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Attendance Quality Up at 2011 AWFS® Fair; Buyers More Senior; More International Countries Represented; Exhibitors Report Higher Number of Leads;

AWFS Adds Show Features; Keeps Attendance on Par

CITY OF COMMERCE, Calif. – Sept. 13, 2011 -- 2011 AWFS® Fair attendance remained steady, with exhibitors reporting that buyer quality this year was more senior than in 2009 and that they collected a higher number of qualified leads from the Las Vegas show this summer. The number of international countries (57) represented also increased and more attendees participated in the show’s educational sessions. Contributing to the success of the show was the addition of new programs designed to build industry knowledge, relationships and education partnerships.

“We were very happy with the results of this year’s Fair,” Angelo Gangone, AWFS Executive Vice President, said. “It’s been a very challenging three years for tradeshows in general and our industry in particular. This year’s show had a very positive feeling. The industry may be finally turning the corner -- and that is what we are really excited about. As a matter of fact, we had the most exhibitors re-sign (for their 2013 exhibit space) onsite, since our show relocated to Las Vegas in 2005 and it appears that we may once again be on the road to growth for 2013.”

The 2013 show dates will be July 31 through August 3, 2013 at the Las Vegas Convention Center.

Chris Leffel from SierraPine, Roseville, Calif., summed up an outlook shared among many of this year’s exhibitors, “SierraPine had one of its best woodworking shows in many years and we are planning an expanded presence in 2013,”

According to Phil Martin, Hafele U.S. and AWFS Fair Tradeshow Chair, “Although we are very happy we are even more excited about what lies ahead for the AWFS Fair. We have already reached out to several potential strategic partners as a means of expanding our exhibitor and attendee base for 2013 and hopefully will make some exciting announcements, not too far down the road.”

AWFS 2011 in Las Vegas also proved to be a very good show for Tigra USA. According to Donna Steele, Executive Vice president, "Overall, the show seemed to have a better attendance than in the past few years and the people who did attend seemed to be there for specific reasons and not only for the lure of the Vegas nights."

This year's fair hosted nearly 8,500 registered attendees 500 exhibiting companies, drawing woodworking industry professionals from 58 countries.

Attendees and exhibitors had a wide range of opportunities to advance their knowledge about new products and technologies for both the big and small shops, increase their management skills as well as take advantage of expanded networking opportunities throughout the course of the four day event.

The Fair's College of Woodworking Knowledge[®] (CWWK[®]) program, offered 46 different sessions, including 11 technical seminars, and a day-long Lean Manufacturing Workshop, exceeding 2009 participation by 11 percent. The top rated sessions included Rapid Case Construction delivered by SCM Group USA, Arm Yourself with Financing Savvy presented by Stiles Machinery and the Lean Manufacturing Hands-on Simulation Workshop presented by Brian Swanson of NACS Inc.

Other featured education events included the Green Desk, hosted by environmental groups answering attendee questions on sustainable products and manufacturing, as well as daily presentations on the show floor given by OSHA, the Small Business Administration and the Service Corps of Retired Executives.

A live WorldSkills contest brought together two recent high school graduates, Daniel Berrios from Pennsylvania and Kaydee Walters from Utah to showcase their woodworking skills. Both built an intricate nightstand in only three days on the show floor. Berrios won the trial and will represent the United States at the 2013 WorldSkills Competition in Leipzig, Germany. Fourteen AWFS Fair exhibitors sponsored the event, new to AWFS Fair, providing all the tools and equipment used by the students.

The Young Professionals Mixer, another inaugural event, brought approximately fifty students and professionals new to the woodworking industry together in the North Hall lounge, to meet and mingle with one another and develop new industry connections. The event was hosted by AWFS' Southern California chapter, Young Furniture Associates (YFA).

29 students went home with prizes from the Fresh Wood student woodworking competition. Best of Show honors went to Candice Groenke from College of the Redwoods in Northern California for her project *Katana Bench*. The People's Choice winner was selected by AWFS Fair attendee and exhibitor votes, *Table for Dali* by Adam Kessler of Buffalo State College won with over 25% of the 900 plus votes tallied. A total of 41 of the 137 student entries were selected as finalists; the projects were on display at the AWFS Fair. Winners and their student projects may be viewed at <http://awfsfair.org/freshwood-winners-2011/>.

AWFS once again teamed with WEIMA, the Las Vegas Convention Center (LVCC) and Freeman to significantly reduce the wood waste appropriately named Destroy Responsibly. In keeping with the AWFS tradition of contributing to the local community, the shredded wood waste was donated to the Gilcrease Orchard and Nature Sanctuary in partnership with Repurpose America. The AWFS Fair is proud to continue to strive to reduce show waste and decrease the footprint that the trade show leaves behind.

In addition, the smartSHOP exhibit, where attendees were able to experience a completely automated woodworking shop, were donated to the Las Vegas Animal Foundation. Due to its popularity plans are already in the works to expand this show feature in 2013.

Eight industry companies received Sequoia Awards for creativity and innovation, leadership and green/environmental product development in categories ranging from machinery to software, including:

For Product Innovation in Components:

Biesse America for Viet HP Sanding Pad

For Product Innovation in Machinery Over \$50,000

SCM Group North America for Stefani ONE TOUCH

For Product Innovation in Machinery Under \$50,000: TIE

Graco, Inc. for ProMix® 2KE and

Oneida Air Systems for Smart Pro Dust Collector™

For Product Innovation in Power Tools:

Micro Fence for Plunge Base and Edge Guide Package

For Product Innovation in Tooling:

Leitz Tooling System for the Leitz Rip Tec Cutting System

For Productivity in Software:

Planit Solutions for Stand Alone Screen-to-Machine™ Center

For Green/Environmental in Wood Coatings:

M.L. Campbell for EnviroVar

For Green/Environmental in Raw Materials:

Hardwood Specialty Products for Red Grandis

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About AWFS:

The Association of Woodworking & Furnishings Suppliers® (AWFS), founded in 1911, is a non-profit organization that wholly owns and produces the biennial AWFS®Fair. The largest trade association serving the entire home and commercial furnishings industry, AWFS has more than 400 members, including manufacturers and distributors of machinery, hardware, software, tooling, lumber, components, wood products and supplies for the woodworking industry including cabinet, furniture, millwork and custom woodworking products.