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NEWS SERVICES

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Ferris, Bata Plastics, Inc. Partner in Recycling Effort

BIG RAPIDS – The partnership between Ferris State University and Bata Plastics, Inc. of Byron Center is more than a business deal, it’s an environmental deal. In the first year of their partnership, more than 5,000 pounds of plastic material was recycled for 2008.

“This is a big win-win,” said Bob Speirs, Plastics and Rubber Engineering Technology department chair and professor. “Bata Plastics is a strong proponent of recycling. It is important to recycle rather than fill up a landfill.”

Speirs is referencing the Plastics Recycling Center sponsored by Bata that will enable materials from the University’s Plastics department to be recycled. The materials are the result of student course work from class assignments.

“One of the important things here is that students also are learning how to recycle for future generations,” said Bata President and CEO W. Lee Hammond.

For Hammond, a board member of the Michigan Recycling Coalition, recycling is more than just a business venture, it’s a passion. The company’s hallmark is giving back to the community and helping other people grow.

“This partnership is in keeping with the practical nature of Ferris State University and its programs,” Speirs added. “We’re giving our students real-world knowledge on how important sustainable materials are for the environment.”

The Ferris Plastics program is the largest and one of the most respected undergraduate programs in the United States. The Bachelor of Science program was started in 1982 and continues to fill a great need in the growing plastics industry for technically trained personnel. The plastics field currently consists of 1.3 million people across the country, making it the fourth largest industry.

Bata Plastics, Inc. is the largest plastics recycler in west Michigan, one of the top five in the state and is ranked 115 out of 500 recyclers in North America by Plastics News, according to Hammond.

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