

techtextil north america **preview**

Techtextil North America expects record visitor figures

The American trade fair dedicated to technical textiles and nonwovens is leading the industry forward, writes **Kathlyn Swantko**

The seventh edition of Techtextil North America, which will run from May 18-20, is set to be bigger than ever, with pre-registrations topping record figures. The event brings together companies from around the world to the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta, Georgia, to showcase the latest advancements that the technical textiles and nonwovens industry has to offer.

Stephanie Everett, group show director, says: "Our pre-registration demographic numbers are significantly higher than any previous Techtextil North America, which doesn't include the crossover we will also

receive from Sewn Products Equipment and Suppliers of the Americas (SPESA) Expo and the American Textile Machinery Exhibition International (ATME-I). As a result, we expect to see the best attended Techtextil North America ever."

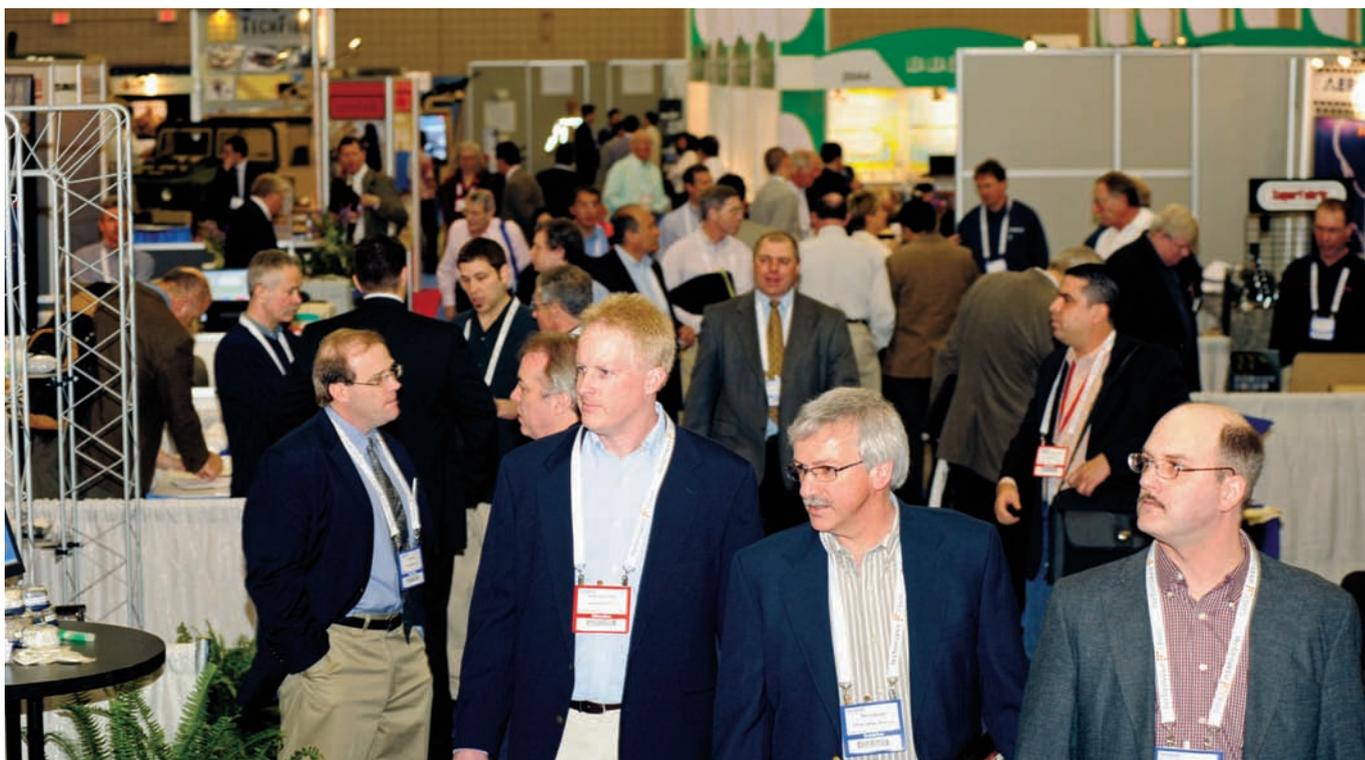
Everett explains: "We expect to have about 300 exhibitors at this year's event, which includes about 52% international exhibitors from outside the US, and about 48% from US-based companies. This is right on par with our 2008 numbers."

As this year's show will run concurrently with two other events, show organisers expect to offer more value for everyone involved. Everett says: "The overall event is

much bigger and will provide additional benefits for visitors and exhibitors alike. Innovation, new ideas and new markets are always the goal. And, by overlapping these shows, we provide even more of this potential to our attendees and exhibitors."

Attendance for Techtextil North America is anticipated to be 4,000 to 4,500 but, based on quotes from the other two shows, the overall attendance is expected to exceed 12,000.

Techtextil North America focuses on the entire value-added chain in the technical textiles and nonwovens sectors, which includes ten contributing product groups ranging from research, planning, and



The last edition of Techtextil North America in Atlanta, 2008.



New topics such as sustainability will be discussed at Techtextil North America's symposium series.

consultancy on the academic side, to publications on the marketing side.

According to Everett, the product groups that are currently doing well and are expected to have continued growth include smart fabrics, protective textiles and technical nonwovens.

She says that application areas that are expected to see growth include Medtech (medical), Geotech (geosynthetics), and Protech (protective apparel, safety, military). "There is also a growing demand for eco-friendly and sustainable materials in all areas," Everett adds.

"I also expect to see continued interest in Sporttech and Clothtech as the apparel industry continues to rebound. This growth will always revolve around those applications with the most potential at the time. The US continues to be a driving force behind innovation and idea generation, so companies are adjusting to fill these new developments and needs."

One of the most exciting aspects of Techtextil North America is its symposium series, which has been heralded as "world class and the best symposium of its kind," by the trade press. Under the leadership of Bill Smith, the advisory board selects seminar topics that offer a variety of relevant and meaningful information.

Smith explains: "We always try to present things that we feel will make an impact on the industry – information that will help people adjust their businesses and get through these tough times, from which we are slowly recovering."

According to Smith, there are certain

areas that need to be covered, such as nano topics, the military and the research being done by the National Textile Center. By paying attention to what's happening in the industry, the advisory board is better able to pre-determine new areas that look promising in generating interest among attendees. This year, the symposium series offers some all-time favourites, alongside some new highlights.

Smith says: "Sustainability is new to the programme this year and product development will be covered after a lapse of several years. We are constantly adjusting the seminars to see what works best and I think that's what has made Techtextil North America so successful."

The symposium series will start with a keynote speech by Kim Glas, deputy assistant secretary of commerce for textiles and apparel within the US Department of Commerce (DOC). She will present the range of trade issues affecting the technical textiles industry, as well as details on the DOC's sustainable manufacturing initiative. The session will also feature a panel of industry leaders to provide a comprehensive overview of the economy, world trade, and industry opportunities within the technical textiles arena.

Three seminar topics will run concurrently on the afternoon of May 18 – Technical Textile Research, chaired by National Textile Center executive director Dr Martin Jacobs; Natural Fibres and Sustainable Materials in Technical Textiles,

chaired by Edward Gregor, president of Edward C. Gregor Associates, LLC; and High Performance Narrow Fabrics chaired by Louis Franconi, VP of Bally Ribbon Mills.

The morning of May 19 will feature three more concurrent seminar topics – Developments to Impact the Military Industry, chaired by Eugene Wilusz, PhD, senior NBC scientist, warfighter science, technology and applied research for the Natick Soldier RD&E Center; Practical Traditions in Filtration Nonwovens, chaired by Dr Behnam Pourdeyhimi, executive director of Nonwovens Cooperative Research Center, The Nonwovens Institute, NCSU; and Unique Fibre and Yarn Developments, chaired by Gerald Mauretti, president EY Technologies.

The afternoon sessions on day two will consist of panels addressing the topics of new product development, protective textiles and nonwovens technology updates. The final symposium sessions will culminate on the morning of day three, with three seminars focused on new and improved technologies that offer potential growth, such as nanotechnology, carbon fabrics and the laser joining of high performance fabrics.

Smith says: "We have many good – really good – companies, inventive people, excellent marketing, and true world leaders here, which bodes well for us in the long run. Successful companies should seek out the information that Techtextil North America presents and use it to prepare for their future."

● www.techtextilna.com