

IFPE Focuses on Return to Growth

OPTIMISTIC TRADE SHOW HINTS AT U.S. MANUFACTURING UPTURN

While the neighborhoods outside of Las Vegas depict the unsettling realities of the struggling U.S. housing market, the construction materials, fluid power, power transmission and motion control industries converged downtown to examine the latest equipment and product technologies—and the general mood was one of optimism.

CONEXPO-CON/AGG and IFPE 2011 attracted nearly 120,000 attendees, down from the 144,000+ at the record-setting 2008 edition, but nevertheless exciting given the current state of the construction industry. Exhibitors cited the high quality of customers and reported strong purchases and sales leads from March 23–26 in Las Vegas.

“The construction industry has been through some very tough times, with record unemployment, since the last show in March 2008. With these positive numbers and the industry support of the shows, we’re optimistic about the future and looking forward to seeing these new sales orders fulfilled,” said Megan Tanel, AEM vice president of exhibition and events.

IFPE alone featured exhibit pavilions from AGMA and the PTDA as well as an international presence with pavilions from China, Italy and Taiwan. While the floor traffic wasn’t as massive as the crowds outdoors, the south hall stayed busy throughout the duration of the show.

“I was very impressed with the number of people walking around IFPE,” said Bob Lennon, vice president of sales and marketing at Centa Corporation. “We received a good number of highly qualified visitors to our booth and have several projects already moving forward—one already placed the PO yesterday. All things considered, a good week in Vegas.”

Melissa Magestro, IFPE show direc-



tor, stated, “IFPE-related markets have fared somewhat better than construction and there definitely was a lot of positive momentum and interaction on the show floor. At both shows, attendees told us this was the place they needed to be to check out what’s new and get up to speed on the latest industry trends.”

Larger exhibitors like Bosch Rexroth and Parker Hannifin saw a significant amount of foot traffic throughout the duration of the exhibition as the companies focused on short presentations and brief product tutorials with engineers. Rexroth emphasized its BlueHydraulics line while Parker

demonstrated its Hydraulic Start/Stop system.

The 52nd National Conference on Fluid Power featured 114 presentations and the Innovations Theater offered 14 sessions developed from abstract submissions for the conference. For the 2011 edition of IFPE, leading industry and university researchers gave keynote presentations, and college-level courses were offered.

While enthusiasm for the market was up, overall attendance levels were down 12 percent compared to 2008. International attendees, however, rose to 24 percent, up from 19 percent in 2008.

“The increased global participation by attendees and exhibitors underscores the importance of world markets to our industry,” Tanel said. “The U.S. economy is slowly improving and we have a ways to go, especially in construction, but after 18 to 24 months there is more pent-up demand for equipment to be ready for the upturn.”

And the exhibitors are ready as well. Many that *PTE* spoke with during the trade show felt that the bearing, coupling and gear drive markets were gaining significant momentum in early 2011 with sales figures that resemble those found just before the economic recession.

The next edition of the CONEXPO-CON/AGG and IFPE expositions will be held in 2014 from March 18–22 at the Las Vegas Convention Center. For more information, visit www.ifpe.com. Here’s hoping there’s even better news to report by 2014. 