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# Senger News & Focus

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Senger and Associates, Inc.

[www.senger-assoc.com](http://www.senger-assoc.com)

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## Composite America – A Natural Fiber Thermoforming Choice

### Natural Fiber Blends Make Wide Range of Products

Composite America is a thermoforming company that specializes in interior trim and under hood components. They are vertically integrated to include all aspects of manufacturing. Their philosophy in lean manufacturing drives them to build products with a minimum consumption of capital investment, floor space, labor, material, time and distance.



Composite America prides itself on their ability to find solutions that cut costs and enhance quality through their unique insight to generate design concepts, deliver working prototypes, provide efficient production processes – they insist on the best quality control methods and ensure on-time delivery.

### The Process and Benefits of Thermoforming Natural Fibers

Natural fibers, which come from annual crops such as kenaf, hemp and flax, are grown in many countries around the world. The fiber stocks are harvested and shipped to processing plants to be converted into useable raw materials. The natural fibers are then blended with a small amount of plastic and processed into non-woven mats. Composite America takes these mats and using a unique and innovative one-shot thermoforming process, molds various parts for applications such as automotive, commercial transportation, recreational vehicles, office furniture, building and construction packaging, and gardening.



Benefits to using these natural fiber products vary according to the materials which are added to the fibers. Fiberglass substrates are added for high moisture applications; PET covers are used to produce under hood components – it's oil resistant and can be easily cleaned; open cell foams are used for applications which

require soundproofing; closed cell foams are used for high moisture applications and also for high temperature applications.

### Why Use Natural Fiber Products?

Natural fibers are “green” and Eco-friendly. Though an obvious benefit to choosing natural fibers, the properties of the fiber lead to other benefits that some consider even more important, such as their ability to provide stiffness enhancement and sound dampening, while lowering costs and improving quality.

European automakers like BMW, Mercedes, Volvo, and Audi have been benefiting from natural fiber composites over the past decade. These companies are producing door panels, headliners, packaging trays, dashboards, and trunk liners. Over the past few years, US automakers like Chrysler, GM, and Saturn have taken the European's lead and are now benefiting from natural fiber in their products as well.



### Engineering Assistance an Added Benefit to Customers

Composite America's R & D team is set up to assist customers with every type of development issue. Their team is available to work with customers throughout the development cycle.

During the concept and product design stages, engineering staff assists customers with questions and concerns by providing unique insights into their technologies. They operate on Pro-Engineer software and can communicate with all of the standard software packages.

During the prototype development stage, the engineering staff will provide the program management, build the required tooling, provide the material needed for the program, deliver field test ready components, and in many cases, share the development program costs. Providing innovations as well as added value through integration are goals they set for every one of their development programs.

For more information on Composite America, you can visit their website at [www.compositeamerica.com](http://www.compositeamerica.com).

## Remmele Steps up Competition

Despite recording slightly increased sales in 2002, Remmele Engineering, Inc. recently announced organizational restructuring aimed at positioning the company to more aggressively compete in its targeted market segments. Remmele will close its Afton, Minnesota facility and integrate this equipment and people into its New Brighton, Minnesota plant. The consolidated New Brighton facility serves the Aircraft, Semi-conductor, Space, Radar Systems and Defense markets.

Further, the company has closed its Monticello, Minnesota plant and integrated this equipment and people into its Big Lake, Minnesota facility. This combined facility serves the Fluid Management, Space, Radar Systems, Semi-conductor, Defense and Medical markets.

The company, which is engaged in contract machining and assembly, design and build of tooling, and design and build of custom automation equipment, now employs 475 people throughout its four sites located in St. Paul, New Brighton, and two in Big Lake, Minnesota.

## Check out New H&H Swiss Website



If you haven't visited the H&H Swiss website for a while, you might want to do so now. The website has been updated with many pictures, more information, and helpful links. If you are interested in having some parts Swiss turned, H&H Swiss is the vendor for you. ISO registered and having a QS/TS compliant quality system, H&H Swiss can meet the criteria you need.

[www.hhswissmachining.com](http://www.hhswissmachining.com)

## Exacto Spring Updates

- ❖ In response to customer requests, Exacto is adding grinding to the services they currently offer. According to President Greg Heitz, Exacto expects to be up and "grinding" within six months.
- ❖ Watch for a feature on the Exacto Spring Corporation in the recently published July issue of the nationally distributed magazine, *The Manufacturer*.

## Contour Expands Capabilities

In the past year, Contour Plastics, Inc. has been experiencing steady growth despite the current sluggish economic conditions. A good portion of this growth has come by continuing to offer their strong engineering capabilities and their ability to bring new

product to market faster than their competition. Even with these unique capabilities, Contour Plastics has recognized that on a global basis the customer expects more from their supplier, and the competition is more aggressive.

In addition to a recently added portable class 100,000 clean room, Contour has also been growing through the promotion of total "turn-key" solutions. They continue to be very successful in offering their customers services that include design, tool building, production and even full assembly of new product.



Probably the most exciting thing happening at Contour is their ability to insert over mold Thermal Plastic Elastomers (TPE's) to Thixotropic molded (magnesium injection molded) parts and making the TPE adhere to the magnesium. Contour has successfully launched a number of new programs utilizing this technology and is continuing to develop this process so it can be used in over molding a number of other metals including but not limited to, aluminum and stainless steel.

As exciting as this new process is, don't forget about Contour's True 2-Shot capabilities along with their strong insert molding and over molding expertise. And, looking to the future, Contour has a number of new and exciting plans being developed, all in an effort to continue meeting customers' needs, and to be a leader in the industry.

## To Learn More

If you would like to learn more about Composite America, Remmele Engineering, H&H Swiss, Exacto Springs, Contour Plastics, or any of the other lines the Sengers represent, contact Senger and Associates, Inc. at (651) 633-6040 or visit our website at [www.senger-assoc.com](http://www.senger-assoc.com).



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