Business Week
29 May - 4 June 06

Toray Industries innovation recognised

29 May 2006

Patagonia's Spraymaster jacket recently won Outside Magazine's 2006 “Gear of the Year” Award in the shell category. The Spraymaster's waterproof breathable features and stretch are made possible by Toray's Entrant DT fabric.

Toray supplies all of Patagonia’s H2No shell apparel.

Ajungilak develops ‘hot wash’ sleeping bags

29 May 2006

Norwegian sleeping bag manufacturer Ajungilak has developed a new range of sleeping bags that can be washed on a hot cycle thus killing bacteria and odours.

The Kompakt range of bags can be washed at 60°C degrees–and is aimed at the trekking market as well as festival goers.

Craghoppers posts record turnover

29 May 2006

UK designer and manufacturer of outdoor clothing Craghoppers, has reported record results for the month of April. Turnover increased 74.9% compared with the same period last year.

The company attributed the success to its product range, which has sold well across all channels, in particular the Nosquito insect repellent range with its new lightweight fabric, which has proven extremely popular with consumers.

Jim McNamara, managing director of Craghoppers commented, "We've had a very successful start to the year so far with April proving to be a phenomenal month. The figures that we've seen have well and truly bucked the general retail trend.”

Established in 1965, Craghoppers produces sun protective shorts and t-shirts, insect repellent convertible lightweights and waterproof trousers, overtrousers, and rucksacks.

Gander Mountain to distribute new hunting line

29 May 2006

Hunting, fishing, camping, marine and outdoor lifestyle products retailer Gander Mountain Company has signed an agreement with Three Forks Ranch that names Gander Mountain as the sole distributor of Three Forks Ranch edition merchandise for fishing, hunting and camping. The new line of merchandise includes fly rods and reels; a complete line of fly fishing clothing and waders; limited edition custom rifles; big game and upland hunting apparel; leather and canvas luggage; and wall tents and camping equipment.

Three Forks Ranch is said to be one of the largest and most prestigious sporting ranches in Colorado.

Dow Corning to present new impact technology at sports injury conference

29 May 2006

Dow Corning Corporation will present its new, patented impact protection technology – the Dow Corning Active Protection System – at The Football Association/Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, 18th Joint Conference on Sports Injury, in Northamptonshire, England, on July 2.

Graham Budden, a Dow Corning senior development chemist, will present “Product Research into High Performance Materials for Aiding in the Prevention of Injuries and Protection of Sports People”.

“In most sports, there is risk of injury as a result of a collision,” said Mr Budden. “For years, manufacturers of high-performance apparel have struggled to develop systems that protect against high-energy impacts without sacrificing flexibility, breathability or ease of use. Now, they can meet this challenge with the superior defence and comfort provided by the Dow Corning Active Protection System.”

Tunisian industrial production rises but textile exports fall

30 May 2006

According to statistics released by the Central Bank of Tunisia, the country’s industrial production index rose by 2.3% in the first quarter of the year compared with a 1.6% decrease during the same period in 2005. The

highest growth was recorded in manufacturing industries notably agro-food industries and mechanical and electrical industries.

Exports rose 10.4% whilst imports increased 12.2%. However textile, clothing, leather and footwear registered a 4.2% decrease in exports.

Brazilian business delegation visits Central America

30 May 2006

A group of approximately 50 Brazilian businessmen led by the ministers of Development, Industry, and Foreign Trade, Luiz Fernando Furlan, and Mines and Energy, Silas Rondeau, is currently visiting Panama, Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras.

The entrepreneurs represent sectors including biofuels, agroindustry, cosmetics, textiles, footwear, and automotive goods.

"The statistics for the past three years clearly demonstrate that this is a very attractive market for Brazilian products; our sales to Central America have more than doubled," minister Furlan observed.

The current relationship between Central America and the United States is attracting the interest of Brazilian investors, who are currently seeking partnerships in the region.

New study shows adoption rate of RFID is modest

30 May 2006

According to a new survey "RFID: How Far, How Fast?" sponsored by NCR Corporation and conducted by Retail Systems Alert Group, the adoption rate of RFID is moving at a modest pace. Many challenges, both technical and cultural, continue to impede the growth of RFID. However, there is reason to believe growth may be on the way.

Results of the survey indicate that retailers are lagging far behind manufacturers in adopting RFID. Only 9% of retailers who responded to the survey have an RFID-implementation timeline, and the majority of retailers who responded positively estimated their organisation's overall revenue will increase to $5 billion or more. 44% of manufacturers have developed a timeline. Although fewer retailers reported a timeline for implementation, those retailers that have a timeline reported that they are spending more than in 2005.

Manufacturers are focusing their attention on one to 50 product lines, rather than across a broader range of product lines as was reported in 2005 and amongst those companies that have a timeline for RFID adoption, most respondents (both retailers and manufacturers) reported that they have pilot distribution centres up and running.

According to the survey, although there still may be several challenges on the horizon in the adoption of RFID, the outlook is cautiously positive. The awareness level of RFID among executives, directors and managers has significantly improved. In addition, many respondents are aware of the benefits their companies can expect within the first five years of RFID implementation.

Foot Locker elects new board member

30 May 2006

US specialty athletic retailer Foot Locker, Inc. has elected Matthew McKenna, senior vice president of Finance for PepsiCo, Inc. to the company's board of directors, effective immediately.

"We are very pleased that Matt McKenna is joining our Board of Directors," stated Matthew Serra, chairman and chief executive officer of Foot Locker. "His extensive financial background and years of experience with a large multi-national corporation make him a strong addition to our Board."

Mr McKenna has been in his current position as senior vice president of Finance at PepsiCo since August 2001. Previously, he was senior vice president and treasurer and before that senior vice president, Taxes. Prior to joining PepsiCo in 1993, he was a partner with the law firm Winthrop, Stimson, Putnam & Roberts in New York specialising in federal income tax matters.

Foot Locker operates approximately 4,000 stores in 20 countries in North America, Europe and Australia.

J.Lindenberg re-acquires USA distribution

30 May 2006

21st Century Lifestyle brand J.Lindenberg, is re-acquiring its US distribution from Triluxe, its current North American distributor and business partner. The acquisition will take effect as of July 1.

The company will establish a wholly-owned subsidiary in the USA with headquarters in New York. This will mean a new focus and the commitment of greater resources and investment in order to fully exploit the global momentum of the brand within the US market. The brand's lifestyle offering will be launched in the US market, and the company is committed to providing the resources and organisational structure required to support the success of each of the collections which include J.Lindenberg Concept men’s and women’s - the main line fashion collections; J. Lindenberg denim - the progressive jeans line; JL - the essential modern casual wear range; and

JL Ski and JL Golf - the two line extensions of technical sportswear.

The company's flagship stores in New York and LA will undergo facelifts and the company will commence a roll-out of new retail stores beginning with the opening of a JL store in Dallas in September 2006.

RegattaSport named official merchandiser for the FISA Regatta 2006

30 May 2006

Ontario-based performance and casual rowing apparel manufacturer RegattaSport, has been selected by Admark, the official marketing agency for the 2006 FISA World Masters Regatta, as the event's Official Merchandiser.

The 33rd annual FISA World Rowing Masters Regatta will take place this year at Mercer Lake in Princeton, New Jersey from September 7-10 and, as the largest rowing event of its kind, expects over 7,000 rowers representing up to 45 countries.

The regatta will be held over five days at Mercer County Park, outside of Princeton, in West Windsor.

RegattaSport provides technical and casual rowing apparel and equipment to athletes around the world and is best known for its CoolMax Fluid line developed in partnership with Invista.

China produces one third of global textile output in 2005

30 May 2006

According to statistics released by the China National Textile and Apparel Council (CNTAC), China's textile output reached 26.9 million tons in 2005, which equates to almost one third of the world's total production.

Annual production in six specific categories increased 82% in the period 2000-2005, rising from 3.8 billion metres to 10.37 billion metres.

Export revenues during the same period rose from $2.8 billion to $8.48 billion.

Fabric exports in 2005 reached 15.56 billion metres valued at $15.43 billion.

Gander Mountain and Camping World form partnership

31 May 2006

Hunting, camping, marine and outdoor products retailer Gander Mountain Company and producer of Recreational Vehicles (RV) supplies, parts and accessories Camping World are to join forces in offering a selection of Gander Mountain's Guide Series products through Camping World's website and catalogue.

The website will offer a selection of men's and women's Guide Series outdoor lifestyle apparel from early June. It will also showcase a selection of Guide Series camping and fishing equipment, such as tents, cots and ready-to-fish rod and reel combos. Camping World's autumn catalogue will offer a similar section of autumn merchandise.

Cognis posts positive Q1 financial results

31 May 2006

Specialty chemicals supplier Cognis achieved net external sales of €875 million in the first three months of fiscal 2006. This represents an increase of 12.1% over the first quarter of 2005.

All of the company's strategic business units achieved sales growth, with Care Chemicals, Nutrition & Health and Functional Products seeing the largest increases.

Process Chemicals' sales grew by 8.3% to €64 million. Performance Chemicals was particularly strong in the Asia-Pacific region, where Cognis saw double-digit sales growth in both its textiles technology and leather technology businesses.

With total sales of €139 million, Oleochemicals achieved sales growth of 2.2%, mainly driven by higher volumes of fatty acids, glycerine and plastics additives.

First North Face flagship store to open in the Germany

31 May 2006

Outdoor specialist The North Face is to open its first store in Germany on June 30 in Munich. In partnership with Sport Schuster, the company will supply an extensive range of outdoor clothing and equipment in its two-storey 250 square metre outlet.

Lectra appoints PLM business development manager

31 May 2006

France-based provider of software and CAD/CAM equipment for industrial users of textiles and leather Lectra has appointed Guido Turco as Product Lifestyle Management (PLM) business development manager for Italy. Based in Milan, he will report directly to Fabio Canali, director of Lectra Italy. Lectra Italy is the company's largest subsidiary with 130 staff serving 3,000 customers.

Mr Turco will be responsible for all Lectra PLM activity in Italy. Specifically developed for the fashion markets and officially launched in April, Lectra's PLM sector helps companies to shorten lead times and reduce costs associated with product conception. Providing continuous decision-making support, it rationalises and improves the reliability of product development processes, and assures the synchronisation and traceability of information flows. In addition, it optimises the collaborative modes used between contractors and suppliers.

He brings more than 20 years of apparel industry experience, including expertise in technical and sales processes, as well as project management; both strategic and operational. From 2000 to 2005 he was senior business consultant at Assyst in Italy, where he managed the technical development of the company's PDM software platform while at the same time developing the Italian market.

Lanxess to sell textile processing chemicals business

31 May 2006

German-based chemical company Lanxess plans to divest its Textile Processing Chemicals business unit by the end of this year.

Before the announcement, Management Board chairman Dr Axel Heitmann had already mentioned that strategic options for this business were being explored in order to safeguard its long-term future. Successful restructuring has been carried out over the past two years to make the business more competitive.

Lanxess is now looking for an investor to participate in the ongoing consolidation of the textile processing chemicals industry. The Textile Processing Chemicals business unit employs approximately 380 people and forms part of the Performance Chemicals segment, which had sales of €1.98 billion in 2005.

Outlast Europe and Sedo collaborate

31 May 2006

Producer of phase change materials (PCM) Outlast Europe GmbH and manufacturer of foamed chloroprene rubber (neoprene) Sedo Chemicals Neopren GmbH have collaborated to develop a new phase change neoprene material combining the isolation and high elasticity features of neoprene with the added value of temperature regulation. Through the collaboration it is hoped to reverse the negative reputation of neoprene in terms of its lack of breathability.

The new product involves Sedo laminating knitted polyester fabrics onto neoprene sheets which have been coated with Outlast technology.

Trends turn towards lightweight bra products

31 May 2006

Italian synthetic fibres producer RadiciSpandex Corp., a subsidiary of The Radici Group, has seen a notable rise in the number of customers demanding technically advanced garments including high-tech bras.

Examples include the Ipex line from Victoria's Secret and the Vassarette brand from VF Corp.

According to RadiciSpandex's marketing manager for fashion apparel, Kim Hall, seamless, stitchless and tagless bras are becoming increasingly popular, as well as paler shades.

She added that the company's S17B spandex bra has been more in demand as a result of its added technology, which gives the fabric a 'cleaner' white. In line with recent trends, the bra is primarily functional with minimal styling and pure colours.

Lija opens new corporate headquarters

01 June 2006

Golf and sportswear designer Linda Hipp's company Lija has relocated to new corporate headquarters in Richmond, Canada in an attempt to improve personnel, warehousing, shipping and showroom conditions.

American Eagle Outfitters reports May sales increase

01 June 2006

US designer and retailer of apparel, outerwear, footwear, and swimwear American Eagle Outfitters, Inc. has

reported sales sales of $168.8 million for the month ended May 27, an increase of 19% compared with the $141.6 million reported for May 2005.

May sales were said to have been driven by a favourable customer response to the company's summer collection.

Total sales for the year-to-date seventeen-week period ended May 27 increased 16% to $691.2 million, compared with $598.1 million for the corresponding period last year.

Sales rise 39.5% at Zumiez

01 June 2006

Retailer of action sports related apparel, footwear, equipment and accessories Zumiez Inc. has reported that total net sales for the four-week period ended May 27, increased 39.5% to $15 million, compared with $10.7 million for the four-week period in 2005. The company's comparable store sales increased 18.2% versus a comparable store sales increase of 10.2% in the last year.

Johnson Outdoors receives military order

01 June 2006

Outdoor recreation company Johnson Outdoors Inc. has received a $1.6 million order from the US military for its Modular General Purpose Tent System (MGPTS) with anticipated delivery in the second half of 2006. The company has now received eleven separate orders totalling $19.1 million under the multi-vendor, multi-product contract announced on September 7, 2005.

The company continues to expect fiscal 2006 military sales to be in the $35 - $40 million range.

Columbia presents new products at OutDoor

01 June 2006

Columbia Sportswear company will unveil new products at OutDoor in Friedrichshafen, Germany on July 23-26.

The company will present its spring/summer 2007 line including its Faster & Lighter Shell jacket, made from 2.5L Omni-Tech Nylon, which is a minimalist shell that adapts to changing weather conditions. With a large size weighing less than 290 grams, it is said to be one of the lightest, waterproof/breathable jackets on the market.

It will also present the Montbovon Tee which mixes cotton with polyester for a light, quick-drying performance t-shirt; the Titanium Zephyr XCR shoe, with its lightweight, protective "frame" to offer support while maintaining breathability; and the Lithium-X Titanium Pack rucksack, which holds 26 litres and is made with rip stock Cordura for a strong touch and sporty feel.

250 exhibitors at TourNatur

01 June 2006

The fourth hiking and trekking trade fair TourNatur will take place in Düsseldorf, Germany, from September 1-3. 250 exhibitors and brands will present their new products to the 30,000 visitors that are expected to attend.

A growing number of young people, primarily interested in exotic destinations and fashionable accessories, are attending and now represent the second largest visitor group at the trade show.

The Outdoor Fashion Show will play an important role at the event, presenting the latest trends in outdoor fashion.

BSI acquires Entropy International

01 June 2006

Global standards and certification body BSI Group has acquired performance and sustainability software solutions company Entropy International Ltd.

The acquisition is set to enhance BSI's portfolio of performance management solutions for its global business customers.

Entropy International provides multi-national clients with an integrated web-based tool for assessing and managing risk, performance and compliance, across environment, health & safety and quality management systems.

BSI, which operates in 86 countries, develops standardisation solutions and the delivery of management systems standards assessments.

Growing retail presence at PeakVision Sports

02 June 2006

Makers of the patented Dual-Zone lens sunglasses designed for golfers PeakVision Sports is to undergo a major retail expansion in areas such as Florida, Southern California, the Midwest and Pacific Northwest. The company received a boost from its appearance at the PGA Merchandise Show in January and product availability has increased by more than 400% via high-end green-grass shops and off-course retail outlets.

PeakVision Sports has introduced four models this year—DG9, GR4, DL6 and SD7—that are said to have

been welcomed by recreational golfers and players on the PGA, LPGA and Champions Tours. The company also recently launched the Peaks Rx Programme, allowing those with optical prescriptions to enjoy the benefits of PeakVision Sports eyewear in the DG9, SL8 and ST7 models.

PeakVision Sports sunglasses are also used by skiers, professional baseball umpires and pilots.

Features of the sunglasses include glare reduction and accurate distance perception, distortion-free, non-polarised lenses, scratch resistance and 100% UV400 A/B/C protection.

End of waiting period for Berkshire Hathaway and Russell Corporation

02 June 2006

The waiting period for US antitrust review (under the Hart-Scott-Rodino Antitrust Improvements Act of 1976) for holding company Berkshire Hathaway Inc. to acquire branded athletic and sporting goods company Russell Corporation terminated on May 30.

As previously announced on April 17, Berkshire Hathaway has agreed to acquire Russell Corporation for $18 per share for each outstanding share of Russell Corporation stock. The transaction remains subject to certain closing conditions, including Russell Corporation stockholder approval.

Merrell receives footwear brand of the year award

02 June 2006

Footwear manufacturer Wolverine World Wide, Inc. has received the Drapers Record Footwear "Brand of the Year" award at a special ceremony held in London for its Merrell footwear brand.

Everlast Worldwide signs new agreement with Jacques Moret

02 June 2006

Manufacturer, marketer and licensor of sporting goods and apparel Everlast Worldwide Inc., has signed a new agreement with its largest licensee, activewear, bodywear and intimates manufacturer Jacques Moret, Inc. Effective immediately, this new agreement grants Moret a licence for Everlast boys', girls', newborn, infants and toddlers apparel in the United States. The new products will be available in early 2007.

As with the men's activewear license signed in December 2005, Moret will partner with M. Hidary and Company Inc. for the design, development and sales of the boys' portion of the licence.

Pacific Sunwear posts May Sales

02 June 2006

Specialty retailer of casual apparel, accessories and footwear Pacific Sunwear of California, Inc. achieved total sales of $85.1 million for the four weeks ended May 27, an increase of 5.6% over $80.7 million during the same period last year. Company same store sales decreased 2.6% during the same period.

Total sales for the first 17 weeks of fiscal 2006 were $385 million, an increase of 6.8% over the $360.6 million reported last year. Total company same store sales decreased 2% during the same period.

DuPont raises Elvanol prices

02 June 2006

Science and sustainable solutions company DuPont Packaging & Industrial Polymers has announced a price increase of $0.06/lb (pound) on off-list prices for all grades of DuPont Elvanol polyvinyl alcohol (PVA/PVOH), effective July 1, or as contracts permit. DuPont cited unprecedented and sustained increases in energy, and petrochemical feedstock and freight costs as significant reasons for this increase.

DuPont Elvanol polyvinyl alcohol is used in a variety of industries including textiles, paper and adhesives.

Staff changes at Buckeye

02 June 2006

David Ferraro, chairman and chief executive officer, will retire from manufacturer and marketer of specialty fibres and nonwoven materials Buckeye Technologies Inc. in September. The board has elected John Crowe, currently president and chief operating officer, to the office of chairman and chief executive officer effective July 1.

In other key management changes, Kristopher Matula, currently executive vice president and chief financial officer, will succeed Mr Crowe as president and chief operating officer, whilst Steven Dean, currently vice president and controller, will succeed Mr Matula as chief financial officer.