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April 14, 2004

On April 14, 2004, ZEON Corporation (President and CEO: Naozumi Furukawa; Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo) celebrated the completion of a facility to process diffusion plates for liquid crystal displays (LCDs) made from Cyclo-Olefin Polymer (COP) at its Takaoka Plant (Takaoka City, Toyama Prefecture). Following the completion of this facility and clean rooms, molders will be installed, and manufacture of diffusion plates is scheduled to begin from the middle of May, 2004.

ZEON Corporation invested approximately 1 billion yen, and initial production capacity will start at one million units annually, planning to gradually increase production in the future. Diffusion plate sales for this fiscal year are estimated at 1 billion yen.

Optes Co., Ltd. (President: Masahiro Yamazaki; Sano City, Tochigi Prefecture), a wholly owned subsidiary of ZEON Corporation, began manufacturing and marketing ZEONOR COP diffusion plates in fiscal year 2003. Optes Co., Ltd. will operate the new full-scale diffusion plate facility. Demand for LCDs used in personal computer monitors and large screen televisions has been rapidly expanding in recent years. LCDs require the use of a light source, and diffusion plates are used in backlight LCDs to disperse light uniformly. ZEONOR has the following superior features:

1. Low water absorbency reduce the possibility of warping when used for large-sized diffusion plates of over 20 inches.
2. Due to its low specific gravity, light-weight diffusion plates can be easily produced.
3. Since ZEONOR does not easily warp, diffusion plates can be made thinner.
4. Because of its high fluidity when heated and melted, it can be used for injection molding, and can be molded into complicated shapes.

ZEON Corporation and Optes Co., Ltd. plan to continue expanding and fostering the COP precision processing business, and will enhance the Takaoka Plant into a large-scale base for precision processing, mainly for the diffusion plates and ZEONOR film, and LCD optical film, which is already in production.

Supplementary explanation of COP

The Company is aiming at full utilization of C5 fraction, a by-product produced when ethylene and propylene are derived from naphtha. COP is made from dicyclopentadiene (DCPD) extracted and separated from the C5 fraction. ZEONEX, a high-grade COP originally developed and marketed by ZEON in 1990 ahead of other companies across the globe, exhibits less warping than other transparent resins when processed into sheet form due to its low water absorbency. It also features good fluidity together with a high-precision molding property when heated or melted. Compared to competing transparent resins such as PC or PMMA, COP has a lower specific gravity. Utilizing its high transparency and low double-refraction properties, it is mainly used for optical devices such as lenses and prisms for cameras on mobile phones, digital cameras, and compact cameras; it is also used in pick-up lenses for OA equipment, and for optical disks including CDs, MDs, and DVDs. In 1998, the Company launched ZEONOR, a standard-grade COP with improved impact and heat resistant properties as well as high transparency. It is widely used in the manufacture of light guides and diffusion plates for LCDs, optical film, extensions for automobile headlights, tableware, and pharmaceutical containers and packages.



For further information

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