

INTERTAPE POLYMER GROUP INC
Form 6-K
February 20, 2004

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Report of Foreign Issuer
Pursuant to Rule 13a - 16 or 15d - 16 of
the Securities Exchange Act of 1934

110E Montee de Liesse
St. Laurent, Quebec, Canada, H4T 1N4

Annual

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Net income	\$5.2 million	\$18.2 million
Revenues	Increased 4.2%	Increased 3.3%
Gross margin	Increased to 22.0% from 20.1%	Increased to 22.4% from 21.0%

Montreal, Quebec and Bradenton, Florida - February 19, 2004 - Intertape Polymer Group Inc. today released results for the fourth quarter and year ended December 31, 2003. "In 2002 we began a process which has focused on improving our profitability notwithstanding the generally weak economic environment in our market segments, and our results tell the story," said Intertape Polymer Group Inc. (IPG) Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Melbourne F. Yull. "We have not only been able to grow our revenues over the course of the year but, more importantly, we have also been able to achieve continuous improvement in our earnings."

Fourth Quarter 2003

Fourth quarter net income was \$5.2 million, or \$0.13 per share (basic and diluted), compared to a net loss of \$58.8 million or \$1.74 per share (basic and diluted) for the fourth quarter of 2002. Excluding after-tax plant closure costs in the fourth quarter of 2003 of \$1.9 million and after-tax plant closure costs and goodwill impairment charge of \$64.7 million in the fourth quarter of 2002, fourth quarter net income was \$7.1 million or \$0.17 per share (basic and diluted), compared to \$5.9 million or \$0.17 per share (basic and diluted) a year ago, and up 14.5% compared to net income of \$6.2 million or \$0.18 per share (basic and diluted) in the preceding quarter of this year. The increase in net income was driven by revenue growth, improved gross margins, reduced financial expenses, and certain tax benefits.

Sales for the fourth quarter were \$157.7 million, up 4.2% compared to the corresponding quarter last year, but down 1.3% compared to the preceding quarter reflecting typical customer buying patterns. "We were pleased to see sales were up across all product lines this quarter over the previous year," said Mr. Yull. "Our revenue growth, in what remains a weak economic environment for the packaging sector, reflects the success of our efforts over the past several quarters to introduce new products to meet customer needs and to strengthen relationships with our product distributors."

Gross margin for the fourth quarter increased to 22.0% from 20.1% in the corresponding quarter last year, primarily resulting from the Company's ability to pass through raw material cost increases, reductions in waste, improved cost controls, and more efficient utilization of labour.

Selling, general and administrative expenses were \$25.0 million in the fourth quarter of 2003, compared to \$22.3 for the fourth quarter of 2002. "About \$2.7 million of SG&A expenses in the fourth quarter included items such as promotional incentives as a result of particularly strong sales in certain channels, a customer bankruptcy, the settlement of an outstanding claim inherited with an earlier acquisition, and the early adoption of the fair value method of accounting for stock-based compensation," noted IPG's Chief Financial Officer, Andrew M. Archibald, C.A. "For 2004, we expect our run rate for SG&A expenses to be about \$22.5 million to \$23.5 million per quarter."

Financial expenses in the fourth quarter were \$5.6 million, compared to \$7.6 million in the fourth quarter last year. The lower financial expenses reflect primarily the impact of debt reduction since the end of the fourth quarter of 2002, in particular, the third quarter of 2003 when the proceeds of the \$41.3 million equity issue were used to pay down debt.

In the fourth quarter, the Company took a charge of \$3.0 million for expenses relating to the closure of its water-activated tape (WAT) plant in Green Bay,

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Wisconsin, and the transfer of equipment and people to its other WAT plant in Menasha, Wisconsin as part of the previously announced consolidation of these facilities.

For the fourth quarter the Company recorded a net deferred income tax benefit of \$4.2 million, compared to a net deferred income tax benefit of \$13.3 million in the fourth quarter of 2002. Generally accepted accounting principals (GAAP) requires an annual review and valuation of future income tax benefits related to net operating losses. As a result of improved operating results and the underlying business environment, this annual review resulted in the net value of future tax benefits being increased. This increase has been recorded in the fourth quarter of 2003 both as an increase in future tax benefits on the balance sheet, as well as a reduction in income tax expense in the statement of earnings.

Spending on property, plant and equipment was \$3.3 million in the fourth quarter of 2003, compared to \$2.1 million for the same quarter in 2002.

Cash flows from operating activities less cash used for investing activities was \$5.1 million for the fourth quarter 2003, compared to \$25.1 million for the fourth quarter 2002, due primarily to changes in various working capital items. The excess cash generated in the quarter was used to repay debt.

Full Year 2003

For the full year 2003, net income was \$18.2 million, or \$0.50 per share (diluted), compared to a net loss of \$54.5 million or \$1.66 per share (diluted) in 2002. Excluding after-tax plant closure costs in the fourth quarter of 2003 of \$1.9 million and after-tax plant closure costs and goodwill impairment charge of \$64.7 million in the fourth quarter of 2002, full year net income was \$20.1 million, or \$0.56 per share (basic and diluted), compared to \$10.2 million or \$0.31 per share (basic and diluted) in 2002.

Sales for 2003 were \$621.3 million compared to \$601.6 million for last year, an increase of 3.3%, and gross margin was 22.4% compared to 21.0% for 2002, resulting from the Company's ability to pass through raw material cost increases, reductions in waste, improved cost controls, and more efficient utilization of labour.

Selling, general and administrative expenses for the year were \$90.0 million, compared to \$85.3 million a year ago, due to higher selling costs related to increased sales, particularly in certain distribution channels, and the effect of consolidating the additional 50% interest in Fibope acquired in the middle of the year.

Financial expenses during the year were \$28.5 million compared to \$32.8 million for last year. The lower financial expenses reflect primarily the impact of debt reduction since the end of the fourth quarter of 2002.

Spending on property, plant and equipment was \$13.0 million for 2003, compared to \$11.7 million for 2002.

Cash flows from operating activities less cash used for investing activities was \$19.8 million for 2003, compared to \$18.3 million for last year. The excess cash generated during the period was used to repay debt. "In the third quarter of 2003, the Company's outlook for total excess cash in 2003 was approximately \$22.0 million," remarked Mr. Archibald. "The Company has come in under this amount primarily as a result of inventory build-ups in anticipation of the Green Bay plant closing and the finalization of supply agreements with tesa tape, inc."

Balance Sheet Improvements

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"We reduced debt by a further \$4.5 million during the quarter, bringing our total net debt reduction to \$55.4 million for the year, which exceeded our objective for the year of \$29 million," commented Mr. Archibald. "The debt reduction, along with a strengthened equity base following our common equity issue in the third quarter, has enabled us to lower our total debt as a percentage of total capital to 41.3%, compared to 52.3% at the end of 2002."

Cost Reduction Initiatives

In 2002, IPG announced cost reduction initiatives of \$17.5 million that it expected to implement over the course of 2003 and 2004. By the end of 2003, \$11.5 million of these initiatives have been implemented. There is another \$6.0 million of cost savings that the Company expects to realize in 2004 as part of this program. Including the benefits of consolidating the WAT plants, as well as reduced interest charges, additional savings relating to these various initiatives should total \$11.5 million in 2004.

Outlook

"The results for 2003 reflect the success of our objective at the outset, which was to focus on things we can control in order to return to appropriate levels of profitability," said Mr. Yull. "For example, actions we have taken with respect to pricing structures have enabled us to pass through raw material cost increases on a timely basis. We believe the improvements we have made throughout our operations are sustainable, and something on which we can build. Beyond the initiatives that are already underway, we believe there will be more opportunities to improve our profitability in 2004. There are also some early signs of economic recovery in our market segments that, if they do materialize, will contribute positively to our revenue and bottom line growth. However, our outlook is currently based on little economic improvement during the year."

(All figures in U.S. dollars, unless otherwise stated; December 31, 2003, exchange rate: Cdn \$1.3033 equals U.S.\$1.00)

Conference Call

A conference call to discuss IPG's fourth quarter results will be held Friday, February 20, 2004 at 10:00 A.M. Eastern Standard Time. Participants may dial 1-888-428-4479 (U.S. and Canada) and 1-612-332-1213 (International). The conference call will also be simultaneously webcast on the Company's website at www.intertapepolymer.com.

You may access a replay of the call by dialing 1-800-475-6701 (U.S. and Canada); 1-320-365-3844 (International) and entering the passcode 717599. The recording will be available from Friday, February 20, 2004 at 5:00 P.M. until Friday, February 27, 2004 at 11:59 P.M., Eastern Standard Time.

About Intertape Polymer Group

Intertape Polymer Group is a recognized leader in the development and manufacture of specialized polyolefin plastic and paper based packaging products and complementary packaging systems for industrial and retail use. Headquartered in Montreal, Quebec and Sarasota/Bradenton, Florida, the Company employs approximately 2,600 employees with operations in 19 locations, including 13 manufacturing facilities in North America and one in Europe.

Safe Harbor Statement

Certain statements and information included in this release constitute

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"forward-looking statements" within the meaning of the Federal Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Such forward-looking statements involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors which may cause the actual results, performance or achievements of the Company to be materially different from any future results, performance or achievements expressed or implied in such forward-looking statements. Additional discussion of factors that could cause actual results to differ materially from management's projections, estimates and expectations is contained in the Company's SEC filings. The Company undertakes no duty to update its forward-looking statements, including its earnings outlook. This release contains certain non-GAAP financial measures as defined under SEC rules, including earnings per share excluding plant closure costs and last year's goodwill impairment charge. The Company believes such non GAAP financial measures improve the transparency of the Company's disclosure, provide a meaningful presentation of the Company's results from its core business operations, excluding the impact of items not related to the Company's ongoing core business operations, and improve the period-to-period comparability of the Company's results from its core business operations. As required by SEC rules, the Company has provided reconciliations of those measures to the most directly comparable GAAP measures.

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Selected Financial Information

Intertape Polymer Group Inc.
Consolidated Earnings
Periods ended December 31,
(In thousands of US dollars, except per share amounts)

	Three months		Twelve months	
	2003	2002	2003	2002
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Sales	157,682	151,261	621,321	601,575
Cost of sales	122,975	120,864	482,423	475,430
Gross profit	34,707	30,397	138,898	126,145
Selling, general and administrative expenses	24,973	22,262	90,047	85,324
Research and development	212	480	3,272	3,169
Financial expenses	5,587	7,621	28,521	32,773
Manufacturing facility closure costs	3,005	2,100	3,005	2,100
Impairment of goodwill		70,000		70,000
	33,777	102,463	124,845	193,366

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Earnings before income taxes	930	(72,066)	14,053	(67,221)
Future income taxes (recovery)	(4,244)	(13,292)	(4,125)	(12,767)
Net earnings (loss)	5,174	(58,774)	18,178	(54,454)

Earnings (loss) per share				
Basic	0.13	(1.74)	0.51	(1.66)
Diluted	0.13	(1.74)	0.50	(1.66)

Consolidated Retained Earnings
Periods ended
(In thousands of US dollars)

	Three months		Twelve months	
	2003	2002	2003	2002
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Balance, beginning of period	63,117	108,887	50,113	104,567
Net earnings (loss)	5,174	(58,774)	18,178	(54,454)
Balance, end of period	68,291	50,113	68,291	50,113

Common shares
Average number of shares outstanding

CDN GAAP - Basic	40,870,426	33,821,272	35,956,550	32,829,013
CDN GAAP - Diluted	41,225,776	33,821,272	36,052,320	32,829,013
U.S. GAAP - Basic	40,870,426	33,821,272	35,956,550	32,829,013
U.S. GAAP - Diluted	41,225,776	33,821,272	36,052,320	32,829,013

Intertape Polymer Group Inc.
Consolidated Balance Sheet
As at
(In thousands of US dollars)

	December 31, 2003	December 31, 2002
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
Current assets		
Trade receivables (net of		

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allowance for doubtful accounts of \$3,911, \$3,844 in December 2002)	89,297	86,169
Other receivables	11,852	10,201
Inventories	69,956	60,969
Parts and supplies	13,153	12,377
Prepaid expenses	7,924	7,884
Future income tax assets	2,682	2,397
	194,864	179,997
Property, plant and equipment	354,627	351,530
Other assets	12,886	13,178
Future income tax assets	3,812	
Goodwill	173,056	158,639
	739,245	703,344

LIABILITIES		
Current liabilities		
Bank indebtedness	13,944	8,573
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	95,270	80,916
Instalments on long-term debt	16,925	29,268
	126,139	118,757
Long-term debt	235,066	283,498
Other liabilities	530	3,550
Future income taxes		4,446
	361,735	410,251

SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY		
Capital stock and share purchase warrants	286,841	239,185
Contributed surplus	3,150	
Retained earnings	68,291	50,113
Accumulated currency translation adjustments	19,228	3,795
	377,510	293,093
	739,245	703,344

Intertape Polymer Group Inc.
Consolidated Cash Flows
Periods ended December 31,
(In thousands of US dollars)

	Three months		Twelve months	
	2003	2002	2003	2002
	\$	\$	\$	\$

OPERATING ACTIVITIES				
Net earnings (loss)	5,175	(58,774)	18,178	(54,454)

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Non-cash items				
Depreciation and amortization	7,786	7,647	29,375	28,653
Loss on disposal of property, plant and equipment		30		1,280
Property and equipment impairment in connection with facility closure	732		732	
Impairment of goodwill		70,000		70,000
Future income taxes	(5,982)	(15,723)	(7,148)	(15,198)
Decrease in other liabilities	(3,000)		(3,000)	

Cash from operations before changes in non-cash working capital items	4,711	3,180	38,137	30,281

Changes in non-cash working capital items				
Trade receivables	8,616	8,825	(741)	475
Other receivables	(1,693)	2,531	(1,647)	5,186
Inventories	(2,021)	10,666	(5,139)	9,851
Parts and supplies	(107)	(112)	(776)	(767)
Prepaid expenses	(1,957)	(3,177)	100	1,567
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	1,606	6,922	10,465	(11,361)
	4,444	25,655	2,262	4,951

Cash flows from operating activities	9,155	28,835	40,399	35,232

INVESTING ACTIVITIES				
Property, plant and equipment	(3,280)	(2,130)	(12,980)	(11,716)
Goodwill			(6,217)	
Other assets	(752)	(1,619)	(1,435)	(5,213)

Cash flows from investing activities	(4,032)	(3,749)	(20,632)	(16,929)

FINANCING ACTIVITIES				
Net change in bank indebtedness	(4,503)	(17,419)	4,910	(19,525)
Repayment of long-term debt		(8,885)	(64,329)	(50,209)
Issue of common shares	552	647	43,009	49,689

Cash flows from financing activities	(3,951)	(25,657)	(16,410)	(20,045)

Net increase (decrease) in cash position	1,172	(571)	3,357	(1,742)
Effect of foreign currency translation adjustments	(1,172)	571	(3,357)	1,742

Cash position, beginning and end of year	0	0	0	0
