



## Can-Do Attitude

### Ball Packaging continues to expand and evolve, making cans used everywhere from Ontario to Newfoundland

Anyone who ever opened a can of Coke, Pepsi or Sleeman beer between Ontario and Newfoundland will be familiar with the work at Ball Packaging's facility in Whitby. This is where about 2,000 of the cans are made every minute, feeding a warehouse which can store as many as 40 million of the gleaming containers at any given time.

A close inspection of any of the cans will also unveil more than the colourful labels used to identify the future contents. "Our name is on every can," says Plant Manager Vic Smith. "We're proud of it."

There is a good reason to be proud. Transforming 25,000-pound aluminum coils into lightweight beverage containers is no small task. The shapes themselves are created in a series of highly automated presses, while every surface needs to be washed and etched to support ever more complex labels. And ongoing changes have hardly been limited to the labels themselves. This plant originally produced two-piece cans to replace containers which needed a separate top, bottom and seam. Steel then made way for lightweight aluminum, and the cans themselves grew in size.

The facility itself has needed to expand along the way.

"We've added a complete new line to our system. As well as doing that, we modified the lines that we had, so we've totally rearranged the whole plant," Smith says. "We added a whole line's worth of equipment. We expanded the building. We upgraded the systems that we have in place. So we changed it a lot."

Changes like that obviously rely on a wide range of skills, and a Whitby locale has helped to ensure the required suppliers were close at hand.

"With all the industry in the area, there's lots of suppliers and contractors available for us to draw on," Smith explains. "With the new line expansion we put in this year, we were able to use contract vendors to help with the installation of the equipment we had in our facility. We also used local vendors to help expand the building. And on a day-to-day basis we have local companies that can supply

## Community of Choice...for Business



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**Vic Smith**  
Plant Manager  
Ball Packaging

# BALL PACKAGING [continued]



us with the maintenance and repair parts we need to keep our lines functioning, so the area has lots of choices.”

The Whitby location also helped in the search for the 40 additional employees to keep everything running.

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“With all the industry in the area, there’s a good draw of skilled labour for us. Some of the new people who we hired came from Durham College and graduated from some of their technical courses.”

**Vic Smith, Plant Manager, Ball Packaging**

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The municipality offered support of its own, as the Economic Development Office helped the business secure permits that were needed for expanding the building and installing the new line alike. “We were on a very tight timeline. We got ahold of the department, and they were great, and worked with us and helped get the process approved in a timely manner,” Smith says.

It is merely the latest example of an ongoing relationship. The Town helped Ball Packaging to identify the original site in 1982. That location, close to Highway 401, continues to play an important role in the company’s success every time a trailer is loaded with 22 or 25 pallets, each piled high with 8,169 cans.

“When you’re doing Just in Time delivery, the transportation routes to your customers are very important. The Highway 401 is an excellent route,” Smith says. “The highway is a direct route to our customers in both directions. It’s just down the street, with easy access, so it works very well.”

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