

IFAI EXPO 2006 Broke Attendance Records

Exhibitors Showed Off The Exciting Diversity Of A Growing Industry

The largest gathering ever held in the Americas for the specialty fabrics industry took place with the IFAI Expo 2006 in Atlanta, October 3 - November 2. Over 8,300 participants from 81 countries swarmed the aisles at the Georgia World Congress Center to see 441 exhibitors showcasing material, equipment and services. Complementing the comprehensive trade show were the eight market-specific educational symposiums which featured more than 100 presentations from industry experts.

The buzz on the trade show floor confirmed that this IFAI Expo, organized by the Industrial Fabrics Association International, was a roaring success! Attendees gave rave reviews:

- Kurt Lisk, co-owner of Get in the Wind, said that "The Atlanta show was great for us this year. We were shopping for sewing machines, and we got to see the whole range of commercial options."
- And from Tom Africa, Senior Industrial Designer/Soft Goods Developer of Priority Design: "I searched the country for four years for a good materials show. I found it here!"
- Exhibitors were very pleased with the quality of the turnout as well. Carl Fortin of Clariant Corporation said, "Clariant had a tremendous turnout! Several new, potential customers visited our exhibit. IFAI Expo 2006 surpassed my expectations!"

The exhibitors featured a rich diversity of products that make up the specialty fabrics industry today. This is not your grandfather's canvas products show. One exhibiting company featured liquid crystal polymer fiber airbags for the Mars *Pathfinder*, *Spirit* and *Opportunity* landings on the surface of Mars. This exhibit was side-by-side with the latest UV-resistant retractable awnings that help homeowners save energy costs. Another exhibitor produced geosynthetic membranes that help reclaim lakes; rebuild levees and beach-protecting reefs, and make green roof environments possible. Tensile structures which provide shade and architectural design interest were next to the latest marine fabricator designs for luxury yacht appointments. Military, government and Homeland Security products made from specialty fibers and fabrics were also on display along with medical textiles, safety gear for firefighters, filtration and the latest heart-sensing athletic/sporting equipment.

The specialty fabrics industry today holds a prominent role in the global marketplace and is one of the most exciting areas around for innovative new applications in hundreds of product categories. To prove the point, IFAI Expo again featured its annual design competition called the International Achievement Awards (IAA). The competition challenges specialty fabric companies and their designers to bring forward their most creative design solutions using specialty fabrics. All the entries receive exposure at the annual IFAI Expo and in the press. This year was the 59th year for the industry's most prestigious award competition. Visit www.ifai.com to see the winners, which came from 348 entries in 27 categories, from 13 different countries. These incredible works span everything from the dolphin stand at the Miami Seaquarium, to the Pabellon de Estado at the Madrid Airport, to a Futuristic Sleep & Dreams Bioscope in France, to large-scale fabric banners and flags at the NBA All-Star Game 2006, and even a physiological status monitoring shirt. The competition alone is a story unto itself! (High-resolution photos and detailed project descriptions are available to the press by request only. Please direct your photo requests to Jessica Sellers at +1 651 225 6982 or jsellers@ifai.com.)

According to IFAI President Steve Warner, "The attendance and exhibits this year prove without a doubt that the specialty fabrics industry is stronger than ever, providing innovation and practical applications across many market sectors. These aren't simply dreams for something that might be possible someday. Our Expo presents practical solutions that everyone is looking for. Our goal in organizing the IFAI Expo is to provide a marketplace that showcases new technology and provides networking opportunities by bringing in the dominant companies involved in our industry. I think we accomplished this goal with IFAI Expo 2006."

IFAI will continue on its current roll when the IFAI Expo comes to the Las Vegas Convention Center, Oct. 3-5, 2007. According to Warner, over **75%** of the exhibit space for IFAI Expo 2007 in Las Vegas has already been booked by exhibitors at the IFAI Expo in Atlanta.

MEGATEX was the innovative umbrella of events created with the co-anchoring exhibitions of the American Textile Machinery Exhibition - International's ATME-I 2006® and the Industrial Fabrics Association International IFAI Expo 2006. MEGATEX also included the co-location of the American Association of Textile Chemists and Colorists' AATCC 2006 International Conference & Exhibition and events organized by 10 additional textile industry organizations. The combined trade shows provided the unprecedented opportunity to access all sectors of the market in one location. Because of this, MEGATEX received the prestigious designation as an International Buyers Program by the U.S. Department of Commerce, which promotes trade shows that are helping suppliers, fabricators and manufacturers connect across international lines.

An IFAI Expo 2006 Fast-Fact Recap:

Exhibits

- 441 Exhibitors
- 83 were new exhibitors

Visitors

- New RECORD! Over 6,000 pre-registered participants
- 38% of visitors are first-time participants
- Came from over 80 countries

Educational programs during Expo

- 110 Speakers
- 8 full-day educational symposiums

2006 IFAI International Achievement Awards - go to www.ifai.com to read the story on the top achievers in this design excellence competition.

- 348 entries
- 27 categories
- Entries from 13 different countries

IFAI Expo History:

Participants Exhibitors

IFAI Expo 1999 7,542 430
IFAI Expo 2000 7,376 482
IFAI Expo 2001 5,835 442
IFAI Expo 2002 7,356 490
IFAI Expo 2003 7,349 480
IFAI Expo 2004 6,516 413
IFAI Expo 2005 6,259 437
IFAI Expo 2006 8,300+ 441

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