



A Review of GlassBuild America '08

Determined Attendees Find Their Way to Las Vegas

By Megan Headley, Ellen Rogers, Charles Cumpston, Tara Taffera and Penny Stacey

Speculation was rampant before the doors opened on GlassBuild America, held October 6-8 in Las Vegas. After all, the housing market was in the tank, the financial sector was in meltdown and the world's largest glass show—glasstec—was scheduled to take place a mere two weeks later in Germany (see *December 2008 USGlass*, page 64, for the *glasstec* review). Would anyone be at GlassBuild?

Yes, attendees came. And while numbers may not have been as high as in previous years, numerous exhibitors commented during the show that those who did attend were determined to make the most of the trip by focusing

on serious purchasing decisions.

Although the show may have held a pleasant surprise in that regard, absences were noted. One of the first things visitors noticed was that most of the primary glass manufacturers were not on the show floor. Some of the largest, most influential glass fabricators also were missing. Those who were present had a number of comments about the economy and the rumors of a glass shortage (see *September 2008 USGlass*, page 44, for related story).

Christine Shaffer, marketing manager for glass fabricator Viracon, which did exhibit, said that the company has seen a reaction to the current financial

situation. "Projects are being put on hold," she said.

Viracon's response continues to be toward the green initiative, she added. "We're always working toward that next coating and we'll be introducing some new products later this year."

Mauro DiFazio, vice president of flat glass sales for Zeledyne in Tulsa, Okla., said that because his company is in a niche market, tint products, "We're where we'd expect to be. We're not seeing massive drop-offs, but I'd say it's soft demand." The company had a ribbon cutting ceremony for a new line on June 1.

William Wyatt, the Americas regional manager for Rider Glass Co. Ltd., a Qingdao, China-based company that



(Left) Vitro America focused on rebranding its doors, glass walls, handrails and shower enclosures under the Envision™ name. (Above) Billco Manufacturing displayed its redesigned Titan glass washer alongside other new products.

Making the Most of Hard Times

If an upside was to be found to the impact of the economy, it was that attendees at the trade show were focused on making purchasing decisions in Las Vegas rather than simply traveling to the show to review the latest new products.

When asked if he felt the state of the economy would impact decisions to purchase major machinery, Cliff Green with IGE Solutions Inc. simply commented, "Everything in our booth is sold."

IGE had partnered with two new companies to provide additional product offerings. From Italy-based Denver, IGE had on display the CNC Quota, and from the Chinese company Landglass Technology Co. Ltd., IGE is now offering tempering machinery.

FOM USA likewise was kept busy and selling equipment that was sitting on the show floor, reported service manager Tom Merendino. "In these economic times it's something we're pretty excited about," he commented. He noted that the company was hearing a great deal of interest in its CNCs and sawing machinery.

According to Kimberly Davis of Glaston, despite the current economy it only makes sense for purchases to

be made on the show floor. "If customers are savvy they're going to start looking now," she said. "Now is the time to reorganize."

Each of Glaston's brands exhibited in the company booth, and Davis noted it was the first time Tamglass, Bavelloni and Albat+Wirsam all were on the show floor together under one banner.

Brian Hurley of Graham Architectural Products has been doing a great deal of looking forward as the new president continues to retool the company's direction. He commented, "My guess right now I think the first six months [of 2009] might be 'interesting,' but we'll turn the corner."

Hurley was preparing for another good year and looking at a somewhat larger purchase than simply components or machinery for producing the company's impact products. "You're going to see some continued consolidation," he said.

One company that had recently undergone such consolidation was on the show floor, and John Czopak, now machinery brand manager of Sommer & Maca, reported that the transition to becoming the glass machinery division of C.R. Laurence (CRL) has "been great." Czopak added, "Don Friese and his group are great to work with."

Czopak was buzzing over the fact that

exports containers of glass it produces to the United States, explained that his company has carried a low profile in the United States for the last five or six years but is now trying to increase its presence.

"We supply acid glass for showers and low-iron glass," he said. "We do most of our business with the companies that make finished products but we also supply distributors who process the glass in some way."

He said that the company is raising its profile even though there are several obstacles currently: "Transportation costs have had an impact as well as the weakness of the dollar and current economic conditions."

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the machinery division now has triple the amount of space that it previously had in its facility.

In addition, the company had a new edger on the show floor, with further additional products to come, Czopak reported. The VFE4C four-cup flat edger is able to grind and polish 1/8- and 1/2-inch glass in any random order without stopping to make adjustments.

Quaker Windows promoted its commercial products at the show—though it does have a residential arm as well.

“Our business is going toward commercial, because that’s the way the industry is going,” said Jimmy Maasen, marketing and sales for the Freeburg, Mo.-based company. The company hoped to meet contract glaziers at the show.

The Efficient Windows Collaborative also has added a commercial aspect to its work in promoting energy-efficient windows, with brochures now available for schools, storefronts and more.

One group that didn’t seem nervous were the security product suppliers.

“We’re doing fine,” said John W. Wood, marketing manager for Norshield Security Products, Montgomery, Ala. “We do a lot of high-end ballistic testing for government agencies. I don’t see a lot of cancellations in our market because we supply an area where security is paramount,” he explained. “This money is not going to be pulled from what’s going on in the financial markets now because it’s security.”

Wood said that while most of the work his company does is outside the U.S. for embassies, it also is doing work for the FBI and its new field offices around the country.

Saving Time and Money

Though traffic may have been scarce at times during this year’s GlassBuild, those in attendance were looking for ways to become leaner and save money, according to several suppliers and exhibitors.

EAM-Mosca was just one of the



Glass Curtains found interest in its frameless glazing display.

many companies offering a solution for this. The company provides a strapping machine for doors and windows, which is designed not only to work quickly and efficiently, but also to cut down on packaging costs.

Austria-based SoftSolutions, which just teamed up with FeneTech for its U.S. sales, offers line scanner products designed to scan glass for defects.

“We see lots of interest from companies because it saves them time and money,” said Christian Krenn of SoftSolutions. The line scanner product can be installed on a horizontal or vertical line.

Software company NetApps was offering another way to save time and money—by providing a software package that provides services throughout the life of a door or window, from the in-home quoting process right down to the manufacturing floor of the plant.

“You save time, you save money,” said Alain Ackad, sales manager for the Quebec-based company. “The world is getting smaller and we want to be a part of that for manufacturers. We want to give

manufacturers a way to help them out in this hard time.”

A LAMATEK representative said the company’s EcoBlocks, which are designed as both a green and a cost-saving product, are going over well for the same reason. “Manufacturers are looking for anything to save money,” she said.

While saving money was, of course, a major focus, saving energy remained a prominent topic as well.

Saving Money By Saving Energy

Cambridge, Ohio-based Edgetech IG had a unique theme at its booth that attracted many attendees. Companies who entered the booth could enter “Edgetech University.” Attendees were given a notebook, an insulating glass (IG) certification manual and a report card to take with them as they visited the different educational stations throughout the booth. All attendees who completed the program were entered into a drawing to win \$2,000 toward IG certification.

Also in the booth were representatives from the Insulating Glass Manufacturers Alliance, the National Fenestration Rating Council and Architectural Testing to answer questions and help educate attendees concerning IG certification.

At the booth's "MythBuster" station a few big myths were being dispelled, according to Edgetech's Brian Kress.

"Because our product is silicone foam, the competition said it must be metal to be strong. They say you can't meet hurricane wind loads with silicone," said Kress.

Kress explained to attendees that according to extensive testing performed by Edgetech silicone can indeed perform extremely well.

"What makes us good is what the competition said makes us bad," said Kress.

He also pointed out that metal bars won't meet the new thermal performance requirements that will soon be put in place.

Mark Silverberg, general manager for Technoform Glass Insulation, also talked about thermal performance.

"A lot of residential business is moving toward higher performing thermal products," he said. "That's a real shift in the market."

He added that his company is getting a lot of calls concerning the new forthcoming ENERGY STAR® requirements.

"We get a lot of calls from people who want to know how to improve the thermal performance of their windows."

Electronic Design to Market Inc. (EDTM) has long been a manufacturer of products for proving energy efficiency, but now is finding the need for its products is growing at a rapid rate.

New at this show is the company's WP4500, which is designed to show the energy performance (including percent of ultraviolet rays transmitted, visible light transmittance, infrared energy and solar heat gain coefficient) of a window that's already been installed and is in use.

"It's a much larger product, and it has a much wider opening," said EDTM's Mark Imbrock.

Though Imbrock calls this product an extension of what the company has been manufacturing in the past, he notes that lately customers are really looking for this type of product.

"All of our calls lately are: 'what can I do to show energy efficiency?'" he said.

Hardware: Putting the Pieces Together

Like most other segments of the industry, hardware manufacturers and distributors find themselves confronting tough economic conditions, but suppliers also see opportunities and changes.

Larry Whipple, business development manager of OEM markets for Adams Rite Mfg. Co., part of Assa Abloy in Pomona, Calif., sees changes in the market. When asked what was new at

the trade show, he replied, "Hardware with wires. Traditional, hardware has been mechanical and now it is morphing into electromechanical."

He pointed out, for example, that electric strikes are becoming important in a number of applications for access control.

"Next on the horizon will be thermal break sections," he said. "The objective is to keep the heat in and the cold out." Doors are being made with these thermal break sections and where the architectural metal product suppliers put the thermal break determines where they put the hardware. This is an issue for the hardware community.

"Fortunately, there is more cooperation among the hardware suppliers and the architectural metal suppliers in the U.S. than there is in Europe," he explained. This means that the thermal break sections are located more conveniently for the hardware suppliers and



Electronic Design to Market representatives heard demand for products showing energy efficiency.

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their electromechanical products.

Jim Murphy, vice president of Strybuc Industries in Sharon Hill, Pa., said suppliers are offering more diversity in finishes and styles as well as a wider variety of basic materials (brass, cast bronze, etc.).

"Companies want to give a wider array of offerings to customers," he said. He pointed out that Hoppe has a line that allows the same finish and style for all hardware in a project.

"Years ago, everyone was saying it's all going to be standardized," he said, "and it's been just the opposite. There is a wider array of choices."

Ed Williams, technical manager for Giese (part of the Italian company GSG International S.p.A.), said that companies are designing products around European hardware, which has enabled sales of his company to double in the last year.

His company offers a product with a Euro grove that allows for flexible application of hardware with minimal fabrication costs. "It fits in well with the U.S. perception that all the suppliers

want their product customized. This gives them the flexibility to do that while keeping inventory minimal."

Andrew Chatfield of CHMI in Keokuk, Iowa, said the company's latest bolt was designed to provide installers with flexibility, without having to stock numerous types of products. The company's combo bolt allows the product to be installed countersunk or non-countersunk. "It's a lot more flexible," Chatfield said of the product.

Roto Hardware also had new products on-hand, including Patio Life for the lift-and-slide market. "The handle lifts the sash and no force is required to lift the door from the sill," said Roto's Dan Gray.

"It's almost effortless," he said. "There is nothing like it."

Caldwell introduced its Mega Lift™ Hybrid Balance System, which is patent pending. The product supports a sash weight of 114 pounds, the average force to open it is 11 pounds, and to close is 26 pounds.

"People are very interested in this product," said Caldwell's John Kessler.

"It's ideal for heavy window applications." He added that the product, which has a 130-pound capacity, only requires a pair of balances.

"Anything that would come close to that would need four balances," Kessler said.

Machinery: Making It Work

While many machinery companies opted not to exhibit at GlassBuild, others had smaller booths and simply didn't bring their machines to the show. One of these companies was Joseph, though the company did introduce a new product in a unique way.

The company unveiled what it touted as its "Next Green Production System"—its Sash Welder/Cleaner Pass-through Process. This includes a four-point welder with pre-loader, automated welder/cleaner transfer and a four-point cleaner. The machine can produce 1,000 squares per shift, and only requires a one-person operation. The compact machine only requires 308 square feet of floor space.

"The size of our booth is the amount of space this machine will take in a plant," said Chris Cooper, senior sales engineer.

Carlson did bring a new machine to show—the ProMax Frame/Sash Clamp targeted toward smaller size manufacturers who make approximately 400 to 600 units per day.

The machine squares, clamps and fastens a variety of wood window frames or sash, and is designed for fast material placement and finished product removal. It is capable of producing more than 400 frames or sash per eight-hour shift, and features a programmable controller.

Wes Schneekolth, regional sales manager, stressed the benefits of having an affordable system for a smaller-sized manufacturer.

"They don't need a Cadillac when they can have a Chevy," he said.

He added that many companies con-



In its new guise as a division of C. R. Lawrence, Sommer & Maca brought new machinery to the show.

veyed to Carlson, “We like how you build a machine—we don’t need all the bells and whistles.”

Decorative Glass: All Decked Out

The decorative glass presence was strong among the many companies exhibiting at GlassBuild.

World Glass from Tampa, Fla., offered a variety of different products, including its line of dichroic glasses. National sales manager, Steve Schiamara explained that his company had built a vacuum chamber for the process that will hold glass as large as 80 by 60 inches.

“We apply a metal oxide to our clear, patterned glass, and that creates a stunning look,” said Schiamara. “It creates a glass that gives both reflected and transmitted light.”

The latest launch for Goldray—a glass magnetic marker board—was so new the company didn’t even have literature on it at the show. Cathie Saroka, marketing director, said the product is made by laminating glass to steel. It’s painted and can be used for maps, calendars and is ideal for offices and hospitals.

“We’re seeing so much demand and interest in this product,” said Saroka, who was trying to show more than just their products, but rather all of the ways that decorative glass can be used.

The industry has seen increased demand for glass that is attractive, but can also meet performance requirements, such as impact or safety glazing. Dependable GlassWorks of Covington, La., displayed a number of innovative uses for glass that can meet such criteria, in particular a door made with spun glass rondels. Will Watts, who works in product development, explained that rondels are made by hot glass studio artists who spin large round disks of glass. Because of the rondels’ shape, they are not easy to laminate or temper for safety applications.

“Our [poured resin] process allows us to take the rondel and laminate it be-



Truth Hardware had a variety of products on display for show attendees.

tween the glass lites to create a safety glazing product,” said Watts. “Something like this can be used as a conference room divider where you want some level of privacy, but still want light to flow through.”

Color was another key theme for decorative glass companies. First-time exhibitor Hirsch Glass Corp. of Dayton, N.J., displayed decorative glass featuring colors melted inside the panels, as well as glass tiles and mosaics.

The company’s Helen Zhao said the glass, for use in both interior and exterior applications, can be laminated for safety applications. The tiles and mosaics are applied onto tempered glass so they, too, can be used as safety glazing. She added that attendees had a lot of interest in her company’s glass products.

“The glass has been very well-received,” said Zhao. “Attendees say it’s very eye-catching.”

Gardner Glass Products from North Wilkesboro, N.C., displayed its colored glass products as well as a newly designed website, www.gardnerglass.com. The company offers 12 stock colors on Starphire® glass and its new website

features a kitchen design tool that allows users to see how different colors would look on the application.

“You can click on the various colors and the [image] changes to what the application would look like with that colored glass,” said John Myers, senior vice president of the company’s DreamWalls product line.

Acid-etched glass products also were on display from a number of companies. Walker Glass Ltd. out of Montreal promoted its new line of textured acid-etched glass and mirror products. Marc Deschamps, business development manager, said that while the economy may be suffering, he still expected to see a good bit of traffic during the show.

“We know the economy is slow, but we’ve been able to grow our business every year since we launched our acid-etched products [around 2003],” said Deschamps.

According to Tim Anderson, manager of specialty products for AGC North America, people are interested in acid-etched glass because of its consistent, soft translucent effect. AGC was at

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the show promoting its Matelux acid-etched line.

“The glass [can be used in] a long list of applications including partitions, doors, furniture, shelving, lighting, showers, building exteriors and more,” said Anderson. “It is processed like normal float glass, and its unique capability to soften light offers endless interior and exterior applications.”

Anderson added that his company saw a lot of interest in the Matelux product offering.

“As a design alternative to just acid-etch on clear glass we offers Matelux on a number of substrates like mirror, back painted glass, Clearvision-low iron and Stopsol reflective glass,” he said.

Imagery on glass—photos of people, nature scenes, logos and artwork—for example, was also popular among glass fabricators, architects and installers. Second-time exhibitor DipTech traveled all the way from Israel to exhibit its GlassJet, a digital frit printer. Matthew Tangeman from Custom Glass Machinery represents the company in North America and described the machine as one that can print extremely accurately, compared to other frit printing processes.

“We’re getting a lot of interest from architects, designers and specifiers,” said Tangeman. “They want to know how they can get this type of glass.”

Creative Specialties International, a division of Moen, was another first-time exhibitor. The company promoted MirrorScapes, through which a wood frame is applied to mirror, and hoping to reach glass shops with the new product.

“You can transform the look of a room in 30 minutes,” said Tim Bitterman, group marketing manager, of the system that’s applied piece by piece to the mirror.

Shower and Bath Enclosures: Showing Off Shower News

While the exhibitor name “Sapa” may



Glasslam had information on a variety of its IG spacer products.

have been new to the show, the faces behind it were not. The company was formerly Alumax before Sapa Fabricated Products acquired it (see August 2007 *USGlass*, page 28). Steve Atkinson, bath enclosure manager, said the company’s presence at the show this year is different—but not just because of the new name.

“In our booth we’re showing everything that we do,” said Atkinson. In addition to bath enclosures, the company offers a number of metal-fabricated products, including metal railings and wheelchair accessible ramps. He said the products have seen a lot of interest so far from contract glaziers already working on a jobsite.

“It’s an opportunity for the glass companies to sell something else,” said Atkinson.

As a first-time exhibitor, Basco Shower Enclosures was focused on growing its glass business and was working to educate and inform attendees about its products and services available.

“We’re pretty well-known on the

East Coast, but here on the West Coast [companies] are not as familiar with us,” said Tom Vezdos, vice president sales – contract distribution.

One new product for the company that Vezdos said has seen a lot of interest is its Preceria curved glass industries. In addition, the company also offers a number of decorative glass options—14 in fact—as well as 13 frame finishes. ■

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