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Argonics tackles delamination by changing manufacturing process

BY DOUGLAS GLENN CLARK

The persistent problem of delamination in mixer drums has plagued the concrete industry for years. Now peeling layers of urethane and the ugly expense of fixing the mess may be a thing of the past. And this brave new world has distributors anticipating a future of lower labor costs and big savings.

Argonics Inc. (www.argonics.com) of Michigan boasts that a departure from its standard manufacturing process has resulted in a new single-pour urethane liner called Kryptane Evolution. The liner carries a five-year or 1-million-yard warranty. If any section of the liner delaminates within the given time frame, that section will be replaced free of charge, according to Bob Welker, sales and marketing manager for Argonics.

Randy Kloos, president of mining, utility and manufacturing products and services distributor Kloos & Associates, said he hopes this product will be a major improvement for an age-old industry nuisance. "There will be less labor time, and a lowered cost per cubic yard of material produced. If you're mixing concrete and there's a problem that requires you to change out the liner before its life expectancy, it's going to cost the customer in down time, lost production and labor expense."

Typically, liners for central batch plant mixers and the like are poured in layers. Unfortunately, he said this method may allow moisture and other contaminants to seep between the layers. The result is similar to what happens to a piece of plywood after it has been exposed to the elements: layers separate and further usage causes the problem to progressively worsen. In the case of mixer liners, the separation is called delamination, and such a condition may demand premature replacement of the liner.

"If you reduce the life-expectancy of the liner, you've got a big economic problem," Kloos said "It takes a tremendous amount of additional labor to replace the lining. If the whole drum has a problem, it will take six people working around the clock for three days to go in and replace that. It appears to me that the new production technique will virtually make problems non-existent.

"There's always a little bit of skepticism with something new. The proof will be in the pudding. But I think customers will be very receptive to this new product with the exceptional performance warranty and the superior quality of the Argonics urethane."

Bob Moyer agrees the future may be bright because his past association with Argonics has been so positive. Moyer is president of Remcon Associates LLC, a Houston-based builder of concrete batching plant systems, and one of the largest consumers of Argonics products. He added that Argonics also offers excellent educational application classes regionally and in Michigan.

Moyer's firm provides services domestically and internationally. He said he has relied primarily on the Argonics dual-durometer drum liner. Despite the global reach, he said he has not experienced delamination problems of any significance. So he sees no reason why the single, multi-plate enforced Kryptane Evolution mixer liner won't be that much more reliable.

"We've heard stories of other people in the industry having delamination

problems, and we haven't had that, frankly. My theory is when it's installed, if there is too much heat, it weakens the liner. Because we integrate major manufacturers into an end-product system, we know where and how to install these liners," he said.

Since it was founded in 1994, Argonics has been one of the largest producers of performance polyurethanes. The firm maintains facilities in Marquette, Mich., and Louisville, Colo.

Welker said it took more than a year of research and tests to make the Evolution a reality. "We had to rethink our manufacturing process," Welker said. "Because there are no layers, it can't delaminate. And we guarantee it 100 percent."

For more information, call 906-226-9747, ext. 240, e-mail information@argonics.com or see argonics.com. Douglas Glenn Clark is a freelance writer in the Los Angeles area. CM

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