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(54) **HEAT EXCHANGER SEAL ASSEMBLY AND METHOD FOR USE WITH A VEHICLE RADIATOR AND COOLING MODULE**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

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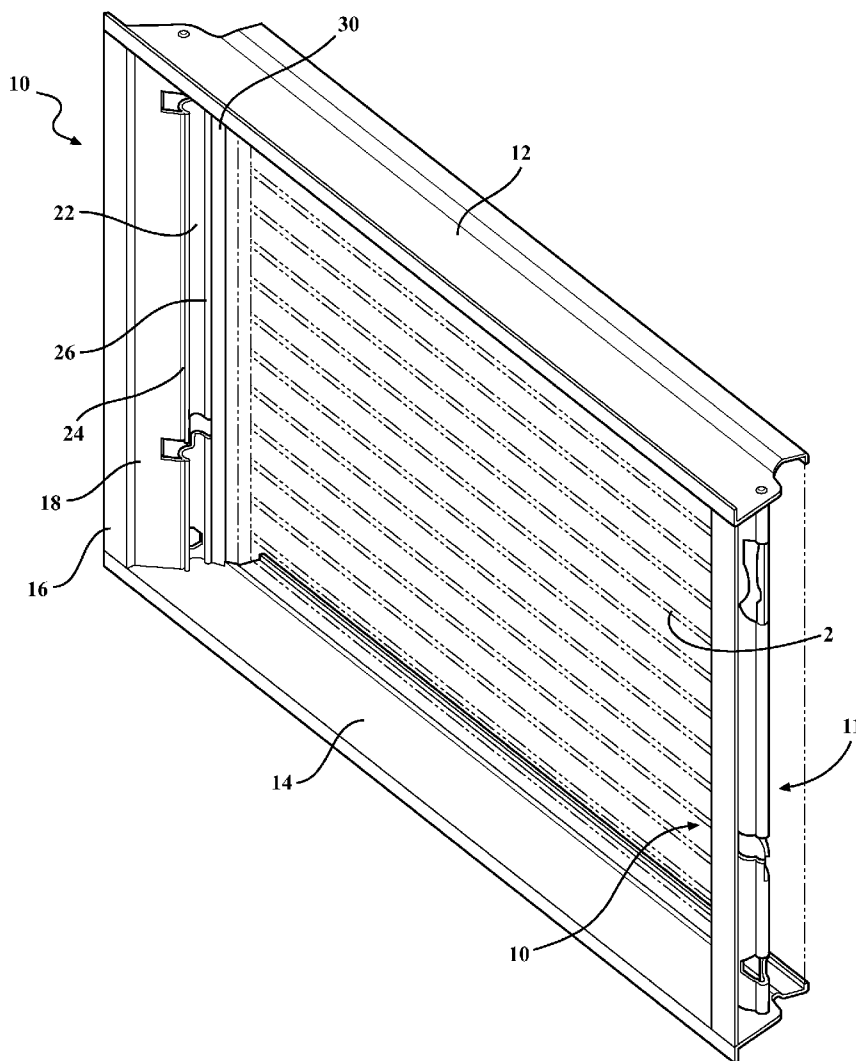
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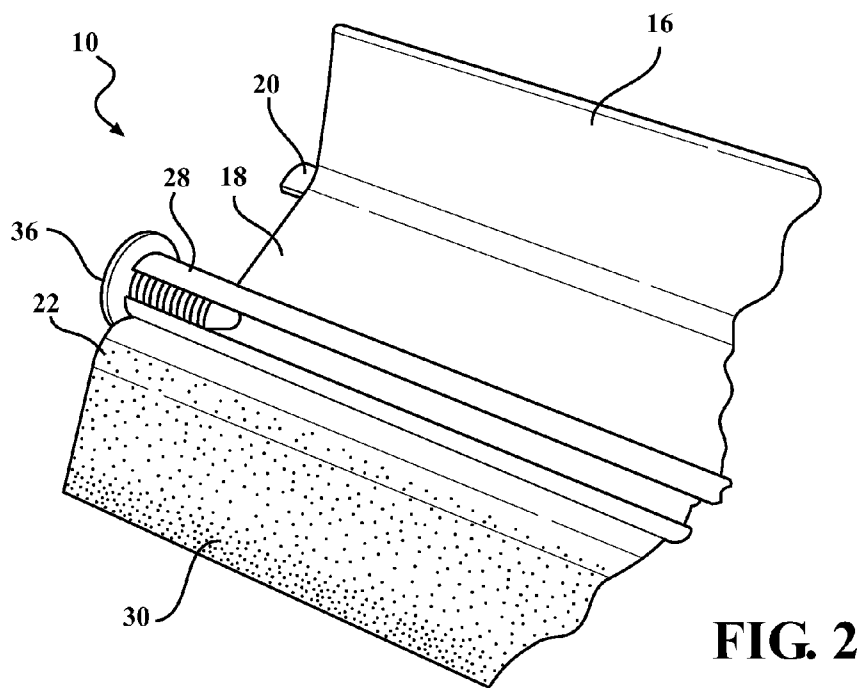
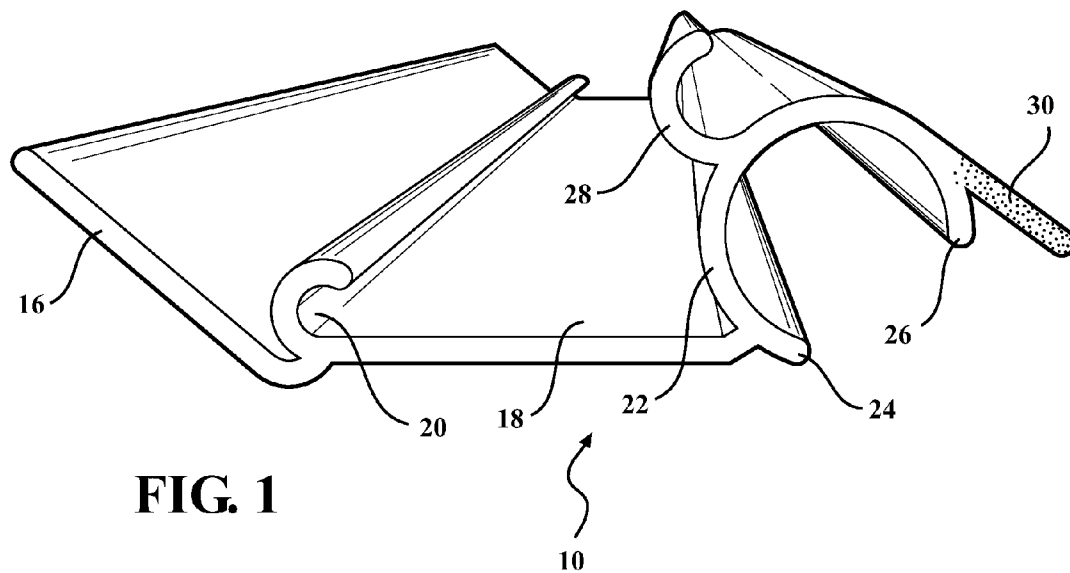
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Related U.S. Application Data

(60) Provisional application No. 61/497,321, filed on Jun. 15, 2011.

A seal for use with a radiator having a plurality of edge extending and assembleable portions collectively establishing a frame around the radiator. The upper and lower extending sides can include a number of materials, not limited to a 40% calcium carbonate polypropylene. The edge extending and interconnecting sides are further constructed, in cross section, of a harder material as a flat extending first face along with an intermediate positioned snap fit portion, such as for engaging a condenser tank, as well as at least one pin receiving location. A second softer material is coextruded to an edge of the harder material and, upon assembly into a four sided frame with the upper and lower sides, is affixed both around and at least partially forwardly of the radiator face in order to redirect/funnel air to the front of the radiator.





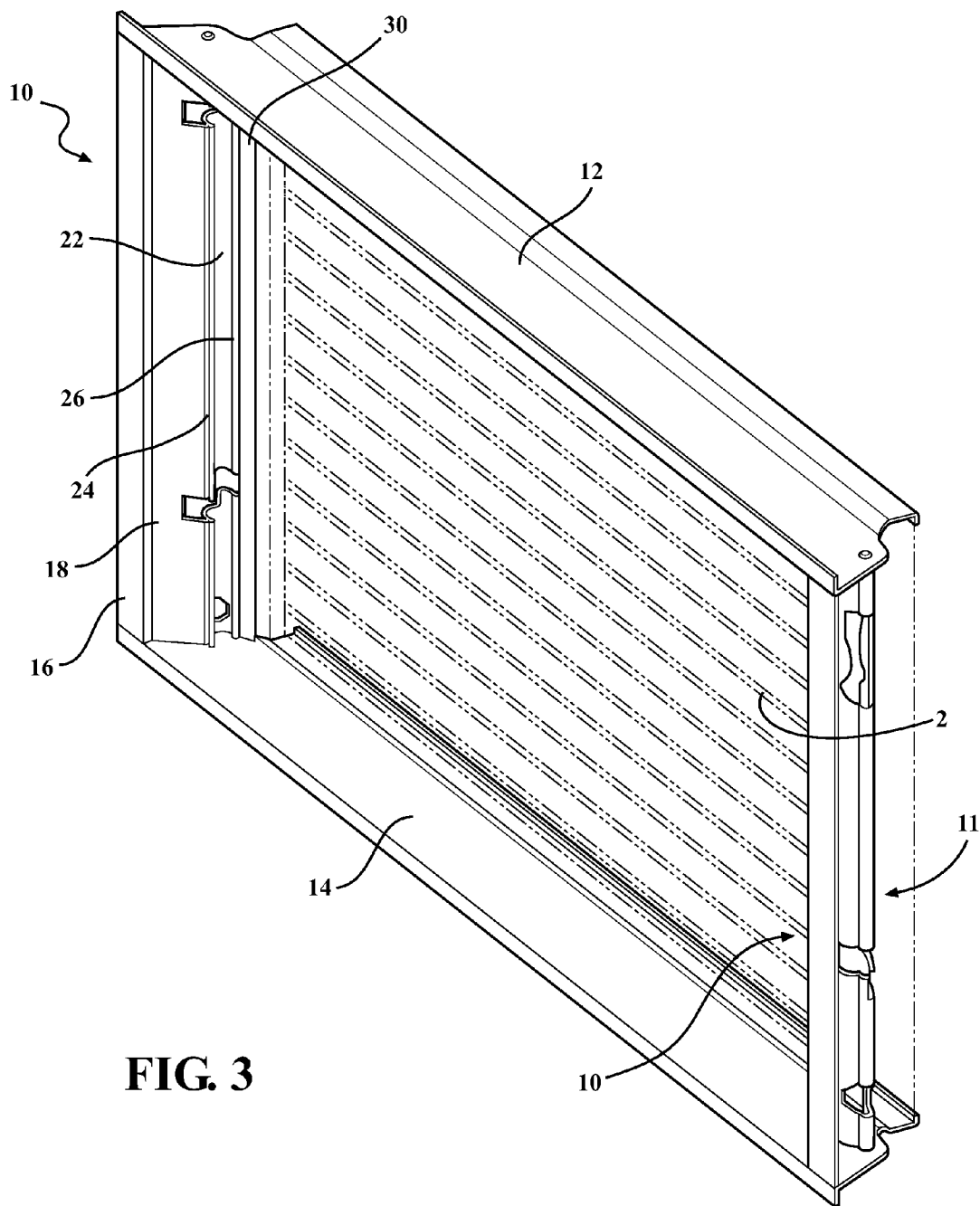
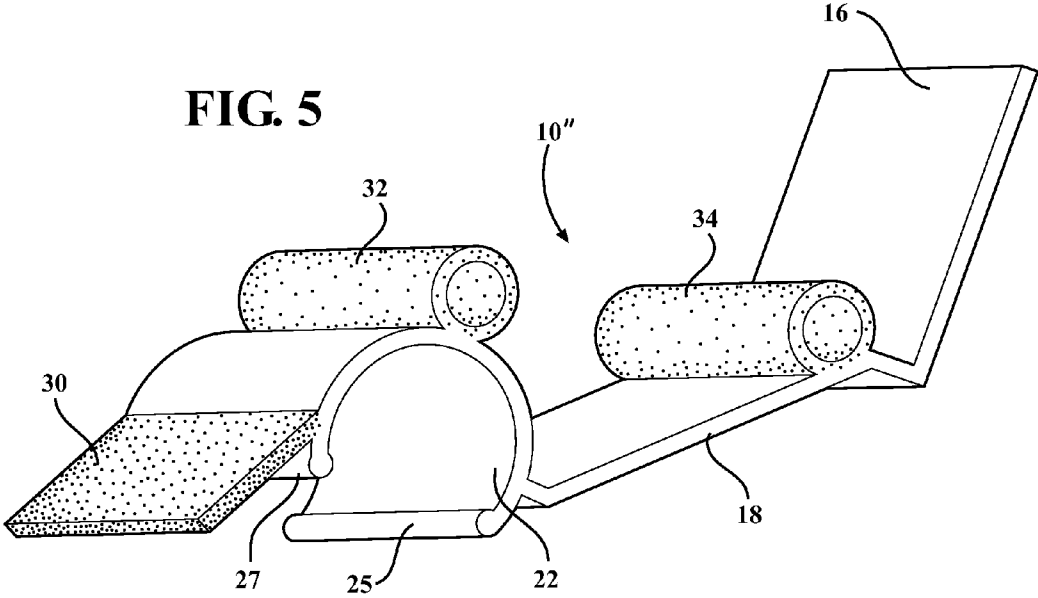
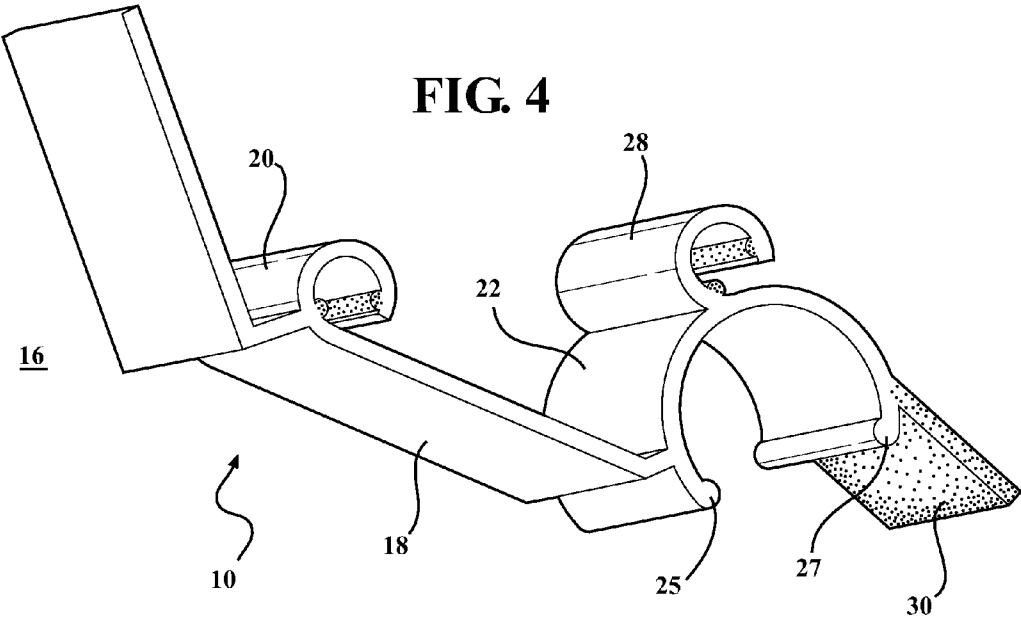


FIG. 3



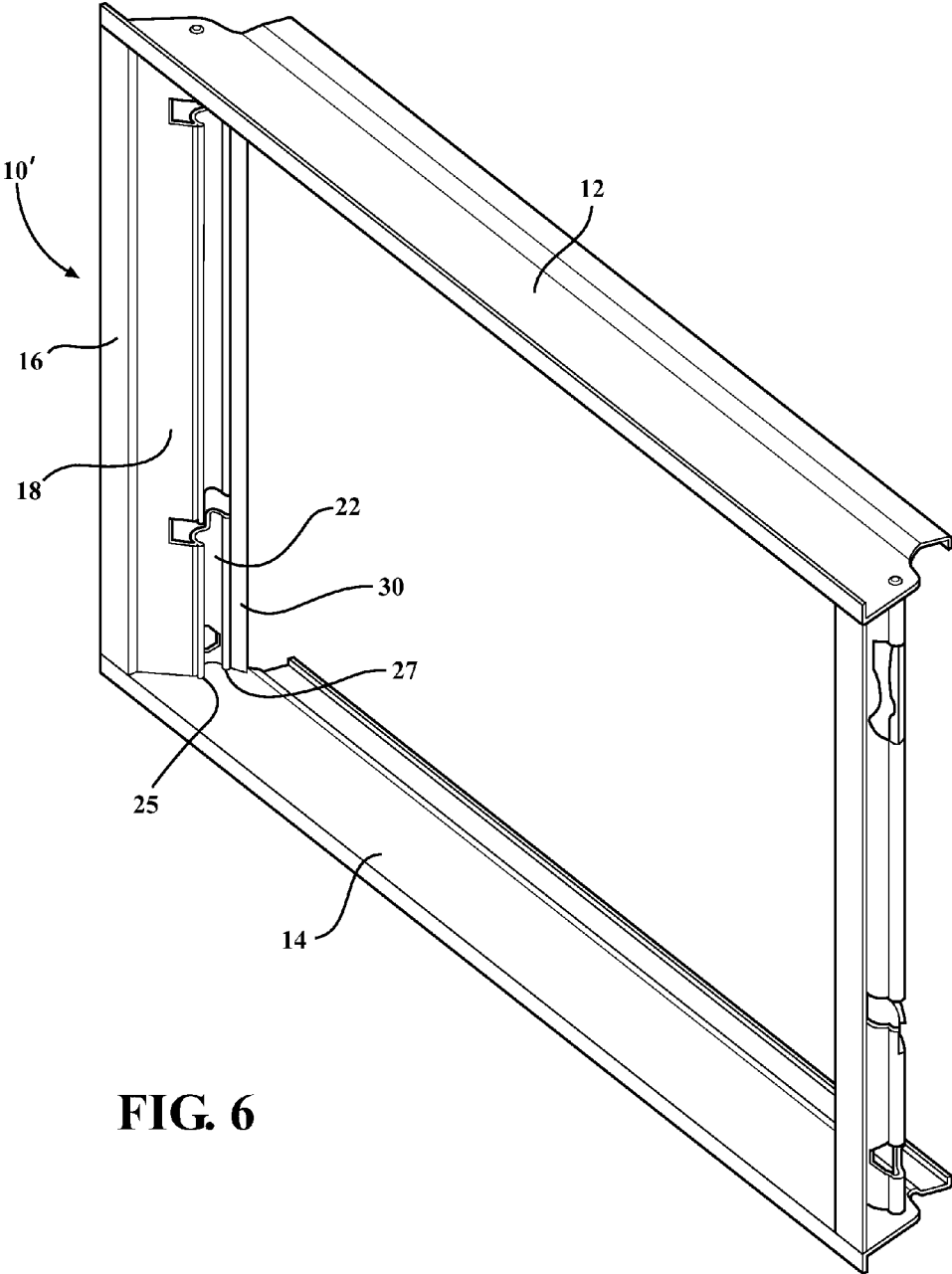
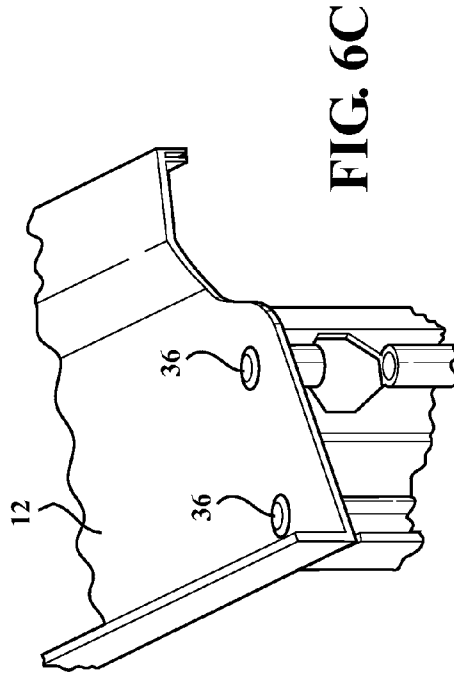
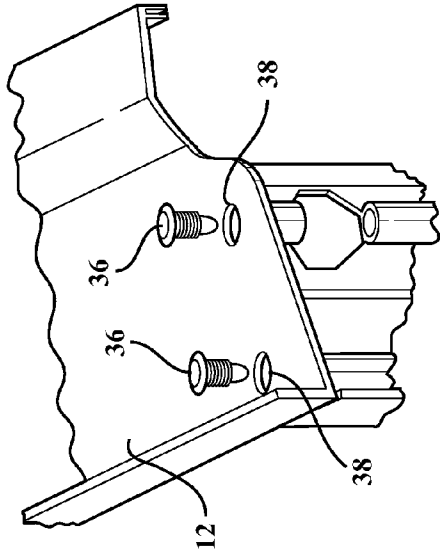
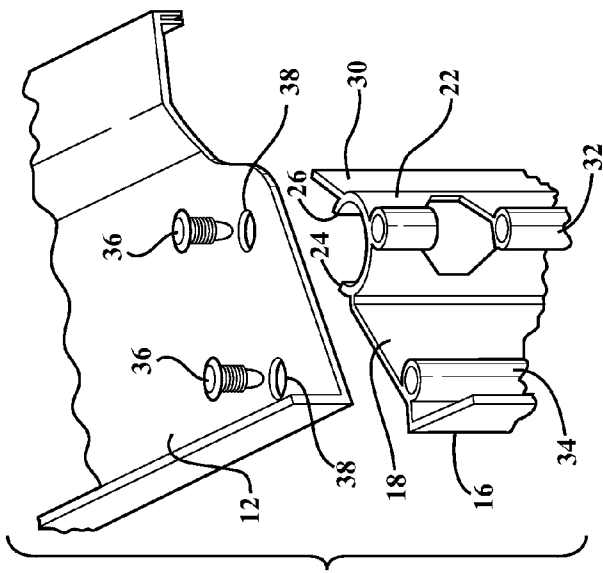


FIG. 6



HEAT EXCHANGER SEAL ASSEMBLY AND METHOD FOR USE WITH A VEHICLE RADIATOR AND COOLING MODULE

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] The present application claims the priority of U.S. Ser. No. 61/497,321 filed Jun. 15, 2011.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention discloses a perimeter seal assembly for use with such as a vehicle radiator and which includes a plurality of frame assembleable parts. The seal assembly includes first and second side extending portions which are coextruded with at least a first harder polymer and a second softer polymer (TPE). The cross sectional profile of each side extending portion further includes a flat face defining a first extending edge for sealing to an associated front end module associated with upper and lower extending portions, a snap fit intermediate profile for attaching to an associated radiator condenser tank, and a softer (TPE) seal extending along an opposite edge for contacting side extending locations associated with the radiator face.

DESCRIPTION OF THE RELEVANT ART

[0003] The prior art is documented with examples of baffle constructions incorporated into a vehicle for assisting in directing air to a vehicle radiator and in order to maximize heat exchange between the radiator surface and the ambient surroundings. Such prior art designs often include a one piece baffle with multiple hinged sides, with the ability to package and transport in any volume being both inefficient and expensive.

SUMMARY OF THE PRESENT INVENTION

[0004] The present invention discloses a seal for use with a radiator having a plurality of edge extending and assembleable portions establishing a frame around the radiator. The upper and lower extending sides can include a number of materials, not limited to a 40% calcium carbonate polypropylene.

[0005] The edge extending and interconnecting sides are further constructed of a co-extruded material including a first harder material and a second softer material which, in cross section, depicts the harder material as a flat extending first face along with an intermediate positioned snap fit portion, such as for engaging a condenser tank, as well as at least one pin receiving location. The second softer extruded material is coextruded to an edge of the first harder material and, upon assembly into a four sided frame with the upper and lower sides, is affixed both around and at least partially forwardly of the radiator face in order to redirect/funnel air to the front of the radiator.

[0006] Additional features include the pin receiving locations including a third extruded and lower durometer material. The edge extending portions can further include a single extruded material interconnecting with additional coextruded edge extending portions.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0007] Reference will now be made to the attached drawings, when read in combination with the following detailed

description, wherein like reference numerals refer to like parts throughout the several views, and in which:

[0008] FIG. 1 is a profile of an extruded side member incorporated into a heat exchanger seal assembly according to the present invention;

[0009] FIG. 2 is an enlarged and rotated perspective of an end section of the extruded side member depicted in FIG. 1;

[0010] FIG. 3 is a perspective view of a frame assembled and perimeter extending seal assembly including side extruded members in combination with interconnected top and bottom defining members;

[0011] FIG. 4 is a cross sectional profile of a slightly modified variant of side profile, similar to that depicted in FIG. 1 and better depicting the configuration of a flat face defining a first extending edge for sealing to an associated front end module associated with upper and lower extending portions, and again showing a snap fit intermediate profile for attaching to an associated radiator condenser tank, with a softer thermoplastic elastomer seal extending along an opposite edge for contacting side extending locations associated with the radiator face;

[0012] FIG. 5 is a similar profile of an alternate three material (tri-extrusion) construction in which separate and lower durometer tubes are extruded at spaced locations onto the profile and enhance seating of push pins which install through apertures in the edges of the top and bottom profiles;

[0013] FIG. 6 is a perspective view similar to that shown in FIG. 3 and depicting the side profile of FIG. 4;

[0014] FIG. 6A is a first enlarged and partially exploded view of a perimeter edge assembly location shown in FIG. 6;

[0015] FIG. 6B is a succeeding pre-assembled view depicting the top profile in seating fashion over the side extending extrusion and prior to installation of the push pins; and

[0016] FIG. 6C is a further succeeding and fully assembled view of the perimeter edge of the seal assembly.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0017] With reference to the following description, and initially to FIGS. 1-4, the present invention discloses an improved and coextruded profile generally shown at 10 for incorporation into such as a perimeter seal assembly for use with such as a vehicle radiator. As further representatively depicted in FIG. 3, mirroring side profiles 10 are arranged in end to aligning and engaging fashion with likewise minor top 12 and bottom 14 in order to construct a four sided frame intended to encircle and contact at least the side edges of a vehicle radiator.

[0018] The perimeter seal assembly is understood to be utilized in combination with other air directing components, such as reconfigurable three sided and flexible front (lower) and upper baffle constructions (not shown) and which are constructed of a two part/two shot injection molded material including integrally formed harder body section and softer interconnecting hinge components. According to the given application, the upper baffle can be assembled along with the lower baffle to define a four sided box-like structure around a radiator (see as depicted in phantom at 2 in FIG. 3), this in combination with the installation of the extruded seal assembly incorporating side profiles 10. In this manner, and as shown, the assembly is positioned both around and at least partially forwardly of the radiator 2.

[0019] As best depicted in the various side illustrations shown in FIGS. 1 and 2, the extruded profile 10 incorporates

at least a first harder polymer material, e.g. such as in one non-limiting example a 40% calcium carbonate polypropylene or like material, combined with a second softer polymer, such as without limitation further including any type of thermoplastic elastomer (TPE). It is further noted that the upper and lower extending frame members **12** and **14** can likewise be constructed from a similar harder polymer material and it is further noted that their material content and/or configuration is further capable of being modified. As depicted, the cross sectional shape of each side extending profile includes a flat face **16** defining a first extending edge and such as for sealing to an associated front end module (see as best shown in assembly view of FIG. **3** with an opposite side extending profile **11** being a mirror opposite of that depicted at **10** and, with associated with the upper **12** and lower **14** extending portions, collectively assembling into the perimeter enclosing frame construction).

[0020] The side profile **10** depicted further includes an angularly connecting intermediate location **18** is separated from the flat face **16** via a first pin receiving profile **20** (this depicted in integrally constructed fashion in FIG. **1** on a reverse face of the profile **10** as compared to that shown in the assembly of FIG. **3**). The cross sectional profile further illustrates a greater than semi-circular cross sectional shaped snap fit location. A body **22** (see again FIG. **1**) extends from an angled edge of the intermediate location (planar) **18** with arcuate edges **24** and **26** (such as defining a greater than 180 degree profile) for snap attaching to an associated radiator condenser tank.

[0021] As further shown in the related variant of FIG. **4**, the body **22** of largely identical and modified profile **10'** exhibits bulbous projecting lip edges **25** and **27** (such as defining TPE beads for assisting in pin retention), this compared to naked edges **24** and **26** defined in corresponding edges of bod **22** in the profile **10** of FIG. **1**, this again for attaching to an associated radiator condenser tank (not shown).

[0022] As best shown in FIG. **1**, the arcuate snap fit body portion **22** again exhibits in cross section a profile at least 180° in configuration and, as shown, more closely 210° or greater, thus ensuring secure snap fit engagement over the associated condenser tank location (not shown). A second pin receiving and likewise arcuate extruded profile is depicted at **28** on a reverse facing and generally intermediate surface location of the snap fit portion **22** (as depicted in both related variants **10** and **10'** in each of FIGS. **1** and **4**) and which, similar to the first pin receiving profile **20**, exhibits a curled semi-circular or greater cross sectional shape for receiving in biasing engaging fashion an end installed push pin (as further depicted at **36** in each of FIGS. **2** and **6A-6C**).

[0023] All of the profile components heretofore described are formed from the initially extruded/harder polymer material, and to which is coextruded the second softer material **30**, such as which is shown in one non-limited variant secured to the snap fit portion **22** a proximate spaced distance from the outermost extending edge **26**. In this fashion, the second material **30** defines an opposite and angularly extending edge (see again FIGS. **1** and **3**) for contacting side extending locations associated with the radiator face. As further described, the second material **30** is coextruded with the first harder material, see components **16**, **18** and **22**, however the present invention also contemplates other forming processes which result in the creation of a similar article.

[0024] FIG. **5** illustrates a similar profile extrusion **10''** to that described in FIG. **4**, with the exception that a third mate-

rial is employed in a three material (tri-extrusion) construction. Specifically, the pin receiving profiles **20** and **28** forming integrally defined portions of the main body extrusion are substituted by a pair of separate and lower durometer tubes **32** and **34** which are coextruded at spaced locations onto the main harder extruded profile.

[0025] Referring finally to FIGS. **6-6C**, a series of illustrations are given of an installation arrangement utilizing a series of push pins, see at **36**, which install through aligning edge apertures **38** defined at each of the edges of the top **12** and bottom **14** profiles (for purposes of ease of illustration the top profile **12** being shown only). Upon positioning each of the pair of side profiles according to any of the variants **10**, **10'** or **10''** between the top **12** and bottom **14** members in the manner illustrated in each of FIGS. **3** and **6**, the apertures **38** align with the inserting/press fit locations associated with either of the pin receiving profile **20** and **28** (variants **10** or **10'**) or tri-extruded tubes **32** and **34** (variant **10''**).

[0026] As also shown in FIG. **2**, the push pins **36** each further exhibit a ridged or other pseudo-serrated stem to facilitate frictional locking engagement when installed through the aperture **38**, as depicted in the succession of views in FIGS. **6A-6C**, and so that the pins **36** establish an inter-engaging contact with the interior of the tubes or inner configured profiles depending upon the variant employed. The multiple pieces comprising the frame assembly thus depicted in FIGS. **3** and **6** are capable of being shipped flat and quickly assembled upon successive positioning and installation of the press fit pins.

[0027] Having described my invention, other and additional preferred embodiments will become apparent to those skilled in the art to which it pertains, and without deviating from the scope of the appended claims.

I claim:

1. A seal for use with a vehicle radiator, comprising:
 - a plurality of edge extending and assembleable portions establishing a frame around the radiator; and
 - at least one of said edge extending portions further having a co-extruded material including a first harder material and a second softer material.
2. The seal as described in claim 1, said first harder extruded material including flat extending first face, an intermediate positioned snap fit portion for engaging a condenser tank, and at least one pin receiving location.
3. The seal as described in claim 2, said softer extruded material further coextruded to an edge of said first material and, upon assembly into the frame, laying onto a radiator face.
4. The seal as described in claim 2, said pin receiving locations further comprising a third extruded lower durometer material.
5. The seal as described in claim 1, at least one interconnecting and edge extending portion further comprising a single extruded material interconnecting with additional coextruded edge extending portions.
6. A seal for use with a vehicle radiator, comprising:
 - a plurality of edge extending and assembleable portions establishing a frame around the radiator;
 - at least a pair of opposite side and edge extending portions further having a co-extruded material including a first harder material and a second softer material;

said first harder extruded material including flat extending first face, an intermediate positioned snap fit portion for engaging a condenser tank, and at least one pin receiving location; and

said softer extruded material further coextruded to an edge of said first material which, upon assembly into the frame, laying onto a face of the radiator.

7. The seal as described in claim 6, said pin receiving locations further comprising a third extruded lower durometer material.

8. The seal as described in claim 6, at least one interconnecting and edge extending portion further comprising a single extruded material interconnecting with additional coextruded edge extending portions.

9. A coextruded seal profile incorporated into a multi-assembleable construction defining a frame about a vehicle radiator, said profile comprising:

at least a pair of opposite side and edge extending portions which are inter-assembleable with upper and lower portions, said side extending portions each defining a coextruded material including a first harder material and a second softer material;

said first harder extruded material including at least a flat extending first face, an intermediate and angularly connecting location extending from said first face, and an at least semi-circular cross sectional shaped snap fit portion adapted for engaging a condenser tank; and

said softer extruded material further coextruded to an edge of said first material which, upon assembly into the frame, laying onto a face of the radiator.

10. The invention as described in claim 9, further comprising a plurality of projecting locations defined upon a reverse face of said profile and, upon aligning with apertures formed in the upper and lower portions, adapted to receiving push pins in resistively engaging fashion.

11. The invention as described in claim 9, said reverse face projecting locations each further comprising third extruded material defining a low durometer tube.

12. the invention as described in claim 9, said reverse face projecting locations each further comprising a curled semi-circular or greater extruded cross sectional shape.

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