

Go West

Techtextil North America was held in California for the first time this year. **Kathlyn Swantko** was there to report on the latest launches on show for the technical textiles and nonwovens industries



A RISING interest in domestic sourcing is emerging, as higher production costs and an increase in quality control problems have become major issues surrounding Asian sourcing. The shift has reinvigorated and motivated US innovators of both technical textiles and nonwoven fabrics in the development of new product ideas. The growing interest in US sourcing was particularly evident at Techtextil North America held for the first time in Anaheim, California, from March 19-21.

Chris Parlee, marketing director for Bemis, observed: "One of the key trends I see in the market is defined by the new term 'near-shoring' (sourcing products in America). The rising costs of doing business in China is bringing prototyping and development back to the US."

The show energised exhibitors and attendees, who found new suppliers, end-product manufacturers, and access to quality educational symposiums, as well as networking and business development opportunities.

"Techtextil is always a valuable show for us," said Dawn Clarke, vice president of technology for Duro Textiles. "We were slammed during the first few hours after the show opened, and we were surprised to meet many new customers, including international representatives

from Mexico and South America. For a small show, we were definitely justified in being here."

Steve Smith, vice president of sales and marketing for SSM Industries, said: "We saw a lot more East Coast people than what we expected. We were able to connect with both current customers and make new contacts, and the quality of appointments was great."

Among the exhibitors, Future Materials discovered a plethora of new and innovative product introductions, as well as technical services being offered to interested attendees.

Support Services for Product Development:

Bemis Associates showcased its market development capabilities and customer-based adhesive solutions at Techtextil North America. Chris Parlee, marketing manager, explained that customer service drives Bemis' film solutions and innovations for a variety of industries. "We continually improve our performance, service and understanding of our customers' needs. We maintain a wide range of adhesive chemistry so we can always offer the very best choice of formulations."

Spunfab Adhesive Fabrics featured its wide range of adhesive web products at the show. The webs, made of 100% thermoplastic polymer resins, use a unique, patented manufacturing process. The distinctive web structure is said to provide consistency over the substrate area, excellent breathability with control of porosity and superior drape and feel. Applications include medical, carpets, apparel, construction materials and technical textiles.

Schenck Vision offered its EasyInspect and EasyMeasure in-line inspection services for coated materials and nonwovens, as well as base and converted materials. The automated quality control and production process monitoring solutions provide assurance for the solar module, flat glass, film and foil, converting, paper, optical media, and semiconductor industries.

SNS Nanofiber Technology promoted its R&D services in nanofibre technology at the show. SNS's analytical lab is equipped with advanced technology and custom machinery, and customers have access to a team of scientists and engineers to assist with nanofibre prototyping. SNS also provides production services for an optimised nanofibre product on an industrial scale.

Equipment:

Tajima Industries displayed its TLMX series Heater Wire Sewing Machine, a computer-controlled head and frame, which sews heater-wire automatically onto a fabric. The machine is targeted towards a variety of applications including apparel, residential/commercial buildings, household appliances, automotive and semiconductor/electronics.

New Products:

American Cord & Webbing featured two new products from its narrow fabrics division: 3M reflective tape woven into Kevlar webbing and its e-textiles conductive webbing with the conductive wire woven into the substrate. From its plastics division, ACW showed its heat-stabilised FireLoc plastic nylon hardware.

American Polyfilm showcased its custom polyurethane films, specifically its 40mm blown polyurethane. API claims to be the only company in America to offer this product (12mm thickness is typical). The company is ISO certified and can produce a variety of made-to-order custom films.



American Cord & Webbing's 3M reflective tape woven into a Kevlar webbing



Tajima's TLMX series Heater Wire Sewing Machine, sewing heater-wire onto a fabric

BASF displayed the capabilities of Acrodur, a natural environmentally-friendly one-component binder system for a variety of industry applications. The Acrodur binder consists of a modified polyacrylic acid and a polyalcohol cross-link that can be used as a binder for such renewable raw materials as kenaf, flax, hemp, or wood, to form a low-VOC, very lightweight and strong bio-composite.

Berwick Offray, a new exhibitor at Techtextil, is widely known as the largest domestic ribbon manufacturer. At the show, the company garnered strong interest in digitally-printed ribbon, as well as new commercial developments utilising its engineering for custom manufacturing to customer specifications.

Duro Textiles/Galey & Lord/Best Textiles (divisions of Patriarch Partners) featured three new products at Techtextil. Galey & Lord in conjunction with Vestagen launched their Vestex Technology, a series of active barrier protective fabrics. Vestex technology offers a level of barrier protection in conjunction with a fast-acting antimicrobial, while maintaining breathability and comfort. The 4.5 to 10oz fabrics

are proven safe for 50 industrial washings, and can also be sold as packages through Best Textiles. The second innovation, Komanda, was developed through a partnership between Patriarch Partners and the Germany-based Norafin. This super lightweight (4.9 oz/sq yard) FR blended rayon fabric has applications in work wear for category 2 arc flash hazards and is NFPA 2112 compliant. The fabric is safe for 100 washings and is offered as broad fabric through Galey & Lord and full package through Best Textiles. The third technology is Duro and Alexium International Group's Ascalon, a durable flame- and water-repellent nylon. The fabric is eco-friendly, no melt/no drip and breathable.

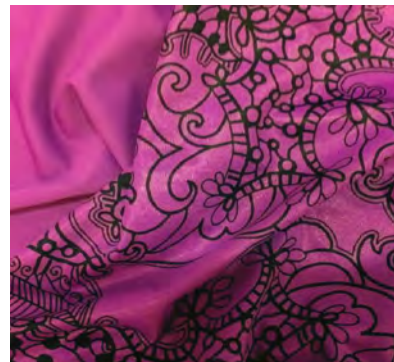
Gehring Textiles presented a stretch poly warp knit fabric, which offers high-powered stretch without the need for spandex. This fabric can be targeted towards a variety of apparel applications. The company also offered a variety of new spacer fabrics that provide mouldability, comfort, and compression, incorporating multiple fibres to make the spacers more inherent in their capability and performance.

Jason Mills is a custom sourcing, manufacturing, warehousing, and distribution partner for all textile manufacturing. The company specialises in the production of a variety of mesh fabrics. At the show, a group of topically-treated FR netting products was featured to meet aeronautical and automobile standards.

SSM showcased two new innovations. The first is its Pro-CFR + TransDRY fabric, which contains three technologies in one fabric: Pro-CFR flame resistant cotton, TransDRY moisture management technology, and an antimicrobial/anti-odour quality. The second new product is SSM's PRO-CFR12 CAL, which is the industry's lightest weight flame resistant cotton fabric that achieves an Arc Thermal Protection Value (ATPV) of 12 cal/sq cm. The fabric is a 6.25oz/sq yd comfortable cotton knit fabric with a 12 calorie Arc Rating.

Zeus introduced its new Filtriq nano-fibre membranes at the show. The product is a nonwoven membrane, processed from PTFE and comprised of individual nano-fibres that create a three-dimensional structure. Applications include pharmaceutical filtration, aggressive liquid chemical filtration, air/gas filtration, fuel cell membranes, etc. Filtriq will withstand heat as high as 500°F (260°C).

“ One of the key trends I see in the market is defined by the new term 'near-shoring' - the rising costs of doing business in China is bringing prototyping and development back to the US ”



Gehring stretch poly warp knit fabric with no spandex

www.techtextilna.com