

PWP Recycling Operation Starts Production

By LINDA HARRIS

Ohio Valley Correspondent

PWP Industries' new, \$20 million recycling operation in Davisville started production this week.

The operation will convert polyethylene terephthalate, or PETE, bottles into resins for food-grade packaging.

The 80,000-square-foot recycling center will employ 30 people initially, said PWP Chairman and CEO Leon Farahnik, and is the first in-house recycling operation for a thermoforming company. Coca-Cola Recycling LLC of Atlanta, a subsidiary of publicly traded Coca-Cola Enterprises Inc. and the largest bottler of Coca-Cola products, will be the operation's primary supplier.

"Coca-Cola will supply us with what I call material," Farahnik said, adding they've already completed trial runs and are ready to begin full-scale production. "The material has been used in water bottles and soft drink bottles. We'll take the material and wash it excessively, then it will go through a special system that makes it food grade for our own packaging."

Farahnik said the company's "green initiative" positions it "ahead of the curve for recycled material in thermoformed packages," allowing it to substantially reduce landfill waste, energy use and carbon dioxide emissions.

Since PWP opened its thermoforming operation in West Virginia in 2002, Farahnik said it's doubled production and added new lines while boosting employment in the Mountain State from the "50 or 60" they started with to more than the 250 who are on the job today.

Gov. Joe Manchin and Sen. Karen L. Facemyer, R-Jackson, president of



the Polymer Alliance Zone Inc., were on hand for the ribbon cutting, tours and luncheon celebrating the recycling center's grand opening.

PWP, founded in 1998, specializes in food packaging for the bakery, snack food, grocery store, produce, food service and confectionery industries. The company became part of HPC Industries LLC in 2001. The following year it consolidated manufacturing operations into a renovated, state-of-the-art plant in Vernon, Calif. The company opened a second plant in Mineral Wells in 2003, adding a polypropylene production line there three years later. The company has a third plant in Abilene, Texas.

"A lot of companies have recycling (operations), but we are the first thermoforming company in the world that makes packaging for the food industry"

to build an in-house recycling plant, he said. "Our firm believes in recycling. We hope this will entice people to think about it, be more pro-active in helping the environment."

Farahnik said the plant will recycle roughly 40 million pounds of recycled PETE flake yearly and, in the process, cut annual emission of 30,000 tons of carbon dioxide while reducing annual energy requirements by 398 million kilowatt hours. Manufacturing of post-consumer-resin PETE uses about two-thirds less energy than production of virgin PETE, the company said.

"West Virginia has been a great state," Farahnik said. "We came here seven years ago and started manufacturing operations at a very small level; now, we have increased our (operations) here and have one of the biggest facilities around the U.S."

Doctor Requests A New Trial In Fraud Case

By GRETCHEN MAE STONE

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Dr. John C. Sharp will explain why he wants a new trial after he was found guilty of 29 counts of health care fraud in June 2008.

U.S. District Judge Irene Keeley set a 9:30 a.m. July 2 hearing in Elkins for Sharp to address his allegations of misconduct by a prosecutor and ineffective counsel.

Sharp filed for a new trial in February.

A jury in Keeley's court found Sharp guilty in June 2008 of 29 counts of health care fraud, according to court documents.

Sharp practiced osteopathic medicine at Pocahontas Medical Center and was its sole proprietor after December 1999. The family practice center had locations in Marlinton and Green Bank.

Sharp was enrolled as a service provider with Medicare, Medicaid and the West Virginia Workers' Compensation program.

The indictment said Sharp schemed to defraud the health care benefit programs from May 1998 to January 2006 by using incorrect billing codes and that he claimed patients made more prolonged office visits than they did and also visited on dates they didn't have appointments.

The indictment also said Sharp's frequency of claims for prolonged office visits significantly exceeded those by other doctors.