

NEWSCLIPS

East Jordan building \$44M plant in Georgia

East Jordan, Mich. — Horticulture products maker East Jordan Plastics Inc. will spend more than \$44 million to build a new facility in Lyons, Ga.

The project is expected to create 80 new jobs. The new plant was announced April 21.

East Jordan-based EJP makes thermoformed and injection molded horticultural containers — including pots and trays — for greenhouses, nurseries and garden centers. Most of the firm's containers are made with a high percentage of recycled plastic. EJP recycles more than 20 million pounds of horticultural containers a year.

The new plant will cover 255,000 square feet. In its first year of operation, the site will be used for logistics and distribution, adding recycling and manufacturing operations over the next five years.

Family-owned EJP was founded in 1947 and first made wooden greenhouse flats before transitioning to plastic. The firm describes itself as one of largest horticultural thermoformers in North America.

Ubhi buys stake in Illinois compounder

Elgin, Ill. — Materials veteran Andy Ubhi has acquired a majority stake in Poly Compounding LLC, a toll compounder in Elgin.

Poly Compounding specializes in highly engineered compounds and processes, especially for heat- and shear-sensitive applications. The firm, founded in 2001 by John Wolfe and Scott Crosby, employs 20 at a 25,000-square-foot location.

Ubhi already owns color concentrates maker Peacock Colors Inc. of Addison, Ill., which he acquired in 2018, and Vortex Liquid Color Inc. of Sheboygan, Wis., which he added in 2020. Poly Compounding is located about 30 miles from Peacock. In a phone interview with *Plastics News*, Ubhi said he plans to keep both sites open.

"We're going to continue with toll compounding, which can be a complementary business to Peacock," he said.

Peacock added a new Buss Kneader line late last year. Ubhi said Peacock posted sales growth of almost 20 percent in 2021 and is growing at double-digit rates so far in 2022.

Ubhi has more than 20 years of plastics experience, including positions with GE Plastics and Kraton Performance Polymers.

Ubhi said that he's known Wolfe and Crosby for many years, adding: "I'll support and add value to their business plan for Poly Compounding."

MBS Advisors of Florence, Mass., advised Poly Compounding on the transaction.

Okay Industries adds plastics molding

New Britain, Conn. — Okay Industries Inc., which produces metal parts and subassemblies for medical devices, recently added plastics molding capabilities.

The company announced April 12 it was adding plastics injection molding and insert molding to its headquarters operation in New Britain and its facility in Montecillos, Costa Rica. Okay also has a plant in Berlin, Conn. Respectively, the buildings have 100,000, 14,000 and 63,000 square feet of space, according to the company's website.

Okay added equipment for insert and two-shot insert molding that, combined with other multicavity and small-shot molding capabilities, will allow it to produce intricate, tight-tolerance parts efficiently, reduce secondary operations and lessen supply chain dependency. The new equipment includes horizontal presses and at least one vertical press with a rotary table, as well as inspection, quality control and automation systems.

The company already produces a variety of metal tubes, blades, shafts and other parts for insert molding.

"The addition of plastics to our metal tube forming, laser tube cutting, and precision stamping and machining operations allows us to provide fully integrated manufacturing of parts for many highly precise medical applications," Sean Stowik, sales and marketing director, said in a news release.

The release did not say how much Okay invested to add the new processes and Stowik did not return calls seeking comment.

Okay has been around more than a century, growing out of B. Jahn Manufacturing Co., a tool and die maker launched in 1911.

Bryce continues growth in Arkansas

Memphis, Tenn. — Flexible packaging maker Bryce Corp. is expanding in Arkansas, a move that will create 142 new jobs.

The \$80 million project involves construction of a new manufacturing site and distribution center in Searcy, where the company has maintained operations for decades.

Bryce opened the company's first location in Searcy in 1976 with 29 employees. By the end of last year, the company had grown to 465 workers in the community. Manufacturing space over 45 years has grown from 30,000 to 350,000 square feet.

Bryce, based in Memphis, serves the food, snack, pet, household, and health and beauty segments.

Crestwood invests \$1.2M to expand headquarters, enter medical market

By Sarah Kominek
Plastics News Staff

Mundelein, Ill.-based injection molder Crestwood Industries LLC is expanding with a \$1.2 million investment, including four new LS Mtron machines and Yushin robotics, as it enters the medical market.

"We have purchased a precision screen printer, LED curing with automatic loader" and a computer controlled robot, Des Paden, president of Crestwood, told *Plastics News* in an emailed statement.

The investment also includes customized software to manage order flow throughout the shop, Paden said.

"We are growing and developing new business, especially in the medical industry," he said in an April 21 news release.

Crestwood's first project in its new medical business is for a leading U.S. supplier based in the Chicago area, the release said.

The part is a polystyrene canister with a lid molded from high density polyethylene, using a new LS Mtron 240 machine, it said.

The four new WIZ-E series all-electric LS Mtron machines are 120, 190, 240 and 310 tons. The new 310-ton machine will also be used in medical applications.

"We are moving towards using all-electric molding machines in our plant, and LS Mtron had a very strong value proposition,"



Jose Villanueva, LS Mtron's sales/service engineer, left, and Tom Kent, Crestwood's general manager of manufacturing, at the company, which has installed new all-electric presses. Crestwood Industries LLC photo

Paden said. "We like the fact that they have local parts and service. Plus, we have older LG machines from 1995 and 1996 that are still running that we recently upgraded. We've always been happy with their performance and the company's service."

"We've already seen 15 percent better efficiency overall from these new machines," Tom Kent, general manager of manufacturing at Crestwood, added in the release. "We're getting much faster cycle times than with our older hydraulic machines. Plus, once our operators were trained to use them, they have proven to be a lot easier to operate and maintain."

In addition to the new molding machines, which brings Crestwood's current total to 22 presses, the company has stocked

more than 50 new tools in the past three years.

"We are hiring, adding a second shift and will be running 16 hours a day, five days a week, very soon," Paden said. "Our next move will be to double our footprint."

Currently operating out of a 15,000-square-foot facility, Crestwood molds parts for various industries, including commercial lighting, automotive, health care and material handling. It typically uses polycarbonate and glass-filled nylon materials.

"We recycle all of our scrap materials," Dave Cameron, operations manager at Crestwood, said. "We've worked hard to create completely closed-loop processes. For our virgin resin projects, we use hot-runner systems for zero scrap."

Indiana-based Plymouth Molding doubling plant size

By Frank Esposito
Plastics News Staff

Injection molder Plymouth Molding Group LLC plans to move into a new \$2.5 million plant in its hometown of Plymouth, Ind.

The 40,000-square-foot location is set to open in December. It will be twice the size of PMG's current site.

In an April 22 phone interview with *Plastics News*, President Mike Lee said PMG will move 12 injection presses to the new site and

plans to add three more. He added that the firm has signed a 15-year lease for the facility.

PMG posted sales growth of 18 percent in 2021 and is on track for 20-25 percent sales growth this year, according to Lee.

"We're seeing strong sales in all our key markets," he added. "We've been able to navigate all the challenges of these last two years."

PMG will move 18 jobs to the new plant, with plans to hire eight more.

PMG molds products for a variety of industries, including recreational vehicles, construction and agriculture. As part of the project, the firm is investing \$600,000 in additional equipment to meet production demand.

The plant is being built by Plymouth Industrial Development Corp., a local investment firm that has developed projects for Dean Foods, Del Monte, Pregis, Jeld-Wen, Hoosier Tire and many other firms since being founded in 1957.

Plastics News FYI

BEST PLACES TO WORK 2022 EMPLOYEE BENCHMARK REPORT

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