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Summer Classics Improves Efficiency and Environmental Footprint

MONTEVALLO, ALABAMA

The addition of a new cutting machine to the Summer Classics cushion factory in Montevallo will improve the company's Green footprint, and expand upon the facility's efficiency, accuracy and speed in cushion production.

Installed in the facility last week, the C3 Eagle Conveyor Cutting System by Eastman improves the speed and accuracy involved in the cutting of fabrics and pattern consistency. The Eagle is able to cut 60 in. a second, features three cutting heads and prints labels onto swatches once they are entered into the system.

"We've been looking into installing a new cutting system since January of 2011," says Keith Norton, vice president of Domestic Operations. "This is an innovative system used by many leaders in the upholstery industry."

After researching for the last two years and visiting other factories, Summer Classics saw an opportunity to improve upon its cushion production with the conveyor system.

Eastman's InMotion software will make customization of cushions easier, and save on the amount of fabric used. The software reports fabric usage percentage and material usage required for each cushion pattern entered.

This accuracy means Summer Classics will recycle less scrap fabric. "Not only can we expand our customer base with the faster cushion production, but our waste factor will go down tremendously," according to Norton.

In addition to the over 100 fabrics Summer Classics carries, customers can also send their own fabrics for cushions. The new machine will make aligning that material to cushion patterns easier, and provide a more accurate estimate of fabric required for each order to that customer.

Over 600 patterns have to be manually loaded into the system, and that is time-consuming. Over the next six months new Adler sewing machines equipped with the latest technology will be phased in. The company is also going to a semi-automatic foam-inserting machine.

"We see digital technology is here to stay and that's where we want to be," Norton says.