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(54) Title: **COMPUTER CONTROLLED LABELING MACHINE FOR APPLYING LABELS INCLUDING STRETCH LABELS AND TACTILELY SENSIBLE INDICIA ON ARTICLES**

(57) Abstract

A computer controlled labeling machine is used to apply labels to an article such as a beverage container. The apparatus and methods provide particular advantages for applying stretch labels and/or labels with tactilely sensible indicia, such as braille markings, to articles. Stretch labels are of the type fabricated from an elastic sheet of material and are applied to an article by stretching the material during application to the container so that upon allowing the elastic label material to relax after application, the label will adhere tightly to the walls on the article, even if the article has a wall of varying diameter. The stretch label may be adhered even more closely to the walls of the article by heat shrinking the label to the article. Tactilely sensible labels provide markings that identify the article to a visually impaired person, and are fabricated for example by applying a liquid material that solidifies in a distinctive pattern on the labeling material applied to the article. The computer control system provides means for controlling the speed and orientation of the labeling apparatus, including the vacuum drum, the relative speeds of the label unwind roll and label pick-up vacuum drum to thereby control the amount of label stretch, and for timing when the liquid application station applies the liquid to form the tactilely distinguishable markings. It also controls timing of the label cutter, rotation of the container turret, and associated apparatus to provide precise control of the labeling operation.

