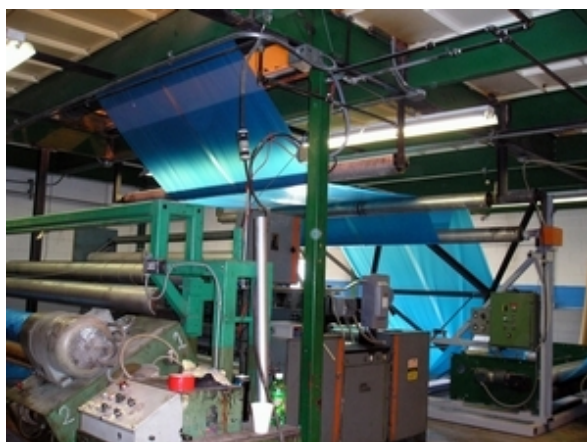


Plastics News

Specialty films company expanding in Minnesota

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Corrosion inhibitor specialist Cortec Corp. is spending \$5 million to upgrade and to expand recycling at its film extrusion operation in Cambridge, Minn.

Cortec in Cambridge extrudes specialty polyethylene films made from resin compounded at the site with a proprietary corrosion inhibitor, said plant manager Tim Bliss in a phone interview. The films

provide corrosion protection for metal parts made by a range of industries.

"The majority of our film business is in the United States," Bliss said to explain why the major investment is being made in Minnesota rather than in Croatia, the location of Cortec's other corrosion-inhibitor film manufacturing facility.

The Cambridge film operation, with annual production capacity of 44 million pounds, is larger than Cortec's comparable operation in Beli Manaster, Croatia. Cortec markets the anti-corrosion films under its VpCI tradename, derived from its vapor phase corrosion inhibition property.

Cortec will install a plastics recycling operation at Cambridge that will take back used VpCI film from customers and recycle it into new VpCI film. The Cambridge plant has been recycling scrap generated in-house for many years and it will add more floor space to accommodate the anticipated influx of returned, spent film.

"Almost nothing goes in the garbage, ever," Bliss said in reference to the in-house recycling program.

Cortec launched its customer recycling program in March by taking in some 12,000 pounds of used VpCI film returned by a heavy industry manufacturer. Under the new recycling program, the customer could save \$10,000 to \$20,000 per year by returning film to Cortec, the company

estimates. Cortec pays for shipping and gives the customer credit for returned film. Customer and client thereby reduce their carbon footprints by reusing the materials.

Cortec can use up to 20 percent recycled resin in its film. The customer recycling program will also create new jobs, stated Cortec founder and CEO Boris Miksic in a news release.

Bliss declined to specify the type of chemistry its VpCI films rely on to cut down corrosion of metal components during shipping and storage. It is, however, an offshoot of its broad-based corrosion inhibition technologies for packaging, metalworking, construction, electronics, water treatment, oil and gas, and other sectors. Such technologies can include spraying a very thin layer with nanometer dimensions onto the metal.

Bliss said Cortec targets completing the upgrades in Cambridge by the end of the year. Projects include installation of printing equipment on an extrusion line to handle UV-cured inks as well as more winding machinery. Other projects include new warehouse and office space and a training center, and upgrading an extrusion line with a new, automated winder, and new die and air ring to boost productivity and attain better control of film thickness.

Cortec's Croatian operation introduced marine degradable film based on PHA biopolymer a few years ago. The EcoOcean film and bags contains about 77 percent bio-based content. The Bali Manastir facility was expanded with new extrusion capacity for the program. In total Cortec spent about \$3.9 million on the Bali Manastir projects. About 15 years ago Cortec began using bio-based resins in its Cambridge operation.

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