



# Extrusion Solutions

THE LATEST EXTRUDING NEWS FROM ENTEK

## **fiberon**® CHOOSES **ENTEK**

Leading Wood-Plastic Composite Decking Supplier Uses ENTEK Extruders and Predictive Parts Stocking Program for High Output Production with Minimal Downtime



According to a 2014 report from the Freedonia Group, US demand for wood-plastic composite (WPC) and plastic lumber will rise 9.8 percent annually to \$5.5 billion in 2018. Decking will remain the largest application and will grow the fastest, based on alternative lumber's

minimal maintenance and long service life. Wood-plastic composite materials will outpace plastic lumber.

That's a great forecast if you're a supplier to this growing industry, and one of its leaders, New London, North Carolina-based Fiberon, partners

with ENTEK Extruders to produce its high-quality WPC decking and railing products. A long-time ENTEK customer, Fiberon purchased their first ENTEK twin-screw extruders in 1999 and today has numerous ENTEK high-output 103mm twin-screw extruders running

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at its two plants in North Carolina and Meridian, Idaho. In addition, Fiberon employs an innovative 'predictive parts stocking program' with ENTEK to avoid downtime and ensure its machines stay running at maximum capacity.

## **Downtime is Not an Option!**

Fiberon and ENTEK first met to discuss implementing a parts stocking program back in 2009, during the slow-down of the 'great recession'. "Both companies took the opportunity at that time to meet and try to come up with a better way to proactively plan for the future," said Tammy Straw, Business Development Manager at ENTEK. "It was out of those meetings that we came up with the parts stocking program we continue to use today."

A systematic, quarterly approach was proposed by ENTEK, to review Fiberon's needs, schedule, build, and ship parts to them throughout the year. The program included barrels, screws, melt pumps, and other wear parts. Some of these parts take months to manufacture and ship – but with this new program, Fiberon always would have spare parts in stock at their facility, ready to go when needed.

A 12-month schedule of production is produced by Fiberon and shared with ENTEK; quarterly shipments of parts from ENTEK to Fiberon ensure that they stay prepared, up and running.

Mike Huskey, Vice President of Manufacturing at Fiberon, said the need to minimize downtime and keep their machines running at maximum capacity is critically important. "There will always be breakdowns and the need to repair machines and replace worn parts," he said. "But in our business, you can't tolerate the loss in productivity that happens when you have to wait days, weeks or longer for replacement parts. That's where this program really helps us – ENTEK works with us to predict our needs and make sure we're properly stocked and prepared for the future."

## **Higher Throughput Rates**

Like all leading manufacturers Fiberon employs lean principles to drive productivity, and ENTEK supports them in achieving their goals in numerous ways. One example involved working together to achieve higher throughput rates from the ENTEK 103mm twin-screw extruders. "We were happy to send a team to Fiberon to analyze their use of our machines, and recommend ways to generate higher throughput," said Kirk Hanawalt, President of ENTEK Extruders. "Fiberon wanted to change some things and we worked with their operators to establish a new set of parameters that actually increased output by as much as 20%."

As business partners since 1999, Fiberon and ENTEK have worked together since the WPC industry was in its infancy. Today, as the booming WPC market grows into a \$5.5 billion industry in the USA alone, the challenge continues to produce the highest quality products to keep up with consumer demand.

"We greatly value the relationship we have with ENTEK," said Mike Huskey. "They are much more than a machinery supplier to us. They are a partner who works with us to help improve our operations, which ensures our mutual success."

