

Plastics News

Investment helps Washington film converter become more sustainable

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Emissions control and energy use improvements have won a Washington film extruder and converter \$342,000 worth of incentives as a state of Washington energy leadership-in-innovation award.

Shields Bag and Printing Co. installed a regenerative thermal oxidizer (RTO) and a flexographic press to improve production at its Yakima, Wash., facility.

"We have been running good product, mostly for food-grade packaging, since October," said Derek LaFramboise, environmental affairs manager.

The RTO from Ship & Shore Environmental Inc. of Signal Hill, Calif., converts volatile organic compounds into carbon dioxide and water. For Shields, that means eliminating solvent fumes.

In addition, Paper Converting Machine Co. of Green Bay, Wis., supplied Shields with a Fusion-brand wide-web 10-color gearless flexographic press. PCMC is a unit of Barry-Wehmiller Cos. Inc.

The new equipment is more energy efficient and should save Shields 1.3 million kilowatt hours per year in energy — or about half of the energy needed in standard units, according to Jimmy Sauter, a project engineer with consulting firm Cascade Energy Inc. of Portland, Ore.

Cascade worked with Shields on an application to electric utility provide

Pacific Power to help support the project. Pacific Power provided \$196,000 while Cascade Natural Gas Corp. of Kennewick, Wash., provided \$146,000.

Annually, the new equipment will reduce Shields' natural gas usage by about 70 percent and cut 1,300 tons of carbon dioxide emissions and nitrogen oxide emissions by 1.7 tons per year.

The new press arrived Aug. 1 and went into regular production in October, LaFramboise said. "Through the RTO startup, we had to address issues with the press that was bought at the same time."

Including the new PCMC unit, Shields operates six out-of-line flexographic presses and also has 30 inline flexographic presses. Shields extrudes materials on 31 machines, a majority with the nameplate of Battenfeld Gloucester Engineering Co. Inc.

The family-owned and -operated firm employs more than 500, occupies in excess of 550,000 square feet and recorded 2014 sales of \$180 million, up from \$160 million in 2013. Chris Daniels, executive vice president of sales and marketing, projects 3 percent growth during 2015.

Food-grade packaging accounts for about 25 percent of the business and "is growing at a faster clip than other segments," Daniels said. Other products include heavy-duty construction and home building material, concrete, lawn/garden and fertilizer bags; and, in a growth niche, tamper-evident cash-deposit security bags for financial institutions, armored carriers and national retail companies.

Shields received a utility sponsor's award during the first annual Washington industrial energy leaders' recognition ceremony in 2012. It was among six recipients for 2014 governor's awards as announced Jan. 15.

Gov. Jay Inslee is scheduled to present the newest award at a March 25 ceremony in Olympia. The citation credits use of "a highly innovative technology" to Shields.

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