

By **Bridget McCrea**,
Editor at Large

Molded wood pallets optimize space and shipping costs

Manufacturer saves money and ships confidently with nestable pallets.

Warren Rupp, a unit of IDEX Corp., of Mansfield, Ohio, is a manufacturer of pumps for a variety of applications in the chemical, paint, industrial maintenance, utilities, wastewater, and mining industries. Short on space and in need of both full- and fractional-sized pallets to meet its global shipping needs, the company wanted a more efficient way to manage its daily flow of less-than-truckload (LTL) shipments. After deploying stackable molded wood pallets, the company optimized warehouse space while maximizing its cost per shipment.

Weighing anywhere from 1 to 300 pounds, the pumps are often ordered on a just-in-time basis, so shipment load sizes vary significantly from one order to the next. “Sometimes an order is just three or four pumps,” says Tom Bender, service parts manager, “and those can’t just be shipped loose.”

To accommodate its shipping needs, Warren Rupp was salvaging free, used pallets. But as order volume grew and as space became a bigger issue—those wood pallets were taking up too much space. Used pallets can also be unpredictable, particularly for full, uniform-load shipments. For companies that ship various sizes of packages and less than full pallet loads, the “one-size” pallet can create unstable unit loads and lead to product damage and expensive claims. Because the company uses a worldwide network of independent, factory-authorized distributors, the pallets also had to be export-approved for overseas shipments and be nestable and stackable.

The new pallets (Litco International, litco.com) are made by certified sustainable process that turns dam-



aged logs, wood waste and other wood byproducts into new, molded wooden export and domestic shipping pallets. The pallets are nestable and take up one-third of the space of a wooden pallet. Warren Rupp can now have three times as many pallets at its workstations. The pallets improve safety because they require less lift truck traffic/trips through the plants to feed the workstations.

“Floor space around here is at a premium,” Bender explains. “Our 88,000 square-foot facility provides every process touch-point—from receiving, machining and painting to final assembly, testing and shipping—for every pump we produce and sell. Because of this, we’re constantly trying to economize on floor space and eliminate unnecessary storage space.”

Using Litco’s molded, single piece nesting pallets, Warren Rupp can now stack up to 50 pallets within a 7-foot vertical space—and with a 4:1 stacking ratio. And because the pallets come in multiple, fractional sizes, the manufacturer is saving money on pallets while also managing fewer product damage and customer complaints.