

recycling today

Features - Scrap Industry News

More than Crumbs

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By Brian Taylor

Firmly established end markets have allowed scrap tire processors to collect and shred with increasing confidence.



The previous 10 years have provided a good deal of encouragement to scrap tire processors, especially on the end market development side of the business.

Tire-derived fuel (TDF) continues to provide a high-volume and steady end market in many geographic regions, but the entrepreneurial endeavors of many firms have helped several other end markets gain traction in the past decade.

Tire shreds are being deployed in landscaping, athletic surfaces, ground cover and civil engineering applications.

The production of crumb rubber, meanwhile, has also proven worth the added investment to scrap tire processors and vertically integrated tire recycling companies throughout the country.

The largest speed bump encountered by scrap tire processors in the past two years is the economic slowdown.

For the past two years, Americans are driving less (both leisure and commercial mileage), purchasing considerably fewer new vehicles and probably are more inclined to squeeze a few thousand more miles out of a set of tires.

Whereas at one time, mountains of scrap tire stockpiles pointed to a market with lopsided supply vs. demand, as of 2010, some tire processors are taking in a smaller share of scrap tires than they were in 2006 or 2007.

Certain end markets, though better established now than in the 1990s, have also diminished in volume, particularly those destined for landscaping, construction and civil engineering applications.

GREEN LIGHTS

Scrap tire processors and the organizations that represent them have helped stabilize and secure end markets, in part by conducting research to dispute criticisms of their products.

In an article in the October 2010 issue of *Recycling Today* ("Safer, Stronger, Smarter," starting on page 50), Liberty Tire Recycling Vice President Kurt Meyer referred to several recent studies on recycled rubber in playground applications, including one conducted in California and released in April of 2010 and another released by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in late 2009.

"Similar to the conclusions of as many as 100 state-level studies, the EPA study reports that crumb rubber poses no significant health or environmental risks," wrote Meyer.

The TDF market has also been studied and defended by companies in that sector. At the 2008 Greenbuild event in Boston, the Portland Cement Association (PCA), Skokie, Ill., hosted a press conference to issue a reminder that that industry remains a critical consumer of scrap tires.

The PCA says that in studying the emissions effects of TDF plants, it found differences between using TDF and traditional fossil fuels that favored TDF. "Dioxin-furan emission tests results indicated that kilns firing TDF had emissions approximately one-third of those kilns firing conventional fuels—this difference was statistically significantly," says the PCA summary.

According to PCA researcher Tyrone Wilson, in addition to cutting dioxin emissions, the use of TDF reduced particulate matter emissions by 35 percent.

20 LARGEST SCRAP TIRE PROCESSORS				
Name of Company, Address	Company CEO or President	PTEs Processed 2009	No. of Facilities	Key Products/End Markets
Liberty Tire Services LLC, 1471 Liberty Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15222	Jeffrey D. Kestel	225 million	23	Crumb rubber, crumb, TCF
Laird-Gardner, 25425 N. 20th Ave., Scottsdale, AZ 85254	Leslie Lakin	21 million (est.)	2	Chemical products, soil engineering, TCF
CRW, 13033 Olive St., Houston, TX 77040	H. Barry Tabacco	20 million	3	Asphalt rubber, synthetic but, recycled products
Lubin Tire Services, 15250 Spring, Santa Fe Springs, CA 90676	Robert Lubin	19.4 million (est.)	2	TCF, crumb rubber, soil engineering
Emerson Tire Co., 1300 Woodmont Ave., Baltimore, MD 21216	Norman J. Emanuel	18.1 million (est.)	5	TCF, thermal areas and playground cover rubbers
The Stephens & Recycling Inc., 2022 E. Holladay St., Portland, OR 97229	Mark W. Higgs	9.2 million	3	TCF, soil engineering, crumb rubber, synthetic
Edwards Inc., 49676 40 USA, Venice Pigeon, MI 49099	Leslie Dabwiler	9.1 million	1	Ground cover, TCF, all black hardware
Max's Tire Recycling, 1445 North, Seattle, WA 98108	Hal McPherson	4.1 million (est.)	1	Chips for TCF
Champion Tire Recycling, 702 5th Ave., Concordia, MO 64601	Gary W. Champion	4.1 million	1	Soil engineering, picnic tables, playground material
Sanjour Tire Products Inc., 17000 Newport Rd., Dallas, TX 75241	Shel Sanjour	4 million	1	Crumb rubber, 2-inch nominal TCF, rubber bark
L&S Tire Co., 7612 S. 30th Ave., 10th Lakewood, WA 98499	Scott Sanjour	3.4 million (est.)	2	TCF, tire bales, truck tire chucks, soil toppings
Recycling Technologies Inc., 880 Spruce St., Harrisburg, PA 17101	Timothy J. Lighty	3 million (est.)	1	Automotive parts, bonded intermodal products
Good Rubber LLC, 1170 Venture Dr., Joplin, MO 64506	Michael Hoenigman	2.9 million (est.)	3	Flaming products, asphalt rubber, playground materials
Manufacturing Enterprises Inc., 23300 Old Star Rd., Lewisport, PA 17045	H. Roger Hess	2.8 million	1	Landscaper and playground chips, special paving, crumb rubber, TCF
BB Rubber Products, 1045 NE 12th, Jacksonville, OR 97228	Paul Gardner	2.5 million	3	Soil mats, pet and equine, flower bedding, recreational and commercial flooring
BAS Recycling Inc., 1400 North St., San Bernardino, CA 92410	William S. Hensley Sr.	2 million	1	Crumb rubber, playgrounds, fill, rubber mulch
Bumper Composites Co. Inc., 12700 Douglas Rd., Cincinnati, OH 45241	William S. Hensley Sr.	1.8 million	1	Products used in landfill construction applications
TRC Inc. Scrap Tire Centers, 10100 DeSoto Ave., South, LA 70760	Ray D. Stewart	1.6 million	2	Soil engineering, TCF, intermodal asphalt
reRubber LLC, 317 S. Sullivan Ave., Ontario, CA 91763	JD Wang	1.5 million	1	Soil erosion protection, asphalt, landscaping products
Global Tire Recycling of Greater County Inc., 1221 Industrial Dr., Woodstock, VA 20189	Mark Baskin	1.2 million	1	Ground tire rubber for asphalt, manufacturing, soil pads

INVESTING LONG TERM

Among the companies on the 2010 Largest Scrap Tire Processors List, the company atop the list has staked a claim on that top spot by a considerable margin.

Growing to a large extent through acquisition, Pittsburgh-based Liberty Tire Recycling has assembled a multi-state organization that collects and processes several times more PTEs (passenger tire equivalents) than the other companies on the list. (For more information on Liberty Tire's operations, see "Mass Production," starting on page 32.)

At the same time that Liberty has been assembling its multi-region organization, other scrap tire processing companies that have maintained a steady presence on the "20 Largest" list also have been investing in their businesses.

In Moreno Valley, Calif., in 2009, BAS Recycling Inc. took delivery of new processing equipment purchased from Columbus McKinnon Corp., Sarasota, Fla.

The multi-stage system installed at BAS "is capable of processing passenger car, truck tires and super single truck tires at production rates of 12,000 pounds or more per hour," according to a news release from Columbus McKinnon (CM).

In Ontario, Calif., a newcomer to the list, reRubber LLC, is planning an expansion in 2011. According to reRubber President and CEO JD Wang, the company will be opening a second facility in 2010 as it continues to produce crumb rubber in a variety of sizes (including 10-30 mesh, 30-50 mesh and minus-50 mesh) for several end markets.

Another Golden State recycler has been helped by a government loan. In March 2010, the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery awarded a \$635,000 loan to Tri-C Manufacturing Inc., West Sacramento, Calif. The loan

enabled Tri-C to buy tire recycling equipment to expand its processing capacity to 2.6 million PTEs yearly.

LISTING CRITERIA

The 2010 version of this list has been renamed from “Largest Tire Recyclers” to “Largest Scrap Tire Processors,” with a goal of distinguishing some of the different layers of the collection, processing and end product manufacturing segments of the market.

For this year’s list, *Recycling Today*, asked companies to count only whole tires they collected and downsized or processed in some manner.

A second list we are considering would spotlight manufacturing and consuming companies that use tire shreds or crumb rubber in new products.

Readers interested in offering an opinion on how they would like to see this list presented in the future are urged to contact the author at btaylor@gie.net.

Additionally, readers who are aware of a company that should have appeared on this list or is a candidate for the next list also are encouraged to call, e-mail or write to the magazine’s attention.

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