

# Polycorp aims to dent market with new liner

By Mike McNulty

Rubber & Plastics News Staff

ELORA, Canada—A stiffer tank car testing regulation in the U.S. and far-sighted planning has put Polycorp Ltd. in what it believes is a very strong position.

The company has come up with a process to extrude tank liners rather than calender them, using rubber roller head extrusion technology. The process makes it easier for companies to deal with legislation in the U.S. requiring that the metal thickness of tank cars be tested every 10 years by stripping the rubber lining from the cars, Technical Manager James Finefrock said.

Once tested, more tank cars will be re-lined with rubber than in the past two decades combined, he said.

Polycorp's Protective Linings Division is the first manufacturer in North America to use roller head extrusion technology on liners, Finefrock claimed, adding that other producers in the U.S. and Canada calender liners.

During a business trip to Germany in 1983 he observed a roller head extruder successfully producing extruded tank lining rubber. From then on, Finefrock was determined to one day bring that

concept to North America.

It took awhile, he admits. He retired after 37 years in tank lining development at Goodyear and Blair Rubber Co. in 2003 but didn't remain idle for long. He joined Polycorp in 2005, primarily to tackle the extruded rubber lining project.

Finefrock successfully extruded chlorobutyl, bromobutyl and natural rubber linings that now are being produced under the Polycorp name.

He said in addition to improved aesthetics, Polycorp's approach to re-lining tanks offers longer service life and increases production rates. "We deliver speed to the customer while improving quality," he said.

Other North American manufacturers laminate their liners, Finefrock said, "which means they are made in several layers, which has presented problems."

"The extrusion concept... produces a very homogeneous material free from stratification and contamination, which is normally the weak point of traditional calender-laminated tank lining," he said. "Thus, a rubber tank lining free of delaminations, 'fisheyes,' metal, wood and plastic contaminations results in a superior product."

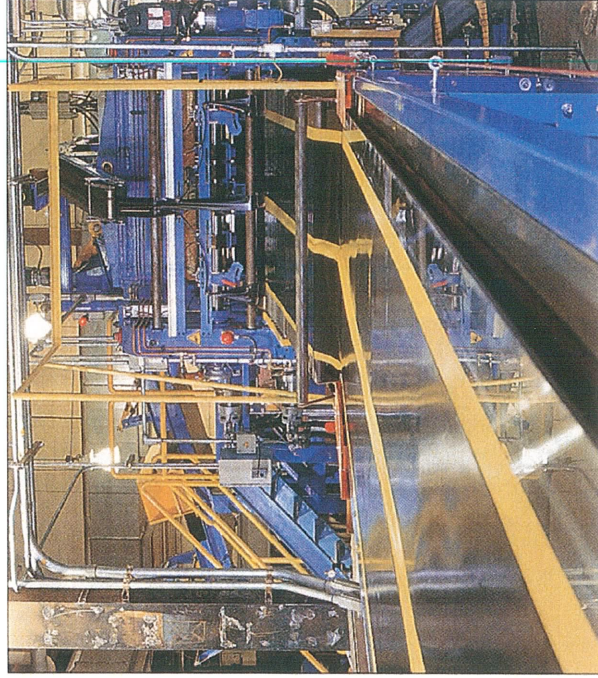
The Elora-based company was formed

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Polycorp Ltd. is using roller head extrusion technology to produce tank liners rather than calendering them. Officials at the firm said Polycorp is the first company in North America to use the technology, which they said is superior to calendered liners.

in late 1995 when President and CEO Peter Snucins and partner Robert Lipic purchased the equipment and intellectual property of B.F. Goodrich of Canada. By spring of 1966, they had hired some ex-B.F. Goodrich employees and had Polycorp up and operating out of the firm's 55,000-sq.-ft. plant.

In early 2002, Snucins bought out the shares of Lipic and other stockholders to become sole owner of the business.

"This (liner) innovation was a combination of market foresight and technological innovation," Snucins said. "We closely monitor the tank lining industry and

foresaw this need for superior tank re-lining capability and we met it with a significant investment of time, effort and state-of-the-art extrusion technology."

Trials on the technology took the better part of two years and involved reformulating the firm's compounds and teaching operators how to use the technology, Snucins said.

The company's Protective Linings Division is a global producer of more than 70 engineered linings that use polymers, including natural rubber, neoprene, nitrile, EPDM and chlorobutyl for the tank lining, mining and rail industries.



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