

The Tillotson Legacy Lives On: 95 Years of American Polymer Innovation



Concord, New Hampshire Mar 12, 2026 (IssueWire.com) - Tomorrow marks the 95th anniversary of one of the most remarkable moments in American manufacturing history.

On **Friday, March 13, 1931**, Neil Tillotson carried the world's first latex-dipped products—**14-inch “Cat” balloons** he had made in the kitchen of his home in Watertown, Massachusetts—to Boston's DeCiccio Brothers, a distributor serving street vendors. The order was modest—**15 gross at \$2.50 per gross**—but it launched an enterprise that would ultimately transform multiple global industries.

From that humble beginning, Tillotson's innovations would help give rise to entire product categories, including:

- Toy balloons and weather balloons
- Rubber-coated industrial work gloves

- Broadloom carpets
- Natural rubber latex medical examination gloves
- Nitrile rubber latex examination gloves

Over the following decades, the Tillotson enterprise expanded across North America and Europe, operating facilities in **New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, Rhode Island, New York, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, California, Canada, and Belgium.**

Neil Tillotson remained deeply involved in the company throughout his life and was still serving as **President of Tillotson Corporation at the age of 102**, at the time of his passing in 2001.

The Legacy Continues in Colebrook, New Hampshire

Today, that extraordinary legacy lives on at **American Performance Polymers (APP) in Colebrook, New Hampshire**—formerly **Tillotson Polymers**—where the next generation of polymer innovation continues to unfold.

At the helm of the technical and polymer science programs is **Rick Tillotson**, son of Neil Tillotson and a leading figure in the modern development of nitrile glove technology and advanced polymer formulations.

Under Rick Tillotson's leadership, APP continues the tradition of American polymer innovation that began nearly a century ago—advancing the science of nitrile and specialty polymers while supporting the re-emergence of **domestic U.S. manufacturing of medical exam gloves and other critical polymer products.**

This work has become increasingly important as the United States seeks to restore resilient domestic supply chains for critical medical countermeasures and industrial materials.

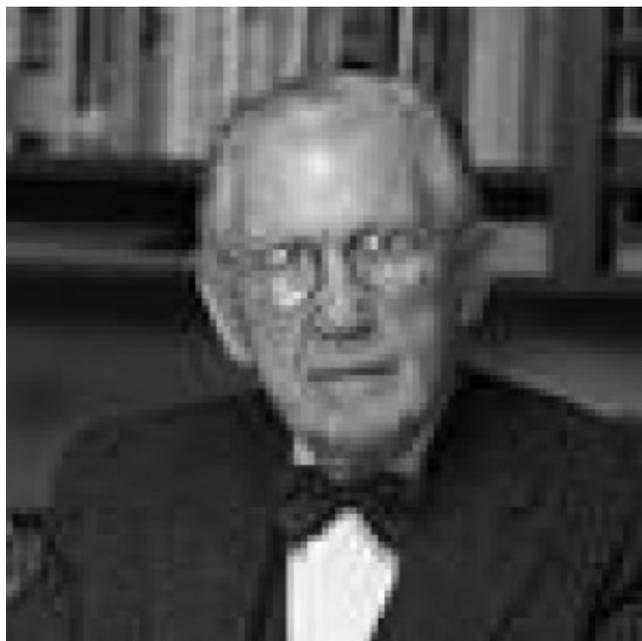
From a Kitchen Experiment to an American Industrial Legacy

What began as a simple experiment in a Massachusetts kitchen in 1931 helped shape a global industry and laid the foundation for generations of polymer science innovation.

Nearly a century later, the Tillotson spirit of invention, resilience, and American manufacturing leadership continues—alive and well in Colebrook, New Hampshire.

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