

## Going green

Drew Brooks

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KINGS MOUNTAIN — When an employee at Spectrum Yarns sees a used plastic bottle, they don't see a piece of trash. They see the beginnings of any number of products, from a couch to a fleece jacket.

That's because the employees at Spectrum Yarns at 136 Patterson Road in Kings Mountain are working in a green environment and in many cases living one as well.

Little more than two years ago, owner Doug Blanchard realized that to truthfully sell green yarn, he needed his plant to be green.

Now, the plant is more than 75 percent self-sustaining, with a goal of 100 percent by 2012. "Some companies promote their green products," Blanchard said. "We say that we're a green company. Most only work on the yarn and they forget to work on the company."

The company uses only environmentally-friendly dyes and chemicals, reclaims water used in the dyeing process and has installed devices to help conserve energy. Even the yarn itself has been recycled, with much of it being produced from plastic bottles.

The result? The company's claim to being "The greenest and cleanest yarn plant on planet Earth."

"That's what we claim to be and that's what we are," Blanchard said. "We used to take these steps for economic reasons but they're good for the Earth too."

Recycling bins are found throughout the facility, with the company recycling more than 1.5 million pounds each year. The company provides bins for employees to bring their own recycling from home, with many taking advantage of the bins, according to Wayne Tipton, head of technical service and sales.

Spectrum Yarns was recognized by MBDC, a Virginia-based firm that promotes the elimination of waste by the use and creation of recyclable products.

Other companies that have earned MBDC's "cradle to cradle" status include Nike, Ford Motor Co. and PepsiCo.

Having the status is more than just good for the environment; it's good for business. At the time Blanchard decided to devote his company to becoming more eco-friendly, others in the business didn't take him seriously. Now, he said, business has boomed.

"Companies today want to do business with a green company," Blanchard said. "We've gotten more attention."