

Polyester Lightens Spending & Loads

Bright Wood could save over \$391,000 annually by replacing steel banding with polyester at today's prices and companywide usage rates. "The average cost of polyester banding is 40 to 50 percent lower than steel strapping," Al Campbell, Continuous Improvement engineer and the driving force behind the change, said.



Ian Tohet (Madras Plant 7) bands an outbound unit with polyester strapping, which is cheaper and easier to handle than steel.

Polyester strapping is also easier to handle. "The polyester coils typically have twice as many feet per coil and weigh half as much at 50 pounds," Al said. "This makes coil changes in dispensers a lot easier on people's backs." Plus the softer material has no sharp edges, unlike steel.

Bright Wood has already set up a recycling program with the Opportunity Foundation, a nonprofit with the mission of providing employment and

other life services to Central Oregonians with disabilities. The program works by having each Bright Wood plant collect polyester scraps in a designated bin.

The Opportunity Center will then cut the banding into recyclable chunks using two choppers provided by Bright

Wood's polyester strapping supplier.

"The only disadvantage is Bright Wood has to purchase new types of tooling to handle the polyester strapping," Al said. The company's heaviest banding users – Madras plants 2, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, and 13 – have already switched to polyester. "The goal is to use the savings from these high volume plants to purchase more banding tools," Al continued. "This pay-as-we-go rollout plan should

take approximately 15 months to complete all Bright Wood plants."

Bright Wood currently has 27 polyester banding tools. Four millwrights – Steve Veeder, Gary Ross, Jon Gandy, and Jason Moser – spent seven hours with the manufacturer's representative learning how to repair both the battery and pneumatic types of strapping tools.

"We found out that with the first banders there was a brief time of personnel getting acclimated to them," Steve Veeder, millwright, said. "Since then, they are working very well with great results."

Bright Wood folks have also discovered ways to reduce tooling-related costs. "Al Campbell and Purchasing have set up the parts supplier with a consignment program so that we pay for parts as we use them with no inventory cost," Steve said. They have also saved money by buying some reconditioned banding tools, which typically cost between one-third and one-half of new.