Business Week
10 July - 16 July 06

American Eagle posts 19% sales increase

10 July 2006

Clothing, footwear and swimwear retailer American Eagle Outfitters, Inc. has reported that total sales for the month ended July 1 increased 19% to $235.4 million compared with $198.4 million for the month ended July 2, 2005.

Total sales for the year-to-date twenty-two week period ended July 1 increased 16% to $926.6 million compared with $796.5 million for the twenty-two week period ended July 2, 2005.

Golf Galaxy enjoys higher sales in June

10 July 2006

Golf specialty retailer Golf Galaxy, Inc., reported that net sales for the fiscal month ended July 1 rose 39% to $42.1 million compared with $30.4 million for the fiscal month ended July 2, 2005. The increase was driven primarily by the addition of new stores and a comparable store sales gain of 2.9%. The GolfWorks, which the company acquired on March 16, also contributed to the year-over-year growth in net sales.

The company currently operates 61 stores in 24 states, ecommerce websites and catalogue operations offering a selection of golf equipment, accessories and apparel.

Anatom to distribute 'Life is Good' clothing

10 July 2006

Sports equipment, footwear, insole and sock company Anatom has been appointed to handle the exclusive distribution of the US clothing brand 'Life is good' within the UK and Ireland.

'Life is good' has seen steady growth over the past twelve years and is expected to achieve a worldwide turnover of $80 million this year. The company will officially launch the brand at the OutDoor Show in Friedrichshafen, July 23-26.

Integrated Textile Systems acquired by Armor Holdings

10 July 2006

US-based polymer manufacturer Integrated Textile Systems (ITS) has been acquired by Armor Holdings, Inc.

ITS manufacturers high-strength material Tensylon which is derived from an ultra-high molecular weight polyethylene polymer. The product has a wide variety of applications, including advanced fibre composites for use in ballistic products. The Tensylon high performance fibre or tape can be processed into any number of specialty tailored composites, depending on the unique application.

Groupe Bikini Village shareholders elect new board of directors

10 July 2006

Canadian swimwear company Groupe Bikini Village, Inc. elected a new board of directors at its AGM on July 5. Paul Delage Roberge, Jean Desmarais, Sylvie Lalande, Yves Simard and Richard Soly make up the new board.

Staff changes at BASF

11 July 2006

The Supervisory Board of BASF Aktiengesellschaft has extended the appointment of chairman Dr Jürgen Hambrecht until the end of the AGM in 2011. Dr Hambrecht's appointment was originally scheduled to expire in 2007.

The Board also extended the appointments of Klaus Löbbe and Dr Stefan Marcinowski to the Board of Executive Directors. Löbbe's appointment will now run until the end of the AGM in 2008 and Dr Marcinowski's until mid-May 2012.

Canadian economic advance offset by textile decline

11 July 2006

According to reports, the Canadian economy advanced by 0.1% in both March and April. In April there was a 1.2% increase in retail, particularly in the automotive sector, although home furnishings and furniture declined.

The manufacturing sector saw the most significant drop, decreasing by 0.3%, including textiles, rubber and

plastics.

Shoe and textile counterfeiting threaten Kenyan economy

11 July 2006

Last year, Kenyan firms lost KES500 million ($6.8 million) as a result of shoe and textile counterfeiting. Reports indicate that the counterfeiting market in the country has doubled in the last ten years as a result of technological advance, lax controls and a lack of appropriate legislation.

Industrialists are appealing to the government to introduce a new law which would help to prevent the production and sale of illegal counterfeit goods. They are favouring a proposal that would raise the maximum penalty imposed on those found guilty of dealing in counterfeit goods from KES$2 million, as it stands now, to KES$5 million ($68,000).

Alpargatas licenses Korean manufacturer for Topper brand

11 July 2006

Argentinean textile and footwear producer Alpargatas has awarded a five-year license to Korean manufacturer Jin Sports Company to produce and sell Topper apparel and football accessories for the Korean market. The company expects turnover resulting from this deal to reach $ 7.5 million.

Marketing manager for the brand Gabriel Travaglini explained the license was renewable for a further five years and that a decision would be made in the next few weeks as to whether it will also cover footwear production and sales.

Korean sales of sports footwear and apparel total approximately $1.2 billion per year, 50% of which is controlled by global companies such as Nike and Adidas. The remaining 50% is in the hands of brands such as Umbro, Hummei, Lotto, Kappa, Diadora and Spanish Joma. It is among these brands that Jin Sports intends to position the Topper brand. The aim is to occupy 25% of this market next year, 35% in 2008 and 50% in 2009.

The investment total is $7 million which includes five new shops. In 2005, the brand sold five million pairs of trainers, of which 500,000 were exported. The target for 2006 is to increase sales by 10%. While the brand seeks to penetrate new markets, its main markets are currently Uruguay, Paraguay, Chile, Venezuela and Bolivia.

The future of Alpargatas - which is currently controlled by the Newbridge Fund and may be sold to Brazilian holding Camargo Correa - remains undecided.

Piloti official footwear supplier for Champion Racing/Audi Sport North America

11 July 2006

Premier racing and performance driving shoe manufacturer Piloti Inc. has been designated as the official footwear supplier to Champion Racing/Audi Sport North America.

Piloti designs high-performance, biomechanically advanced driving shoes for professional racing drivers.

Eric Marohn leaves Huntsman's Textile Effects

11 July 2006

Eric Marohn, head of Huntsman Corporation's recently acquired Textile Effects business, has decided to leave the company for personal reasons.

President of the Materials and Effects division Paul Hulme will assume day-to-day responsibility for the Textile Effects business until the company can find a suitable replacement for Mr. Marohn.

Huntsman manufactures and markets differentiated and commodity chemicals for a variety of global industries including chemicals, plastics, automotive, textiles, footwear, paints and coatings and packaging.

New Execute Sports footwear line for Jet Pilot

12 July 2006

Action sports products producer Execute Sports, Inc. has entered into an agreement with water sports equipment company Jet Pilot to build a wakeskate and racing boot line, embedded with its Kampus Drain System technology.

Execute Sports is also preparing a launch of the Kampus shoe line. Duane Pacha, product and brand manager at the company, said, "Our shoes are performance-driven, having their genesis in the sport of wakeskating, and standing up to the rigorous demands that those athletes put on them, and we believe that will cross-over well into consumers and participants in other watersports markets."

Textiles to boost Indian manufacturing sector

12 July 2006

The manufacturing sector in India appears to be experiencing a revival. The manufacturing growth rate has increased from 5% in 2000-01 to over 9% in

2005-06. Manufacturing growth during the current financial year is estimated at 10.4%. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) equity inflows into the manufacturing sector have increased from $671.47 million in 2003-04 to over $2 billion in 2005-06, a jump of 75%. Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Shri Kamal Nath underlined the importance of the manufacturing sector as a driving force for the country's economic development, especially in terms of employment. He announced that further initiatives were under way to increase the share of manufacturing in GDP from the current level of around 17% to 25% by 2012.

Technology upgrading schemes for various sectors, such as small scale industries and textiles, have also been implemented.

Shri Kamal Nath said that 26 proposals envisaging total investment of Rs1766 crore ($382 million) and involving a central grant of Rs952 crore had been sanctioned under the Industrial Infrastructure Upgrading scheme.

The National Strategy for Manufacturing has identified 20 sectors as having immediate potential for growth and employment in the country. These include textiles and garments; leather and leather goods; auto-components; and chemicals and petrochemicals.

Mauritius revises 2006 economic growth forecast

12 July 2006

Mauritius has marginally revised downwards its 2006 economic growth forecast to 4.6% from 4.7%, citing concerns about a slowdown in the performance of some key sectors.

After decades as one of Africa's top performers, the Mauritian economy slowed last year as the end of favourable world trade deals on sugar and textiles took its toll on export earnings.

Yarn Expo and Intertextile combine to attract more local and national visitors

12 July 2006

China International Trade Fair for Fibres and Yarns coincides with Intertextile Shanghai Apparel Fabrics from October 25-28. The co-location of these two events should ensure a high turnout of trade buyers: in 2005 the Intertextile fair alone attracted 45,000 attendees.

Chinese textiles and garments continue to grow in popularity across the world and in 2005 China's total global trade in the sector exceeded a value of $120 billion. This import and export demand is placing a burden on the nation's fibre and yarn producers and textile manufacturers are increasingly looking to import the raw materials they need. In the first four months of 2006, China's imports of yarn reached $1.5 billion and imports of fibres reached $3.3 billion – 15% and 86% year-on-year increases respectively. The two fairs should have a wide appeal for foreign manufacturers wishing to meet new buyers from China as well as Chinese manufacturers looking to increase their national business.

Russell Athletic launches Dri-Power Fleece

12 July 2006

Sporting goods company Russell Corporation's Russell Athletic division has released new technology for use in sweatshirts, which is said to manage moisture and transfer sweat away from the skin. The new brand will be called Dri-Power Fleece and will debut this week.

The product introduces a dual moisture management system that pulls sweat away from the body and transfers it to the top layer of fabric, keeping the wearer's body drier and cooler.

The sweatshirt has been the main staple of Russell Athletic for 80 years when it was first used as a replacement for the wool football jersey.

Warnaco elects Nancy Reardon to Board of Directors

12 July 2006

Apparel, swimwear and sportswear company The Warnaco Group, Inc. has elected Nancy Reardon to its Board of Directors, making her the eighth independent director on a board of nine.

Ms Reardon is the senior vice president and chief human resources and communications officer at Campbell Soup Company.

Raichle releases new mountain boot Mt. Envy

12 July 2006

Swiss mountain footwear specialist Raichle has developed a boot that is designed for strength and responsiveness during rock climbing.

The Mt. Envy is said to stand safely on metal pegs and rungs and safeguard the sole of the foot; ensure good traction and a comfortable bending line; provide surefootedness on scree, grass and snow; and be light while providing a comfortable fit.

With a profile-free climbing zone under the ball of the foot, the Vibram Mulaz sole grips friction steps and

rungs. The external Motion Control System provides flexibility and stability for the ankle. The separately adjustable Ghilly lacing system helps to provide a comfortable fit. A Gore-Tex version is also available for breathability and waterproofness.

The boot is made from nubuck leather and Dropstop textile with a leather lining. Memo-foam is used in the tongue and around the ankle.

FootJoy introduces new line of women's golf gloves

13 July 2006

Golf shoe and glove company FootJoy is to enhance its range of women's gloves with new colours and models.

The StaSof range, featuring tanned Lavender Taction APL Cabretta leather will now offer the new Performance Fashion colours. Made by Pittards of England the leather offers superior grip performance and moisture resistance. The soft, breathable textured-suede microfibre along the back of the hand is said to provide a comfortable and consistent fit. The glove will be available in six staple colours: white, tan, pink, red, navy and black.

The WeatherSof glove will now be available with fashionable colour tabs, available in black, pink, blue, red, yellow and tan.

The lightweight, breathable StaCooler glove features an Aloe-Vera Cabretta leather technology for a soft, cool grip performance. The new colours include white, tan, lime, raspberry, orange, red, blue and black.

South African manufacturing increase offset by textile decline

13 July 2006

According to the South African statistics department, estimated manufacturing production from January to May has risen by 4.1% compared with the same period in 2005. Eight of the ten manufacturing divisions reported higher levels of production, including motor vehicles, metal products and paper products.

The textiles, clothing, leather and footwear division reported negative growth for the period compared with the same period of 2005, an overall 0.1% loss.

Alliance English saddlery line launched

13 July 2006

Lynn Palm and Cyril Pittion-Rossillon of equestrian education company Palm Partnership Training have introduced a new line of English saddles designed to fit Quarter Horses, Appendix Quarter Horses, Paints and other stock horse breeds.

Partnered with French saddle makers Forestier they have developed the Alliance English saddle line, having spent three years researching and developing the saddles.

Ms Palm stated, "With a properly fitting, comfortable saddle, a horse gives optimal performance. The Alliance Hunt Seat and Dressage saddles allow stock horse breed riders to ride in a saddle specially designed to fit their horses."

The Alliance line offers hunt seat and dressage saddles designed for stock horse breeds and a cross training saddle designed to fit traditional English riding breeds such as Thoroughbreds and Warmbloods. Saddle leather choices include full grain, doubled calf, or buffalo and saddles come in an array of sizes.

Nano-Tex appoints James Curley as president, CEO and director

13 July 2006

Nanotechnology-based textile enhancement company Nano-Tex Inc. has appointed James Curley as president and chief executive officer of the company and he is also to join its board of directors.

Mr Curley joined Nano-Tex as chief financial officer in June 2005. In December 2005, he was named Interim CEO, responsible for the company's leadership and direction. Mr Curley will continue to oversee all aspects of the company's world-wide business operations including its continued expansion into the apparel and commercial interiors markets.

OutDoor Asia debut to attract 10,000 visitors

13 July 2006

The first OutDoor Asia will take place in Nanjing, China, August 23-26. As of June, 122 exhibitors had registered for the event and a further 30-50 are expected to sign up.

Korea and Taiwan will be present with national displays and Chinese manufacturers include Nikko, Kailas, Mobi Garden, ACME and Pitorpan.

Leading footwear manufacturers from Central Europe, Lowa and Meindl, will exhibit alongside Vaude, Northland, Tatonka, Steiner and Zeiss.

The show will involve an international fashion show, trade show party, climbing competitions, shoe testing centre and more. Around 10,000 trade visitors are

expected to attend, with 20,000 expected on the 26th when the show will be open to the public.

The outdoor industry's highest growth rates are in China, accounting for the manufacture of 60% of global outdoor products.

Research study good news for foot pain sufferers

13 July 2006

A new Australian Study claims that Formthotics foam foot insoles are as good as hard plastic orthotic insoles for people with chronic heel pain.

At La Trobe University, Melbourne, research was tested on New Zealand-made Formthotics, made by Christchurch-based Foot Science International against the more expensive hard custom foot orthotics generally favoured by podiatrists. The result showed that Formthotics and hard custom orthotics produce similar short-term benefits for people with heel pain but that Formthotics were significantly less expensive. La Trobe researcher Dr Karl Landorf said the study examined short- and long-term effectiveness of orthotic insoles in the treatment of 135 patients with heel pain.

New Zealand sports stars Claudia Riegler, Steve Gurney, Richard Hadlee and many All Blacks have used Formthotics to recover from heel or foot injuries and Formthotics medical director Charlie Baycroft said heel pain was a common problem that affected one in ten people worldwide.

Formthotics were chosen for the study because they are the most frequent alternative to rigid orthotics prescribed by Australasian podiatrists. They were invented in 1979 and are now exported to more than 25 countries for sports and health professionals.

700 companies at ShanghaiTex 2006

14 July 2006

The four-day ShanghaiTex trade fair, which closed July 8, welcomed over 700 companies from 19 countries, including two delegations from America and Taiwan.

Exhibitions included those of the Shanghai International Garment Industry, Shanghai International Knitwear Industry and China (Shanghai) International Textile Equipment.

50,493 visitors attended from 47 countries, including 2,937 overseas professionals.

Upon closure, import and export deals had reached $20 million, and the domestic trade concluded on site was RMB550 million ($68.8 million). Other deals for equipment are also still under negotiation.

The 13th edition of the show will take place in June 2007, with a new increased area of 120,000 square metres.

Training opportunities for UK textile companies

14 July 2006

Businesses from the UK textiles industry could receive a share of £300,000 to help provide training opportunities for their employees. Educational foundation Edge has created the Edge Employer Awards to reward employers who provide excellent training opportunities for young people with an extended deadline to July 21.

A judging panel made up of local business leaders and young learners will decide which three organisations will be rewarded for the apprenticeships, work placements and other practical-learning opportunities they offer.

These three organisations will then be entered into the national competition. The prize will be presented in the form of a grant to be invested in training opportunities for young people.

Textile and clothing prices offset increase in Palestinian price index

14 July 2006

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) has reported that the consumer price index numbers reached 152.38 in June, showing a 0.18% increase over May.

Price increases included 0.10% in furniture household goods and services and 0.41% in transport and communications.

This was offset by decreases such as 1.25% in medical care and 0.06% in textiles, clothing and footwear.

Price changes appeared to be regional, with prices in the Gaza Strip rising by 0.22%, in Jerusalem by 0.07% and in the West Bank.

Over 60 job losses at Gildan US and Canada plants

14 July 2006

Casual and sportswear manufacturer Gildan Activewear Inc. is to reduce its Canadian and US facitilities to a five-day working week. This is in line with the company's plans to focus on large-scale production at the textile

manufacturing facilities in Honduras and the Dominican Republic.

The Canadian and US textile facilities will continue to manufacture fabric for fleece and sport shirts, as well as for a T-shirt sewing facility in Mexico. The company continues to increase its overall capacity through major new expansions in both its Central American and Caribbean manufacturing hubs, and will continue to evaluate the role and global competitiveness of its Canadian and US textile manufacturing facilities.

In excess of 60 positions at Valleyfield and Bombay will be terminated and Gildan will attempt to alleviate the impact of this decision on its employees.

Adidas Golf introduces three new summer styles

14 July 2006

Golf apparel, footwear and equipment company Adidas Golf has added three new models to its footwear range. Tour Traxion, University and Greenside are three new styles to be released for the summer and are said to offer performance, style and comfort enhancements.

The Tour Traxion borrows its style cues from the award-winning Tour 360 model, offering comfort and affordability. The shoe features a lightweight EVA midsole with adiPrene cushioning and a 1-year waterproof warranty. It retails for $90 and is available in four different colour options that match the Tour 360.

The University features golf-specific performance attributes including a wide and stable platform for swing stability, Traxion lugs and replaceable soft spikes for grip, and adiPrene for cushioning and comfort. The result is a lightweight athletic design to highlight the company's Sport Series. The University retails for $80 and is available in five different colour options.

The Greenside model is said to offer style and comfort at a lower price. The shoe retails at $60 and is available for both men and women in two different colour options.

EC invests In RFID research and development

14 July 2006

A three year initiative dedicated to research, development, training and demonstration in the effective use of RFID based on EPC global standards has been launched in Brussels. The BRIDGE (Building RFID solutions for the Global Environment) project is being supported by the European Union's Sixth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development with €7.5 million funding.

The project brings together a consortium of 31 global organisations. Participants in the programme comprise universities in Europe and China, including three of the Auto-ID Labs, solutions providers, both large and small, together with large scale retailers, manufacturers and SMEs.

The focus will be on business-based research, provision of information services, and hardware (including sensors and tags) and software development. This will result in the development of comprehensive training materials in the use of RFID, increased pilots and deployment for a variety of business areas and sectors including: anti-counterfeiting, through the development of new services in the EPCglobal network to reduce the level of piracy of goods, which is a serious problem in Europe; for the textile industry, better fulfilment of customers needs by increasing the flow and accuracy of information through a global supply chain; and in the retail environment by optimising processes in retail stores in order to increase service to the customer by using RFID on consumer sale units.

The project is an opportunity for Europe to build on a standardised RFID technology for use in global supply chains. It will contribute to the development of new solutions for businesses of all sizes and improve skills and expertise on RFID technology, which will help enhance the competitiveness of European companies, providing benefits to customers and citizens.