Sharp Starts First Gen-10 LCD Plant

Editor's Note: several years back a panel at the Society for Information Display Conference laughed at my question about how large a flat-panel display consumers will eventually be able to buy. (At the time an 80-inch LCD was considered a frivolous tech demo with no market beyond business kiosks and public displays.) Bradbury was right, people won't stop until the entire wall is a TV.

Sakai, Hamburg, October 1, 2009 - Sharp Corporation started operations at its new LCD panel plant (Sharp Display Products Corporation) in Sakai City, Osaka Prefecture, Japan. Construction on this state-of-the-art manufacturing complex for LCD panels and thin-film solar cells began 1 in November 2007.

This LCD panel plant is marking a new era in large displays: it is the first facility in the world to adopt 10th-generation glass substrates. Using Sharp’s proprietary UV2A (Ultraviolet-induced multi-domain Vertical Alignment) photo-alignment technology, the plant is capable of producing high-contrast, energy-efficient panels of 40 inches and larger.

“At the new manufacturing complex the unique concentration of specialists, know-how and leading-edge production facilities in one place will enable us to take vertically integrated production to a new level. Apart from significant time and cost benefits, this bears an enormous potential for innovation since significant improvements of LCD technology effects the whole process chain. The outcome is for example our new state-of-the-art LCD TVs,” explains Maximilian Huber, President of Sharp Microelectronics Europe.

The new manufacturing complex will bring the world two environmentally friendly product lines: energy-saving LCD panels and energy-creating solar panels, when the thin-film solar cell plant picks up operation in March 2010. In addition the new manufacturing complex stets benchmarks in resource saving production. Besides implementing similar waste management and water recycling systems like the ones that have proven successful at the Kameyama plant, all factory roofs will be equipped with solar panel to generate 18 WM of electricity for the manufacturing

complex. Furthermore approximately 100,000 LED lights for both indoors and outdoors will substantially cut down power consumption for illumination to the entire the complex.

Facility Info:

Production capacity: 72,000 substrates per month

(36,000 substrates per month at start of operations)

Glass substrate size: 2,880 x 3,130 mm (10th-generation glass substrate)

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