

## **Ups and Downs: New Data on Plastics**

Despite pressures from external challenges, the U.S. plastics industry remains one of the largest manufacturing sectors in the U.S. In addition, demand for plastics remains strong, and the industry continues to be vital to the U.S. economy. That is the state of the industry according to two new reports released by the Society of the Plastics Industry Inc. The reports, which summarize 2005 global business trends, reveal some bright spots including a 9.7 percent growth in demand in 2005 and an increase in the overall value of shipments. American produced plastic goods still hold significant market share over imports, and imports have not rapidly overtaken market share when measured on industry-wide basis. However, the U.S. plastics industry continues to face challenges in the global marketplace that place it at a disadvantage to foreign competitors, according to Eugenia Ross, the society's director for international trade. "The high price of natural gas and the price advantage Chinese companies enjoy due to that country's artificially undervalued currency make it tough for American-based companies to compete."

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