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Algo Group posts lower sales

03 April 2006

Canadian manufacturer of men's and children's sportswear and ladies' fashion apparel Algo Group Inc. has posted lower sales for the fourth quarter and full year ended December 31, 2005.

For the fourth quarter, sales fell to $9.2 million from the $12.5 million reported for the same period in 2004. The company recorded a net loss of $4.6 million, compared with $2.1 million for the same quarter last year.

Sales for the twelve-month period were $50.5 million, compared with $61.5 million for the same period in 2004, a decrease of $11 million. The net loss for the period was $6.9 million, compared with a net loss of $4.8 million for the previous year.

ADMET introduces new tabletop testing machines

03 April 2006

Provider of integrated materials testing systems ADMET Inc., has launched its new eXpert 760x line of tabletop universal materials and product testing machines. The line, ranging from 1kN (225 lbf) to 10kN (2,250 lbf) provides the flexibility to perform low force tension, compression and flexure tests on biomaterials, wire, textiles, packaging, elastomers, plastics, films, foils and other materials.

Units in the eXpert 760x series feature small footprints ranging from 12” x 16” to 17” x 20” and have a single-column design with crosshead travel of up to 34”. They include fast-acting servo motors and precision ball screws for controllability at light loads. Optional extended columns are available for high elongation tests.

Ferro Footwear Takes EC to the European Ombudsman

03 April 2006

Netherlands-based Ferro Footwear B.V. lodged a complaint with the European Ombudsman on March 31 accusing the European Commission of maladministration in the anti-dumping proceedings concerning imports of leather footwear from China and Vietnam.

According to the company, the Commission has breached the company’s right to be heard on the facts and findings before a decision is taken, as well as its rights to proportionality, objectivity and fairness. It claims that EU Trade Commissioner proposed provisional anti-dumping duties having neither informed the parties prior to the announcement, nor giving them an opportunity to respond.

The company’s statement added that the decision to introduce anti-dumping duties was based on erroneous facts and assumptions that could easily have been avoided if a sound administrative procedure had been followed. Similarly the Member States' advice with respect to the introduction of these anti-dumping measures may have been different in light of the relevant facts and proper consideration of the interests of all parties.

In addition, the anti-dumping measures that are to be imposed as of April 7 are completely disproportionate. The EU producers would gain €3.7 million while companies like Ferro Footwear, would lose as much as €150 million.

Ron Janssen, owner of Ferro Footwear B.V. said:

"We regret to have to take this step but the Commission's handling of this investigation leaves us with no alternative. Despite repetitive requests from the EU footwear industry for a careful examination of all the interests concerned, Commissioner Mandelson has gone over the line by publicly announcing his decision without informing the interested parties first. It is high time the Commission stops protecting a few footwear manufacturers by sacrificing the interests of the European footwear industry as a whole."

Advansa & Contifibre announce cooperation agreement

03 April 2006

Italian yarn processor Contifibre has signed an agreement with Advansa to become a licensed processor of Coolmax and Thermolite speciality polyester products.

Andrew Venables, director of Contifibre, stated, "The addition of the Coolmax and Thermolite products to Contifibre's extensive range of Lycra, Tactel, Supplex and Cordura branded products gives us the opportunity

to offer tailored yarn solutions to the leading innovators in fabric and garment technologies world-wide."

David Bayliss, Advansa Business Segment manager, commented that the broad processing base (texturising, air-texturising, covering and air-covering) available in Contifibre, together with a strong end-use innovation focus through the Contifashion development centre and extensive commercial network, makes it an ideal partner in the growth of the branded speciality business within Advansa."

Sara Lee makes executive appointments

04 April 2006

Chicago-based manufacturer and marketer of brand-name products Sara Lee has named Lee Chaden as executive chairman of Sara Lee Branded Apparel, and Richard Noll as chief executive officer.

In their new roles, Mr Chaden will concentrate on preparing the enterprise to be spun off as an independent, publicly traded company which will be known as Hanesbrands Inc., including recruiting a board of directors to govern the company. Mr Noll will focus on managing the global business.

Mr Chaden currently serves as executive vice president of Sara Lee Corporation and chief executive officer of Sara Lee Branded Apparel and Mr Noll is senior vice president of Sara Lee Corporation and president and chief operating officer of Sara Lee Branded Apparel.

Crocs receives four patents

04 April 2006

US-based footwear designer and manufacturer, Crocs Inc, has announced that it has received four patents covering various aspects of its footwear.
The company has also filed complaints with the US International Trade Commission (ITC) against 11 companies that manufacture, import or distribute products that Crocs believes infringe patents. The company is seeking permanent injunctions against these believed infringements as well as monetary damages.

Crocs has also applied for other patents, covering a variety of its models in other regions of the world, including the European Union, Asia, South America, Australia and Canada.

Crocs designs and manufactures footwear for men, women and children which incorporates the company's proprietary closed-cell resin material, which is said to produce a soft and lightweight, non-marking, slip- and odour-resistant shoe, suited to casual wear and recreational uses such as boating, hiking, fishing and gardening.

Lanxess enjoys a successful first year in business

04 April 2006

German chemical company Lanxess has announced that its first year in business has been a success and claims that as a result of restructuring annual savings of approximately €50 million will have been achieved by 2009.

Sales increased by 5.6% to €7.15 billion in 2005 and the company reduced net debt from €1.1billion to €680 million.

Lanxess is planning a third package of restructuring measures in order to increase its competitiveness. New measures have been planned for the Polybutadiene Rubber, Butyl Rubber, Inorganic Pigments and Styrenic Resins business units, with an associated one-time implementation cost of €55 million. These measures affect sites in the United States, Brazil, France and Belgium, and involve eliminating up to 250 positions outside of Europe.

Lanxess anticipates that the highest growth rates in 2006 will again be recorded in the emerging markets of Asia, Latin America and eastern Europe. In the chemical sector, Asia – and in particular China – is expected to show the highest rates of growth.

All segments performed to targets this quarter and Lanxess believes it will achieve its economic earnings again this year, enabling it to post positive net earnings.

Terra Footwear to manufacture for the Canadian Air Force

05 April 2006

Up to 20 new jobs will be created in the next three months as a result of a new contract awarded to Canadian industrial footwear producer Terra Footwear to produce 54,000 pairs of boots for the Canadian Air Force.
The contract could surpass $12 million if two additional orders are placed beyond the original 54,000.

A new production line has been upgraded to produce the new Air Force footwear.

Lectra opens combined site in Shanghai

05 April 2006

France-based provider of software and CAD/CAM equipment for industrial users of textiles and leather Lectra has opened a new facility combining its Asia-Pacific headquarters, regional International Advanced Technology Center (IATC) and Call Centre,

and Shanghai teams at a single new site in Shanghai, China.

Lectra has been present in Greater China for 20 years and now has 23 offices in the region with 135 staff, serving approximately 1,700 customers.

The company has also inaugurated a new office dedicated to the Japanese fashion market in Tokyo.

Puma signs eyewear licence

05 April 2006

German-based sportswear and footwear producer Puma has announced new licence agreement for lifestyle and eyewear with Japan-based spectacle frame producer Charmant Inc.

The first eyewear collection will be presented to retailers this summer and will be available to consumers by the end of 2006.

Italian eyewear producer Luxottica Group will also be part of the agreement and will act as retail and wholesale distributor in the North American market.

Vietnam to invest $3 billion in textile and apparel industry

05 April 2006

Vietnam's Ministry of Industry has announced that it will invest $3 billion in the country's apparel and textile industry by 2010, in an attempt to develop these sectors into key export industries.

Through investing heavily in these sectors, the Ministry hopes to achieve an annual growth rate of 14 to 16%, with annual export growth of 10 to 12%.

New partnerships for AdvanSA

05 April 2006

Following the recent signing of a licence agreement with Italian yarn processor Contifibre for its Coolmax and Thermolite polyester yarns, European manufacturer of polyester resins, intermediates, filament and fibres AdvanSA has signed another new agreement with Barcelona-based yarn-processor Ductel.

Ductel specialises in air-texturising technology.

EDANA announces students selected for R&D grant

05 April 2006

The International Association Serving the Nonwovens and Related Industries, Brussels-based EDANA, has announced that 11 MSc and PhD students have been chosen for the R&D student grant. The students, all studying in the field of nonwovens and related areas, have been selected from eight European universities. The grants cover travel, accommodation and the participation fee for the Nonwovens Research Academy, where pre-competitive and post-competitive research studies relevant to the growth of the nonwoven industry are presented and disseminated.

The Nonwovens Research Academy will also feature a R&D needs" session to help bring the industry into closer contact with research institutes.

EDANA represents 190 members in the nonwovens and absorbent hygiene product industries and their suppliers across Europe, Middle East and Africa.

SATRA opens advanced footwear test facility

05 April 2006

UK-based research and technology centre SATRA will open a new state-of-the-art footwear test facility at its Wyndham Way site in Kettering this summer.

With an investment of £3 million, once completed the facility is set to be the largest consumer product testing laboratory in the UK.

SATRA will offer its full range of testing facilities at the new laboratory including its recently introduced resistance to water, slip and abrasion tests for finished shoes.

The organisation's current footwear testing facility, based at its Rockingham Road site, will close when the new laboratory is completed, ending 60 years of footwear testing at the location.

Chief executive Dr Ron Whittaker said that, despite the moves to global resourcing, the demand for SATRA's testing services for footwear and leather are higher than ever, increasing by more than 10% in 2005. "It has only been 12 years since our last footwear test laboratory was commissioned, but such has been the pace of development, expansion and improvement in footwear testing over that period that a completely new facility is now required," commented Mr Whittaker.

Eschler develops ceramic printing

05 April 2006

Swiss knitted fabric manufacturer Christian Eschler AG has developed a fabric coating based on polyurethane in which diamond-hard ceramic particles are integrated without the use of solvents. The ceramic part remains permanently embedded in the polyurethane so no toxic gases can be released which is said to produce a fabric with a high degree of resistance to chafing.

The new technology is considered particularly well-suited to clothing for cyclists as well as in outdoor and sailing outfits.

The fabrics printed with the new process are said to strengthen the areas of the apparel that protect the areas that are most at risk in the case of a fall. Tests have shown that ceramic-printed fabrics achieved up to 100% better results than unprinted fabrics with regards to resistance to chafing As the ceramic printing's ability to slide lessens the danger of painful abrasions—especially those associated with falls on asphalt.

Eschler is also working in conjunction with a well-known sailing brand that will supply team apparel for the America's Cup 2007 in Valencia to incorporate ceramic-printed fabric into the apparel used.

Ceramic-printed fabrics are well-suited to cycling, cross-country skiing and motor cycling gloves and Eschler is now developing a laminate with a ceramic-printed surface layer for military gloves.

Staff changes at Berghaus

05 April 2006

British outdoor brand Berghaus has announced several senior management appointments. Current managing director of Brasher, Richard Cotter has been named president of Berghaus.

Mr Cotter joined Pentland in September 2003 as managing director of the Brasher brand. Prior to this he was managing director of a number of consumer goods businesses including AMG Outdoor Ltd. He will continue to run Brasher in the interim whilst Pentland recruits a new managing director.

The company has also named Lewis Grundy as product director for Berghaus.

Report on US textile manufacturing industry published

05 April 2006

Dublin-based market research company Research and Markets has added Textile Manufacturing – Industry Profile to their offering.

The US textile industry includes around 10,000 companies with combined annual sales of $80 billion. The industry has become more concentrated with the 50 largest companies holding over 60% of the market with around 100 companies posting annual sales of over $100 million.

According to the report, demand is largely focused on the domestic apparel industry and consumer demand for home furnishings. Large companies tend to have economies of scale in production for high-production items, while small companies can compete successfully by producing specialised textiles.

Major products are yarns and threads, fabrics, carpets and curtains. Fabrics account for about 40% of industry revenue, carpets 20% and yarns and threads 20%.

Academy Snowboards' domestic sales on the rise

05 April 2006

US developer of performance sports products Execute Sports, Inc, has reported that domestic sales of its brand Academy Snowboards' have increased by approximately 87% on a year-to-date basis compared with last year.

Academy Snowboards sponsor last year's Transworld Rider of the Year, Chad Otterstrom and also Mike Casanova, who is defending his Transworld Team Challenge title for a third year in a row this week in Aspen, Colorado.

Cognis reports 2005 sales increase

06 April 2006

German-based specialty chemicals supplier Cognis has reported a 3.3% increase in net external sales to €3.176 billion in 2005.

Process chemicals' sales fell by 10.4% to €359 million, partly due to challenges faced by the Textile Technology business.

PrimaLoft posts sales increase

06 April 2006

Insulation for outdoor products brand PrimaLoft has posted a world-wide sales increase of 35% for 2005. According to a company statement, the improved results a attributable to a combination of long-standing relationships with leading brands and new developments such as its new range of insoles for ski boots.

Primaloft insulation is currently used in clothing, outdoor wear and footwear and is used extensively by the US military.

Polartec ‘green’ fabric programme expanded

06 April 2006

US-based performance textiles producer Malden Mills is to expand its Poleartec recycled and ‘renewable’ fabric programme.

According to the company, recycled yarn technology has advanced dramatically allowing it to develop a collection of Polartec fabrics which save precious resources, reduce emissions from manufacturing and reduce pressure on landfills by recycling industrial and consumer waste.

Two new ‘green’ garments are set to be launched on the market in autumn, Patagonia’s Capilene 4 long underwear programme and Timberland’s new Mountain Sweater, with a wider range due to be released by September 2007.

Zumiez reports March sales increase

06 April 2006

US-based action sports related apparel, footwear, equipment and accessories retailer Zumiez Inc. has reported higher sales for March.

Total net sales for the five-week period ended April 1 increased by 37.3% to $18.4 million, compared with $13.4 million for the same period in 2005.

American Eagle Outfitters posts higher sales

06 April 2006

US-based accessories, outerwear, footwear and swimwear manufacturer American Eagle Outfitters, Inc. has posted increased sales for the month ended April 1. Sales for the period rose 9% to $201.6 million, compared with $185.4 million for the same period in 2005.

Comparable store sales increased 3% for the month. Total sales for the year-to-date period ended April 1 increased 10% to $344.7 million compared with $313.1 million in 2005, while comparable store sales increased 4%.

UK technologists join SAFT

06 April 2006

Two UK footwear specialists have been awarded the status of SATRA Accredited Footwear Technologist (SAFT).

Nicola Land, of Airwair International, of Northamptonshire, UK, and Jennifer Potts, of Marks & Spencer, in London, are the latest candidates to achieve the level of competence required by the technology centre.

In order to achieve accreditation the technologists had to undertake modules on lasts and fitting; materials and constructions; laboratory testing procedures; product design, performance and risk assessment; and quality assurance and supplier auditing. They then had to pass a final examination.

Ms Land has four years of experience in the footwear industry. She was technical manager at Airwair when she started the course last year and has since been promoted to quality manager.

Ms Potts has been with Marks & Spencer for two and half years and specialises in footwear product technology.

SATRA deputy chief executive Richard Turner commented, "As more and more footwear is being resourced and produced globally it is vital that footwear technologists keep abreast of the latest developments.”

Morgan Stanley acquires Ploucquet

07 April 2006

Following ongoing negotiations over the past few months, investment bank Morgan Stanley and Annex Capital have acquired 100% of the share capital of German laminates, coating and membrane developer Ploucquet Holding GmbH from 40 descendants of the group’s founding family. No financial details of the agreement have been disclosed.

Morgan Stanley was already working with Ploucquet prior to the acquisition and had previously granted new loans to finance the working capital needs of the business.

Ploucquet was founded as a textile trading business in Heidenheim in 1806 by Christoph Friedrich Ploucquet. It now specialises in laminates, coatings, finishing processes and membrane systems and employs approximately 500 staff world-wide. The group owns Sympatex Technologies GmbH and has a joint venture with Outlast Technologies, Inc.

The headquarters of Ploucquet Holding and the distribution organisation for the entire group will be relocated to Unterföhring near Munich beginning May 1.

Mallory replicas tested on Everest

07 April 2006

In an attempt to find out the whether the clothing used by Mallory on his famously ill-fated Everest expedition was up to the task, an exact replica of his clothing will be tested on Mount Everest by mountaineer Graham Hoyland.

The Mountain Heritage Trust, owner of the replicas, has agreed to preliminary field-testing by Mr Hoyland, who will wear the replica clothing on part of his expedition this spring.

The replicas, comprised of six different layers of wool, silk and cotton, challenge the conventional view that Mallory's clothing and equipment were inadequate for his ill-fated 1924 Everest expedition. Based on the scientific analysis of textile fragments from the original clothing, uncovered on Everest in 1999, the replicas were created to provide a better understanding of the construction of the garments. They demonstrate how effective they would have been at providing protection at altitude, and have been rigorously laboratory-tested for comparison with current mountaineering products.

The replicas are the result of a three-year project headed by Professor Mary B. Rose and Mike Parsons both of Lancaster University Management School's Institute for Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development (IEED). Research work and replication was undertaken at the Universities of Leeds, Southampton and Derby.

The result of this work stands out as a challenge to outdoor clothing designers, as Mallory's clothing was 20% lighter, and his footwear 40% lighter, than today's equivalent. Preliminary field-testing of the clothing on Everest will further the understanding of how effective these clothes really were.

BASF adds two new colours to its Bafixan sublimation ink range

07 April 2006

BASF has added two new colours to its Bafixan P 100 HS sublimation ink range for inkjet printing —a deeper black, a more brilliant cyan.
The deep Xtra Black shade ensures strong contrasts and intense colour. Its brilliant counterpart, turquoise, can be printed directly with the new cyan shade. This greenish blue is said to be equivalent to a real process colour and appears fresher and greener than comparable inks.

The new additions mean that the Bafixan P 100 HS range now comprises nine colours: Yellow, Red, Light Red, Brilliant Blue, Light Brilliant Blue, Cyan, Black, Xtra Black and Grey.
According to BASF, whether for indoor or outdoor applications, with Bafixan P 100 HS inks, digital prints can be produced rapidly and reliably on nearly all polyester and polyamide surfaces. High-resolution, brilliant results are obtained even at extremely high printing speeds and an excellent quality standard can be achieved even with a print setting of 360x360 dpi, 2 pass with ink feed from a refill system.

The inks are suitable for use on large-format digital printing machines with Epson heads, such as Mimaki, Mutoh and Roland, as well as variations and rebuilds of these printers. The inks dry quickly on sublimation paper and give good results even on relatively poor transfer papers. Furthermore, they produce virtually no emissions in the form of fuming during transfer, and the transfer process is odourless. This optimises both printing results and working conditions.

Weiqiao Textile reports 20% increase in profits

07 April 2006

Chinese cotton textile producer Weiqiao Textile Company Limited has reported positive results for the year ended December 31, 2005. Turnover of the group increased 22.5% to RMB13,584,389,000 ($1,696,034,583); gross profit reached RMB2,244,130,000, representing a rise of 20.8%; net profit attributable to shareholders also rose 50.5% to RMB1,242,473,000.
Commenting on the year's performance, Mr. Zhang Bo, Chairman of Weiqiao Textile, said, "We had significant growth in turnover and net profit as a result of an aggressive expansion of value-added products and marketing. We upgraded equipment, meeting customer demand for more sophisticated products. We were fortunate that both the political and market environment for textiles improved. Textile agreements were signed with the United States and European Union, allowing trade to flow freely and cotton prices stabilised."

The Chinese government provided significant tax relief for the group's investments in technology upgrading. The company and its non-wholly owned subsidiary Binzhou Industrial Park were granted tax relief by the local tax bureau in an aggregate amount of approximately RMB287, 689,000 in 2005, owing to its investment in domestic equipment.

Weiqiao Textile Company Limited, a non state-owned enterprise, is said to be the largest cotton textile producer in the PRC, specialising in the production, sales and distribution of cotton yarn, grey fabric and denim. Based in Shandong it has four production bases in Weiqiao, Binzhou, Weihai and Zouping and employs more than 140,000 people.