

# Latex International

It is truly amazing to see a company go from having been burned to the ground to becoming one of the leading forces in better sleep trends throughout North America. In fact, one cannot have a real appreciation for the monumental successes of Latex International until visiting the Shelton, Connecticut factory and spend time with the creative and dedicated leadership of that company. Due to the recent planning, manufacturing expansion and new product development, brought about under the leadership of CEO Mike Lorelli, manufacturers, retailers and consumers of sleep products will all benefit in the months and years ahead.

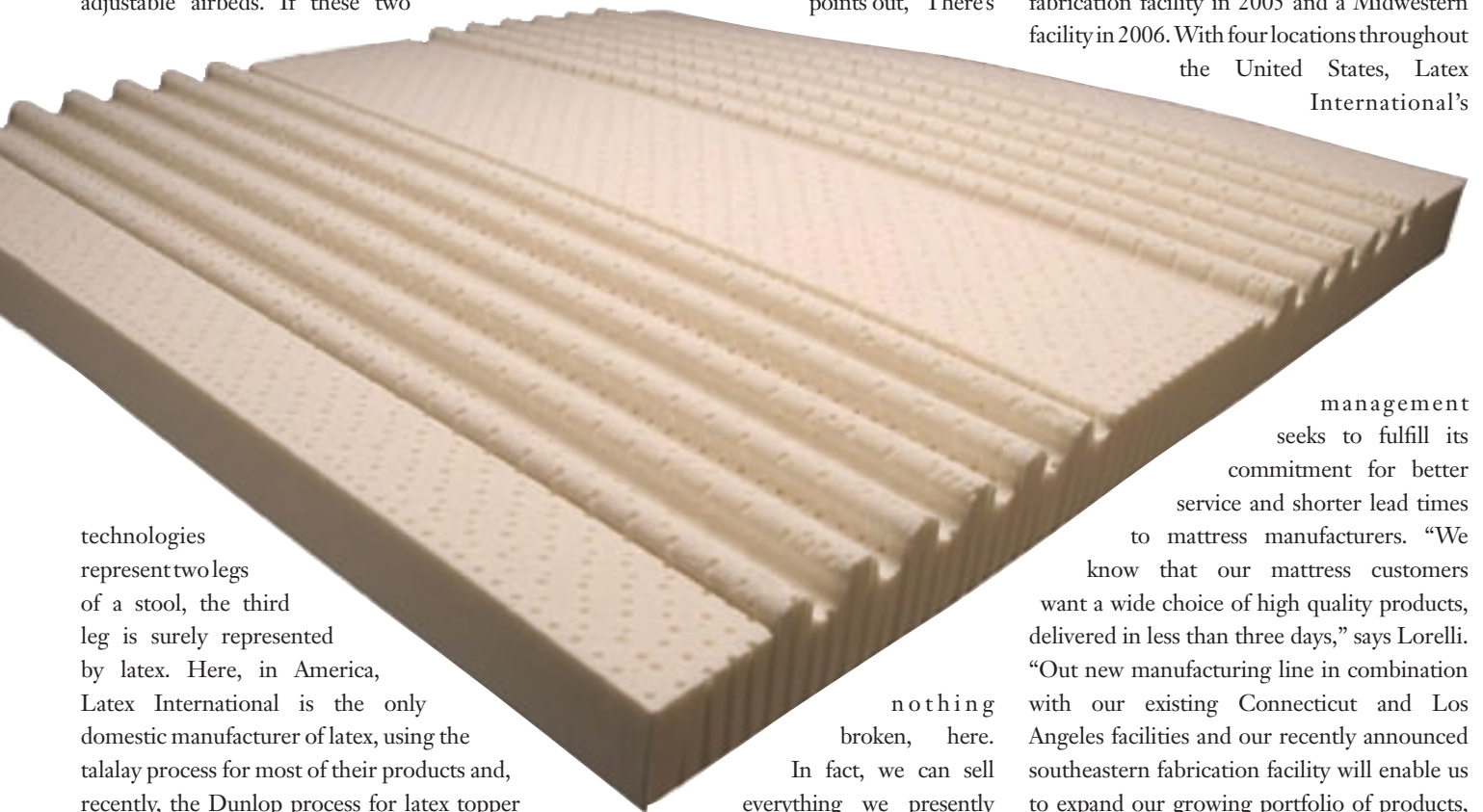
Due to mass media marketing, retailers and consumers are increasingly aware of the availability and growth of visco elastic temperature sensitive beds and individualized adjustable airbeds. If these two

to sell total latex core mattresses. Recently, Lorelli shared with BEDROOM Magazine that the company is doing business with nine out of the ten top mattress manufacturers in the county and that Latex International holds a 55% market share of the growing total latex market.

Retailers should know that Latex International senior management is developing a marketing plan to create, manufacture and market products that will set the tone and direction for better sleep for years to come. Starting with a strong commitment to the International Sleep Products Association, the Better Sleep Council and the leading primary and secondary conventional and specialty sleep manufacturers, Latex International will be providing a broad range of market-driven products. Lorelli points out, "There's

consulting firm to develop a five-year, strategic plan designed to provide the very best quality products, excellent service, innovation, delivery and cost. Lorelli also points out that all of these factors are driven by the number one concern of a manufacturing plant: namely the issue of safety for Latex International's employees.

The new marketing plans specifically addresses such issues as reducing lead times, no-returns and convenient delivery. Latex International is in the process of expanding its physical locations from its present Connecticut and California locations to include a Southeastern fabrication facility in 2005 and a Midwestern facility in 2006. With four locations throughout the United States, Latex International's



technologies represent two legs of a stool, the third leg is surely represented by latex. Here, in America, Latex International is the only domestic manufacturer of latex, using the talalay process for most of their products and, recently, the Dunlop process for latex topper production.

It was not too many years ago that the old latex foam products were just beginning to convince the primary and secondary manufacturers of mattresses to put latex into their mattresses, either as a component, or

nothing broken, here. In fact, we can sell everything we presently make. However, we feel that we can fulfill our mission as a company by providing expanded capacity, better distribution and innovative market and value-driven products.

To this end, Kevin Stein, the Director of Marketing, has been working with a

management seeks to fulfill its commitment for better service and shorter lead times to mattress manufacturers. "We know that our mattress customers want a wide choice of high quality products, delivered in less than three days," says Lorelli. "Our new manufacturing line in combination with our existing Connecticut and Los Angeles facilities and our recently announced southeastern fabrication facility will enable us to expand our growing portfolio of products, increase our speed to market, and reduce our delivery time."

Not content to merely build new facilities, Latex International has steadily improved upon its Shelton, Connecticut facility to

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create a modern, lean manufacturing, just-in-time facility geared to provide innovative products for the growing demand in the specialty sleep category. Frank Beafore, Vice President of Operations and Technology, explains that there are “enterprise areas” with what they call a “village process board” where factory floor team leaders, engineers, quality control managers and product designers meet to monitor and manage each individual process. In keeping with state-of-the-art lean manufacturing techniques, Beafore’s team aims to develop customer value-driven products the right way, the first time, with minimal waste, flaws or defects. Beafore also notes that

continuous line, which will minimize the need for fabrication. The topper material will be available in thicknesses ranging from 0.4 inches to 2.0 inches in a wide range of firmness levels. Mattress manufacturers will now be able to source latex rolls, manufactured in the United States, that can go directly into a mattress quilt. Latex International says that the mattress/topper combination will virtually eliminate body impressions.

Retailers should note that a significant number of the returns that they have had to deal with in recent years are a result of body impressions or “set”, when foam and other quilting material naturally compress

product that can be used in the quilting layer. Since body impressions are one of the most common reasons for retail mattress returns, a resilient and durable cushioning technology, such as our latex, can help eliminate those impressions from happening.”

With a commitment to determine what their customers want, where they want it, when they want it and to provide the finest in quality, service and delivery, there can be no question that Latex International will continue to grow and have a positive impact on the market. In fact that impact is very likely to put the word “latex” on the lips of manufacturers, retailers and consumers as



with a focus on better sleep products, Latex International is always experimenting for better methods and better solutions.

As part of the innovation and response to new opportunities, Latex International recently announced its plans to expand its latex pouring and manufacturing capacity and to introduce the first U.S. Dunlop process latex topper production line. Kevin Stein notes that, “This is the only one of its kind in the U.S. and is expected to be on line in early 2006.” The new line will enable Latex International to produce Dunlop process mattress toppers and sheets on a

or compact over time. Some consumers have complained that, with the new high profile mattresses containing substantial amounts of foam that this compression or “set” occurs too quickly and too often. If, in fact, the use of latex toppers in the quilting layer significantly reduces returns, Latex International could provide an answer that has a very positive impact on the entire sleep industry. Commenting on this, Lorelli states, “For the past three years, the use of latex has been growing over 30% annually in high-end bedding. The missing component has always been a really high performing

the third vital leg of the better sleep products stool. Retailers and manufacturers who want more information on latex and Latex International are encouraged to contact:

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