The escalation of labour costs in Asia is providing a second look for sourcing opportunities in the Americas and the Caribbean Basin,” said Mary O’Rourke, president, O’Rourke Group Partners. “Buyers would like to be able to conduct 10% to 12% of their apparel sourcing in the Americas.”

However, for the Americas to once again become a supply chain centre for apparel production, there are major obstacles to overcome. According to O’Rourke, “The biggest sourcing challenge for apparel products in this hemisphere is that we don’t have the built-in, well-established product development hub in Central America that China has for creating or duplicating textile products. At this time, we only have the capabilities for basic fabrics. We don’t have fabrics/trims sourcing ability built into the region.”

Mike Todaro, managing director of American Apparel Producers’ Network (AAPN), added, “There are four major challenges for sourcing in Central America: 1) the need for increased-access to fabric; 2) the need for more flexibility; 3) the need for faster production; and 4) the need to become more cost competitive.”

According to Todaro, “The biggest challenge is in the woven fabric segment for apparel, excluding denim and basic cotton. Specifically, there is a need for woven fabrics targeted towards the better apparel market. Currently, there are no textured woven bottomweight fabrics available in Central America.”

Shows like Techtextil North America and Texprocess Americas give the industry an opportunity to discuss these and other issues. This year’s show, held in Atlanta, April 24 – 26, also provided exhibitors and attendees with a broad array of symposiums, as well as exposure to new products crossing a variety of market categories. Considering ongoing economic concerns, the well-attended event was a pleasant surprise to both attendees and exhibitors.

Brad Sees, attending the show for Fiber & Yarn Products, was energised by the positive atmosphere at the show. “I was personally pleased with the upbeat anticipation at the show. This is something that has not always been apparent over the last several years in the domestic textile market.”

According to show organisers, 479 exhibitors presented their products, representing Canada, Germany, China, Portugal, Belgium, and Italy, as well as the US. Initial reports show that the combined attendance at Techtextil North America and Texprocess Americas was about 6,800. Future Materials looks at a variety of new products presented at this year’s show.

Approximately 6,000 visitors came to the combined Atlanta show which featured 479 exhibitors

SDL Atlas, known throughout the industry for offering the largest range of textile testing products, supplies, consumables, and services available from a single source, presented its newest product, the Drying Rate Tester, at Techtextil North America. This device provides retailers, fabric manufacturers, and textile additive producers with a consistent method for measuring the drying rate of a fabric. The Drying Rate Tester can be used independently to find a drying rate or can be used in conjunction with the SDL Atlas Moisture Management Tester (MMT) in order to obtain a more complete understanding of the moisture management properties of a performance fabric.
Long life thread

AMERICAN & EFIRD presented three new sewing threads at the show: AneFlex, its high extension PBT apparel sewing thread, developed from polybutylene terephthalate (PBT) to deliver highly elastic seams, without compromising seam strength or sewing performance for such applications as swimwear and compression garments. A&E’s new AneSoft is a textured micro-denier sewing thread with excellent softness and covering properties and the extensibility for knit applications.
A&E’s Wildcat Repreve is a 100% recycled textured polyester sewing thread, designed to help meet the challenge of manufacturing environmentally responsible apparel. A&E also used the show to introduce its new THREAD. (Technology to Help Reduce Early Apparel Demise) initiative to fight the premature death or abandonment of apparel due to the use of cheap thread. A&E invites manufacturers/designers to join the fight by visiting jointhread.org.

Greenbenefits

CONSOLIDATED FIBERS, manufacturer of continuous filament yarns for fire hoses, bedding, furniture, fibrefill, baby wipes, auto interiors and filtration media showcased its more affordable staple for common use applications from Ingeo PLA biopolymer. Paul Latten, divisional president for international and technical fibres, explained, “Consolidated Fibers has now brought the cost down to where having an environmentally friendly raw material does not have to be cost prohibitive.” The initial product is designed for wipes, medical, diaper, feminine hygiene and interlining applications.
Consolidated Fibers introduced the new 4T Staple Fiber as an innovative and patented polyester fiber with deep-grooved and open channels, a 22% hollow ratio, and high absorptive capacity. According to Latten, the new 4T Staple Fiber has greater moisture management capabilities and more elastic qualities than other comparable fibres on the market.

The finish line

AURORA SPECIALTY Textiles Group presented its extensive array of innovative cutting edge technologies for the coating, dyeing, and finishing of both woven and nonwoven fabrics for a wide range of end-uses and markets. Specifically, Aurora targets the coating and dyeing of fabrics for print media, pressure sensitive tapes, home furnishings, medical and industrial applications.

Read and respond

HEIQ MATERIALS AG, the Swiss based company that develops and manufacturers innovative textiles, presented its newest patent-pending development Adaptive. “This new thermoregulation textile is a polymer-based functional technology that responds to the environment,” explained Marlen Philipp, marketing and sales for HeiQ. “Textiles treated with Adaptive can effectively read and respond to the wearer’s body temperature and moisture levels; and it continues to adapt to changing conditions in the body from warming, to cooling, to warming. This is what we call active functionality.” HeiQ’s Adaptive is ideal for sportswear, underwear, activewear, hosiery, towels and bedding.

California dreaming

THE TENTH edition of Techtextil North America will take place at the Hilton Anaheim in Anaheim, California, from March 19-21, 2013. This will be the first time the show will be held in California and the move is expected to solidify the West Coast version of the event into a strong, focused must-attend event for the technical textiles and nonwovens industry.
California boasts a gross domestic product of $1.9 trillion, with major industries including aerospace, entertainment and agriculture and manufacturing. California also represents 13% of the US economy and is the eighth largest economy in the world.
By repositioning the West Coast show from Las Vegas to California, organisers hope it will be more accessible to a larger audience. Anaheim is served by four major domestic and international airports and has a drive market of 20 million people within a 90 mile radius.

www.amefird.com

American & Efird’s Wildcat Repreve

www.consolidatedfibers.com

www.auroratextile.com

www.heiq.com

www.techtextilna.com