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JETRION PIONEERS IN-LINE UV INKJET TECHNOLOGY FOR AUTOMOTIVE LABEL MANUFACTURING

ANN ARBOR, MI – July 7, 2005 — Based in Center Line, Michigan, Whitlam Label is a member of the Automotive Industry Action Group (AIAG), and is one of only a few Tier I companies that produce harsh environment labels for General Motors, DaimlerChrysler, Ford, Toyota and many other automotive industry giants. It is the first automotive label company to be granted ISO/TS 16949 status.

There are up to 150 labels on every vehicle. These are barcode labels that identify parts to track manufacturing dates, engineering revisions, or provide other information, such as vehicle identification (VIN) numbers. Each label (including the inks, laminates and adhesives) has to withstand high temperatures, some up to 450 degrees Fahrenheit. The labels also have to survive everything that can invade an engine compartment, such as grease, grit, oil, salt, car wash detergents and waxes.

Maintaining the readability of barcode data on harsh environment labels had always been a challenge until last year, when Whitlam engineers began a unique technology partnership with Jetrion LLC, a subsidiary of Flint Ink Corporation.

The joint development effort, centered on in-line integration of Jetrion's cutting edge, drop-on-demand 3025 Inkjet System into Whitlam's Mark Andy presses, has yielded a solution that both companies describe as a major breakthrough in variable data label printing.

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"When we first saw the Jetrion 3025 Inkjet System, we immediately recognized its potential for our automotive label applications," says Rick Shaieb, president of Whitlam. "It offers tremendous flexibility with Jetrion UV inks that print high quality, clean and sharp variable images on virtually any type of label substrate, at much faster speeds than our other variable print units can give us."

Whitlam's engineers and programmers worked in partnership with technology teams from Jetrion and Mark Andy to integrate a 3025 Inkjet System as an in-line inkjet printer on one of Whitlam's 15 Mark Andy flexo presses. After some fine-tuning of the programming, Whitlam now has an innovative in-line label production solution.

Ray Parnell, technical director of Whitlam, points out that as an in-line unit, the Jetrion 3025 Inkjet System significantly increases efficiency by eliminating the re-handling operations required with other types of variable imaging technologies. He notes that high-resolution printing (526 dpi), plus the permanent affinity that Jetrion's UV inkjet inks have for tough-to-print high-gloss and film substrates, results in harsh environment labels with unprecedented premium barcode quality and exceptional wear endurance.

"We printed prototype labels with the Jetrion 3025 on many types of harsh environment substrates, and exposed them to extreme conditions in our test laboratory," Parnell adds. "They were oven-aged under high temperatures, exposed to solvents, abrasion and UV. Under every condition, the Jetrion UV ink held up incredibly well under the testing. Most important, the label barcodes remained completely readable."

"We're excited about this new technology from Jetrion," says Kevin Hayes, Whitlam's vice president of sales and marketing. "It has given us some very unique capabilities that we will take to a lot of new markets."

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One of those markets is Whitlam's award-winning consumer product label business. Already in the works are plans to install at least one additional 3025 inkjet head on press to print variable information in formats wider than the 2.4-inch width of the single unit. One Jetrion controller can manage up to four inkjet heads on a press.

Security labeling has also become a very large program for Whitlam. According to Shaieb, the automotive industry is very concerned about the counterfeiting of aftermarket parts. "We have developed an innovative security labeling solution that has become an integral part of the systems used by our customers for identification of parts and packaging," he explains. "Our engineers have designed certain security features into our labels that are visible only with special equipment."

"We have a label that works even when it's illegally removed," Parnell says. "You can peel our label off a part, and install the part in a different vehicle, and our device will still detect that the part is not on the original vehicle."

Whitlam's drive to innovate has built relationships with automotive customers that go beyond the printing of a label. Many of the companies send engineers to Whitlam to study the process of creating labels for use in their production lines. Whitlam has built a reputation throughout the industry as the "go-to" source when it comes to finding innovative label solutions.

Jetrion LLC

A wholly-owned subsidiary of Flint Ink Corporation, Jetrion LLC provides a complete spectrum of industrial inkjet products, services and custom high-performance integration solutions to the printing, converting, packaging and direct mail industries. For more information about Jetrion, contact Jason Oliver, director of marketing and new business development, at 734-622-6650 or info@jetrion.com. Jetrion is on the Web at www.jetrion.com.

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About Flint Ink

Founded in 1920, Flint Ink Corporation offers a comprehensive range of flexographic, sheetfed, web offset, gravure, UV/EB curable, digital, and advanced and conductive inks. Operations are organized into nine segments: North America, Latin America, Asia, India/Pacific, Flint-Schmidt in Europe, Jetrion LLC, Precisia LLC, Progressive Color Media LLC, and CDR Pigments & Dispersions. For additional information on Flint Ink's products and services, contact Rita Conrad, vice president of Corporate Communications, Flint Ink, at 734-622-6362 or rita.conrad@flintink.com. Flint Ink is on the Web at www.flintink.com.

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