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The next generation

Capable hands hold rubber industry's future

By Bruce Meyer

Rubber & Plastics News Staff

Those who are worried the rubber industry doesn't have enough youth to carry the sector's torch forward can rest easy.

Based on the 28 members of the *Rubber & Plastics News* Under 40 class profiled in this issue, the future of the industry is in good hands. They represent a wide variety of areas and occupations within the sector and, as a group, express the optimism that can help carry on the tradition of sharp thinking and technological advances that keep the rubber and tire industries moving forward.

And while many view rubber as a mature industry that might not appeal to younger generations, that's not apparent here.

"Every day there is something new and different," said Casey Hedlund, 30, a senior scientist at Lord Corp. "I may spend one day researching literature for a new project, the next day mixing a compound for it, or a few days later impatiently waiting for test results. Through the entire process, I gain knowledge on materials and techniques."

Others in the class echoed that sentiment in answers they submitted to surveys following their nomination.

"When I asked the engineers who interviewed me to

Meet RPN's Under 40 Class of 2017, beginning on Page 9.



describe a day as a project engineer, they told me that their days are always different," said Dalton Hart, 26, a senior project engineer at Desma USA. "Knowing that I would always be challenged and working on new ideas intrigued me and sold me on the position. Learning that I would see projects from start to finish indi-

cated to me that I would feel a great sense of accomplishment at my job."

Alexandra Krawicz, 36, lead chemist of global research and development at SI Group, felt after her interview that the company would be a good fit for her. "I

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Tekni-Plex expands in Asia, U.S.



Tekni-Plex's medical molding plant in Suzhou, China.

By Chris Sweeney

Rubber & Plastics News Staff

SUZHOU, China—Tekni-Plex Inc. is expanding its global footprint and product offerings through two of its subsidiaries.

First, the firm is investing \$15 million for a new manufacturing facility in Suzhou, near Shanghai. The firm said it represents the single largest recent investment by Tekni-Plex, responding to the growing needs of the Asia-Pacific pharmaceutical and medical device markets. The site will manufacture products from three of the firm's units—Natvar, Colorite and Action Technology.

In a joint move, the facility will produce Natvar's recently announced silicone extrusion tubing capabilities for

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Another round of expansions

Cooper Standard enhances global capabilities

By Chris Sweeney

Rubber & Plastics News Staff

NOVI, Mich.—Cooper Standard Automotive Inc. is drastically increasing its global technical capabilities and North American manufacturing presence with a variety of moves.

The firm plans to open a new North American innovation center in Livonia, Mich., nearly doubling the size and scope of its current center in nearby Farmington Hills. Chief Operating Officer Keith Stephenson said the facility is set to open in October.

In a separate move, Cooper Standard is investing \$1 million to expand its manufacturing capabilities for coolant tube and hose assemblies, transmission cooling lines, and fuel and brake lines at Surgoinsville, Tenn., in response to customer growth. The firm confirmed that the project will create about 98 new jobs.

Finally, the company celebrated the opening of both a test and a prototype center in Shanghai to support growth in the Asia-Pacific region. Stephenson said the project represents a \$5.8 million investment and expects employment to reach about 100 engineers in the coming months.

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Cooper's new Asia-Pacific test center.



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My passion for the rubber industry developed during my time as an intern/co-op at Bridgestone Americas Technical Center.

Josh Guilliams

Alexandra Krawicz



Age: 36

Title: Lead chemist of global research and development

Company: SI Group

Why she was selected: After two years of research, Krawicz is preparing to submit her first patent in the U.S. for a new resin technology she developed for the rubber industry.

How has working in the rubber industry broadened your view of the world?

I must say that before joining SI Group I did not appreciate the breadth of applications for rubber and resin chemistry, and was not familiar with many of its applications. I also learned a tremendous amount about scale-up production, and I am still learning that part of the job. Those were things I had not been exposed to in college and graduate school. Another aspect of the job is that it is not enough to be a good chemist; you need to understand the business side to drive important projects forward that will make the organization successful. I am still learning this as well as perfecting interactions with customers to understand their needs.

What advice do you have for students considering a career in the rubber industry?

If you are an undergraduate student I strongly suggest you find an internship in a company and get firsthand experience to see if you like it. There also are opportunities to do undergraduate research with professors who are leaders in this field, and I recommend seeking those out. I had done undergraduate research myself and I think it gave me an edge over other job candidates when I found my first industrial job right after college and before going to graduate school.

Where do you see yourself in five years?

I enjoy the technical aspects of my work, and I am eager to expand into strategic decision making and road mapping. I would like to have more direct customer interaction on a regular basis and develop a deeper understanding of the market requirements and trends. I am looking forward to eventually moving into a leadership position, but with a strong technical background to drive the group and company toward new accomplishments.

Other interests: Enjoys exploring new countries/places, hiking and trying new cuisines with her husband.

Josh Guilliams



Age: 37

Title: Technical director

Company: Polymer Valley Chemicals

Why he was selected: Since joining Polymer Valley Chemicals, Guilliams has been responsible for developing new products with two pending patents.

What inspired you to pursue a career in the rubber industry?

My passion for the rubber industry developed during my time as an intern/co-op at Bridgestone Americas Technical Center. Working in the analytical labs, I found great mentors in Dr. Julia Zimmerman, Lisa Dinger and Tim O'Connor. Under their direction, I had the opportunity to learn about teamwork, chemical analytical methods, process engineering, compound development and rubber technology outside of the classroom, while I was pursuing a degree in chemistry/engineering and polymer science. The hands-on experience I gained during this time challenged me and I began to excel. Prior to graduation, I was offered a full-time position with Bridgestone and worked there for 13 years in multiple facets of product development.

What accomplishment are you most proud of so far and why?

During my time at Lanxess' Butyl Division, I led a global team to revisit an industry concept for halobutyl in tire tread applications. Historically the performance issue with halobutyl in tire tread applications dealt with tire wear performance issues. Our team was able to solve the wear performance issue and as a result, we initiated a global market strategy for this technology. Since doing so, the technology has received multiple commercial successes.

What advice do you have for students considering a career in the rubber industry?

Mentorship is key. Surround yourself with people who have had success and challenges within in the industry. A great mentor will provide guidance and support, as well as challenge you. It's also important to be self-directed in your own success. Read trade publications and join trade associations, for example. Challenge yourself to study new technologies and be a life-long student of science.

Other interests: Exercising, improving his golf swing, and wine tasting with Debbie, his wife of nine years.

Bart Hubenak



Age: 31

Title: Marketing specialist

Company: Ryco North America

Why he was selected: Hubenak recently joined Ryco as its marketing specialist and has shown promise with the firm.

What inspired you to pursue a career in the rubber industry?

I have always been fascinated with the global markets. Working at Ryco I have the privilege of watching trends across many sectors of the economy. Ryco allows me to follow trends in the marketplace while educating my colleagues how to capitalize on these trends and improve their daily responsibilities.

How has working in the rubber industry broadened your view of the world?

Working in the rubber industry has broadened my view of the world by ensuring me there is plenty of room for growth and innovation. Regardless of the decisions made by economic policy makers, the rubber industry has shown me human innovation will always leave room for optimism.

What advice do you have for students considering a career in the rubber industry?

For any student entering the industry, their main objective should be studying as many digital tools as they can in conjunction with studying the global economy. Digitalization is here to stay and is a tool future generations must understand. Also, I am under the firm belief future generations must understand how and why economic policies affect the marketplace.

Other interests: Enjoys fishing, sailing, mountain biking and the outdoors with family and friends.

Cody Hughes



Age: 26

Title: Government sales

Company: Hanna Rubber

Why he was selected: During his four-year career with Hanna, Hughes seeks

opportunities to provide customers with great service.

What inspired you to pursue a career in the rubber industry?

I like helping people and solving problems. The rubber industry allows me to do that.

What do you love most about your job?

I get to deal with a lot of different products across many industry segments and meet lots of interesting people.

What advice do you have for students considering a career in the rubber industry?

Do it. Every day is something new and exciting. You will face different challenges each day.

Other interests: Plays semi-pro football and works on the family cattle farm.

I like helping people and solving problems.

Cody Hughes

Asher Dean



Age: 26

Title: Production floor lead

Company: Hanna Rubber

Why he was selected: Through four years with the company, Dean understands the need to have quality people working with him and will put in the extra effort to make sure a customer's order goes out correct and on time.

What inspired you to pursue a career in the rubber industry?

Coming out of college, looking for a job, I wasn't sure what I wanted to do. My cousin worked in the industry and helped me get into a position at his company.

What do you love most about your job?

I love having different tasks every day and not having to do the same repetitive thing over and over. I really enjoy working with my hands and this job allows me to do so.

What accomplishment are you most proud of so far and why?

Having the knowledge and ability to work anywhere in my company's production warehouse is a big goal of mine. There are nine different shops in my company's warehouse, and my goal is to train and master in each one of them. I am proud to say that I have completed seven of the nine shops.

Other interests: Is set to marry his fiancée Miranda in December and spends time with his older brother, sister and 7-year-old niece.