

A Show to Watch

China Glass 2009 Brings in Mixed Reviews

by Megan Headley

While some attendees observed that North American attendance may not have been as strong at the 20th China International Glass Industrial and Technical Exhibition (China Glass 2009) as in years past, those visitors note that this remains a show to watch. This year's event took place at the Shanghai New International Expo Centre, May 13-16, 2009.

More than 800 companies from around the world exhibited at the event, organized annually by the Chinese Ceramic Society and co-organized by the Shanghai Ceramic Society. The exhibition area spanned 55,000 square meters—the largest in the history of the show—and hosted exhibitors representing 23 countries, including the United States.

Attendee Origins

Mike Hovan, president of Cambridge, Ohio-based Edgetech I.G. Inc., was among those that felt attendance was down over previous years. "There wasn't a lot of international interest compared to previous years," Hovan added, noting that there were few North American visitors specifically at this year's event. "There was a decent



Photo courtesy of Technoform.

Some said this year's China Glass was down slightly in attendance, due to the economy, but it continued to attract visitors from around the world.



Photo courtesy of Edgetech.

Attendees seemed to agree that the layout of China Glass 2009 was better organized, with a higher quality of displays, than in years past.



Mark Silverberg (left) traveled from Ohio to Shanghai where Technoform exhibited at the 20th China Glass.

contingent of international exhibitors,” just not of attendees.

Mark Silverberg, general manager of Technoform Glass Insulation North America Inc. in Twinsburg, Ohio, thought attendance was lower this year due to the construction crisis from last year.

Silverberg also observed that attendees hailed primarily from China and other Asia-Pacific countries. While exhibiting in the Technoform booth, he had the opportunity to speak with attendees from Australia and New Zealand, the Middle East and India, as well as a few attendees from North America.

It could be a relative matter. This marked the sixth time attending for Michael Spellman, president of IGE Solutions in Jupiter, Fla., and his outlook differed.

“At the show we all were very surprised to see the attendance high in such a down world economy. There

seemed to be absolutely no signs of recession at the show,” Spellman said. “We learned there were 836 exhibitors with 229 from foreign countries taking up a huge majority of the new exhibition center.”

Spellman did agree, though, that “attendance was from around the world [but] with very few North Americans.”

Gerhard Reichart, president of Glasslam NGI Inc. in Pompano Beach, Fla., found that “The industry was well represented across China, really across the globe.”

Reichart added, “I think the show was quite good. It was quite busy, especially the first two of the four days.”

Big Booths, But Old Products

Having attended the show for six years, Spellman said that he was surprised by the overall quality of the Chinese booths and the quality of what was being exhibited.

“Each year it seems to get better and better, but this year it seemed to take a quantum leap forward,” he said.

Hovan, who also has been attending for at least the last six years, agreed that this year’s event seemed to be better laid out and much more organized than in years past.

“They had separate tents outside [the expo hall] that were totally packed; people didn’t even have elbowroom going through the aisles,” Reichart recalled. He said that the show seems to continue to gain strength each year.

“I’ve been going for the past five years and it just continues to grow both in Beijing and in Shanghai,” Reichart said. “I think the Beijing one is typically a little bit bigger but the Shanghai one that it alternates with is right up there.”

While Jay Molter, vice president of marketing and sales for Glasstech in Perrysburg, Ohio, did not attend this year’s event, he has taken part in China Glass in previous years. Compared to North American trade shows, he said the biggest difference in China Glass is the size. “When you look at the number of halls the show covered, I believe China Glass has to be the second largest show in the world behind glasstec,” he added.

As the quality of the show improves, one can’t help but wonder when this show will be giving glasstec a run for its money.

Spellman said, “Most of our time was spent in two halls where our Chinese manufacturers, Landglass, Tenon, Hangdon and Golive were displaying,” he said, adding that he and his col-



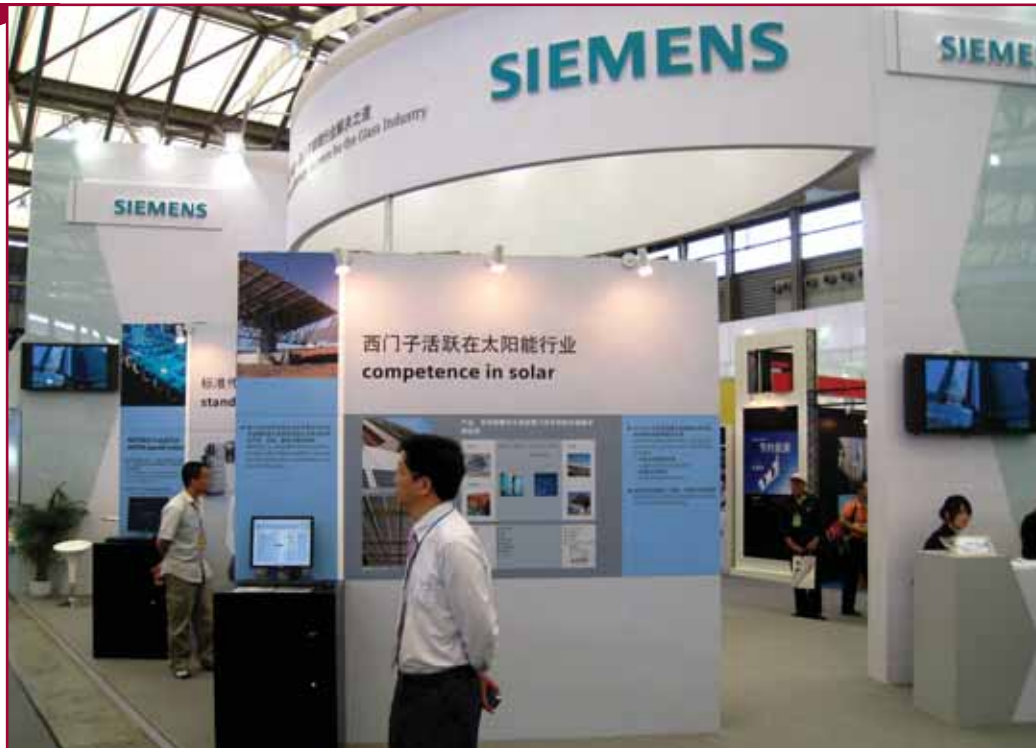
China Glass 2009 continued

leagues barely had time to see the entire show. "Each of our Chinese manufacturers was extremely happy with the results from the show, with much better sales than anticipated."

The Glasstech stand was manned by Randy Croson, the company's director of sales based in the United States, as well as employees from the company's Shanghai office. It also received steady traffic throughout the show. "Based on the report I received from our group following the show, we were pleasantly surprised," Molter said. "We received a number of quality enquiries that we believe will turn into solid business for Glasstech in the coming months."

According to Silverberg, among the biggest booths at the show were those of glass processing and insulating glass (IG) equipment companies, including Chinese IG equipment companies Tenon and Han Jiang. He noted that some of his company's customers, including South Glass, Pilkington, St. Gobain and Xinyi, went all-out with displays.

Photo courtesy of Technoform.



Siemens offered information on its solar glazing processing equipment, showing that solar is a big trend in glass around the world.

While the displays may have been impressive, the products weren't necessarily new to those North American or European attendees.

"There wasn't a whole lot that was new or surprising," Hovan noted. "Dip-Tech's laser printer had a lot of attention," and he observed that there were a number of companies showing off solar products, "but again, that's not really new."

Reichart observed a lot of interest in those solar products, such as the anti-reflective coated photovoltaic glass on display in XYG Glass' booth. "That was neat to see them making a lot of progress on that side," he said.

Reichart also saw that the Lisec booth had a great deal of traffic as attendees signed up for tours of the Austria-based company's Shanghai facility. A week prior to the show the company had installed new equipment and attendees signed up "to see the latest state-of-the-art warm-edge foam spacer automation."



Photo courtesy of Edgetech.

Dip-tech's laser printer drew attention at the show.

Coming Soon

Next year's event will be held in Beijing once again.

"My expectations run very high about the future of China Glass," Spellman said. He added, "The future is now in China and we are happy to be a part of it." ■

the author



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