

Behrend goes plastic

ERIE--A Harborcreek plastics manufacturer has produced a plastic pallet more palatable in price and environmental impact.

The Plastics Technical Center at Penn State Erie, The Behrend College, assisted Port Erie Plastics Inc. with its designed for a new, reusable, plastic version of the traditional wooden pallet, or skid. Port Erie Plastics' product even can be recycled into a new pallet when worn out.

The nine-legged nesting pallet weighs less than 16 pounds, making it the lightest full-size pallet available.

Pallets are used by forklift operators to move everything from toilet paper to tractor parts. Plastic versions have a longer life than wooden pallets, but their price--between \$30 and \$60 per skid, compared with \$6 to \$10 for wood--has hampered market penetration.

Jon Connole, marketing manager for Port Erie Plastics, said the new pallet can be sold for under \$20 in high volumes when manufactured from virgin starting materials, or resins. The price will be less if recycled resins are used.

The pallet project was the brainchild of William C. Witkowski, president of Port Erie Plastics. "We can seize a niche in the pallet market by offering companies the advantages of a plastic pallet at a cost closer to wood skids," Witkowski said. "The Plastics Technology Center was a tremendous resource in helping Port Erie develop an attractively priced plastic pallet."

The project was supported in part by a grant won by Port Erie Plastics from Pennsylvania's Ben Franklin Partnership Program, a state-wide economic development effort.

John P. Beaumont, assistant professor of engineering and director of the Plastics Technical Center's Computer-Aided Engineering Center, worked closely with Port Erie Plastics to develop the molds used to produce the pallet. The Center's special software allows Beaumont to visualize a three-dimensional

mold on a two-dimensional computer screen. "The software not only helps in structural analysis, but also in evaluating the injection molding process and the effect of the molding process on the product--all before any molds are built," he explained.

The Plastics Computer-Aided Engineering Center assists plastics-related businesses in evaluating and applying leading-edge computer analysis tools and techniques while pursuing the University's educational mission.

By using "simultaneous engineering" strategies, the Penn State-Behrend/Port Erie team was able to consider materials selection, part design, mold design and processing before building the first mold.

"As a result of our simultaneous engineering effort, quality pallets were produced within a few minutes of starting up the first mold," Beaumont said. "Such an outcome would be highly unusual for a mold of this size and complexity using more traditional approaches."

Beaumont said the pallet and mold design allows Port Erie Plastics to use either recycled or virgin plastic starting materials. The choice permits the 41-year-old company to balance pallet cost and performance.

The key to competitive pricing is the use of post-industrial and post-consumer waste plastic, Beaumont added. "These materials normally just end up in a landfill. There are acres of it already out there. It is a significant resource that when handled properly can be turned into a product with excellent strength and excellent rigidity," he said.

And when a Port Erie Plastics pallet finally wears out, it can simply be ground up and remolded. Wooden pallets must be disposed of a cost that can sometimes reach the original purchase price.

David Hoffman, a senior plastics engineering technology major from St. Mary, assisted Beaumont with the pallet mold design as part of his required senior design project.

Philanthropy scholarship offered

INDIANAPOLIS--The Indiana University Center on Philanthropy is seeking student applicants for its Jane Addams Fellowships in Philanthropy program. This program awards each fellow \$15,000 for the year and 12 credits toward a graduate degree. The application deadline is February 17, 1995.

Qualifying candidates include recent graduates with a bachelor's degree and seniors anticipating graduation. Applicants must show demonstrated leadership potential, special interest in some aspect of community service, and academic stability.

Jane Addams, founder of

Chicago's famed Hull House and noted social reformer, devoted her life to community service and philanthropy. This program was created to encourage aspiring young leaders to work for the common good while studying and investigating the roles of philanthropy. In addition to guided study, students will select an internship with a nonprofit organization in the Indianapolis community.

Interested persons should contact the IU Center on Philanthropy, 550 West North Street, Suite 301, IN 46202, (317)274-4200.

At a Glance

Aids forum

ERIE--Dr. Cindy Patton will present the opening talk in the second annual Feminist Scholars Speaker Series at Penn State Erie, The Behrend College, on Thursday, February 2 at 7:30 p.m. Her lecture, "From Innocence to Safety: Media Representations of Young People's Risk for AIDS," will be held in Reed Lecture Hall, Reed Union Building. It is free and open to the public.

An AIDS activist, Patton has written extensively on the HIV/AIDS epidemic and is a member/advisor on numerous international committees. She is widely recognized as a leading spokesperson and expert in the field.

Patton is a faculty member of the Department of Rhetoric and Communication at Temple University. She is the author of "Inventing AIDS," "Sex and Germs: The Politics of AIDS," "Making It: A Woman's Guide to Sex in the Age of AIDS," and most recently, "Last Served? Gendering the HIV Pandemic."

Patton's appearance is sponsored by the Penn State-Behrend Division of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Penn State Equal Opportunity Planning Committee.

Star watching

ERIE--Dr. Roger Kancke, head of Penn State-Behrend's Division

of Science and a NASA-funded astronomer, will discuss the latest theoretical and observational information available on black holes at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 20, in 101 Otto Behrend Science Building.

Black holes form when extraordinary densities cause objects to completely collapse in on themselves. Everything in their vicinity is attracted by gravity so intense that even light cannot escape.

NASA's Hubble Space Telescope has discovered a black hole in the center of the giant elliptical galaxy M87, located in the Virgo constellation. The M87 black hole is so monstrous, astronomers estimate it has swallowed more than one billion stars.

Astronomical viewing with the College's small telescopes will begin at 7 p.m. and continue after Knacke's lecture, weather permitting. The lecture is free and open to the public, but reservations are requested. To make a reservation, phone the Division of Science at 898-6105.

Point of Light

ERIE--Dr. Robert Light, associate dean for Graduate Studies, Research, Continuing and Distance Education, and Economic Development at Behrend College, has been named to the Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission.

The primary goal of the commission is improvement of the quality of life through orderly growth and development in Erie, Crawford, Warren, Mercer, Lawrence, Forest, Venango, and Clarion counties. The commission works to secure state and federal money for capital and small business loan funds, business grants, infrastructure development, export and procurement assistance, youth leadership programs, and transportation and health care services for the rural poor.

Light will serve the commission as a private citizen and resident of Erie County.

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that there are many Black American heroes who could be studied within the college curriculum, but students are limited to a chosen few unless they study them on their own.

Many doors will open in the future, and America, as a society, according to Fulwood must be prepared to enter those doors.

There still is a way to go to fulfill Martin Luther King's dream, said Fulwood. But according to him, Americans have to find the path, stay on that path, and not let anything stray them from the path.

"We should step boldly into the future as we've never done before. I for one want to go boldly. The future is coming whether we know it or not."

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Business News and Sports

Thursday

"Lion Hotline" @ 6:05 p.m.

Call Bruce Parkhill!

Saturday

Penn State University Basketball

Lady Lions v. Purdue @ 12:45 p.m.

PSU v. Northwestern @ 7:40 p.m.

Tuesday

Speaker Series Events

Mr. Dale Van Atta

Call-in Show @ 4:30 p.m.

Lecture @ 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday

The Point After

Let's Talk Super Bowl

with Jerry... and...