Business Week
3rd December 05 - 9th December 05

Huntsman begins construction of Singapore facility

5 December 2005

Huntsman Corporation has held a ground breaking ceremony for its new world scale Jeffamine polyetheramines manufacturing facility, the company's first production site in Singapore's Jurong Island.

The company expects to commission the new 16,000 tonnes per annum plant in the first quarter of 2007.

This new facility will transform our Performance Products business from being primarily a distributor of imported products to a business with hard assets on the ground in the centre of this exciting and fast-growing region," said Don Stanutz, president of Huntsman Performance Products division.

Key Jeffamines polyetheramines applications include epoxy coatings, concrete additives, organic pigments, fuel and lubricant additives, herbicides and pesticides.

Footwear boosts Finish Line sales

5 December 2005

US-based athletic retailer The Finish Line, Inc. has reported consolidated net sales of $274 million for the 13 weeks ended November 26, an increase of 16% over $235.3 million for Q3 last year. Comparable store net sales for Q3 increased 4% on top of an 8% increase reported for the comparable 13-week period last year.

For the 39 weeks ended November 26, 2005, consolidated net sales were $906.8 million an increase of 13% over $805.4 million reported for the 39 weeks ended November 27, 2004. Year-to-date, comparable store net sales increased 1% on top of a 9% increase reported for the comparable 39-week period last year.

New lightweight Thinsulate for footwear launched

5 December 2005

As cold feet can be distracting and uncomfortable for outdoor enthusiasts during winter, Thinsulate insulation has developed a new product for footwear that will help keep them more comfortable inside and outside longer – Thinsulate insulation 100 gram. A blend of olefin microfibres and larger staple fibres, the product is designed for use in applications where breathability and lightweight warmth are crucial for performance and comfort, such as cool weather trail running, hiking and casual/dress footwear.

The new 100 gram insulation is the lightest footwear Thinsulate insulation on the market, which is said to make it ideal for footwear designers developing new products for trail running, hiking, cycling and even for every day footwear that can be worn on the train platform as well as in the office during the cooler months of the year.

Thinsulate insulation 100 gram provides yet another option for designers to create unique footwear for consumers. The lightweight warmth is perfect for anyone who spends time outside – training, commuting or just enjoying the great outdoors," said Kim Kocer, market development manager, 3M Personal Safety Products Department.

Meeting on intellectual property held in Italy

5 December 2005

The World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) has announced that some 200 representatives from the world's leading fashion houses, as well as government, academic and trade circles, from 40 countries gathered in Caserta, Italy last week to highlight the importance of the intellectual property (IP) system in enhancing the competitiveness of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the textile and clothing sectors.

The international symposium, organised by WIPO, from November 30 to December 2, in collaboration with the Italian Ministry of Productive Activities (Italian Patent and Trademark Office) and the Institute for Industrial Promotion (IPI), reviewed the status of the textile and clothing sectors and stressed the importance of the tools of the IP system to these sectors whose success strongly depends on technological innovation, innovative designs and creativity expression.

The symposium was opened by the Italian Minister of Productive Activities, Claudio Scajola, and Carlotta Graffigna, director and controller who represented WIPO Director General, Dr. Kamil Idris.

According to WIPO, copyright, industrial designs, trademarks, trade secrets and patents are key intellectual property tools that are of great importance to the fashion industry in the knowledge-driven economy enabling them to compete effectively in domestic and export markets in the era of increasing globalisation and market integration. These tools play a key role in establishing and consolidating a company's market position, and by protecting intangible capital through specific intellectual

property rights (IPRs), fashion houses may increase profit margins and improve their market share. To reap the full benefits of the IP system, companies need to develop an IP strategy that is fully integrated into their overall business strategy.

The role of the IP system in the fashion industry was examined at the meeting and illustrated using case studies from the textile and clothing sectors. Keynote speakers included Carlotta Graffigna, Pio Del Gaudio representative of the Municipality of Caserta, Antonio Grella, dean of the Second University of Naples (SUN), and Carlo Cicala, president of the Union of Entrepreneurs of the District of Caserta.

Major fashion houses, such as Benetton, Ermenegildo Zegna, Gianni Versace, Zara, Miroglio, and Suberis contributed to the debate, presenting experiences and successful case studies.

India's Minister of Textiles urges Asia to harness its advantages

5 December 2005

Speaking at the opening ceremony Asian Textile Conference on December 1, India's Union Minister of Textiles, Shri Shankersinh Vaghela, called upon the Asian textile industry to harness its advantages to withstand global competition. The minister, who delivered the inaugural address, told delegates from Asia and Europe that Asia has a strong base in raw materials, an expanding man-made fibre industry and a large pool of technical and managerial man-power. He said an infusion of new funds could bring back the buoyancy to the textile industry.

He added that the advantages enjoyed by Asian countries need to be harnessed through upgrading technology and improving quality to retain the competitive edge, leading to a quantum leap in the quality share of the Asian textile exports in the post quota regime. However, he also emphasised that the bottom line for success in the post quota regime would be quality, prices, marketing skills, adherence to delivery schedules and work place norms insisted upon by the buyers. The minister also expressed the need to enhance relationships between trade, export promotion bodies and various departments responsible for operating export promotion schemes and facilitation services.

Lanxess divests iSL-Chemie

5 December 2005

Chemicals company Lanxess AG has sold iSL-Chemie GmbH & Co. KG, Kürten, Germany, to Berlac AG, Sissach, Switzerland. The purchase price for iSL-Chemie, a subsidiary of Lanxess' business unit Rhein Chemie Rheinau GmbH, Mannheim, Germany, is approximately €20 million. The transaction is effective immediately.

iSL-Chemie, which produces colour pastes and specialty coatings for plastics, was established more than 35 years ago. It employs about 130 people and is expected to have sales of some €25 million in 2005.

"iSL-Chemie is a well-positioned manufacturer of innovative products," said Lanxess' Management Board chairman Dr. Axel Heitmann. We divested this company because it was not among Rhein Chemie's core activities. In the Swiss Berlac group we have found a purchaser who will support iSL-Chemie in growing its business."

The Berlac group is a global manufacturer of high-end special lacquers and effects for the design-oriented industry. Application areas for Berlac products include the ski and snowboard industries, the watch-making and eyewear sectors and automotive and telecommunications.

Coming after the announcement two weeks ago of the planned sale of the Dorlastan business to the Japanese company Asahi Kasei Fibres, the divestment of iSL-Chemie represents a further step aimed at optimising Lanxess Group's portfolio.

Sympatex to unveil new image

5 December 2005

Following the announcement of a partnership between Sympatex and Nike in the golf market, Sympatex will be unveiling further developments at ispo Winter- where the company will announce all of its latest technical developments:

Sympatex will unveil a new brand image, which has been updated to reflect the company's new technical direction.

On-going developments that were first launched at Go Outdoors have been finalised including investment in new machinery, which provides lighter, quieter and better performing glove inserts.

The company will also highlight further developments in its Reflexion technology including gloves, Windmaster products, and direct laminate/three layer option for technical products.Details of a new partnership with Outlast will also be announced.

Huntsman to acquire interest in Huntsman Advanced Materials

6 December 2005

Huntsman Corporation has announced that it has reached a definitive agreement with affiliates of SISU Capital Limited to acquire, for approximately $125 million, a 9.7% minority interest in Huntsman Advanced Materials LLC (AdMat) which is currently owned by SISU affiliates and other third parties.

Immediately following the acquisition, it is anticipated that AdMat will become a subsidiary of Huntsman International LLC. The acquisition is expected to be completed by the year end.

Indian PM urges more economic cooperation with Russia

6 December 2005

Indian Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, has said that India and Russia need to make concerted efforts to reinvigorate economic cooperation and integrate it with market forces. Addressing a joint meeting of Indian and Russian businessmen in Moscow, Dr. Singh said, While the political responsibility for expanding ties with other countries is the primary task of governments, business to business relations have become a critical element in the overall architecture of interaction between countries".

The Prime Minister outlined joint financing of Indo-Russian projects and development of relationships between financial institutions as the directions for future growth. He said that the bilateral trade level of $1.9 billion does not correspond with the potential of the two economies and the strategic partnership.

Dr Singh stated," The global and bilateral environment has now changed. The economies of Russia and India have registered GDP growth rates of about 7% in recent years. New potential areas of growth have emerged in both economies and new areas of bilateral cooperation have opened up. Structural reforms in both economies and advances in science and technology have given our respective economies new strengths and capabilities which we should seek to exploit for mutual benefit.

There is need to not only stem the decline in trade in traditional items like tea, tobacco, textiles and leather, but to also expand the trade basket to include value added items in areas of applied technologies, information technology, telecommunications, automobile components, gems and jewellery, and energy. With our vast resource base and intellectual capital, India and Russia should jointly explore avenues for generating and meeting demands on a regional and global basis."

Vietnam prepares defence in anti-dumping probe

6 December 2005

According to Vietnamese media reports, following a recent anti-dumping probe and calls for a 130% tariff rate to be imposed, the country's leather and footwear industries are preparing to defend themselves against European Commission (EC) claims that Vietnamese companies are dumping footwear on the European market. Claiming they have evidence to prove that they have not dumped products, lawyers are preparing a case to illustrate that the EC's findings were unfair.

Dick's Sporting Goods appoints executive vice president

6 December 2005

US full-line sporting goods retailer Dick's Sporting Goods, Inc. has announced that Gwen Manto will join the company on January 9, 2006 as executive vice president and chief merchandising officer. Ms. Manto will be responsible for all areas of merchandising as well as private label sourcing, merchandising planning, replenishment and allocation.

She joins Dick's with more than 30 years of industry experience, most recently as executive vice president of Softlines for Sears, Roebuck & Company, where her responsibilities encompassed revenue of $6.5 billion. Ms. Manto was also president of the Kid's Foot Locker division.

Pakistan sporting goods exports decline

6 December 2005

In October 2005, Pakistan exported sporting goods worth $18.146 million compared with $23.980 million in September. This equated to a decline of 24.33% month-on-month and 19.43% compared with October 2004 ($22.523 million).

A breakdown of statistics, released by the Federal Bureau of Statistics, showed that the country exported $12.747 million worth of footballs, $0.914 million worth of gloves and other sporting goods worth $4.485 million compared with $14.408 million, $1.707 million and 7.865 million respectively in the previous month. Football exports fell by 11.53%, gloves by 46.47% and others by 42.97% compared with September 2005.

Total sporting goods exports in the period July to October 2005 stood at $90.396 million compared with $91.992 million - showing a minor decline of 1.74% compared with the corresponding period last year.

Hyosung launches new global branding campaign

6 December 2005

Hyosung has launched a multi-million dollar trade branding campaign for its Creora elastane brand.

The images featured in the campaign are portraits of the finely tuned musculature of four different yoga instructors, demonstrating their agility and energy and illustrating the concept of 'stretching beyond'.

The ads will run in American, European and Asian trade magazines during 2006 with more than €600,000 advertising investment.

Hemptown contracts ARC to commercialise technology

6 December 2005

Hemptown Clothing Inc. has announced that it will work with the Alberta Research Council (ARC) to commercialise its new Textile Fibre technology developed jointly with the National Research Council (NRC). Specifically, ARC has been contracted to conduct pilot tests on
samples to establish the parameters required by industry for Hemptown's new sustainable fibre technology Crailar.

Hemptown Clothing and the federal science organisation NRC jointly developed Crailar as an enzyme process that transforms industrial hemp into a soft, white fibre. It claims worldwide, petroleum and cotton based textiles make a huge environmental footprint in production and are not sustainable for the future. Hemp is highly environmentally sensitive, grown organically without the use of pesticides, toxic fertilisers or the substantial fresh water irrigation required by cotton.

G-III Apparel announces 61% rise in sales

7 December 2005

US manufacturer and distributor of outerwear and sportswear G-III Apparel Group, Ltd. has announced positive operating results for the third quarter of fiscal 2006. For the three-month period ended October 31, 2005, G-III reported that net sales increased by 61.7% to $186.6 million. This compares with net sales of $115.4 million during the comparable period last year.

For the nine-month period ended October 31, 2005, G-III reported net sales of $254.9 million compared with net sales of $175.9 million during the same period in 2004.

G-III Apparel manufactures and distributes outerwear and sportswear under licensed labels, its own labels and private labels. The company has fashion licences with brands such as Calvin Klein, Kenneth Cole, Nine West, Cole Haan, Guess?, Jones Apparel, Sean John, and Tommy Hilfiger, and Donald Trump, and sports licenses with the National Football League, National Basketball Association, Major League Baseball, National Hockey League, Louisville Slugger, NASCAR, World Poker Tour and more than 60 universities.

Former CEO of Levi Strauss passes away

7 December 2005

Former CEO of the Levi Strauss & Co. family business, Peter E. Haas, Sr., has passed away in San Francisco of natural causes at the age of 86.

Mr Haas, chairman of the executive committee of Levi Strauss & Co. and a great-grandnephew of Levi Strauss, worked closely with his brother Walter A. Haas, Jr. to help transform a pair of pants - Levi's jeans - into one of the most famous brands in history and in the process, build the family business into a major multinational corporation.

Among his most lasting legacies, Mr Haas played a critical role in the racial integration of apparel factories in the United States before the US Civil Rights movement. At the time, segregation was a common practice at factories throughout the South. He rejected segregation on principle and used the company's expansion of manufacturing plants as a means to create employment opportunities for blacks. In meetings with local community officials, he insisted that Levi Strauss would only open factories in their communities if blacks were granted equal status with white workers.

Haas' involvement in equal opportunity led to his appointment by San Francisco Mayor George Christopher to the city's Fair Employment Practices Commission, the first in the state of California.

Hohenstein Institutes named one of the best in the ‘Land of Ideas’

7 December 2005

During the Football World Cup next year, Germany will welcome people from around the world and in order to reflect the country as a place of progress, a new initiative has been established. Germany – Land of Ideas” is a joint project between FC Deutschland GmbH, the Federal Government and German Industry, which is intended to reflect the strength of Germany as a location for investment and industry: inventiveness, creative passion and visionary thinking.

As part of this initiative, the Hohenstein Institutes were chosen from over 1,200 applications as one of 365 places at which the productivity of the country will be presented to a broad public in 2006.

Meanwhile, Hohenstein Institutes has announced that it will hold its second innovation exchange free of charge with business and research partners on Friday, 27 January 2006, when it will present its current research projects and offer tours of the Institutes. The following day, 28 January, will be an open day, when the laboratories will be open for anyone interested.

Gander Mountain elects vice chairman of the board

7 December 2005

Outdoor lifestyle retailer, Gander Mountain Company, has elected David Pratt to fill the newly-created position of vice chairman of the board. Mr Pratt, the former chairman, president and CEO of United Industries, has been a director of Gander Mountain since August 2005.

Gander Mountain offers products and services for hunting, fishing, camping and boating, including outdoor equipment, technical apparel and footwear, as well as gunsmith, archery, ATV and marine services.

Fastfit acquires Canadian distributor

7 December 2005

Fastfit International Inc. through its subsidiary, Fastfit Sports Group Inc., has acquired the sportswear division of Aikens Distributing Group. Fastfit International Inc. is the franchisor of Fastfit 30 Minute Fitness For Men clubs, the only Canadian owned chain of men's 30 minute fitness clubs. Fastfit Sports Group Inc. is the Canadian distributor for men's fitness equipment and related exercise accessories.

Keith Gear, director of operations for Fastfit Sports Group Inc., commented, "We were surprised with the demand from club members for quality gym clothing and we were fortunate that this purchase opportunity was available." At present Fastfit Sports Group will only produce Fastfit branded clothing. "We will be working diligently to satisfy our existing clubs demand for clothing prior to examining all outside branding and private label opportunities" stated Mr. Gear.

BASF firefighters keep cool with Baltes boots

7 December 2005

Firefighters at BASF's chemical complex in Ludwigshafen, Germany are said to be keeping their cool thanks to a new boot produced by Baltes which uses Outlast's Adaptive Comfort temperature regulating phase change material (PCM).

According to Jürgen Helt, technical officer of BASF Fire Department, It is our target to be able to reach each corner of our plant within five minutes." And in order to do this BASF fire fighters are required to wear their boots all day long (not just" before an emergency) so as to save time. As a result, the firefighters demand a high level of comfort, which seems to have been met with the introduction of the Baltes boots. 16 months ago I received a prototype of this new development and tested it," said Mr Helt. It was impressive. The boot is very comfortable and light….and as we wear the boots all day, we no longer feel like we're standing in an oven", he added.

Gildan Activewear reports record sales

7 December 2005

Gildan Activewear Inc. has announced record financial results for the fourth quarter and fiscal year ended October 2, 2005.

Gildan reported fourth quarter net earnings of $29.2 million, up 73.6% from the fourth quarter of last year. Earnings in the fourth quarter of fiscal 2005 included an after-tax gain of $0.8 million from the sale of equipment pursuant to the closure of the company's Canadian yarn-spinning facilities in the second quarter of the year. Sales in the fourth quarter amounted to $180.7 million, up 24.1% from the fourth quarter a year ago, reflecting a 25.2% increase in unit shipments. Net earnings were $86.0 million compared with $60.3 million in fiscal 2004.

Gildan Activewear manufactures branded basic apparel including basic T-shirts, sport shirts and sweatshirts for sale in the wholesale imprinted sportswear market.

Spring/Summer 2007 fabric trends presented at Interstoff Asia

8 December 2005

The Interstoff Asia Directions trend committee will present its apparel fabric trends forecast for Spring/Summer 2007 at Interstoff Asia Spring to be held from 22 - 24 March 2006 at the Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre. The trends provide designers and textile professionals with the necessary information to guide their creative processes in line with the coming fashion season. The trends revolve around four themes: 'simplicity', 'reality', 'exoticism' and 'vacation'.

The Directions trend committee combines the talent and experience of Elementi Moda (Milan), Here & There (New York), Global Color Research (London), Sachiko Inoue (Tokyo) and Nelly Rodi Agency (Paris). Together, these leading trend forecasters from the world's fashion centres have combined their expertise and local influences to come up with the themes of tomorrow's apparel fabric trends.

These themes will be creatively displayed in a trend forum designed by the Directions committee member Elementi Moda from Milan. As well as designing the central display illustrating the trend themes at Interstoff Asia Spring, Elementi Moda has also designed the trend guide, a booklet presenting the trends in details.

Salamon's new management structure

8 December 2005

Salamon, a business division of Amer Sports Corporation, is reorganising its management structure. The aim is to efficiently integrate the business operations of Amer Sports and Salomon. The changes in the management structure help to identify the best way of working together in order to achieve the set synergy targets.

Salomon's management group will consist of the following members:
- Mr Jean-Luc Diard, President
- Mr Jari Melgin, finance and administration
- Mr Philippe Dubé, Salomon Winter Sports equipment

- Mr Jean-Marc Pambet, Salomon Outdoor and Winter Sports Softgoods
- Mr Bernard Millaud, Mavic
- Mr Tyler Jordan, Arc Teryx
- Mr Jacques Dorcier, human resources

In addition to the above, a vice president, sales and marketing will be appointed at a later date. The successor to Mr Melgin's current duties of Amer Sports' Treasury and IR will be appointed later.

Winners of 13th ispo BrandNew Awards announced

8 December 2005

The ispo BrandNew Awards will be presented for the 13th time at ispo winter 06, which takes place from January 29 to February 1, 2006. The latest trends and innovations will be exhibited at the world's largest young entrepreneur contest in the sports equipment industry in the BrandNew Village in Hall A2 of the New Munich Trade Fair Centre.

A total of 171 young entrepreneurs from 25 countries submitted entries this year. The following criteria had to be fulfilled: the brand or company is not older than four years; never previously an exhibitor at ispo; and present innovative products.

The top-rate, expert jury, composed of representatives from the sports industry and the sports trade media, had to select an overall winner, seven category winners and 32 finalists from the entries from the submissions. The eight lucky winners each receive a completely furnished booth of 20 sq. m., and the 32 other finalists a 10 sq. m. booth. The award ceremony will take place in the ispo BrandNew Village at 4:30 p.m. on Sunday, January 29, 2006.

The winners include:

- The Advansa Overall Winner: North Legion SMX from Norway
SMX is the ideal alternative for all bikers in the winter. Regardless of whether mountain-biker, BMX or FMX fan, all two-wheel tricks are also possible on the slopes.

- Thermolite Hardware Winter Award: Icelantic Boards from the USA
Icelantic makes skis for free-riders, free-skiers and new schoolers.

- Creora Style Award: Tyra Clothing from Hungary
This streetwear label from Hungary provides multifunctional clothing for women and men.

- Freudenberg Sportswear Award: Stridelite from the USA
StrideLite provides multifunctional jackets and belts, into which electronic illuminated strips" are worked.

- Riri Sportswear Accessories Award: CZiP from the USA
Thanks to a zipper on the back of the hand, you can simply fold open the glove fingers and consequently open a ski boot, take a handkerchief out of your jacket or take a snapshot.

Common Economic Space with Russia

8 December 2005

An important step towards establishing a more open and integrated market between the EU and Russia, known as the Common Economic Space (CES), was taken today. European Commission Vice President, Günter Verheugen, and the Russian Minister of Industry and Energy, Viktor Khristenko, signed documents which establish two permanent frameworks for dialogue between the European Commission and the Russian authorities.

The aim is to improve the administrative, regulatory and investment environment for businesses operating in Russia by closer co-operation, exchange of information and by working towards the harmonisation of technical legislation and standards relating to industrial products. Working groups will cover a number of industrial sectors, including textiles, automobiles, chemicals and pharmaceuticals.

European Commission vice president Günter Verheugen, responsible for enterprise and industry policy, said: I am pleased that we have been able to sign these terms of reference today. I am confident that the two dialogues will not just be talking shops, but will be practical mechanisms for eliminating barriers to trade and investment, thereby enhancing the competitiveness of both the EU and Russian economies."

The two dialogues, already announced by Mr Verheugen in October, are key elements of the roadmap to create a Common Economic Space.

The regulatory dialogue will promote the harmonisation of technical regulations on industrial products. Across many industry sectors, the differences between EU and Russian standards and technical regulations are a trade barrier. The aim is not just to talk but to work towards regulatory convergence.

The dialogue on industrial and enterprise policy aims to improve the administrative, regulatory and investment environment for companies operating in Russia. Support and advice from both EU and Russian industry in the projects will be vital to their success.

The first meetings under the dialogues are planned for early 2006.

The Roadmap on the Common Economic Space was adopted at the EU-Russia Summit in Moscow on 10 May 2005. It aims to establish an open and integrated market between the EU and Russia by increasing opportunities for economic operators, promoting trade and investment and strengthening co-operation in several fields.

Mr Viktor Khristenko, Minister of Industry and Energy of the Russian Federation, was visiting the European Commission in Brussels as part of a delegation from the Russian government, led by Prime Minister Fradkov.

Adidas aims to sell 10 million official balls

8 December 2005

The chief executive of German sporting goods company Adidas has said that the company is hoping to capitalise on the enthusiasm for the Germany 2006 soccer World Cup by selling 10 million official balls.

CEO Herbert Hainer said: "We sold almost six million of the 2002 World Cup ball, more than six million of the 2004 European Championships ball and we aim to sell 10 million of the Germany (2006) ball."

The ball is due to be presented in Leipzig on Friday 9 December 2006. Until then, Hainer is giving little away about the design of the ball but he said it would be better suited for South American soccer players as well as fly "more accurately than other balls".

"The ball is softer and it allows better control than ever. That's what most players want, particularly the South Americans," he said, adding that the weight and aerodynamics of the ball would remain constant throughout a game.

"It's totally inured against external influences," he said. Although FIFA has ruled out using "smartball" technology at the World Cup, Hainer said a ball partly designed by Adidas containing a tiny microchip would eventually be adopted.

Hainer said it was possible Adidas could share the technology for the ball with other firms in future. He also repeated that the company planned to chalk up more than one billion euros worth of soccer product sales next year.

Innovar Yarn selected for Polo-Ralph Lauren Sock

9 December 2005

Innova yarns from American Fibers and Yarns Company (AF&Y) have been selected for a men's athletic/sport sock marketed under the Polo brand. The sock will be designed and marketed by New York-based Hot Sox, the licensee of Polo-Ralph Lauren Hosiery for 25 years.

"Innova yarns have made it possible for us to blend comfort and performance in ways never before possible," said Gary Wolkowitz, President of Hot Sox. "Innova is engineered from a synthetic base, but designed to have the look and feel of cotton. Therefore, we can produce comfortable, long-wearing socks that are colorfast even when washed in bleach."

Features include moisture wicking and quick drying, bacteria and odor resistance, color fastness (bleach-cleanable), arch support, terry sole for cushioning and reinforced heel and toe for longer wear.

American Fibers and Yarns Company (AF&Y) supplies solution dyed filament yarns. Headquartered in Chapel Hill, NC, AF&Y maintains a Technology Center that specialises in engineering filament yarn with innovative combinations not available from other suppliers. The company also operates two U.S. production facilities totaling 600,000 square feet of manufacturing space.

Berghaus launches Extrem Big Wall range

9 December 2005

After three years of extensive testing and development by three of the world's elite climbers, Berghaus' new Extrem Big Wall range will be launched in Winter 2006.

As the achievements of Berghaus climbers, such as Leo Houlding and the Huber brothers, develops so too does their need for innovative new product design. The team has worked closely with Berghaus designers to develop strong, lightweight and functional product that's ideal for super alpine climbing on some of the world's most technical terrain.

The range has been tested to destruction by the Berghaus team on some of the world's hardest big walls in Patagonia, Yosemite and Himalaya. The result is seven new products designed by three of the world's leading climbers for climbers: Solipsist Jacket, Realisation Pant. Asylum Belay Parker, Musashi Jacket, Rak Bag, Squealer Haul Bag, Bivvi Bag.

The North Face opens Warsaw retail store

9 December 2005

December sees the opening of the first The North Face store in Poland, the 11th in Europe since the brand first introduced its retail partnership program in Europe in June 2003. Opened in partnership with Summit Shop, the store is located on the first floor of the Galeria Mokotów, a shopping mall in the centre of Warsaw. With 95 square meters of selling space, the new store elaborates on The North Face retail concept designed to personify the brand and celebrate its outdoor exploration heritage.

Topher Gaylord, president outdoor international which comprises The North Face and JanSport brands, said: Customers visiting the store will find a complete selection of The North Face technologically advanced apparel, footwear and equipment in the same authentic atmosphere found in The North Face retail stores worldwide."

The new Polish store will allow consumers to shop the entire breadth of The North Face product collection,"

added Francesco Navach, director Retail The North Face EMEA, including the new youth collection and baselayer system collection coming this Fall."

Other The North Face retail stores in Europe can be found in London, Amsterdam, Madrid, Helsinki, Stockholm, Copenhagen, St. Petersburg, Manchester, Livigno and Val d'Isere.

Premier of the world's biggest ski film contest 'VAST Awards' at Ispo

9 December 2005

The VAST Awards, a ski film contest for pros and amateurs, will be presented for the first time in the International Congress Center Munich (ICM) at the start of ispo winter 06, which will take place from January 29 to February 1, 2006.

In December 2004, almost 100 films, each 3 to 5 minutes in length, were submitted from around the world and a jury of experts, which included filmmaker Crille Forsberg, free-skier Doug Coombs and the well-known ski photographer Matthias Frederiksson, whittled it down to the best 20 films, spanning 10 categories.

A website has now been set up www.vastawards.com which allows ski and film enthusiasts to watch the nominated films and vote for their favourites.

Winners will be awarded the prizes in the ICM of the New Munich Trade Fair Centre on Sunday 29 January 2006. They will share prize money totaling US$ 50,000.

All 20 nominated films and the VAST Awards Movie, a compilation of the best sequences from all nominated films, are available as a DVD.

Nike swift innovation extends to USA short track

9 December 2005

Short track speedskating has undergone intense governing-body scrutiny to address major safety concerns for personal protection and the International Skating Union (ISU) has imposed stringent cut-resistance standards, creating rigorous challenges for compliance. Nike has met these standards with the Nike swift short track skin, another component from the Advanced Innovation Team.

After the Salt Lake City Games, the only cut-protection option for skaters was to wear two garments – an outer suit and an inner cut-resistant suit. The Nike swift short track skin is a one-suit system utilising lightweight cut-protective fabric (independent-laboratory approved) in critical body zones. Anatomically specific integration of the cut-protection material is located in critical areas specified by the ISU.

The suit will be found on national teams from The Netherlands, China, United States and South Korea during the 2005-2006 Season.

Nike's 35-member worldwide Advanced Innovation Team has been conducting extensive research to produce apparel performance and design since 2000.