



The National Association
for the
Sewn Products Industry

SEAMS.....Important

The National Association for the Sewn Products Industry

Volume XXXI, Number 3.....June, 2009

SEAMS Fall Conference to Tour NCSU Facility...

The SEAMS Association's **Fall Networking Conference** will be held on **October 15-16, 2009**, in Raleigh, North Carolina at NC State University's College of Textiles. We will tour their facility to see all the latest innovations in the world of textiles and design.

Our meeting will include the Election of Officers and Directors for the year 2010, informative speakers, topical sessions, and a golf outing. Details will be sent as they are finalized.

Mark your calendars now and SAVE THE DATES !



"Made in USA Supply Chain" Pavilion Powered by SEAMS at SPESA Expo 2010...

SEAMS President Gerald Schwartz announced at the recent Spring Conference that **SEAMS will endorse the SPESA Expo 2010**, to be held in Atlanta, Georgia, on May 18-20, 2010.

SEAMS will present a showcase of products produced by our members in a pavilion representing the **USA Softgoods Supply Chain**. There will be individual booths and an open area where attendees can see examples of our members' capabilities, products, and services at every link in the entire supply chain.

SEAMS has reserved over 2,000 square feet of exhibit space for the **SEAMS USA Softgoods Supply Chain Pavilion** to show the world what our members can do. Each SEAMS member participating in the pavilion will receive, in addition to their 10x10 booth space, a FREE listing in the Show Directory, and a FREE listing on a full-page four-color advertisement featuring the USA Softgoods Supply Chain Pavilion. Contact SEAMS at 803-772-5861 for more information about exhibiting. The cost for SEAMS members to exhibit in the pavilion will be sent out in July.

The SPESA Expo 2010 will join with two other international trade organizations, Techtexil North America, and ATME-I/Megatex, to host a bigger-than-ever conference and exposition that will cover every aspect of the global sewn products concept-to-delivery sewn products lifecycle; from product design to product development, engineering to pre-production, sourcing to production, and logistics to distribution. The event will provide valuable information and insight for every sewn products company, including contractors, manufacturers, brands, agents, and retailers.

SPESA Expo 2010 is owned and organized by the North Carolina-based industry association SPESA, the Sewn Products Equipment & Suppliers of the Americas. For information visit www.spesaexpo.com.



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COMING EVENTS

October 15-16, 2009 --
SEAMS Fall Conference
NCSU, Raleigh, NC

November 11-12, 2009 --
Apparel's Tech Conference
New York, NY

May 18-20, 2010 --
SPESA Expo 2010
GA World Congress Center
Atlanta, GA

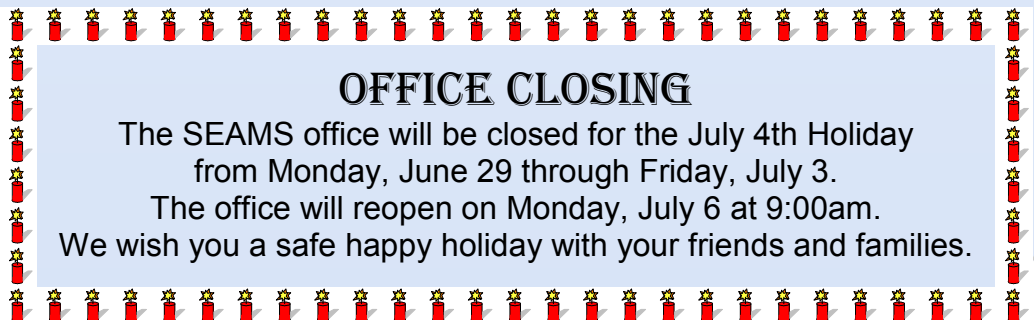
May 21-22, 2010 --
SEAMS Spring Conference
Atlanta, GA

OFFICE CLOSING

The SEAMS office will be closed for the July 4th Holiday
from Monday, June 29 through Friday, July 3.

The office will reopen on Monday, July 6 at 9:00am.

We wish you a safe happy holiday with your friends and families.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS !

Thoughts from the Executive Director...

Oh, those lazy, hazy days of summer!

Well, it's anything but lazy at your SEAMS office. We are extremely busy working on great opportunities for our members. So, buckle up and get ready for a great second half of the year!

Our offices will be closed next week for the holiday. Maggie and I hope you have a safe holiday with your families.

.....**Sarah**

SAVE THE DATE !

**October 15-16, 2009
SEAMS Fall Networking Conference**

**NCSU College of Textiles
Raleigh, North Carolina**
Details to be sent as they are finalized.

SEAMS is...a not-for-profit association working for the improvement of the sewn products industry...since 1967.

Dues Discount Incentive Program...

SEAMS incentive program helps us grow and helps our members! SEAMS members can earn discounts toward their next dues invoice by signing up new members.

For every NEW MEMBER that a current member signs up, SEAMS will apply a **20% discount** to the current member company's next dues invoice, **up to 100%**. If you sign up five (5) new member companies within one year, you could owe us nothing for your next years' dues!

We encourage members to talk to their colleagues in the sewn products industry to encourage them to join SEAMS. Let us know who you are speaking to, and we will mail them an informational packet that will answer all of their questions. We see this as an ongoing membership drive, with the added bonus for current members of reducing their dues.

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Morris Saintsing, CEO

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Johnny Winkler, Senior Partner

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WEBSITE: www.cockpitusa.com

EMAIL: jacky@cockpitusa.com

Jacky Clyman, Production/Sales

Jeff Clyman, CEO

Cockpit USA is 33-year-old company continuing to manufacture in the USA. Offering leather and textile outerwear as well as woven shirts, bottoms, and tee shirts. Cockpit USA has the current official contract for the USAF A-2 flight jacket.

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Referral Sources -- here's how these new members heard about SEAMS.

New MemberSource of Referral

Bamboosa Palmetto Apparel

B & W Consulting Partners..... former member

Cockpit USA..... Leathercraft Sportswear

TRICOR..... Tony Ellis, former member

For all the details about member referrals and how to earn discounts toward your annual dues, please see the information box on this page.

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*Do you need ...to locate a contractor, ...a source for an unusual trim item,
...to find a special piece of equipment, ...or to hire qualified personnel?*

Here's your answer...

The SEAMS Association is a **COMPLETE SUPPLY CHAIN** comprised of a wide variety of companies who can do anything. Through this network of contacts we can find anything that you need in your daily operations, even that once-in-a-while "thingamajig" that you didn't know you needed. We get phone calls and emails in the SEAMS office every day with requests for help, both from members and from nonmembers. These requests are sent out by email and FAX to our entire membership -- **and we know that a SEAMS member will come through with a solution.**

Since the last newsletter the SEAMS office has received requests for help to find companies to sew all these items: polo shirts, small stuffed animals, men's dress shirts, backpacks, tee shirts, baby rompers, and woven pants & shirts.

We received requests for help finding a source for dri-fit fabrics, bamboo fabric, poly-wool fabric, a pattern digitizer, marker making, and fleece fabrics.

As you can see, we get a wide variety of requests every week. By tapping into our **COMPLETE SUPPLY CHAIN**, we are able to help most people who contact us.

So remember, whatever you need, **SEAMS CAN HELP!**

Cheating hurting U.S. textiles, officials say...

Gastonia mill exec, others will testify to Congress today about foreign smuggling, job losses and lax enforcement.

By Barbara Barrett
Washington Correspondent
Posted: Thursday, Jun. 18, 2009

WASHINGTON U.S. trade data show that more cotton yarn was exported from the United States last year than was actually produced in this country, which sounds suspicious to a Gastonia mill executive.

Dan Nation, a division president of Parkdale Mills, will tell Congress today that he thinks foreign companies are lying about where they are making their yarn. The result, he says, are illegal, duty-free imports that undercut American-made textiles and cost jobs both domestically and in free-trade countries. He has had to close plants in South Carolina, North Carolina and Alabama since late last year, laying off 450 workers.

"The cheaters are winning," Nation said in an interview. "I'm really getting tired of sitting down and looking at people in the eye and telling them they don't have a job anymore." Nation and other industry officials say foreign companies sneak products through free-trade countries and slap on fake paperwork – and that Customs and Border Patrol isn't doing enough to stop textile smuggling. "Inadequate enforcement allows fraud and corruption," Nation said in his prepared testimony, which was obtained by McClatchy Newspapers.

Nation accuses a company called Yarns America of operating a shell company in New York that actually produces its yarns overseas, then apparently sends it into the United States using fraudulent paperwork. A call to Yarns America's headquarters in Lawrence, N.Y., went to an answering machine and was not returned.

According to data put together by the National Council of Textile Organizations, more combed-cotton yarn was exported from the United States in 2008 than was produced and imported in this country. "I mean, people are lying, or else there's some awful problem in the data collection somewhere," said David Trumbull, vice president for international affairs for the National Textile Association. "It was a real wake-up call to me."

He said new trade agreements with Central America, North America and sub-Saharan Africa bring new regulations that can overwhelm enforcement agents at the borders. "We don't know what is going on, what's coming into the United States under these preference programs," Trumbull said.

Today's hearing, led by U.S. Rep. Heath Shuler of Waynesville, will look into how illegal textile imports affect small businesses. Shuler is chairman of the subcommittee on rural development, entrepreneurship and trade for the House Committee on Small Business.

"I intend to raise the profile of an issue that has cost the jobs of hardworking Americans, especially in the Southeast," Shuler said Wednesday in a prepared statement. Although textiles make up a relatively small percentage of imports, they carry high duties – making them attractive for smugglers looking to exploit weaknesses in enforcement systems, said Loren Yager, director of International Affairs and Trade for the Government Accountability Office. He will testify at the hearing.

"With this industry, quite a lot of responsibility is with the (Customs and Border Patrol) agency and control of the border," Yager said in an interview. "We don't make specific recommendations about number of personnel they need to have. We believe they need to do a better job of assessing the number of personnel they need and presenting that kind of a plan clearly to Congress."

Four years ago, then-President George W. Bush toured the R.L. Stowe textile plant in Belmont to reassure workers that CAFTA would not hurt their jobs. This past winter, the plant shut its doors.

Company president D. Harding Stowe said he had been assured by the president that the White House would crack down on textile smuggling. "Lack of effective customs enforcement was an important factor in our decision to close the business," Stowe said in his prepared testimony.

"It is my hope that by contributing to this hearing other American textile companies that still remain in business will have a future in our industry."

<http://www.charlotteobserver.com/business/story/785849.html?q=textiles>



Industry News...

MINNESOTA BANS NON-US CLOTHING IN PUBLIC COLLEGE BOOKSTORES...

Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty on May 16 signed into law the *Omnibus Higher Education Appropriations Act* (SF 2083). Buried in the 65-page legislation was a short provision that states, "To the extent possible, a bookstore located on the campus of a public college or university in Minnesota must offer for sale clothing or articles of apparel that are manufactured in the United States of America. The college or university must make a report to the legislature on the results of efforts made to comply with this section."



US Textile Makers Have Problems With New Trade Bill

James A. Morrissey, Washington Correspondent

US textile manufacturers are deeply concerned about legislation introduced in the Senate last week that would provide duty-free treatment for apparel imports from some of the poorest nations in Asia. The legislation's sponsors, Sens. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., and Kit Bond, D-Mo., say it is designed to help 14 impoverished nations sustain "vital export industries and promote economic growth and stability," but US manufacturers say it will undercut existing preferential trade agreements and cost American jobs.

While the bill calls for use of yarn and fabric made in the United States or the participating countries, it allows for yarn and fabric inputs from anywhere in the world during the first eight years of the proposed agreement. US textile manufacturers see it as a potential conduit for yarn and fabric made in China, and in addition, they fear it will undercut virtually every preferential trade agreement the United States has with nations and regions such as Mexico, the Caribbean, African nations that are participants in the African Growth and Opportunity Act; and bilateral agreements with other countries throughout the world.

An analysis of the bill by the National Textile Association (NTA) concludes "it will give duty-free access to a quantity of apparel assembled in the beneficiary countries and third parties at a level approximately equal to historic trade under general rates of duty. It is not likely to lead to increases of US inputs." In addition, NTA expects most of the growth would come from Bangladesh, which already is a major exporter of apparel.

The American Manufacturing Trade Action Coalition points out that Bangladesh already is the third-largest exporter of apparel to the United States, just behind China and Vietnam; and Cambodia, another participant, is not far behind. Many of the 14 designated countries do not have any textile manufacturing capability, and, therefore, would not benefit from the legislation on a scale anywhere near as great as the already dominant apparel-exporting countries.

Cass Johnson, president of the National Council of Textile Organizations, sees the bill as a boon to US retailers and other importers, as they would not have to pay the nearly \$1 billion in duties they currently pay on imported goods from Bangladesh and Cambodia. "They would be getting a billion dollar bailout under the guise of helping impoverished countries," he said.

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- Boxpleating
- Ruffling
- Trapunto
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- Multi-Needle Trims
- Tucking - Multi-Needle
- Picotedge
- Belting
- Purledge
- Shelledge
- Ruching
- Smocking
- Wire-Edge

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Webbing

- Tote Bag Type

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Is Made in the USA Enough?

by Dick Silverman
Posted Wednesday May 13, 2009
from WWD Issue 05/13/2009

The "Made in USA" label, particularly in hard economic times, resonates with some American consumers, but may do little to offset the enticement of lower cost for shoppers determined to seek value and savings during the recession.

Brooks Brothers, for one, is placing a bet that marketing the decision to manufacture 70 percent of its tailored clothing in a new \$20 million, 92,000-square-foot factory in Haverhill, Mass., will generate goodwill and boost sales.

"It gives us the ability to have the right product, in the right stores, at the right time," said Lou Amendola, Brooks Bros.' chief merchandising officer, adding the factory allows the retailer to be more efficient, and responsive to customers.

"We believe we are entering a new era, where consumers will increasingly focus on purchasing products they know are 'Made in America,'" he said.

Brooks Bros.' advertising, marketing and labeling campaigns, which are in development, will spotlight made in the new facility, accentuating the brand's US roots, he said.

The firm, founded in 1818, has a heritage of US Production. It makes ties in Long Island City, NY, and shirts in Garland, NC. Shoes are produced in the US, England, and Italy, and apparel is made in Italy and Asia. The plant may allow the company to eventually expand to other categories that are now without concentrated manufacturing in the US, Amendola said.

The US remains one of the most expensive nations in which to make products, which is why manufacturers have moved abroad, particularly to Asia and South America. But as the country struggles with job losses, business failures and cutbacks and shrinking consumer expenditures, purchasing domestic products promoted for their high quality and nimble distribution could combine with the emotional appeal of helping to get America back on its feet.

Workers at Des Plaines, Ill.-based Hartmarx Corp. are trying to tap into that sentiment as they, along with union leaders and elected officials, intensify pressure on creditor Wells Fargo to continue to fund the bankrupt men's company to avoid liquidation and save an estimated 3,600 jobs while a prospective sale is being negotiated.

This comes as some manufacturers are disenchanted with higher shipping and labor expenses for outsourced goods.

"The time is right for feeling good about America again," said Steven Smith, creative director of BrandEquity, a visual marketing and brand communications firm that 15 years ago convinced US athletic producer Penn to make red, white and blue tennis balls. "There is nothing wrong anymore in touting the fact something is American made.

The \$787 billion economic stimulus package that President Obama signed into law in February has a "buy American" clause for infrastructure projects, but it also contains an ample number of exceptions, and though Americans' appetite for Japanese cars and electronic gear has diminished because of the economy, those manufacturers remain formidable competitors for dollars, as the troubled auto industry well knows.

"The US public would like to buy cars 'Made in America' they could be proud of but...the perceived value now is that foreign brands make a better car," Smith said.

However, foreign suppliers are not without their own challenges. Growing discomfort about rising economic powers such as China might inspire shoppers to buy product made by American workers, said Michael Solomon, professor of marketing and director of consumer research at the Haub School of Business at St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia. Despite "globalization...the economic climate has people buying from home again," he said. "Everyone across the globe seems to be blaming us, and Americans are feeling defensive."

After the swine flu outbreak, which originated in Mexico, and health scares about Chinese-made toothpaste in 2007 and baby milk formula the following year, consumers question where goods they buy, wear and eat are produced, he noted. "In times like these, people are not feeling very cosmopolitan in embracing the world," Solomon said. "It's 'us first' now."

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Is Made in the USA Enough?

.....continued from page 6

And with the global market growing even more competitive, countries such as Vietnam, Cambodia, Ghana and Kenya are challenging China on the low-cost playing field. “So pressure among producers to keep costs low is intense,” said James Heintz, associate professor at the Political Economy Research Institute of the University of Massachusetts in Amherst.

Kevin Burke, president of the American Apparel & Footwear Association, minimized the branding power of the “Made in USA” label, pointing to statistics showing that 97 percent of US apparel purchased in 2008 was imported -- an estimated 30 percent of it from China. “Ask the average consumer what they look for when buying apparel and they say, ‘style, color and price,’” he said. “The label showing where the product was made is the last thing they look at...As long as the clothing is a good price, it doesn’t matter to them where it was made.” Burke said he met with college students on sourcing issues recently, and just one in 10 said that where a product was made meant anything to them.”

Although he praised Brooks Bros.’ commitment to domestic production, Burke said: “It’s hard to imagine that given the condition of the economy...domestic production is coming back. It would be phenomenal if it did, but I don’t think it will. If you look at the level of imports versus production, the numbers don’t even match up.”

Dov Charney, founder and chief executive officer of American Apparel, which makes all of its colorful fashion basics in Los Angeles, has said he is optimistic the company can maintain its domestic manufacturing, but he doesn’t dismiss the idea of moving some sourcing outside the US if necessary.

Nonetheless, consumers worldwide increasingly welcome “all things local” and favor merchandise produced where they live, according to Trendwatching.com, which tracks consumer products in 100 countries. “In a world ruled by globalization and mass production, a growing number of consumers are seeking the local, and thereby the authentic,” the firm said in a report.

Apparel brands could benefit if they promoted the specific regions where products are made, said Marc Gobé, president of Emotional Branding.com. For example, Brooks Bros. could label its merchandise “Made in New England,” a region shoppers associate with craftsmanship and tradition, he said. “There are better ways of promoting something than just stating ‘Made in America.’ It is a very broad concept and doesn’t have an emotional connection for people to be motivated by it.”

Some retailers and suppliers are finding American-made labels less risky because of the economic environment, said Brian Meck, vice president of sales and marketing and co-owner of Pennsylvania-based FesslerUSA. The company makes private label fashion tops, tanks, shorts, skirts and leggings in the contemporary, junior, misses’ and children’s markets for customers such as Nordstrom, Saks Fifth Avenue and Urban Outfitters.

“Just knowing they work with suppliers here they can trust gives them stabilization and comfort,” Meck said. “They find it reassuring that we work in the same time zone and speak the same language they do.” Clients express frustration with the efficiency and deliveries of foreign suppliers, and turn to the US to minimize uncertainty, he said.

Los Angeles-based premium denim manufacturer Chip & Pepper touts its US origins on rivets, inside tags, hang tags and leather patches, but its decision to manufacture domestically is a struggle. Brothers Chip and Pepper Foster, co-owners of the business, said many retail buyers still choose cheaper imported products.

“You just can’t get the same quality and access working overseas,” Chip Foster said. “It makes me sick when I see buyers meeting with importers, while my brother and I have a quality American-made product they won’t buy because they can get it for \$50 less overseas. “Sure, we can make jeans for \$30 in China or Mexico, but then there would be even fewer jobs in the US,” he says. “Buyers want cheaper jeans, consumers want cheaper jeans, but it’s expensive to make jeans here.”

Chip & Pepper still maintains control of all aspects of its production, but costs are rising to the point where wholesale prices are \$85 to \$155, he said. Even though the firm cuts, sews and washes all denim products in the US and buys rivets and buttons from American suppliers, “In the end, buyers are buyers, and what seals the deal is price points,” Pepper said.

An American designer, who manufactured in the US, echoed that complaint. The designer, who asked not to be identified, said: “In my heart of hearts, I’m so disappointed buyers do not believe in ‘Made in the US’ anymore, and how everything today at retail is about price.”

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OUR MISSION

The mission of the SEAMS Association is to **support the resurging US sewn products industry** through **membership networking and collaboration**; by **offering benefits packages** that help control overhead expenses; through **access to educational programs** to help improve the quality and productivity of the US sewn products industry collectively, and of our member firms individually; and by **keeping our members informed** about legislation in Washington, DC that impacts our industry.

The SEAMS Association is a not-for-profit organization comprised of manufacturing and contract manufacturing companies in the US sewn products industry. SEAMS supplier member companies provide valuable products and services to the apparel and sewn products industry. Membership in the SEAMS Association is one way to enhance your company's continued growth and success. The US sewn products industry faces many challenges and one of the best ways to promote the industry's interests is to join forces with business colleagues in the SEAMS Association.

SEAMS is dedicated to promoting a business climate which will enhance and support the retention of sound economic growth throughout the entire United States. The Association is constantly working to develop solutions to many of the challenges facing the sewn products industry. Participation as a member of SEAMS guarantees that the voice of the sewn products industry will be heard and responded to.

SEAMS member companies are located throughout the United States of America.

OFFICERS & DIRECTORS - 2009

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We welcome your input...

Please feel free to contact any of the officers and directors to share your ideas.

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