Business Week

16th May 05 – 22nd May 05

Counterfeit goods seized in Tianjing

16 May 2005

Customs officials in Tianjing, China have caught a local company trying to export a large number of counterfeit branded goods illegally.

The goods, including 2,920 sportswear outfits and 12,460 pairs of sport shoes branding counterfeit Nike, adidas, and Puma brands, were seized by officials. The company attempted to transport the items out of China by hiding them amongst another consignment of goods.

Pakistan leather sports goods exports increase

16 May 2005

According to statistics released by Pakistan's Federal Bureau of Statistics, Pakistan exported $35.20 million worth of leather sports goods during March 2005 compared with $21.83 million in the previous month.

Footballs accounted for $21.755 million worth of the total exports, gloves $2.543 million and other items $10.911 million compared with $8.044 million, $1.660 million and $12.126 million respectively in February 2005.

Komatsu Seiren and Nextec sign agreement on footwear waterproofing technology

16 May 2005

Japanese chemical multinational company, Komatsu Seiren co. Ltd, a producer of functional polyurethane films and Italy's Nextec srl, a technology development company for the footwear industry, have signed a partnership agreement for the development of the waterproofing technology named OutDry.

Nextec's machine provides the lamination of 3D semi-finished products, which allows footwear manufacturers to improve the comfort of shoes, whilst saving labour, to manufacture waterproof footwear. Komatsu Seiren will provide the necessary material – a waterproof, breathable textile/membranes - used in the OutDry process and will support the technological development of Nextec by offering full access to its research department and offering Nextec a six-year soft loan.

Nextec has granted Komatsu Seiren the option on its future business in the Far-East area and the OutDry exclusive patent license for the Japanese market, where several customers are present, amongst them Mont-Bell, leading manufacturer and retailer of mountaineering gear.

Today OutDry is used by a number of footwear manufacturers including Gronell, Lizard, Woolrich, and recently Uniflair-Panther in the safety-shoe sector.

World Bank: CAFTA should spur growth

16 May 2005

The free-trade agreement between the United States, Central America and the Dominican Republic (DR-CAFTA) offers an opportunity to enhance economic growth, trade and investment in Central America and the Dominican Republic, according to the World Bank.

On May 11, the World Bank released a preliminary summary of its forthcoming report, Challenges and Opportunities of DR-CAFTA for Central America. The report summary stated that the ratification and implementation of DR-CAFTA would play a central role in shaping the future of Central America, and it outlined the potential benefits of the trade agreement.

"The treaty holds the potential of increasing trade and investment in the region, which in turn is key to lifting economic growth and improving the welfare of the people of Central America and the DR, (Dominican Republic) including those living in poverty," the World Bank spokesperson said.

However, the study concluded that even though DR-CAFTA caps a decade and a half of reforms and offers an important opportunity to make additional progress in trade-led growth, it is not a "silver bullet" or magic formula.

"DR-CAFTA alone cannot be expected to unleash radically higher levels of trade and growth," the World Bank said. "Countries will need to accompany DR-CAFTA implementation with policies to address key constraints and bottlenecks in order to reap the full social and economic results of this initiative."

Canadian Government announces $3 million project to boost apparel sector

16 May 2005

The Canadian Government has announced that it is to provide more than $3 million for three projects aimed at improving the country's economic growth and competitiveness in the apparel sector.

"Canada's future competitiveness depends on productive, high-performance workplaces, supported by a highly skilled work force," said Eleni Bakopanos, parliamentary secretary to the minister of Social Development. "The apparel sector is an important sector of our economy, and these projects will help to ensure that we have the skilled work force to remain competitive."

The Apparel Human Resources Council (AHRC) will receive this funding through the Government's Sector Council Programme which will help to support the promotion of skills development within the apparel sector.

Wacker to present dirt repellent topcoat

16 May 2005

Germany-based specialty chemical producer, Wacker Chemie GmbH, will debut a new silicone top coat, Elastocil 47005, at Techtextil 2005 from June 7-9 in Frankfurt.

Elastocil 47005 is a transparent surface coating and is said to combine the advantages of a silicone/organic polymer binder with the effects of nanoscale components. This enables the targeted adjustment and improvement of weathering and dirt resistance, as well as various other surface properties.

It is said to be particularly suitable for protective clothing, architectural textiles, and airbag coatings.It is also supposed to be highly dirt repellent and its resistance to weathering and ageing makes it suitable for outdoor textile applications, such as tents and awnings.

Warnaco reports 11.8% sales increase

16 May 2005

New York-based designer, marketer and retailer of intimate apparel, swimwear, sportswear and accessories, The Warnaco Group, Inc., has reported an 11.8% increase in sales to $439.5 million for the first quarter ended April 2, 2005 compared with the same period in 2004.

"These results evidence a solid start to 2005. Revenues grew by nearly 12%, with contributions from each of our three operating groups," stated Joe Gromek, Warnaco's president and CEO. "Product successes from many of our leading brands, across multiple channels both domestic and international, drove top and bottom-line improvements. In addition, improved execution and cost controls contributed to a

23% increase in first quarter operating income."

The increase was driven primarily by the sportswear group, with the expanded distribution of Chaps and the continued strength of Calvin Klein jeans. Intimate apparel group revenues increased 7.5% with significant contributions from Warner's and Calvin Klein underwear. Swimwear group revenues were up slightly, with gains from Ocean Pacific and Calvin Klein swimwear in Europe, but lower sales of other brands including Speedo.

The Warnaco Group's brands include Warner's, Olga, Lejaby, Body Nancy Ganz, Speedo, Anne Cole Collection, Ocean Pacific, Cole of California and Catalina as well as Chaps sportswear and denim, J. Lo by Jennifer Lopez lingerie, Nautica swimwear, Michael Kors swimwear and Calvin Klein men's and women's underwear, men's accessories, men's, women's, junior women's and children's jeans and women's and junior's swimwear.

Lenzing sales rise 22.9%

16 May 2005

Austrian fibre producer the Lenzing Group has reported sales of €233.8 million for the first quarter of 2005, a 22.9% increase compared with the same period in 2004. Net income amounted to €20.5 million compared with €16.6 million for the comparable quarter of the previous year.

These positive results have been attributed to the full consolidation of the Tencel group of companies, as well as a new fibre-production record.

According to the company, while the fibre volumes sold in Asia at declining prices continued to be satisfactory, business activities came to be increasingly difficult in Europe (including Turkey), both for the Business Unit Textile Fibres and the Business Unit Nonwoven Fibres. It was possible to successfully counter the trend by producing record quantities of fibres and improving the product mix. Sales of modal fibres reached an all-time high. With regard to nonwovens, demand in Asia and the USA was said to be very gratifying. Europe lagged behind, both in terms of prices and volumes.

However, despite an upbeat beginning to the year, Lenzing expects considerably more difficult overall conditions throughout the world for the year as a whole due to strong pressure on raw-material and viscose prices, the unfavourable euro/dollar rate, and the liberalisation of the textile import quotas.

Benetton reports €378 million revenue in Q1

16 May 2005

The Benetton Board of Directors has approved the consolidated results for the first quarter of 2005. Consolidated revenues were €378 million compared with €381 million in the corresponding period of 2004. Casual sector sales amounted to €339 million, in line with the first quarter of 2004, thanks to the growth in the retail revenues and to a different product mix. Net income for the period was €23 million compared with €28 million in the first quarter of 2004.

The Board also confirmed the full year forecast announced at the time of the March 4 Board Meeting.

Winners of the 12th ispo BrandNew Awards announced

16 May 2005

Ispo has announced the latest summer winners in its twice yearly ispo BrandNew Awards, with a move towards sports inspired furniture and sports lifestyle products becoming more of a focus.

Knog Pty Ltd from Australia won the ADVANSA Overall Winner's award. Its large range of stylish and functional bike accessories was voted best out of the 130 entries.The products range from protection clothing, saddle bags and backpacks to gloves and attachable lights. Careful attention has been paid to every detail, resulting in products that set themselves

apart with their focus on pure function and immaculate design.

The Thermolite Hardware Award went to Global Goal from Denmark. This new soccer training device offers countless possibilities for various training techniques. Global Goal is a 3-dimensional goal with six scoring areas and one top basket. It is ideal for soccer players of all ages who are seeking to improve technique, co-ordination, flexibility and feeling for the ball.

Young German design company Duckdiver won the DuPont Style Award with its Surf Lounger – a chair for urban surfers who want to enjoy that at-the-beach freedom from the comfort of home. The chair is inspired by material and design from the world of surfing and adds a touch of the beachboy lifestyle to peoples´ homes, gardens and balconies.

The LMA Fitness Award was given for the German Handytrim - a simple and efficient way to train and tone upper body muscles. The device consists of two aluminium rings and a disk on a piece of string. The five basic exercises are easy to learn and make keeping fit fun for people of all ages and athletic abilities.

The Swim Distance Tracker from Finland won the ZSport Accessories Award. This small device counts swimmers' laps, enabling the swimmer to measure performance while focusing fully on his or her training. It is easy to clip onto swimming trunks or swimsuits and doesn't disturb the swimmer.

German brand Maloya took the Coolmax Sportswear Award. The judges were convinced by the stylish approach to functional bike apparel and the well thought-out marketing.

Riri Water Award for the best watersports product went to Kampus Wakesk8s from the United States. With footwear especially designed for wakeskating, wakeskates and fins.

The ispo Hardware Accessories Award was awarded to Spank, a small and young bike company from Germany, for its unconventional approach to bike design.

Sportswear company Bosco, the first ever applicant from Russia, won the ispo Global Strategy Award for its unique global strategy to launch its business. The first step was the design of a special sportswear collection for the Russian Olympic team in Athens 2004. This global promotion has catapulted the brand, with its strategically placed Russian logos, into international sport shops. The jury decided to reward this highly effective and unique approach to global marketing with a special award.

USA revives quotas on Chinese textile imports

17 May 2005

The USA has decided to re-impose quotas on three categories of Chinese textile imports – cotton trousers, shirts and underwear – arguing thousands of domestic jobs are at risk due to the high levels of clothing imported from China. The US Commerce Secretary, Carlos Guitierrez, said a government investigation had established that the local textile industry is at risk.

The decision was made by the US inter-agency Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements (CITA). As a result, total shipments of the three categories of Chinese imports this year will only be able to increase by 7.5% on the shipments from 2004.

Eton Systems widen garmenting ambitions in Latin America

17 May 2005

Eton Systems, a Swedish provider of unit production systems (UPS) for the apparel and other sewn-product industries, is expanding its marketing and implementation activities in Latin America.

As a result of the company's success in Brazil over the past few years, Eton Systems AB (Gånghester, Sweden) has named Gary Freedman as Sales Manager

for Latin America. Freedman, a 25 year veteran of the UPS market, has been instrumental in the development of this market for Eton over the past three years and now assumes responsibility for Eton's operations in Brazil, Columbia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, and Peru.

"We are excited about the opportunity to work with the companies in this region", said Gary Freedman. "These companies understand that our technology is not just for the big companies. They embrace it as a means of improving their customer service capabilities and to make their companies the best they can be. Seeing so many smiling faces every day makes this a wonderful environment to work in. The pride in product and industry truly shines through here."

Eton's has installed 13 systems in the country so far. Brazilian companies that have deployed Eton's UPS technology include Staroup (jeanswear), Marisol (childrenswear), Karsten (towels/robes), and Tapajos (womens sportswear), along with other top apparel, textile, and home fashions producers. In Mexico and Central America, many producers are challenged to transition from traditional 'cut-and-sew' activities to delivering 'full package' programs that require them to manage everything from raw materials through to finished products.

Eton Systems AB designs and supplies UPS – productivity and management system – developed specifically for use in the sewn-products industries. It automates material flow through the production process and minimises material handling for each operation throughout the manufacturing process, enabling companies to manage material and information in an efficient fashion, including wall-to-wall data management from operations performed within, as well as outside of the UPS system.

Thomson Research Associates launch new antibacterial system

17 May 2005

Thomson Research Associates, Canadian producer of antibacterial and antifungal treatments for textiles and polymers, has launched its new silver-based antimicrobial treatment for textiles, Ultra-Fresh Silpure. The system enables textile manufacturers to add odour and fibre-degradation resistance to their products through the use of a powerful antimicrobial substance – silver.

Ultra-Fresh Silpure, the newest development in the Ultra-Fresh family of products is applied at the finishing stage for more complete protection of the fabric and is said to cause no discoloration. The ultra-fine particles adhere more effectively to fibres for longer protection thanks to the application of nanotechnology manufacturing processes for the silver.

Plant trials have established that antimicrobial performance of Ultra-Fresh Silpure remains strong after 50 or more washes – a powerful benefit for consumers of sports and leisure wear. In plant trials using typical application processes on 100% polyester fabrics, bacterial survival was less than 0.1%, even after 50 washes.
"Previous cost barriers to the wider use of silver have been overcome," says Dr. Laval Yau, president of TRA. "Now, silver antimicrobials are no longer confined to niche markets. They can be used effectively and profitably through the broadest range of consumer products."

The Ultra-Fresh brand, introduced by Thomson Research Associates is now used by more than 200 companies in more than 30 countries. It finds countless applications in the manufacture of textiles, plastics, foams, coatings and rubber-based materials.

SmartLite launches new material for soling technology

17 May 2005

SmartLite has introduced further enhancements to its soling technology range with the launch of the new smartLite 660 material, designed to offer greater production flexibility through improved barrel stability on the production machine, a more advanced blowing system providing superior flow in the mould and a wider range of colour options.

SmartLite materials provide extra cushioning compared to single density rubber while maintaining a high level of durability. With a density of 600kg/ m3 and a hardness 56 Shore A, the new material has a softer feel created using a unique chemistry, without the use of traditional phthalate plasticizers. This combination also allows the shoe assembler to minimise surface preparation of the soles and yet achieve exceptionally high bond strengths to a wide range of upper and insert materials.

“Global footwear brands are looking for innovation and quality, while at the same time limiting the use of chemicals in the workplace. This latest development of phthalate-free technology reflects the smartLite team’s commitment to these needs. As a result, we have been able to develop a product that meets the market requirements,” says Bart Van Edom, project manager.

SmartLite materials are injection mouldable thermoplastics, meaning that production waste and sub-standard mouldings can be granulated and used back in virgin material. SmartLite 660 complements the existing commercially available grades: 304(A) for optimum performance with density as low as 600kg/m3; 344(A) for enhanced performance for complex mouldings and 305(A) for midsole/dual density soles with densities between 500 – 600kg/m3.

Huntsman develops new sole design optimisation system

17 May 2005

Huntsman Polyurethanes, the Institute for Plastics Processing (IKV) and Simcon have developed a new, user-friendly software system which simulates the injection moulding of smartLite materials, allowing specialized moulders to finalise their sole and mould designs before investing in tooling, trials or machine modifications. Developed by Huntsman, the system reduces prototyping time, improves efficiency and accelerates the market introduction of new soling styles.

The new software, devised and owned by Huntsman, and powered by Simcon’s Cadmould programme, allows moulders to incorporate interesting design features, predict the filling pattern, position the injection points correctly and achieve soles with the required final properties at the lowest possible density. It can also help to prevent unsightly marks caused by air traps or, in the case of two injection points, an unfavourable location of weld lines.

By testing several critical factors and making adjustments to the tooling or part before cutting in metal, the simulation software helps smartLite customers cut costs and reduce time to market – important aspects for innovative moulders in the fast-moving footwear business.

The package covers all the measurements and model fittings needed for accurate simulations of the mould filling behaviour of smartLite materials, under production conditions. The new tool simulates the mould to include the filling pattern, injection pressure, density distribution and other critical factors for optimising a given part of, or the process itself.

Huntsman is a global manufacturer and marketer of commodity and differentiated chemicals. Its operating companies manufacture basic products for a variety of global industries including chemicals, plastics, automotive, aviation, footwear, paints and coatings, construction, technology, agriculture, health care, textiles, detergent, personal care, furniture, appliances and packaging.

Avery Dennison offers new label-management software

17 May 2005

A new all-purpose labelling software programme that supports the full range of labelling requirements and applications, including basic bar-coded label design, thermal transfer label printing and RFID compliance labelling in network or standalone modes, has been launched by Avery Dennison Printer Systems. The product, called the Avery Dennison Label

Management System (LMS), is a Windows-compliant; Wizard-driven programme that supports most popular linear and 2-D bar codes, as well as RFID label formats. It is available in three versions to accommodate different labelling environments and user requirements.

"Avery Dennison LMS has broad applicability across many industries and labelling environments, but it has particular appeal for users with outdated or orphaned label software programmes," said Dan Williams, marketing manager, Avery Dennison Printer Systems. "For example, companies with existing programmes that do not support the formatting and production of RFID labels will benefit from the full RFID functionality offered by LMS."

The LMS is said to require almost no training or programming knowledge. Wizard-driven data-entry screens and design tools guide users through the label-creation process. A multilingual user interface also supports 20 languages.

In addition to producing bar code and RFID formats, the programme is compatible with all major-vendor thermal printers, and with Windows 95, 98, 2000, NT and XP, as well as SAP and AS 400 applications.

Inditex names Pablo Isla as new CEO

17 May 2005

Spanish fashion retailer Inditex, that owns Zara, has appointed Pablo Isla Álvarez de Tejera as chief executive officer of the company.

Isla, 41, is a graduate in Law from the Universidad Complutense of Madrid and abogado del Estado [State lawyer]. He has chaired the Board of Directors of the Altadis Group.

From 1992 to 1996 he was Head of Legal Services at the Banco Popular Español. Later, he was appointed general director of State Assets at the Ministry of Economy and Finances. In 1998 he returned to the Banco Popular as General Counsel, until joining the Altadis Group.

Columbia Sportswear enters outdoor bike market

17 May 2005

Columbia Sportswear Company has announced that it has signed a license agreement with World Wide Cycle Supply, Inc. for the design, manufacture and marketing of a new line of outdoor bikes and bike accessories. The new Columbia collection will feature hardtail and dual suspension mountain bikes, comfort bikes, hybrid bikes, road bikes, cruisers and youth style models. The company will also produce bike accessories including grips, saddles, bike pumps and water bottles. The new line is expected to be available in retail outlets in spring 2006.

"This agreement is an exciting new opportunity for us," said Tim Boyle, president and CEO of Columbia Sportswear Company. "Licensing is an important part of our branding efforts and is one more way to enhance our mission to offer consumers quality products for a variety of outdoor activities. We are pleased to be working with such a credible industry leader on the introduction of this new line for outdoor biking enthusiasts."

Columbia Sportswear Company designs, markets and distributes active outdoor apparel and footwear.

Unifi to enter joint venture in China

17 May 2005

US producer and processor of multi-filament polyester and nylon textured yarns Unifi, Inc. has announced that it is to sign a joint venture agreement with China's Sinopec Yizheng Chemical Fiber Co., Ltd. (YCFC).

The agreement was initially expected to be signed in mid-May, however, due to internal issues at YCFC, not related to the joint venture, the signing of the joint venture contract and issuance of certain required notices are now anticipated to take place sometime in June. Based on this timeline, the establishment of the joint venture will

probably occur sometime in the company's first quarter fiscal 2006.

The companies are forming a joint venture to manufacture, process and market polyester filament yarn through YCFC's five facilities in Yizheng, Jiangsu Province, China. The joint venture will be owned 50% by each company. Unifi's investment in the proposed joint venture is estimated to be $30 million. The proposed joint venture will focus on the production of higher margin specialty yarns for use within China and Asia.

Carhartt looks to Asia as textile source

17 May 2005

American workwear and protective wear manufacturer Carhartt is reported to be looking into sourcing up to $40 million worth of textiles and garments in Asia, a worrying move for many suppliers, as the company has until now sourced all of its goods in the USA and Europe.

Carharrt executives have travelled to India to meet with suppliers with a view to possible contracts with Indian firms such as JCT and Alok Industries. They will then move on to China and Taiwan.

NZ Merino wins $40 million deal with SmartWool

17 May 2005

According to a report in The Press, Christchurch, the New Zealand Merino Company has secured a $40 million deal with sock and garment manufacturer SmartWool. The deal, to provide 600 metric tonnes of wool per annum, will guarantee minimum prices for growers for the coming seven years, as the price has been set within the top quarter of the price range seen over the last ten years.

It will also further enhance the fibre's reputation as it will now feature in Timberland boots – one of SmartWool's customers. However, the deal is not only being hailed as great business, it is also seen as a step in the right direction in terms of farming. SmartWool has agreed to pay its suppliers in New Zealand to work towards finding an end to the practice of muelsing, which has stirred up a great deal of controversy in recent times.

DuPont Tychem protective apparel recognised by Korean government

17 May 2005

DuPont Tychem C and Tychem F protective apparel have passed a safety inspection for protective clothing for use when dealing with organic chemicals. The tests were carried out by the Korea Occupational Safety & Health Agency (KOSHA) and marks the first time the government has conducted this type of test.

"We are honoured to be recognised by the government as providing a safe environment for workers with value-added products that meet customers' high standards," said Zen Yu, DuPont Personal Protection - Korea.

Vietnam to expand rubber industry

17 May 2005

According to the Vietnam Rubber Association, the country is planning to raise its rubber tree acreage to 700,000 hectares by 2010 from the current 500,000 hectares. At the same time, more rubber processing plants are to be built and efforts are to be taken to raise the productivity of the existing plants.

The move is designed to increase the output of dried latex to some 520,000 tons and the annual capacity of rubber plants to 1,300 – 1,500 tons each in the central highlands and 6,000 – 20,000 tons each in the southeast region.

The Central Highlands Dac Lac province has already signed a project to cultivate rubber trees in four provinces of Laos. Recently, a plantation contract was recently signed between Dac Lac Rubber Co. and the Bachieng district of Laos' Champassack province under which local farmers will plant and cultivate the rubber area for the Vietnamese company.

Vietnam exports approximately 90% of all its rubber. Last year's exports of rubber rose by 53.2% compared with a 14.2% increase the year before.

Bangladeshi PM visits Viet Nam in search of improved trade ties

18 May 2005

Bangladeshi Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is currently on an official visit to Viet Nam at the invitation of Prime Minister Phan Van Khai. It is the first official visit to Viet Nam by the top Bangladeshi leader.

Trade ties have already greatly improved between the countries as their bi-lateral trade jumped from $14 million in 2002 to $39.5 million in 2004, but they are seeking to increase this still further in the hope of achieving $50 million this year. Viet Nam exports textiles and garments, electronics products and footwear to Bangladesh whilst importing leather, chemicals, materials for the making of garments and textiles, and pharmaceutical products.

FLA accredits six companies

18 May 2005

The Fair Labour Association (FLA) has accredited six companies' compliance programmes, signifying a satisfactory completion of each company's three-year initial implementation period into the FLA. The compliance programmes of adidas-Salomon, Eddie Bauer, Liz Claiborne, Inc., Nike, Phillips-Van Heusen, and Reebok apparel all received accreditation following an extensive performance review based upon independent factory monitoring and verification reports of supplier facilities conducted by external monitors.

"Accreditation in simple terms means accountability and verification. FLA's purpose is to cultivate a culture of respect for workers and we do this by holding companies accountable to the workplace code of conduct," said Auret van Heerden, FLA President and CEO. "Collectively these companies are responsible for consumer products made in 2,800 factories in 62 countries. Each of them has worked hard to establish a workplace standards program that complies with the FLA's considerable requirements. We hope that consumers and others interested in the programs of these companies will consult the FLA's first two annual reports and the tracking charts which report on the monitoring of factories by the FLA's accredited independent external monitors and will also look for the FLA's third annual report due for publication later this year."

FLA is a non-profit organisation that combines the efforts of industry, non-governmental organisations, colleges and universities to promote adherence to international labour standards and improve working conditions worldwide.

AMG appointed sole UK distributor for Ugg

18 May 2005

UK lifestyle equipment suppliers, AMG Outdoor, has been appointed as the exclusive distributor of the Ugg Australia footwear brand in the UK and Eire with immediate effect.

Part of the Deckers Outdoor Cooperation, the Australian Ugg brand will benefit from AMG's experience in the footwear market, its specialised Distribution Centre, its infrastructure and its network of established retail customers.

AMG was appointed by the Deckers Cooperation in June 2002 to manage the distribution of the Teva footwear brand and more recently in late 2004, AMG was appointed to manage the Italian footwear brand, Trezeta. In addition, it manages several International brands including Rossignol snowsport equipment and Trangia stoves and cookware.

AMG's origins lie in the camping, sports and snowsport markets with a portfolio of famous brands, including tents, rucsack, sleeping bags and gloves under the Force Ten, Vango, Lichfield and Phoenix brands.

Ugg Australia is a brand of authentic sheepskin footwear. Its product range includes slippers, clogs, boots, and shoes.

EU to consider formal consultations on textile imports

18 May 2005

EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson announced on May 17 that he will propose that the European Commission launch formal consultations with China on T-shirt and flax yarn imports from China. Two textile products from a list of nine are currently being considered by the EU.

The Commission's investigation has found evidence suggesting a risk of irreparable damage for two product categories: T-shirts and flax yarn. In these two product categories, import volumes from China for the January-April period of this year have risen by 187% for T-shirts and 56% for flax yarn compared with the same period in 2004. For T-shirts, import prices have decreased by 36 % over the same period of time.

Data points to a dramatic deterioration of the situation of the Community industry in terms of production, profitability and employment. Initial production data for T-Shirts suggest sharp drops in production in Greece, Portugal and Slovenia – of 12%, 30-50% and 8% respectively. Traditional suppliers of T-Shirts such as Morocco, Tunisia and Romania have seen their exports displaced, with drops in imports to the EU of 8%, 22% and 29% respectively.

As a result, China's share of the EU's market for T-shirts has increased from 7% in 2004 to 18% in 2005 over a three-month period.

For flax yarn, production across Europe has fallen by 25%, turnover by 25% and employment by 13% on the same period in 2004. For this product, China's share of EU's market has increased from 7% in 2004 to 13% in 2005 over a three-month period.

A proposal to launch formal consultations with China for T-shirts and flax yarn will be presented to the College of Commissioners, following an inter-service consultation. It will then be discussed with Member States in the Textiles Committee. On receipt of the formal consultation request, China is required by the Textiles-Specific Safeguard Clause in its 2001 Protocol of Accession to the WTO to introduce self restrictions on exports.

NCC welcomes US safeguards on Chinese textiles

18 May 2005

The US National Cotton Council (NCC) stated late last week that it was gratified by the Administration's swift and decisive action to impose safeguards on certain categories of textile and apparel imports from China under the special China Textile Safeguard Authority contained in the China World Trade Organisation (WTO) Accession Agreement.

The special safeguard provisions were designed to assist other countries in adjusting to increased competition in textiles and apparel occasioned by China's WTO entry.
"The decision to utilise safeguards is authorised by the agreement, appropriate under the circumstances, and should enable the US textile industry to better adjust to this competition," NCC President/CEO Mark Lange said. "While the safeguard authority is temporary and is based on current levels of trade, it is an important tool that the Administration can use to help improve the trade imbalance that currently exists in textiles and apparel. This action by the Administration provides the US textile industry an opportunity to adjust to the current competitive environment.

Furthermore, the Council urges swift action by Congress to approve the Central America Free Trade Agreement, which will further enhance the competitive situation of US textiles and apparel."

Iconography launches presentation technology

18 May 2005

Digital consultancy Iconography has launched a corporate presentation tool to enable companies with multiple communications needs to deliver highly-customised presentations in a few simple

steps. IVOR has been designed in consultation with clients including DfES, Jisc, Timberland and General Dynamic.

Available on CD-Rom and also accessible via secure networks, IVOR enables presenters to run a pre-set sequence, such as a standard corporate presentation, or to select content from a number of additional modules and screens to create a bespoke presentation, utilising a rich resource of interactive and multimedia presentation assets.

IVOR enables the customisation of a presentation to match the precise requirements of an audience, eliminating the need to download images, logos or other assets from many different sources, which often reduces the quality of a presentation and weakens a brand.

“IVOR was designed specifically for companies with multiple markets, products and communications needs,” explains business development manager Wayne Robbins. “The value of corporate identity and brand recognition is undisputed, but all too often presentations are cobbled together using old logos, poor images, and inconsistent messages. IVOR guarantees control and consistency over these elements, coupled with the flexibility to use them as you wish in terms of content and sequence - users can build and save very different presentations for different uses, all through a single easy-to-use resource.”

Cotton Traders enters corporate clothing market

18 May 2005

Leisurewear brand, Cotton Traders, has entered the £70m corporate clothing market with a new division known as ‘Club & Corporate’. Capitalising on the growing trend for more casual workwear in place of formal attire, the UK-based brand has established the new division to cater for the bespoke individual clothing needs of large corporate clients. Along with other items, Cotton Traders’ piques, polo shirts and sweatshirts can now be professionally screen printed or embroidered with any company name or logo in 1,000 plus quantities for use in the workplace or for promotional purposes. Founder and wholesale director at Cotton Traders, Steve Smith commented: “Over the last couple of years, we have received an increasing number of enquiries from customers for comfortable, functional, good quality uniforms and promotional garments.

“Customers were specifically requesting Cotton Traders garments as many of them had prior experience of the quality and durability of our products. As a result, we have identified a real gap in the market for personalised yet Cotton Traders branded garments that would reflect and enhance a company’s corporate identity in this largely unbranded marketplace.”

Cotton Traders has experience in the design and production of speciality, customised products for Guinness, Budweiser, RBS Six Nations and leading UK rugby clubs including Leicester Tigers, Bath, Gloucester, Sale Sharks, Glasgow, London Welsh and the international, world select Barbarians team.

Levi Strauss names new president at US Dockers

18 May 2005

Levi Strauss & Co. has appointed John Goodman as president of the US Dockers business, effective June 6. Goodman, 40, will report to Phil Marineau, Levi’s chief executive officer.

Goodman has been senior vice president and chief apparel officer for Kmart Holding Corporation, a wholly owned subsidiary of Sears Holdings Corporation since December 2003. In this position, he managed the company's multibillion dollar apparel and home business at 1,500 US Kmart stores.

"John is a talented merchant and leader with a track record of building profitable businesses," said Marineau. "He has extensive apparel and retail industry experience, and keenly understands the importance of great products and close working relationships with retailers in driving brand growth."

Levi Strauss & Co. is a global brand-name apparel marketer with 2004 sales of $4.1 billion. The company manufactures and markets branded jeans and casual sportswear under the Levi's, Dockers and Levi Strauss Signature brands.

VF reorganises staff

18 May 2005

Mackey J. McDonald, chairman and CEO of branded apparel company VF Corporation, has announced broad organisational changes aimed at streamlining the company's structure to support growth plans.

Eric Wiseman, 49, has been promoted to executive vice president, Global Brands. He has served as vice president and chairman of VF's Outdoor and Sportswear Coalitions since February 2004. Reporting to Wiseman will be the presidents of VF's Jeanswear, Intimates, Outdoor and Sportswear Coalitions. Also reporting to Wiseman will be Mike Gannaway, vice president Customer Management.

The company also plans to consolidate its supply chain functions within a new global supply organisation, under the leadership of George Derhofer, 51, who has been promoted to senior vice president, Global Operations. Since February 2004, Derhofer has served as vice president and chairman of VF's Intimate Apparel and Imagewear Coalitions. He will continue to have responsibility for Imagewear Coalition.McDonald also announced that Terry Lay, who has worked for VF for 34 years, will retire this year.

VF Corporation brands include Lee, Wrangler, Riders, Nautica, John Varvatos, JanSport, Eastpak, The North Face, Vans, Reef and Kipling.

COSATU to press clothing retailers on local sourcing

18 May 2005

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) is planning mass action against South African retailers after the Competition Commission found that there would be no competition concerns should retailers sign the proposed code of conduct tabled by the union at the National Development Labour Council (Nedlac).

In October 2004, COSATU submitted a demand at Nedlac requesting that retailers sign a code that would commit them to a 75% local content target, and secure their support to combat illegal imports and contraventions of legal minimum wages and working conditions at supplier factories.

Cosatu will now issue a Section 77 1(d) notice, in which the federation has to give at least 14 days' notice of the start of a programme of mass action. In the meantime it hopes that retailers will use this period to reconsider their stance and sign the code. The union federation pointed out that by September last year more than 32,000 jobs had been lost in the clothing, textile and footwear industry. This figure, for the period since January 2003, has now risen to 40,000 lost jobs.

Drastic measure to cut TV viewing and increase exercise

19 May 2005

The media is full of stories about child obesity and how modern children do too little physical activity, but it seems that may be about to change thanks to a new insole. A final year design student from Brunel University, in London, Gillian Swan, has designed an insole for children's shoes that records the amount of exercise a child does during a day and converts it to television watching time.

The project, 'Square-eyes,' means the more exercise a child does – the more television viewing time they earn. The insole contains two buttons. The first records the number of steps taken by the child in a day. The second is used to trigger transmission of the total number of steps taken to the base station using a radio signal.

The base station, which is connected to the television, then calculates the TV time the child has earned and displays it on the

station's LCD screen. Once their earned television time runs out, the TV automatically switches itself off and is disabled until more exercise credit is earned.

"Today's children are exposed to a raft of television programmes and children's channels," says Gillian Swan. "Ten years ago, children were entertained by playing games with their friends, now they are cooped up in their bedrooms watching hours of television programmes. Square-eyes will help children to include exercise in their daily routines from an early age."

Foot Locker reports 16.1% sales increase in Q1

19 May 2005

US-based athletic retailer, Foot Locker, Inc., has reported positive results for its first quarter ended April 30, 2005, recording an increase of 16.1% in sales to reach $1,377 million compared with sales of $1,186 million in the same period in 2004. Net income increased 19% to $58 million from $48 million last year.

During the first quarter, the company opened 23 new stores; remodelled/relocated 90 stores and closed 62 stores. At April 30, 2005, the company operated 3,928 stores in 18 countries in North America, Europe and Australia. This represents an increase of 341 stores, approximately 10% versus the first quarter of last year. This is primarily as a result of our acquisition of the Footaction chain.

Dyckhoff introduces Trevira Bioactive bedding

19 May 2005

German terry towelling manufacturer Dyckhoff is extending its range of Trevira Bioactive textiles for the hospital and care sectors. Following the introduction of hand towels and bathrobes in antimicrobial terry towelling qualities, the company can now supply antimicrobial bedding and reusable underlays for beds.

US expands restrictions on Chinese textile imports

19 May 2005

The row over Chinese textile imports escalated further on May 18, as the USA further expanded restrictions on clothing imports from China.

Following the first quotas imposed last week, the US government has added to the list of Chinese items that will now be limited men's and boy's cotton and man-made fibre shirts; man-made fibre trousers; man-made fibre knit shirts and blouses; and combed cotton yarn.

The government took the decision as it is believed that Chinese imports of these goods are having a negative effect on the US domestic industry.

Gander Mountain Company reports Q1 results

19 May 2005

Outdoor equipment, technical apparel and footwear retailer, Gander Mountain Company, has reported sales of $135.1 million for the first quarter ended April 30, 2005, an increase of 37% over the first quarter of fiscal 2004. Comparable store sales decreased 1% after an increase of 8.7% in the first quarter of 2004. The net loss for the first quarter of fiscal 2005 was $17.6 million, compared to a $13.8 million restated loss for the first quarter of fiscal 2004.

"First quarter results keep us on track to meet our 2005 financial plan," said Mark Baker, president and CEO. "We are satisfied with our results for this quarter, which accounts for only about 15% of sales due to seasonality. We saw solid comparable store sales gains in hunting, our largest product category, and in marine accessories."

Headquartered in Saint Paul, Minnesota, Gander Mountain Company offers outdoor equipment, technical apparel and footwear for hunting, fishing and camping enthusiasts.

Donaldson signs South African marketing alliance with Breathetex

19 May 2005

US-based provider of filtration systems and technical materials, Donaldson Company, Inc., has signed a new marketing agreement to establish BreatheTex Corporation, based in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, as its exclusive selling agent for Donaldson's Tetratex PTFE laminated fabrics in the European, Middle Eastern and African markets for contract apparel.

The move is said to offer Donaldson opportunities to strengthen supply chain competitiveness and reduce time-to-market for PTFE/PUR waterproof breathable laminates used in high-performance garments in the military, fire services, police, emergency services, institutional workwear and medical markets.

"We are very excited about the marketing and supply chain synergies that this alliance creates for our customers in Europe, Middle East and Africa," said Warren Hayslip, general manager of Donaldson's Membranes Division "The two companies now offer very compatible and complementary strengths in film production, coating and lamination, research and development, technical services, customer service, and sales and marketing."

BreatheTex Corporation (Pty) Ltd., headquartered in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, is a supplier of laminated waterproof breathable fabrics to worldwide markets.

Hemptown Clothing revenues up 31% in Q1

19 May 2005

Canada-based Hemptown Clothing Inc. has announced revenues of $178,563 for the first quarter ended March 31, 2005, a 31% rise from the same period of 2004. During the first quarter it also launched HT Naturals – an "eco-fabric" brand, produced from an expanded combination of fabric blends including organic cotton, bamboo, soy, recycled polyester, and other textiles.

The company continues the development of its patentable enzyme process for hemp-derived "Crailar" fibre with the National Research Council of Canada and in April received $174,893 from the Government of Canada's Scientific Research and Experimental Development programme (SR&ED) in recognition of its work in the development of its environmentally friendly fabrics and garments.

Jason Finnis, president of Hemptown, stated, "We continue to build the biotechnical aspects of our business with the pending Crailar process. Our HT Naturals product line has been well received, and we will continue to aggressively use our sales team to develop interest and generate revenues."

Hemptown Clothing Inc. is a hemp T-shirt apparel brand and sells a line of hemp/cotton activewear: T-shirts, sweatshirts and caps. The company is also involved in ongoing bio-technology fibre research and development of conservation-based textile technology.

Wal-Mart plans 15 new stores in China

19 May 2005

Wal-Mart Stores Inc., the world's largest retailer, plans to open 12 to 15 stores in China this year, according to its president John Menzer. With 46 stores in China alone and 5,000 worldwide, Wal-Mart hopes to rival its biggest competitor, Carrefour, which has been expanding rapidly and plans multiple store openings in the country. The central city of Chongqing is the retailer’s next target.

"Right now China, percentage-wise, is our fastest growing market," said John Menzer.

Wal-Mart buys toys, footwear and seasonal goods from China, making it its largest export country. It enjoyed a 31% rise in its sales to China last year to 7.6 billion Yuan ($918 million) and a 30% increase in the number of its stores. Direct and indirect exports from China to Wal-Mart reached $18 billion in 2004.

American Sporting Goods buys And1

19 May 2005

American Sporting Goods (ASG), a US athletic footwear and apparel company, has bought And1, a basketball footwear and apparel maker. Terms of the deal have not been released.

ASG said the popular And1 will help it reach a young male customer, as well as 130 international markets. And 1 is remembered for its aggressive marketing of its basketball sneaker. Founded in 1993, in 2003 it had revenue of $175 million. Its "Mixed Tape Tours" featured the nation's best street-ball players and the company has been endorsed by NBA players. Last year, it started a limited expansion into retail stores.

Feng Tay Enterprises to expand in 2005

20 May 2005

Taiwan's leading footwear maker Feng Tay Enterprises Co. is expected to see a 19% rise in production volume after the number of its global plants will grow to 12 with a total workforce of 64,000 by the end of this year. The company plans to expand its operations, setting up factories in China, Vietnam, Indonesia and Mexico, in addition to its headquarters in Taiwan.
Existing operations in Vietnam are being expanded and the number of its factories there will increase to five by the end of the year. Production capacity in Vietnam, with regards to global output, will increase to 55% from the current 32%, while the corresponding ratio in the mainland will be lowered to 33% from 50%. Indonesian production will shrink to 11% from 17% during the same period and the output in Mexico will account for merely 1% of the total.

The company’s annual output is around 42 million pairs of shoes and the figure is predicted to rise to 50 million pairs by the end of 2006. Last year, the company raked in NT$20.23 billion (US$595 million) in revenue from its global operations.

DuPont to launch nonwovens facility in South Korea

20 May 2005

DuPont has announced it had signed an agreement with the Republic of Korea to build a $12 million nonwovens market development manufacturing facility in the province of Gyeong-gi, near Seoul.

The company worked with South Korea's Minister of Commerce, Industry and Energy Dr. Hee-Beom Lee and several Korean organisations, including the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency, in securing the agreement.

Mark P. Vergnano, vice president and general manager of DuPont Nonwovens, said: "This market development facility will allow us to develop new selective barrier technologies and drive new applications globally. In addition, this initiative furthers DuPont's objectives to more clearly address the market needs of the Asia Pacific region."

Earlier this year, DuPont opened its corporate research and development facility near Shanghai. Last month it announced a research agreement with the National Chemical Laboratory in India.

Brazil’s COBAFI acquired by Sabanci Holding

20 May 2005

Acordis' Diolen polyester industrial yarn and tyre cord fabric operation, COBAFI, (Companhia Bahiana de Fibras) which is based in Brazil, has been sold to Haci Omer Sabanci Holding, A.S. Through the acquisition it is hoped that COBAFI will be able to strengthen its position in South America.

“As a leading European manufacturer, Diolen Industrial Fibres concentrates on industrial production in Europe. As a “local” supplier we focus on increasing competitiveness, setting and protecting high quality and service standards, and on providing the best price/performance ratio to our customers in our “local” European

market place," said Jan Michiels, CEO of Diolen Industrial Fibres.

Fountain Set reports 20% profit

20 May 2005

Hong Kong's Fountain Set (Holdings) Limited, recognised as the world's largest circular knitted fabric producer, has reported positive unaudited results for the six months ended February 28, 2005. Turnover increased by 6.30% to HK$3,118,468,000 ($400,297,368), whilst profits soared 20.24% to reach HK$53,860,000.

Headquartered and listed in Hong Kong, Fountain Set has production facilities in China, Sri Lanka and Indonesia, with a global staff force of approximately 22,000.

IMF warns of looming crisis in cotton producing small African nations

20 May 2005

West African cotton states facing an economic crisis due to a 30% drop in world prices should pass on the pain to farmers and not resort to subsidies, according to International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Large African cotton producing nations like Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali have over 10 million people dependent on the crop. In a bid to overturn the tide facing farmers in Benin and Mali, governments have agreed to pay their farmers above-market prices for the 2004-2005 harvest. In case of Burkina Faso, the government used the rainy day fund to support domestic prices.

According to IMF Managing Director Rodrigo Rato, all this will put a drag on the economies leading to increased fiscal deficits and possibly higher borrowing, undermining the stability of their economies and threatening other spending priorities. Mr Rato also predicts the decline in cotton prices to be a permanent trend.

Wolverine Boots and Gear announces new branded headwear agreement

20 May 2005

Wolverine Boots and Gear has signed a license agreement Paramount Apparel International, Inc. to develop and market Wolverine brand headwear for men.

Kevin Smith, vice president of Wolverine Brand Licensing at Wolverine World Wide, Inc. commented, "Paramount is an energetic, talented and dedicated company. These are the qualities we need to build a long-term business in headwear." Wolverine headwear will be available at selected retailers across the USA beginning autumn 2005.

Wolverine Boots and Gear is a division of Wolverine World Wide, Inc. that manufactures and markets a range of footwear solutions with patented technology systems offering licensed products, including workwear, rugged casual apparel, gloves, eyewear, sun eyewear and headwear.

FootstarWorks wins FMI Retailers Choice Award

20 May 2005

Occupational footwear company Footstarworks has been honoured with the 2005 FMI Retailer Choice Award for Innovation and Product Potential in the apparel category, for its Safetrax slip-resistant overshoe.

The overshoe was designed as an affordable solution for the implementation of mandatory slip-resistant footwear programmes, meeting ASTMF-1677 certified slip-resistant outsole standards.

According to the US Bureau of Labour Statistics, annual slip and fall claims account for 15% of total workers' compensation claims, representing the second leading reportable cause for personal injury. Approximately $5.3 billion was paid out on occupational injuries in 2000 and inappropriate footwear has been noted as

the cause of an estimated 24% of all slip and fall accidents.

“Première Vision Pluriel”

20 May 2005

The twice yearly fairs held in Paris, Expofil, Première Vision, Le Cuir à Paris, Indigo and Mod’Amont, have joined forces and been renamed “Première Vision Pluriel”. This follows the decision to join Le Cuir à Paris together with the four other events that were previously held under the Paris Pôle Mode banner.

Le Cuir à Paris, which has until now taken place at the Porte de Versailles, will now join the four other shows at Villepinte, starting in September 2005. Although the fairs will maintain their independence and individual identities, a common pass will now provide entry to all of the shows.

Dhaka-Hanoi trade agreement signed

20 May 2005

At the end of a three day official visit to Vietnam, Bangladeshi Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and Vietnamese counterpart Phan Van Khai announced that they had signed agreements to boost trade between the two countries, setting a target of $ 100 million bilateral trade by 2008.

The leaders identified specific areas for increased trade that include garments, leather, accessories, and jute.

Cognis reports slight increase in sales

20 May 2005

For the first three months of 2005, German specialty chemicals supplier Cognis has reported a 0.4% increase in net external sales to €780 million with the Strategic Business Units (SBUs) of Care Chemicals, Functional Products and Oleochemicals achieving significant growth.

The upward trend in Cognis’ Oleochemicals base stock division continued into the first three months of 2005, with sales rising 1.9% to €107 million.

With sales up 5.7% at €309 million, Care Chemicals, Cognis’ largest SBU, achieved strong growth. Functional Products achieved a significant rise in sales of 3.0% at €197 million.

Nutrition & Health’s sales fell 1.2% €75 million and sales of Process Chemicals stood at €86 million, 18.7% lower than in the same period in 2004. This was largely due to the divestment of the PVC stabilisers business effective July 1, 2004.
Antonio Trius, CEO of Cognis, said: “The first quarter result for 2005 was a strong one. We have to take into account that the first quarter of last year was one of the strongest in Cognis’ history.”

Cognis is a worldwide supplier of specialty chemicals and nutritional ingredients. The company employs about 8,100 people, and operates production sites and service centres in 30 countries.

Johnson Outdoors announces 11.1% increase in sales in Q2

20 May 2005

Outdoor recreation company, Johnson Outdoors Inc., has reported an increase of 11.1% in net sales for the fiscal quarter ended April 1, 2005.

The company stated that the rise in net sales was due solely to the addition of the Hummingbird brand, which was acquired in May 2004 and added $15.8 million to Marine Electronics' sales this quarter. The planned discontinuance of low-margin specialty boats resulted in the unfavourable comparison year-on-year in Watercraft revenues. Diving sales benefited from favourable currency translation ($0.6 million), however, not enough to reduce the impact of soft markets worldwide. The projected decline of military tent sales accounted for the majority of the reduction in sales during the quarter in Outdoor Equipment.
Operating profit declined $0.3 million in the second quarter versus the same period last

year. Hummingbird added $2.0 million to operating profit for the quarter, and increased efficiency in manufacturing drove the $1.1 million improvement in Watercraft operating losses.

"Marine Electronics continues to drive growth and, after two years of hard work, Watercraft is stronger, less complex and more competitive. Efforts to rebuild momentum in Diving amidst a struggling marketplace and to ensure better balance in performance across the Outdoor Equipment portfolio are well underway. We are committed to doing what's right to ensure Johnson Outdoors and all our businesses are sustainable, profitable and viable for the long-term," said Helen Johnson-Leipold, chairman and CEO, Johnson Outdoors Inc.

For the year-to-date, net sales increased 14.3%.

Johnson Outdoors designs, manufactures and markets a portfolio of brands across four categories: Watercraft, Marine Electronics, Diving and Outdoor Equipment.

Huntsman Polyurethanes expands its Suprasec soling range

21 May 2005

Huntsman Polyurethanes has launched its latest additions to its Suprasec range of water-blown polyether soling technologies. Anticipating future environmental legislation to eliminate ozone depleting and greenhouse gas emissions in the footwear industry, the new series of high performance polyurethane systems is available for a variety of components and offers footwear manufacturers high durability and improved processing.

Proposed European legislation is predicted to ban the sale of footwear containing fluorinated hydrocarbons (HFCs) by mid-2006. This has prompted Huntsman to further develop its fully water-blown technologies. Manufacturers are set to benefit from improved processing, cleaner aesthetics and durability.

Physical blowing agents have traditionally been used in polyether chemistry to improve surface definition and physical properties. By using Suprasec prepolymer technology, Huntsman has been able to create similar effects using only water as the blowing agent.

Craig Roberts, marketing manager, Huntsman Polyurethanes Footwear team, says: “Huntsman pioneered the development of fully water-blown polyether systems and it is this focus that has enabled us to perfect the technology, enabling our customers to achieve the ultimate step and eliminate physical blowing agents completely.”

Nano-Tex named a Red Herring 100 company

22 May 2005

Nano-Tex, a California-based fabric innovation company providing textile enhancements to the apparel and interior furnishings markets, has been named one of the Red Herring 100 Private Companies of North America.

NPD Fashionworld, an apparel industry analyst firm, predicts that the percentage of clothing with performance enhancements on the market will jump from 25% to 50% of the $170 billion apparel industry in the next few years.

"The Red Herring award underscores the value we bring to the textile industry," said Donn Tice, Nano-Tex CEO. "In a stagnant apparel market, Nano-Tex is a proven catalyst for growth by helping retailers bring differentiation to the selling floor, giving consumers new reasons to buy and driving repeat purchases."

Nano-Tex offers a family of nanotechnology-based textile enhancements that become inherent to the fabric to deliver performance characteristics without compromising the comfort, look or feel of the fabric.

Red Herring is the weekly magazine for technology entrepreneurs, investors and industry observers.

Men's Wearhouse Q1 income rises

22 May 2005

US specialty men's apparel retailer Men's Wearhouse has announced net earnings of $22.7 million for the first quarter ended April 30, compared with $15.1 million last year..Total sales increased by 14.1% to $411.6 million compared with $360.7 million for the same period in 2004.

Founded in 1973, Men's Wearhouse is one of North America's largest specialty retailers of men's apparel with 710 stores. The stores carry a full selection of designer, brand name and private label suits, sport coats, furnishings and accessories.

Too Inc net sales up 7% at $164.4 million for Q1

22 May 2005

Specialty young girls' apparel retailer Too Inc has reported net sales of $164.4 million the first quarter ended April 30, an increase of 7% from $154.1 million in 2004.The company's, comparable store sales increased 1% against a 2% rise in 2004 and net income reached $7.4 million from $5.1 million in 2004.

The company's Limited Too division that sells sportswear, related accessories, footwear, lifestyle and personal care products remodelled five existing stores during the quarter and opened two new stores.

Too Inc. currently operates 568 stores in 46 states and Puerto Rico, and has a select number of international franchised stores.