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CUSTOMER CONNECTION

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GREEN SUSTAINABILITY TAKING ROOT AT JM EAGLE

JM Eagle has become the first plastic-pipe manufacturer to set and reach high standards of green sustainability at its plants.

Modeling its environmental initiatives after the BIFMA (Business and Industrial Furniture Manufacturers Association) e3 program, JM Eagle has now certified the processes of its Meadville, Pa., and Perris, Calif., plants at the Gold level and six other plants at the Silver level in green initiatives.

"The BIFMA e3 program after which JM Eagle's sustainability is designed has been heralded with much success," says John Macek, JM Eagle safety manager who is spearheading the company's green activities. "By modeling the JM Eagle program after that one, we can apply that same high level of green standards to our manufacturing processes and accurately measure our outcomes."

The Meadville plant has undergone an extraordinary continuous improvement endeavor in the past year. With an innovative recycling center and state-of-the-art collection system, it has set the standard for post-industrial product reuse.

The recycling center is located on a pre-palletized form for easy collection, banding and pick-up of cardboard scrap. Meadville recycles most of its entire product, with only a negligible amount reaching the solid waste stream. Improvements in the extruder electrical safety systems have also been put into place, safeguarding personnel from electrical shock and increasing the energy efficiency of the lines.

The Perris plant, which earned the Energy Star Partner Award in 2009 for slashing its electrical usage, drastically improved its energy efficiency per man-hour and reduced the amount of energy it takes to make the product.

Perris uses most of the regrind product that other plants cannot use, reducing the need for raw materials by incorporating more than 90 percent post-industrial material into the finished product without sacrificing high-quality standards. It has also substituted "chemicals of concern" with environmentally friendly components in its water treatment.

Receiving Silver status in the JM Eagle Green Sustainability program are plants in McNary and Sunnyside Wash.; Wilton, Iowa; Magnolia, Ark.; Fontana, Calif.; and another JM Eagle plant in Meadville. Assessments are scheduled for Perris, Calif.; Columbia, Mo.; and Pueblo, Colo.

Still, the work to make JM Eagle one of the greenest manufacturers in the country is not complete.

"This program is in its infancy with many challenges being offered to the plants, and many areas for improvements are being identified at a fast pace," says Macek. "We expect to see many improvements put into place this year to raise JM Eagle's profile as the complete—and green—manufacturer of plastic pipe."

