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Solutions For Nonwovens

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A newcomer to the nonwovens industry, NonWoven Solutions (NWS) recently celebrated its first full year of production. Serial production began in March 2008 and by May, demand had pushed production into two full shifts. May 2009 marked yet another milestone as NWS started a third shift and began a 24-hour/five-day production schedule. Located in Lakemoor, IL, the plant is currently housed in a brand new 40,000 square-foot building. The total number of employees is 24.

Although the company is new, its executive team, combined, boasts more than 140 years of experience in the nonwovens field. NWS partners include Steve Brown, Gerry Leineberg, Frank Porto, Joe Leineberg and Tom Leineberg. The latter three are also the principals in Superior Felt & Filtration, LLC, which is a sister company to NWS.

"The shift expansion will allow us to maximize our production efficiencies as less downtime will be incurred at the start and end of each day," remarked Dave Gastall, plant manager. From a sales and business development standpoint, both vice president of sales Frank Porto and Steve Brown, president and general manager, reported that demand for their product continues to grow. "We are providing a very clean and uniform product that is competitively priced and meets the demands of the medical and personal care markets, as well as the engineered fabrics markets," Mr. Porto commented.

The goal in building the company and specifying the production equipment, was to assemble the capability to make a fabric that was as good as current technology would allow. According to the company, this goal has been met with its selection of equipment from N. Schlumberger (Thibreau and Asselin). Mr. Brown reports that uniformity from this equipment has met the guarantees that NSC made.

"We are enjoying side-center-side web uniformities (i.e., CV or coefficient of variability) that are in most cases less than 1%." The plant has been constructed to deliver micro-biological performance that is consistent with the most critical medical grade fabrics and fabrics with safe skin contact performance. In addition to wipes and absorbents, NWS produces micron-rated felts and engineered fabrics as well as various types of coating, printing and lamination substrates.

NWS processes exclusively white, synthetic-based fibers in a 1-15 denier range. The company's goal was to be able to keep the potential for contamination to a minimum. NWS has accessory equipment to flame-singe, calender, heat set and combine multi-layered combinations of materials using needle felting as the bonding technique. In addition, precision slitting and die cutting are available. Future plans include a second line within this facility that will be geared to lightweight fabrics and high-speed production. ❖