

METSO BOLSTERS MILL SERVICES IN NORTH AMERICA

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BELOIT TESTING AND ROLL FINISHING ASSETS FIND NEW HOME

DURING THE LAST YEAR, METSO PAPER (FORMERLY Valmet) has substantially strengthened the services side of its paper machine business in North America. Especially through the acquisition of Beloit service and after market assets, Metso Paper has been able to expand its paper testing, roll covering, maintenance, spare parts and other services available to pulp and paper mills.

PAPER TESTING AND ANALYSIS

In Charlotte, NC, the company has combined the Tapio Analyzer (profiling) work previously done there with state-of-the-art testing and analysis equipment capabilities acquired from the Beloit Rockton (IL) R&D Center. The new lab is under the direction of Dan Sze who managed similar activities for Beloit in Rockton. The staff also includes Sami Kahra and Bill Graff, process analysis engineers.

The lab is well-equipped to perform a wide range of pulp and paper testing services and paper variability analyses. Along with the Tapio analyzer, it has more than 30 distinct pieces of testing equipment, including a basis weight profiler, Kajaani formation and fiber length analyzers, and equipment to test smoothness, gloss, caliper, burst, stiffness, porosity, internal bond and other qualities.

In promoting the lab's range of testing capabilities, Metso also emphasizes the grade specific and machine concepts knowledge of its staff. "We are used to working on paper and machine variability defects that specifically challenge the efficiencies of paper making systems," Sze said.

The new lab operates as an extension of a mill's own testing and analysis activities. The recent spate of mergers and acquisitions has left many mills without extensive R&D facilities, Sze noted, so there has been an increased interest in supplementing the mill's on-site testing capabilities.

Through its analysis of paper samples, the lab can also help mills (as well as consultants, fabric companies, chemical suppliers, and small labs) troubleshoot machine problems.

Many times mills send their own results to the lab in Charlotte for interpretation or to confirm their own analyses, Sze said. The lab can work on all grades from tissue to fine paper to board grades. It is currently setting up a system to analyze pulp which will include a "pressability index" or standardized pressing procedure for determining the strength and dewatering characteristics for various furnishes.



A variety of rolls sent to Aiken for reconditioning

ROLL SERVICE CENTER

Another acquisition from Beloit, the roll service facility in Aiken, SC, has been upgraded to include third-generation thermal spray roll covering equipment. Its HVOF and plasma spray units are the latest developments in this area ensuring uniform, highest quality and surface properties on thermal coatings.

Marco Marcheggiani, president of Metso Paper USA, Inc.; Lennart Vihma, president of the company's service operations; and Juha Keskiivari, general manager of the Aiken facility took part in a ribbon-cutting ceremony May 4, to officially open the thermal coating operation at the facility.



Dan Sze, left, and Sami Kahra prepare to test a roll of tissue on the Charlotte lab's basis weight profiler.



Lennart Vihma, Marco Marcheggiani, and Juha Keskiivari inaugurate the thermal spray coating section in Aiken, SC.

Metso Paper has produced more than 500 ceramic press roll covers worldwide to date. In North America the Montreal facility produced more than 120 covers and the Aiken Service Center has made over 60 covers. The complete range of Valmet ceramic and carbide thermal sprayed products will be available from the Aiken Service Center, including all ValRok family products as well as hard coatings developed for calender rolls.

In November, Metso Paper plans to open a new service center in the Stateline-Beloit, WI, area to enhance the company's capabilities in servicing former Beloit and Valmet equipment. The service center will provide assembly and repair of certain components, and it will serve as a logistics center for the distribution of spare parts and other materials. It also will have offices for engineering and service personnel supporting field services and upgrades of fiber and papermaking lines. **TJ**

RESPONDING TO THE MARKET

Metso Paper's emphasis on service is partly a response to changes that have occurred in the North American pulp and paper industry since the early 1990s. Mergers, acquisitions and consolidations, the Cluster Rule, plus concerns about over capacity and returns on investment have overshadowed and often over-ridden recent considerations about building new paper machines in North America.

Rather than invest in new machines, pulp and paper companies have been reducing capacity by shutting down their less efficient machines and selling off some of their mills. They are looking at getting the most out of those machines they choose to keep in operation, often turning to suppliers for technical support.

Add to all that the simple fact that Metso was able to acquire a portion of the Beloit assets and market for its services after the North American company filed for bankruptcy in 1999. The acquisition included Beloit's roll cover division (Beloit-Manhattan), as well as the paper machine after-market business assets and paper machine technology, such as Beloit's paper machine drawings, patents and several pilot machines. The roll cover division included six service centers, located in South Carolina, Mississippi, Washington, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, as well as Cernay, France. Metso's fiber and paper business area has an additional 12 sites in North America.

Groupe Laperriere & Verreault (GL&V), based in Trois-Rivieres, QC, Canada, has also responded to changes in the North American market and has benefited from Beloit's misfortunes. In February 2000, GL&V acquired the Impco-Jones and Beloit-Lenox segments of the former Harnischfeger subsidiary. That not only increased GL&V's pulp and paper design and manufacturing capabilities, it also considerably increased the company's revenues for spare parts.

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