ZEON Corporation Boosts Production Capacity of Cyclo-Olefin Polymer (COP) to 15,000 Tons

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ZEON Corporation (President & CEO: Naozumi Furukawa) decided to increase the capacity of high-performance transparent thermoplastic resin, a cyclo-olefin polymer (COP, product names: ZEONEX® and ZEONOR®), at its Mizushima Plant (Kurashiki City, Okayama Prefecture).
The facility, with an annual production capacity of 5,000 tons, was built in 2004. It will boost annual production capacity to 10,000 tons, and as a result, total annual COP production capacity will be 15,000 tons. Approximately ¥2 billion will be invested and construction is scheduled for completion in June 2005.
This capacity increase aims to keep up with the favorable sales of ZEONEX® and ZEONOR®.
In addition to generating higher sales of ZEONEX® for such optical applications as lenses for cameras incorporated in mobile phones, Fq lenses for laser printers, and pick-up lenses for DVDs, a significant increase in sales ZEONEX® for medical uses, such as pre-filled syringes, is also expected.
For ZEONOR®, while sales have been solid in optical film for LCDs (product name: ZeonorFilm®—manufactured and sold by wholly owned subsidiary Optes Co., Ltd.), full-scale production of light guide panels has been started. For ZeonorFilm®, in addition to the rolls on the market, manufacture and sales of low double-refraction film, vertical uniaxial stretched film, horizontal uniaxial stretched film, and vertical/horizontal biaxial stretched film has started.
ZEONOR® Light Guide Panels are used for large-size LCD televisions, where demand is surging. Sales of ZEONOR® are expected to grow considerably, as it has the advantages of light weight, excellent molding properties, and resistance to deformation due to its zero water absorbency. For these reasons, demand for this ZEONOR® raw material resin for ZEONOR® Light Guide Panels is expected to rise.

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 low water absorbency, good fluidity and high-precision molding property when heated or melted, and 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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