

WELLS *A model for the future*



Wells Hosiery President Ted Cooley with Linda Measmer, Wells' product development director.

Wells Hosiery Mills Inc. in Asheboro is a company that industry observers say could serve as a prototype for hosiery operations of the future – strong research and development, on-time delivery and competitive pricing.

Wells is not the typical hosiery operation. It's a hosiery manufacturing facility that recently turned out a couple hundred of packages that contained a pink

said recently as he opened the Wells Hosiery operation to Legwear Trends for a tour of the Asheboro operation. "That's from the artist's drawing board it to sending it out."

Research and development is an integral aspect of his operation, with four full-time employees continually working to develop new ideas and products.

Linda Measmer, heads up the research and development operation, and says she and her co-workers draw from a wide variety of sources to develop products that clients want to put on their store shelves. Those sources range from industry shows to trips to Paris and other destinations in their search for new ideas and



Wells employs several college students in the cut-and-sew operation as interns.

ladies top and matching socks for the a breast cancer organization. It's also a hosiery manufacturing facility that produces elegant women's tops made from Jacquard lace which adorn the racks at Bloomingdales and similar specialty retailers.

While company CEO Ted Cooley is reserved in touting the company's successes in today's hosiery manufacturing climate, his confidence in Wells' ability to offer on-time deliveries hints to what industry forecasters believe is essential for a viable hosiery operation in 2005 and beyond.

"We actually have turned out samples in 24 hours," Cooley

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WELLS

products. Cooley says the department routinely churns out 50 samples a week.

For the hosiery production, Wells utilizes 138 Lonati machines and has entered into a joint venture with Acme-McCrary for the use of 65 Santoni machines that produce a line of seamless products.

Hosiery Technology Center (HTC) representatives say Wells Hosiery's ability to use its machinery for maximum flexibility is indicative of today's successful hosiery operation.

Dean Allred, HTC outreach coordinator who is based at Randolph Community College in Asheboro, has worked with Wells employees in developing a number of opportunities for products.

Wells' willingness to broaden the scope of its hosiery manufacturing capabilities is a good example of putting the "whatever it takes" philosophy to work, Allred says.



Wells Hosiery is a vertical hosiery operation.

"They work as a state-of-the-art bodywear and apparel operation," Allred says.

"It's the whole idea of 'whatever it takes,' which I have often heard Ted Cooley say," says Allred. "Just because it doesn't fit into a sheer category, that doesn't mean anything."

Another aspect of the operation that Allred says other manufacturers might take note of is



Sandra Garner heads up the company's cut-and-sew operation.

that same all-out willingness to fulfill the customers' needs – however unique or despite the size of the run. "Those short-run high-end products are where the profit is at," says Allred.

In fact Cooley, recently opening the facility to Legwear Trends for a tour, said the operation has no problem cranking up the machines for runs of 500 or even 200 if that is what the customer wants.

"Pick it, pack it and send it to the store," said Cooley, who began in the business as a manufacturing trainee in Burlington in 1973. He worked in sales, marketing and engineering before eventually beginning a greige mill operation in 1983.

In addition to the company's line of hosiery products, it was the company's receptiveness to new approaches that led it to develop a partnership with G-Wheels, a Manhattan, New York-based, women's apparel business operated by Janie Fisher and Gail Weaver.

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Well's cut-and-sew operation produces all the items for G-Wheels successful line of women apparel, which grace the pages of Bloomingdales' catalog as well as the shelves of a number of specialty stores.

And while Wells is committed to producing quality products and getting the goods delivered on time, its president says it also is committed to affordable prices.

Unique approaches. Unusual machinery applications. Quick turn around. Quality. Good price.

Or as its management states, "Whatever it takes."



The company utilizes a fleet of 138 Lonatis to produce a line of hosiery products that range from simple to complex.

Why Wells Hosiery partners with Henderson Machinery Inc.

Henderson Machinery Inc. is a strong supporter of Wells Hosiery and wishes it continued success as an industry leader. As a supplier of hosiery manufacturing equipment, we're assisting manufacturers like Wells as they re-engineer for the future.

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Report Urges Textile Center Links To HTC

The North Carolina textiles industry should look to the Hosiery Technology Center as a model for an operation to support marketing, research and development and training, a report submitted to the Department of Community Colleges concludes.

The report, mandated by the 2004 General Assembly, proposes the Center for Applied Textiles Technology become an entity under Gaston Community College in Gaston County, NC, with a relationship similar to that between the HTC and Catawba Valley Community College.

Further, the report insisted the Textiles Technology Center should maintain tight links to the hosiery center. "In order to profit from the successes of the HTC and promote cross-fertilization of the two centers, the legislation that governs the TTC should stipulate that the directors of the TTC and the HTC meet in person quarterly to share information, expertise and strategies. The TTC should also submit an annual report with impact measures similar to that currently produced by the HTC every year," the report says.



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