

A new General Polymers grows with focus on small, mid-sized processors

By Frank Esposito
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GENERAL POLYMERS THERMOPLASTIC MATERIALS
Mike Kirtley (left) and Greg Boston opened General Polymers Thermoplastic Materials in October.

CLARKSTON, Mich.—A well known name has returned to the North American resin distribution market.

General Polymers Thermoplastic Materials opened for business Oct. 15. GP offers support to small-to-medium sized processors with a focus on prime, certifiable grades of engineering resins and compounds from a current total of seven suppliers.

General Polymers also was the name of a firm started by Dan McGuire and Tom Mueller in 1973 in Troy, Mich. GP grew into one of the region's largest resin distributors before being acquired by Ashland Inc. in 1983. It continued using that name for several years after the acquisition.

Partners Greg Boston and Michael Kirtley have launched the new firm in nearby Clarkston, Mich. Boston worked for more than a decade at the original GP, from 1987 to the late 1990s.

"I learned a lot from Dan McGuire and from Bill Christian, who was in charge of training," Boston said in a recent phone interview. "They were very patient with me, and I loved the industry."

After leaving GP, Boston worked for materials firm EMS-Grivory and then spent about a decade with compounder Asahi Kasei Plastics North America. He had known Kirtley — whose resin distribution resume includes Channel Prime Alliance, Osterman & Co., Delta Polymers and Spartan Polymers — for a long time, and the two had talked off and on about going into business together.

In October, the time was right. "We want to focus on areas that the big box guys look over," Boston explained. "We've got some OEM and Tier 1 customers, but we're really focused on privately held, custom injection molders.

"We'll sell anything from 50 to 500 pounds to a half-truck or a truck," he added. "We want to follow the example of the original General Polymers and to honor the history of companies like GP, Plastic Service Center and others."

The new GP's initial plans were to start with commercial coverage in the Midwest, but that's quickly expanded into other areas of the United States and Canada.

"We planned our launch with a focus on the Detroit metro area, but were quickly presented opportunities to support experienced professionals in other regions of the U.S.," Kirtley said in a news release.

The firm currently has 13 sales reps — including Boston and Kirtley — and uses public warehousing across the country. It also is looking to add to its portfolio of material suppliers.

GP's coverage area now spans from Ontario to Georgia and from the East Coast to Kansas City, with some accounts on the West Coast as well.

"We want to go back to basics," Boston said. "There's a need in the industry to understand the needs of the suppliers we work for."

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