were born April 5. The Headricks said they would not hire an ad agency to represent them. But they did manage to grab enough attention to receive their share of donations for their family, including \$6,000 worth of breast milk, offers of baby care products for a year, car seats, diapers and six knitted blankets from a Wichita woman.

FEMPRO WINS MAJOR CANADIAN BUSINESS AWARD

Fempro, a Canadian manufacturer of absorbent products, was recently presented the coveted Company of the Year Award from the Quebec Chamber of Commerce. Fempro, founded in 1996 in Drummondville, manufactures feminine hygiene products and food packaging soaker pads. In less than five years, it has tripled its sales, doubled its workforce and become profitable. Fempro is now investing \$12 million in new production equipment and an industrial facility.

RMED REPORTS 1Q PROFIT

RMED International has reported net income of \$185,786 on sales of \$1.149 million for the first quarter 2002. RMED sold its manufacturing operation in November 2001 to Presto in order to focus its attention on the marketing and sales of its patented Tushies and TenderCare alternative disposable diapers through health foods stores, home delivery, tushies.com and

tushies.co.uk. Presto has entered into a long term manufacturing contract with RMED to manufacture certain disposable products for the company.

CAS PURCHASES NEONATAL DIAPER LINE

This report comes from the Nonwovens Industry Executive Report ... CAS Medical Systems, Branford, CT, has purchased the BiliBottoms phototherapy line from its developer Patricia Millner. The diaper features a patented, light permeable design that combines maximum exposure of the skin surface to phototherapy with the benefits of using a diaper for premature infants. The design uses a latex-free nonwoven front sheet and a clear poly backsheet with a superabsorbent core padding. Maximum exposure of the skin surface to phototherapy lights allows a reduction of bilirubin levels and shortens treatment time for infants in the neonatal unit.

K-C TO FINALIZE PURCHASE OF K-C AUSTRALIA THIS MONTH

Kimberly-Clark will buy the remaining 45% stake in its Kimberly-Clark Australia Pty. Ltd. unit from Amcor Ltd. for \$375 million this month. In mid-2001, Kimberly-Clark increased its ownership in the Australian unit to 55% from 50% and set the acquisition price for the remaining stake with Amcor, its joint venture partner since 1963. Kimberly-Clark Australia makes tissue, personal care and health care products in Australia and New Zealand.

CINTAS BUYS RENTAL UNIFORM SERVICE

Omni Services, the parent company of Rental Uniform Services (RUS), was purchased last month by Cintas, a Cincinnati, OH uniform provider. RUS rents and cleans uniforms for manufacturers, distributors and offices. In addition, the company provides products for restrooms, including floor mats, towels, soap and feminine hygiene products.

A UNIQUE FATHER'S DAY GIFT FOR POOR DAD

Our friends at GasBGon are at it again, this time hyping their flatulence filter seat cushion as an ideal Father's Day present for the dad who has everything, even gas. "Fathers are natural gift recipients at this time of year," said Jim Huza, developer of GasBGon. "But to be fair, GasBGone is an equal opportunity air purification device that works for everybody."

A product of Dairiair, LLC, GasBGon flatulence filter seat cushions "Clear the Air, Not the Room" using air purification technologies to neutralize the sound and odor of flatulence. GasBGon comes in a range of designer styles, starting at \$19.95. For info: www.gasbgon.com.

Among the testimonials to this truly unique filter application: "Mom really loves the GasBGon, but she doesn't want to take them out of the car, especially my Dad's cushion," said five year-old Evan of Columbia, SC. "Send us another one for his favorite chair."

DOW EXPANDS SAP PRODUCTION

Dow Chemical has added 35,000 metric tons of capacity for its Drytech superabsorbent polymers at its Rhine Center (Germany) plant. Dow has also completed construction on a bulk handling facility at its Rhine Center facility to allow it to deliver Drytech to its European customers.

GEORGIA-PACIFIC SETS IPO

Georgia-Pacific has finalized plans to sell its consumer products subsidiary in an initial public offering, which is tentatively scheduled for the third quarter. Up to 20% of the equity value of the unit will be sold via the IPO; the remainder of the \$12 billion unit will be spun off to existing G-P shareholders. G-P's air laid nonwovens business, which it acquired through its purchase of Ft. James in 2000, falls under the consumer products side of the business. G-P's building products and paper and packaging units will remain with the parent company.

BGF NAMES HENDERSON PRESIDENT

BGF, Inc. has appointed James Henderson as its new president. He replaces Richard Cromer, who left "to pursue other career opportunities" after serving as president since April 1998. Henderson has been executive VP-Sales and Merchandising, since joining the company in 1989. BGF, Greensboro, NC, manufacturers specialty woven and nonwoven fabrics made from glass, carbon and aramid yarns for use in a electronic, filtration, composite, insulation, construction and commercial products.

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

NONWOVENS CONSUMER PRODUCTS ON EU TARIFF LIST

The European Union is targeting a host of consumer end products for trade sanctions in retaliation for the Bush Administration's March decision to impose tariffs on steel imports to the United States. In mid-May the EC presented the World Trade Organization (WTO) two finalized lists representing a "fine-tuned" and somewhat pared down version of that first draft. The first, shorter list names those items the EC plans to target with 100% retaliatory tariffs as early as June 18, 2002 and items from the nonwovens industry's value chain do show up repeatedly on the second longer list. These items are being targeted with anywhere from 15-30% tariff increases should the WTO issue a ruling in favor of the European Union in 2003.

In its finalized version, the EC added products that fall under the Harmonized Tariff Schedule category 4818, which are described as: "toilet paper and similar paper, cellulose wadding or webs of cellulose fibers, of a kind used for household or sanitary purposes, in rolls of a width not exceeding 36 cm, or cut to size or shape; handkerchiefs, cleansing tissues, tablecloths, table napkins, diapers, tampons, bed sheets and similar household, sanitary or hospital articles, articles of apparel and clothing accessories, of paper pulp, paper, cellulose wadding or webs of cellulose fiber."

It should be noted that these tariffs are not imminent. The U.S. has been working closely with EU leaders to negotiate a compromise on the steel issue to avoid these penalties.

Anyone with any questions - or anyone looking to obtain a complete list of the proposed target product categories - should contact the INDA Washington, D.C. office at 703-538-8805.

INDA TESTIFYING ON FLAMMABILITY ISSUES

In response to a notice from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, INDA is preparing testimony to be delivered this June regarding the nonwovens industry's position on a draft proposal intended to establish national flammability standards for upholstered furniture. In a related issue, INDA is also preparing comments in response to draft revisions of state-level upholstered furniture flammability standards that have been in effect in California for more than 25 years.

In response to both of these initiatives (with the CPSC and the state of California) INDA convened a conference call in May during which industry positions were staked out by INDA staff and members who produce fire-resistant fabrics. Basically, INDA does not support or protest the development of a national standard, nor do we have views on the need to revise California state standards. That said, however, INDA will urge CPSC and the California State Board of Home Furnishings to consider the benefits of fire-resistant barrier fabrics in preventing the loss of life and property damage due to fires caused by ignition of upholstered furniture.

If either or both of these bodies decide to issue new/revised standards, INDA will continue to encourage the adoption of underlying test methods that can be met through the use of barrier fabrics. For more information, please contact Peter Mayberry, at 703-538-8805; pmayberry@inda.org.

INDUSTRY REPORTS

HOME AIR QUALITY NOT SO CLEAR

Although 95% of Americans recently surveyed describe the air in their homes as "clean and healthy," the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has consistently ranked indoor air pollution among the top five environmental risks to public health. The survey was sponsored by W. L. Gore & Associates, the maker of CleanStream vacuum filtration products for home and industrial uses. EPA studies of human exposure to air pollutants indicate that indoor air levels of many pollutants may be two to five times, and occasionally, more than 100 times higher than outdoor levels.

Of course, since the survey was sponsored by Gore, one of the solutions to this problem is a good vacuum cleaner. Says Gore, "An efficient vacuum cleaner will help capture most dust, allergens and irritants from carpets, furniture and other surfaces as you vacuum, while an efficient vacuum cleaner filter will help prevent particles - as small as 1/300th the diameter of a human hair - from re-entering the atmosphere after they are collected by the vacuum cleaner."

Among the other findings:

- * More than 97% of Americans surveyed believe that cleaning their homes is important to their air quality.
- * Nearly 50% said their primary vacuum is two years old or less.
- * Ninety-five percent of those surveyed said they considered a filter on their vacuum "important" to the quality of the air they breathe inside their home.

- * But only 83% of the Americans surveyed think it's important to have a vacuum filter that can be cleaned.
- * In the same survey, Americans ranked filtration third among the features that are most important to them when buying a vacuum cleaner, right behind a vacuum cleaner's power and its manufacturer's reputation.

PATENT REVIEW

Method of modifying a nonwoven fibrous web for use as component of a disposable absorbent article

Assignee: Procter & Gamble

Abstract: An economical method is disclosed for modifying the physical characteristics of a nonwoven fibrous web which involves passing the web between at least one pair of interengaged rolls to incrementally stretch the web, and then withdrawing the incrementally stretched web from between the rolls under tension. A web modified according to the disclosed method has advantageous elongation, extensibility and strength properties, as well as other desirable characteristics. In another aspect, a method is disclosed for forming a composite material by combining a modified nonwoven web with a polymeric film, or an elastic member, which may be liquid impervious yet breathable. In yet other aspect, a method is disclosed for forming a composite material by combining a modified web with a polymeric film which is rendered liquid-impervious yet breathable while the method is performed. The modified nonwoven webs and composite materials made according to the disclosed methods may be advantageously employed in absorbent articles such as disposable diapers.

Patent Number: 6383431; Issue Date: 2002 05 07; Inventors: Dobrin, George Christopher; Benson, Douglas Herrin; Curro, John Joseph

Releasable wrapper for absorbent articles such as sanitary napkins

Assignee: Procter & Gamble

Abstract: A releasable wrapper for absorbent articles such as sanitary napkins, panty liners, and adult incontinence devices, and the like which have side flaps is disclosed. The releasable wrapper covers the adhesive fasteners on the garment-facing side of the absorbent article and provides an individual package for the absorbent article.

Patent Number: 6383169; Issue Date: 2002 05 07; Inventors: Mills, Sue Ann; Lavash, Bruce William; Bamber, Jeffrey Vincent

MEETINGS UPDATE

PARTICIPATION IS LIMITED AT NONWOVEN WORKSHOP

INDA, the Clemson University School of Textiles and the North Carolina Research Council are jointly presenting a five-day seminar focusing on the hands-on development of nonwoven fabrics through a host of technologies. Scheduled for August 19-23, The Nonwoven Product Development Workshop, will allow participants to review and analyze the development process of nonwoven fabrics and converted products from conception through end market, including market research, material selection, finishing and performance testing. It will combine class work, lectures and hands-on practice that cover the entire range of nonwoven product development processes. For more information: jtyner@inda.org.

INTC SET FOR SEPTEMBER IN ATLANTA

The International Nonwovens Technical Conference (INTC) 2002 will be held September 24 - 26, 2002 at the Renaissance Waverly Hotel in Atlanta, Georgia. This year's INTC continues the tradition that was begun in 2000 by TAPPI, The Technical Association of the Pulp and Paper Industry), and INDA (Co-Sponsors of INTC).

The sessions for the conference include: Binders & Additives; Polymers & Fibers; Properties & Performance; Process Technologies; Filtration; Finishes & Surfaces; Mats & Insulation; Absorbents; Porometry; Automotive Interiors; Protective Barriers; Process Modeling; and Sustainability. Also featured will be a Nonwoven Products Tutorial, Student Poster Presentations as well as a Table-top Event and Reception. For more information and to register: www.inda.org.

THAT'S ALL FOR THIS MONTH

The next issue of the Vision Consumer Products e-Report from INDA will be sent July 10. In the meantime, feel free to contact editor Michael Jacobsen at 201-612-6601 or email at [mjacobson@inda.org](mailto:mjacobsen@inda.org).

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