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[21740002]

Sales were nearly identical to the year-earlier \$ 1.36 billion .

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The drop in earnings did n't surprise analysts who said the Pittsburgh glass , coatings and chemical concern had been predicting a slow quarter because of the sluggish construction industry , a major market for the company 's flat glass .

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Glass sales to Canadian and European auto makers and sales of replacement auto glass in all markets increased .

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The coating segment also posted higher sales particularly in North America and Europe .

[21740006]

But sale increases were offset by slumping sales in flat glass and fiberglass reinforcements , the company said .

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Also , chemicals sales were slightly down because of lower prices for vinyl chloride monomer and other chlorine derivatives .

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In New York Stock Exchange composite trading , PPG closed at \$ 41 a share , down 37.5 cents .