Business Week
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Lubrizol reports growth in performance coatings, specialty materials

31 October 2005

Specialty chemicals company, the Lubrizol Corporation has reported earnings of $48.6 million for the third quarter ended September 30, 2005 compared with $32.2 million in the same period in 2004. Consolidated revenues for the quarter were $1,014.1 million, an increased of 11% over third-quarter 2004 revenues.

For the first nine months of 2005, consolidated revenues were $3.04 billion compared with $2.21 billion for the first nine months of 2004. Consolidated earnings for the first nine months of 2005 were $157.2 million Earnings for the first nine months of 2004 were $73.6 million
The company's Performance Coatings product line reported revenues of $146.3 million in the quarter, an increase of 6% from the third quarter of 2004. The company stated that higher selling prices more than offset weak demand for printing varnishes and for North American and European textile coatings markets that are continuing to relocate to Asia.

The Specialty Materials product line reported third-quarter revenues of $113.3 million, which increased 9% from the third quarter of 2004 driven primarily by higher selling prices. Demand for Estane thermoplastic polyurethane increased in the quarter, as new applications for athletic footwear, explosion-proof security glass, paint-protection films and medical applications offset the non-recurrence of last year's large shipments for military applications, including fuel and water tank linings.

Ugg contributes to positive Q3 for Deckers Outdoor

31 October 2005

Deckers Outdoor Corporation has announced financial results for the third quarter and nine months ended September 30, 2005. Net sales increased 24% to $69.2 million compared with $55.8 million in the same period last year, and net earnings for the quarter increased 40% to $8.2 million, compared with $5.8 million for the third quarter of last year.
For the nine months ended September 30, 2005, net sales increased 23.6% to $173.8 million compared with $140.6 million in the corresponding period last year. Net earnings for the first nine months of fiscal 2005 increased 21.3% to $19.8 million, compared with $16.3 million in the same period last year.

"Our strong third quarter results were primarily driven by robust sales of UGG footwear, coupled with a significant gross margin improvement and control of operating expenses which allowed us to expand our operating margin by 350 basis points," Mr. Angel Martinez, president and CEO stated.

Ugg sales increased 46.2% to $57.3 million for the third quarter compared with $39.2 million for the same period last year, while Teva sales for the third quarter were $9.7 million compared with $11.9 million, a decrease of 18.4%.

Hi-Tec launch a new insole for summer 2006

31 October 2005

UK-based footwear brand Hi-Tec is launching a new 'Comfort Tec Custom' insole for 2006. This technology follows the form of the foot using a unique memory foam layer delivering an ergonomically contoured foot-shaped" fit, for a feeling of instant comfort.

The foot bed is moulded incorporating several layers that offer an instant feeling of relaxation within the foot. Additional features within the insole technology include: a moisture wicking top cloth to guarantee cool, dry feet; a memory foam layer delivering ultimate foot shaped fit; a polyurethane heel pad insole to provide shock absorption and an instantly comfortable experience; and poliyou layers designed to prevent bacterial build-up and offer odour control.

BASF's North American business increases cost savings

31 October 2005

BASF Corporation, BASF's North American subsidiary, has announced that its ongoing restructuring programmes will yield an additional $150 million in annual fixed cost reductions by mid-2007. The company expects one-time costs of $80 million arising from these measures.

The added savings are beyond the originally targeted $250 million already achieved and will bring the total fixed cost reductions for the restructuring programme announced in early 2003 to $400 million annually. This goal was reached in the second quarter of 2005, 18 months earlier than scheduled.

In addition to the cost reductions, the company expects to see its earnings before interest and taxes rise by $200

million on an annualised basis by 2007 as a result of the company's Commercial Effectiveness programme. Commercial Effectiveness involves the adoption of new pricing methodologies and business models, as well as focusing technical and developmental capabilities on customers with whom BASF can grow profitably.

Mammut launches Nirvana Line with IQ Measure System

31 October 2005

Mammut's has unveiled new, further developments of its snowsports Nirvana Line - which include the IQ Measure System. The system, integrated into the Nirvana jacket, is said to reliably inform the wearer of height and temperature, but can be easily removed when you need to wash the garments.

Further improvements include strategically positioned stretch inserts to improve freedom of movement, weight reduction through the addition of new 13mm tape technology, a two-way underarm zip with double flap for ventilation, and two inner pockets with absorbent cleaning cloth for ski goggles.

Alexandra workwear acquires Baer

31 October 2005

UK-based supplier of uniforms and workwear, Alexandra plc has announced its £4.5 million acquisition of de Baer plc, a tailored corporate clothing company.

Alexandra has acquired the trading assets of de Baer plc and its wholly owned UK subsidiary Rimac Limited from its administrators Damian Joseph and Iain Allan.

De Baer's main markets are the travel and transport, financial and leisure and hospitality industries. According to a statement, the acquisition consolidates Alexandra's position in the important sector of tailored corporatewear. It will also extend Alexandra's presence in the Irish market through the de Baer subsidiary, Image Development Limited.

Alexandra's CEO Julian Budd commented, This deal is a perfect fit for Alexandra. De Baer is a highly respected brand and has a quality management team and blue chip client list. Its strength in tailored corporatewear is complementary to our existing business and will enhance our position in this market sector. We expect the acquisition to be earnings enhancing in its first full year."

Outlast appoints product and sales manager

31 October 2005

German designer of phase change materials (PCMs) Outlast Europe GmbH has recently appointed Frank de Vries as the new product and sales manager, as a result of increasing demand.

Outlast materials are used in a variety of applications including outerwear, footwear, underwear, socks and bedding.

Eastman announces record sales

31 October 2005

Manufacturer of chemicals, fibres and plastics Eastman Chemical Company has announced record sales revenue of $1.82 billion for the third quarter 2005, a 10% increase over third quarter 2004 and a company record. The increase in sales revenue was attributed to higher selling prices throughout the company and increased sales volume from continuing product lines.

In its Coatings, Adhesives, Specialty Polymers and Inks External division, sales revenue decreased by 7% as a result of the restructured, divested and consolidated product lines in third quarter 2004. Sales revenue from continuing product lines increased by 17% as a result of higher selling prices for cyclical commodity product lines. The Performance Chemicals and Intermediates segment's external sales revenue increased 16%. Specialty Plastics reported an 8% increase in external sales as higher selling prices more than offset lower sales volume. The polymers division's external sales revenue increased 19%. Fibres reported a 24% increase as a result of higher selling prices and increased sales volume.

Eastman manufactures chemicals, fibres and plastics worldwide. It provides differentiated coatings, adhesives and specialty plastics products; PET polymers for packaging; and is a major supplier of cellulose acetate fibres.

CIRFS releases new statistical yearbook on man-made fibres

31 October 2005

The International Rayon and Synthetic Fibres Committee (CIRFS) has announced the 2005 edition of the CIRFS Statistical Yearbook - Information on Man-Made Fibres" - a guide to the man-made fibres industry, now in its 42nd year of publication. This year's edition includes an improved presentation of trade data, covering 65 reporting countries.

The yearbook, containing more than 300 pages of facts and figures about the worldwide man-made fibres industry, charts both the long term trends in the industry and the recent developments in particular.

The information includes world production volumes of man-made fibres, cotton and wool from 1900 to 2004, with a detailed geographic breakdown covering the more recent years; Fibres Mill Consumption trends in Western

Europe, Central Europe & Turkey; end-use patterns for man-made and natural fibres in Western Europe, Central and Eastern Europe, Turkey, USA and Japan; import and export information for 33 countries in Europe, 12 in Asia, 15 in the Americas, three in Africa and two in Oceania. This section also includes an original CIRFS calculation of the textile and clothing trade data broken down by fibre.

Bernard Bruyère, head of the CIRFS Statistical Department, stated, Our information on world production is continuing to improve, and our database of trade flows now covers 65 countries throughout the world." CIRFS is the representative organisation for the European man-made fibres industry, with member companies in over 20 European countries and associate members from several countries outside Europe.

Lauffenmühle launches new stretch fabric with Dow XLA

1 November 2005

German fabric producer Lauffenmühle has launched a new stretch fabric product range Evolution Relax with Dow XLA for workwear.

According to Lauffenmühle, as many people have to wear their workwear garments far longer than their home clothes, it is no surprise that the demand for stretch workwear fabrics is growing rapidly.

Dow XLA guarantees stretch performance after continuous wear and repeated washing and it is claimed to be the state-of-the-art elastic fibre for workwear fabrics. It resists harsh chemicals, high heat and UV light. The transparent fibre virtually disappears into the fibre blend and provides a high performing and lasting stretch comfort - even in intensive high temperature industrial laundering processes.

Following extensive tests Lauffenmühle has launched its new fabrics with Dow (all elasticised in the weft). The range starts with the shirt weight Evolution Relax125 (125 g) followed by three twill fabrics Evolution Relax 215 (g), 245 (g) and 285 (g) with 60% PES/ 35% CO/5% EOL. A Canvas fabric Evolution Canvas Relax, with 54% PES/43% CO/3% EOL will complete the new product range. This canvas stretch (with 54 % PES and 20-25% elasticity) is said to be unique in Europe.

Furthermore, with the help of Lauffenmühle's new Air Spun spinning technology, it has been possible to develop a fabric which combines excellent abrasion and pilling performance, low shrinkage, durable 20-25% stretch, soft hand and easy care without compromise.

Airesis acquires Le Coq Sportif

1 November 2005

Swiss-based Christian Eschler AG has developed new fabrics for outdoor wear. It has introduced softshell laminates under the brand name E-star 2000 and E-star H2, as well as Isowind, a water/windproof three-layer laminate.

The company has also added Schoeller's 3XDRY finish to several of its most popular circular knit fabrics.

Yue Yuen steps into safety shoes

1 November 2005

Yue Yuen Industrial (Holdings) Limited is to expand its manufacturing scope laterally and move into the production of safety footwear. It has set up a joint venture called Oftenrich Holdings Limited with Upmax Investments Limited, which is a member of the Golden Chang Group. The joint venture will focus on the manufacture of safety shoes and casual shoes.

Witrh annual turnover of over $200 million and production of about 12 million pairs of shoes, Golden Chang has over 50 years of experience in leather processing and footwear manufacturing originating in Taiwan. Its principal production base is located in Zhongshan, Guangdong Province, China. Major customers include Wolverine, Wal-Mart, Timberland and Dr. Martens.

Commenting on the joint venture, Mr. Edward Ku, executive director of Yue Yuen, said, Teaming up with a well-experienced manufacturer will offer immediate contribution and product category diversification opportunity to the group. Furthermore, the combination of the expertise from two market leaders will enhance the competitiveness of the joint venture in footwear manufacturing providing high quality services for customers in the safety/casual shoes segment."

Freudenberg Chemical Specialities plans facility in China

1 November 2005

Specialty lubricants company Freudenberg Chemical Specialities KG is readying itself to participate more closely in China's economic boom. The Munich-based company has signed an investment agreement with the Shanghai Quingpu Industrial Park, thus taking the first step towards the planned construction of a production facility for speciality lubricants and release agents.

Production is scheduled to start up in 2007, with annual production output set to increase rapidly by 2010. The plan is to build a shared production facility for Klüber Lubrication and Chem-Trend, each part of Freudenberg Chemical Specialities KG, both of which operate sales companies in China.

As one of the world's fastest-expanding economies, China has a special role to play for our own growth plans," said the president and CEO, Hanno D. Wentzler. “The demand for high-quality lubricants and release

agents will be rising over-proportionately here during the years ahead, because the key industries important to our business are likewise achieving continuous growth." The sectors in China exhibiting particularly vigorous expansion include the textile, footwear, automotive, plastics, and tyre industries.

LaCrosse Footwear reports fall in sales

1 November 2005

Branded work and outdoor footwear company LaCrosse Footwear, Inc. has reported a drop in sales for the third quarter ended September 24, 2005.

The company reported consolidated net sales of $31.0 million, compared with $34.5 million in the third quarter of 2004, which was said to be the result of increased petroleum prices and a general slowdown in consumer spending.

For the first three quarters of 2005, consolidated net sales were $69.6 million, compared with $76.8 million in the same period of 2004. Sales to the outdoor market were $18.9 million for the third quarter of 2005, up 1% from $18.7 million in the same period of 2004. Sales to the work market were $12.1 million for the third quarter of 2005, compared with $15.8 million in the same period of 2004.

"Despite challenging economic conditions, we are encouraged with our sales and earnings performance in our core work and outdoor business in the third quarter," said Joseph P. Schneider, CEO.

Wolverine World Wide announces Outdoor Group promotions

1 November 2005

Branded casual, active lifestyle, work, outdoor sport and uniform footwear company, Wolverine World Wide, Inc. has announced organisational promotions in its Outdoor Group. The Outdoor Group consists of the Merrell, Sebago and Patagonia footwear businesses and is led by Jacques Lavertue, group president. Scott Sible has been promoted to group vice president & general manager - Merrell Footwear. In this new role, he will have full responsibility for Merrell Footwear global operations, including brand management, sales and marketing. Rod Stafford has been promoted to group vice president & general manager - Sebago Footwear. In his eight years at the company, Mr. Stafford has held senior positions in the international operations of the Sebago, Merrell and CAT brands.

Craig Throne has been promoted to group vice president & general manager - Patagonia Footwear. Mr. Throne will lead the new Patagonia Footwear initiative on a global basis, with the initial launch of product anticipated for the spring 2007.

Onder Ors has been promoted to join the Outdoor Group as group vice president - international. In this role, Mr. Ors will have global responsibility for all of the Outdoor Group brands and operations with third- party distributors.

Charles Willis, currently creative director for the Outdoor Group, has been promoted to group vice president - creative director. Tobin Teichgraeber has also joined the Outdoor Group as creative director - Merrell Apparel.

IFAI appoints new representative in Europe

1 November 2005

The Industrial Fabrics Association International (IFAI) has announced that Claude Levy-Rueff has been appointed as the IFAI representative in Europe. In his new position, he will be responsible for generating new business in Europe, as well as handling customer service respon sibilities with existing European members.

Mr Levy-Rueff graduated with an economics degree from the University of Paris, and an MBA from Stanford University. He and his wife, Francoise, live in Paris. The Industrial Fabrics Association International (IFAI) is a not-for-profit trade association whose member companies represent the international specialty fabrics marketplace. IFAI is the largest trade association serving the industry.

Retailers and manufacturers elected to Sporting Goods Industry Hall of Fame

2 November 2005

The Sporting Goods Industry Hall of Fame Committee has elected six new Hall of Famers, who will be inducted at a special 50th Anniversary Hall of Fame induction ceremony next May, bringing the total number honoured to 130.

Alan Cohen, The Finish Line, Inc.; the late Dave Koch, New Era Cap Co.; Don Pfau, Sports, Inc.; Joachim Schroeder, retired from Karstadt Sports (Germany); Jim Soffe, M.J. Soffe Co.; and Edward W. Stack, Dick's Sporting Goods, will be honoured in ceremonies on May 23, 2006 during the 42nd Annual National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA) Management Conference & 8th Annual Team Dealer Summit. The conference and summit will be held May 21-24, 2006, in San Antonio, Texas.

This year's class of Hall of Famers is special, not only because of their noteworthy accomplishments in the sporting goods industry, but also because their induction marks a half century of the Hall of Fame recognising the best and brightest of our industry," said NSGA Hall of Fame Committee chairman Mickey Newsome, chairman and CEO of Hibbett Sporting Goods.

The Sporting Goods Industry Hall of Fame induction

ceremony is co-sponsored by W.L. Gore & Associates, Inc., Mizuno USA, and New Balance Athletic Shoe, Inc.

Team GB selects adidas for Olympics

2 November 2005

Adidas has been selected by the British Olympic Association to supply Team GB's Olympic Team in Beijing in 2008. The global sportswear company will also supply the British competitors at next year's Winter Olympic Games in Turin.

Adidas, which has supplied Team GB since the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games, will be an official sponsor of the team and will supply all technical, training and lifestyle apparel in Turin & Beijing.

BASF posts 11% sales increase in Q3

2 November 2005

BASF continued on its growth path in the third quarter of 2005 as compared with the same quarter of 2004, sales increased by 11% to €10.4 billion. Cumulative sales for the first nine months of the year rose by more than 12% to €31 billion.

BASF's chief financial officer, Dr. Kurt Bock, took special note of the company's net income of €808 million: That is more than double the figure of €366 million that we posted in the same quarter of 2004." At €2.5 billion, net income in the first nine months of 2005 exceeded the strong level for full year 2004 by almost half a billion euros.

The sales growth was primarily due to necessary price increases in all the company's chemical segments. With these price increases, BASF responded to higher raw material prices, which resulted in additional costs of more than €1 billion in the first nine months of the year.

In the third quarter of 2005, BASF recorded higher sales in all regions. Asia remained dynamic, and the economic environment in North America was robust despite the hurricanes. In parts of Europe, however, economic growth was weak, especially in Germany.

Pakistan's sporting goods exports increase

2 November 2005

Pakistan exported sports goods worth US$ 23.980 million in September 2005 compared with $21.816 million in August 2005, an increase of 9.92% month-on-month but a decline of 5.97% compared with September 2004 ($25.503 million).

According to a breakdown of the statistics, released by the Federal Bureau of Statistics, the country exported $ 14.408 million worth of footballs, $1.707 million worth of gloves and other sporting goods worth $7.865 million compared with $13.907 million, $1.335 million and 6.574 million respectively in the previous month. This equated to a 3.6% increase in football exports, a 27.85% growth in gloves and a 19.64% rise in the export of other sporting goods month-on-month.

Total sporting goods exports in the July-September 2005 period stood at $72.250 million compared with $69.467 million in the same period of 2004, an increase of 4.01%.

Intertextile Shanghai attracts 45,000 visitors

2 November 2005

Intertextile Shanghai Apparel Fabrics has proved itself to be among the most important apparel textile fairs in China for the garment fabrics sector attracting over 1,500 exhibitors and 45,000 visitors. The event which was held from October 26-29 welcomed professionals from the textile and garment industries from across China and internationally including nine national pavilions from Germany, Italy, Japan, Korea, Pakistan, Portugal, Taiwan, Thailand and Turkey. For the first time, the show welcomed companies from the Czech Republic, the Netherlands and Peru.

Intertextile Shanghai Apparel Fabrics is organised by Messe Frankfurt (HK) Ltd and The Sub-Council of Textile Industry, CCPIT. The next Intertextile Shanghai Apparel Fabrics will be held at Shanghai New International Expo Centre from October 25-28, 2006.

Spalding launches Neverflat basketball

2 November 2005

Basketball equipment brand, and a division of Russell Corporation, Spalding has unveiled Neverflat, which is said to be the first-ever ball with proprietary pressure retention technologies guaranteed to hold air up to 10 times longer than traditional basketballs.

The Neverflat basketball is guaranteed to stay fully inflated for at least one year - with no additional inflation needed during that period.

According to Ron Laliberty, Spalding's director of research and development: "Traditional basketballs lose air on a consistent basis, resulting in a ball that falls out of Game Ball specification within a few months. For years we've studied all aspects of the construction of the basketball, from the bladder to the valve to air treatment. Spalding's Neverflat technology upholds consistent air pressure like no other ball in the marketplace."

The new basketball utilises patent pending, exclusive full-ball construction technologies - said to be a first within the inflated sports category - to increase pressure retention. In addition there is no seepage as a new membrane and NitroFlate air technology virtually eliminates that possibility. This new membrane

technology tightens the natural pores in the ball's bladder to improve
pressure retention; proprietary NitroFlate molecules are injected into the ball, forming a protective barrier against air seepage, resulting in consistent NBA Game Ball bounce height for at least one year.

Kodiak adds extra slip resistance to QuadAir outsole

2 November 2005

US safety footwear manufacturer Kodiak-Terra USA has added slip resistance to its safety footwear with the Quadair outsole.

"It is all about bundling as much safety into a pair of shoes that you can, offering the best in the marketplace," said Wayne Elsey, president of Kodiak-Terra. "We have perfected our outsole to exceed the standards, dictated by the United States Postal Workers Union, utilising both the James testing as well as the Mark II Brumgrabber test. It offers our customers a unique advantage of a truly slip resistant safety toe product."

Ashworth appoints new director

2 November 2005

US designer of golf-inspired lifestyle sportswear Ashworth, Inc has appointed a new outside director, John W. Richardson, to the company's board effective December 12, 2005. He will stand for election at the company's annual meeting of stockholders scheduled for March 2006.

Mr. Richardson is the senior vice president, controller and chief accounting officer of Qwest Communications International, a provider of a variety of telecommunications services.

European footwear retailers warn of job losses

3 November 2005

EU footwear retailers are warning of the adverse effects of the possible EU anti-dumping measures aimed at China and Vietnam.

"Well over 10,000 jobs will be in jeopardy in Europe if the EU's anti-dumping measures against China and Vietnam are enacted. The last thing European consumers need is rising prices for daily necessities such as footwear, not to mention a reduced selection of products. And recent events in the textile industry have shown where protectionism can lead," noted Footwear Association of Importers and Retailchains (FAIR) president Mr. Paul Verrips.

FAIR represents the interests of over 90 European footwear importers and retailers that employ approximately 80,000 people and accounts for 40% of the EU's shoe imports.

"Asian imports pose no real threat to the European footwear industry. Only a handful of footwear manufacturers still realise the entirety of their production in Europe. These companies are mainly family-owned SMEs that specialise in the kind of high quality and/or niche products that are not produced in China or Vietnam at all," Mr. Verrips pointed out.

"The lion's share of the European footwear industry moved its production activities offshore a number of years ago," he noted. "Only the final assembly process is often still done in Europe nowadays. Affordable shoes are unlikely ever to be made in Europe again."

According to a statement from FAIR, another problem faced by the European shoe industry is that the remaining plants would be unable to make up for the production shortfalls that would result from the EU's envisaged anti-dumping measures. This would translate into a reduced selection for consumers in the short and medium term, accompanied by substantial increases in retail prices.

Clariant announces leadership appointments

3 November 2005

The board of directors of Clariant Ltd has appointed three key leadership positions, including naming Roland Loesser as new chairman and Jan Secher as new chief executive.

Mr. Loesser, Clariant's current chief executive, will assume his new role following the Annual General Meeting (AGM) on April 7, 2006, taking over from the current chairman, Robert Raeber, who will reach the statutory retirement age at that time. Mr. Secher will join Clariant's management board on January 1, 2006 and take over as chief executive after the AGM. Mr. Secher is a Swedish citizen and has a Masters degree in Industrial Marketing from the Linkoeping Institute of Technology in Sweden.

Professor Dieter Seebach will retire as member of the board of directors. The board will propose Dr. Peter Chen, chemistry professor at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich to replace Dr. Seebach. Dr. Chen, 45, is an expert in Physical Organic Chemistry and a US citizen.

Adidas-Salomon reports positive Q3 sales

3 November 2005

Adidas-Salomon AG has reported an 8% increase in third quarter net sales for the group on a currency-neutral basis with improvements coming from all regions except Europe, where sales remained stable. In euro terms, sales grew 9% to €1.924 billion in 2005 from

€1.758 billion in the third quarter of 2004. Operating profit increased 12% in the third quarter of 2005 to €315 million versus €281 million in 2004. The group's net income from continuing operations was up 28% in the third quarter, reaching €209 million versus €163 million in 2004.
For the first nine months currency-neutral sales grew 10%. In euro terms, sales also grew 10% to €5.115 billion from €4.664 billion in 2004.

Sales growth in the adidas segment set the pace for group performance during the first nine months of 2005. Currency-neutral adidas revenues increased 10% in the first nine months. Drivers of this growth were strong double-digit growth in the sport heritage division as well as increases in virtually all of its sport performance categories. Currency-neutral revenues in the TaylorMade-adidas Golf segment increased 12%, driven by significant growth in all major categories except putters. Currency effects only had a minor effect on sales at adidas and TaylorMade-adidas Golf in euro terms. adidas sales in euro terms were up 9% to €4.545 billion in the first nine months from €4.155 billion in 2004.

TaylorMade-adidas Golf sales in euro terms grew 11% to € 528 million in 2005 from €477 million in 2004.

Lion Apparel introduces protective multi-threat garment

3 November 2005

After two years of development, Lion Apparel has introduced its latest protective multi-threat garment, Tactix MT94, to provide a new level of protection for bio-terrorism, natural disaster first responders and Drug Enforcement Agents.

The MT94 - which employs Gore Chempak Ultra Barrier fabric, a thin, lightweight, and high-strength PTFE film with a tough Nomex outer shell - was principally designed to offer a high level of vapour protection which is required to protect against chemical/biological terrorism agents. However, it is said to have a wide range of uses including technical rescue, confined space rescue, decontamination, high-risk entries such as narcotics labs, and bomb secondary threat protection. In addition to guarding against challenges identified in National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1994 and 1992 standards, the MT94 also offers protection against flame and "weaponised" chemical and biological agents.

Dow Fiber Solutions launches new stretch fibre for workwear

3 November 2005

Uniform manufacturers, laundry suppliers and leasing companies are looking for more durable, longer-lasting garments - to lower costs and positively affect the bottom line. At the same time, uniform and career apparel wearers are demanding more comfort and flexibility than current uniforms provide.

To meet the demands of durability and comfort demanded in modern workwear, Dow Fiber Solutions has introduced Dow XLA HTT - a high temperature tolerant fibre - which is said to be the first stretch solution that is inherently resistant to the high heat and harsh chemicals used in industrial laundering, tunnel drying and dry cleaning.

Dow XLA HTT is an olefin-based fibre which can withstand temperatures of up to 220°C without compromising its stretch performance. Uniform manufacturers have begun to produce garments with Dow XLA HTT fibre because the fabric withstands temperatures optimal for thermosol dyeing of polycotton and polywools, and maintains dimensional stability and stretch - all while providing lasting stretch performance through boil, UV, chemical and chlorine resistance.

The Sportsman's Guide releases record results

]3 November 2005

Internet and catalogue retailer specialising in outdoor clothing, outdoor equipment, golf apparel and equipment and footwear The Sportsman's Guide, Inc. has reported record results for the quarter ended September 30, 2005.

Net sales for the quarter were $61.5 million, compared with $57 million reported for the same period in 2004. The nearly 8% increase in consolidated net sales, year-on-year for the third quarter, was the result of sales growth at both The Golf Warehouse and The Sportsman's Guide. For the nine months ended September 30, 2005, net sales were $189.9 million, a 34% increase over the $141.4 million reported for the first three quarters of 2004.

Net earnings for the quarter were $2.2 million, a 50% increase over the $1.4 million reported for the same period in 2004.

Hartmarx acquires Simply Blue and Seymour Blue women's business

3 November 2005

US producer of business, casual and golf apparel Hartmarx Corporation has acquired Simply Blue and Seymour Blue.

Simply Blue's Christopher Blue collection is positioned in the classic-to-better sportswear market and offers jeans, jackets and capris in denim and other fabrications.

Hartmarx produces and markets business, casual and golf apparel under its own brands including Hart Schaffner Marx, Hickey-Freeman, Palm Beach, Coppley, Cambridge, Keithmoor, Society Brand, Racquet Club, Naturalife, Pusser's of the West Indies, Royal, Brannoch, Riserva, Sansabelt, Exclusively Misook, Barrie Pace and Aura. In addition, the company has certain exclusive

rights under licensing agreements to market selected products under a number of brands such as Austin Reed, Tommy Hilfiger, Kenneth Cole, Burberry men's tailored clothing, Ted Baker, Bobby Jones, Jack Nicklaus,

Claiborne, DKNY Donna Karan New York, Pierre Cardin, Perry Ellis, Jeffrey Banks, Jhane Barnes, Andrea Jovine, Lyle & Scott, Golden Bear and Starington.

Everlast signs licensing agreement for Scandinavian countries

4 November 2005

Everlast Worldwide Inc. has signed a new license agreement with Contrast APS to introduce a series of Everlast-branded products to Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland. The Denmark-based company will develop and sell Everlast sports bags, duffels, backpacks, sleeping bags, bed linens, and beach towels.

Everlast manufactures and licenses sporting goods and apparel products under the Everlast brand name.

Reebok and Wal-Mart settle sole design suit

4 November 2005

Reebok International, Ltd. has reached an out-of-court settlement in a law suit in which Reebok claimed that the Wal-Mart had infringed on a sole design patent owned by Reebok. The suit, filed last December, claimed that the three-layer cushion sole design developed by Reebok and patented in 2004 was used by the retailer without permission from Reebok. The suit was due to go to trial in the first week in November, but was settled out-of-court. Terms of the settlement were not disclosed.

Record results for Puma in Q3

4 November 2005

Puma AG has announced another record quarter in sales and earnings with branded sales rising 18.4% to reach €699 million and consolidated sales more than 16% to €536 million. Footwear sales rose 16.6% to €350 million, apparel 15% to €149 million and accessories 19.9% to €37 million.

In the first nine months global brand sales also rose 16.4% to reach almost €1,867 million and consolidated sales posted a 14% increase over the same period in 2004. Footwear sales rose by 16.9% to €1,078 million and apparel by 12.8% to €627 million. Accessories reported the strongest growth at 28.8% and reached €163 million in nine months.

Spira Footwear protests over shoe ban

4 November 2005

US footwear brand Spira Footwear has launched a protest over what it feels is an unfair and unjust rule by the governing bodies of Track and Field - the International Amateur Athletic Federation and USA Track and Field. Both the IAAF and USATF have adopted a rule that bans springs in footwear, including Spira's WaveSpring technology, in competition.

According to IAAF and USATF rule 143(3)(a), "A competitor may compete in bare feet or with footwear on one or both feet. The purpose of shoes is to give protection and stability to the feet and a firm grip of the ground. Such shoes, however, must not be constructed so as to give the competitor an additional assistance and no spring or device of any kind may be incorporated in the shoe."

As part of its protest the company is offering a $1 million prize to any male or female runner who can win the 2006 Boston Marathon in a banned pair of Spira Footwear and is even developing a special lightweight running shoe just for the marathon.

Spira shoes have a patented spring technology that reduces the impact on a runner's feet, which is said to lead to easier recovery and less overall exertion.

Royal Ten Cate to sell Ten Cate Permess and Multistiq

4 November 2005

Dutch specialty chemical company Royal Ten Cate has announced that it is to sell Ten Cate Permess (the Netherlands, Italy and the United Kingdom) and Multistiq (the Netherlands) to their respective management. The transaction will be completed before the end of November. The sale, which will take place at book value, will amount to €10 million in net assets.

Ten Cate Permess operates in the field of interlinings, which are used to reinforce clothing. Major customers include fashion chains and manufacturers of designer clothes for women and men's fashions. It recorded a drop in sales and margins as a result of the weaker dollar, which caused a decline in the company's competitive position as a European-based manufacturer. Production at Ten Cate Permess was considerably scaled down in 2004 and at the beginning of 2005, which involved reorganisation costs. As a result, a loss occurred that adversely affected the result of the Advanced Textiles & Composites sector in the current financial year. However, according to a statement from Ten Cate, a healthy basis for the future has been created for Pemess.

Multistiq is a specialist supplier of basic materials for labels; its major customers are to be found in the carpet and graphics industries.