

## **Boards made in ithaca of plants and soy become furniture in the hands of syracuse cabinetmakers**

e2e Materials wants to break into \$20 billion market for building products, eyes factories in Upstate New York

The Post-Standard  
by Rick Moriarty, Staff Writer

An Ithaca startup is hoping its collaboration with two Syracuse cabinet fabricators will open new markets for its environmentally friendly composite materials.

e2e Materials Inc. is teaming with CabFab, on Burnet Avenue, and R.B. Woodcraft, on Erie Boulevard East, to produce furniture and cabinetry that will be used in the Syracuse Center of Excellence headquarters, which is opening this month.

e2e will make a plant-based composite that CabFab will use to build the center's security desk and R.B. Woodcraft will use to build kitchen cabinets and display cases for the center.

Using a technology developed at Cornell University, e2e manufactures composite board from annually renewable plant fibers processed with a soy protein-based resin. The biodegradable material can be used in place of conventional fiberboard and particleboard in any number of products.

The company says its product is strong and contains no formaldehyde or petrochemicals. It's inherently flame retardant and is completely biodegradable, the company says.

Edward Bogucz, the center's executive director, said furniture and cabinets made from e2e's composites will give off no harmful gases as conventional fiberboard and particleboard can.

"We're very interested in the e2e product," he said. "It's a very promising product for building applications."

The center is a not-for-profit industry-university collaborative organization that promotes innovations in environmental and energy technologies and products.

In 2007, e2e won the Central Upstate Regional Alliance's \$100,000 business prize as the region's most innovative, small, emerging, growth company.

Until now, e2e's only commercial product has been skateboards. It made 6,000 of them for Comet Skateboards at its manufacturing facility at 239 W. Cherry St., Ithaca, last year.

But e2e President Patrick Govang said the company's plan is to break into the \$20 billion furniture and building materials markets. And the exposure the company will get from having its products prominently displayed at the Center of Excellence could help the cause, he said.

"We're going for it all," said Govang.

The company has no plans to make desks and cabinets and building materials such as floor joists. Instead, it plans to sell four-by-eight foot composite sheets to those who do.

In January, testing showed the company's material met the Business and Institutional Furniture Manufacturer's Association's standards for durability, strength and longevity, Govang said.

e2e is in discussions with the owners of idled fiberboard manufacturing facilities in Lackawanna and Deposit about converting them to make e2e's plant-based composites.

Chris Clemans, vice president of CabFab, said the company made prototypes of cabinetry with e2e's composites and was pleased with the results.

"It's an organic substitute for plywood and fiberboard," he said.

It also holds fasteners very well, he said.

"The product is a very strong material," he said. "We found it to be very tough."