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TRENDS

Legwear Fashions Textiles

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News About The Industry, From The Industry, For The Industry.**

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Mayo Knitting Mills



Solo Licensing



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Cover Photography: Hosiery by Solo Licensing (far left), Wells Hosiery and Apparel (Center) and Solo Licensing. Cover and product photography by J. Johnson & TRENDS staff.

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dedicated to the hosiery industry

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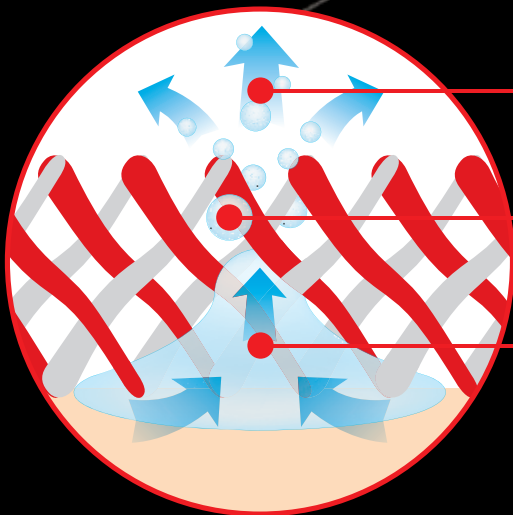
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legislative column

by PAUL FOGLEMAN, Director, Hosiery Governmental Affairs Council

Politics is a contact sport, so they say. The story behind the recent safeguard on cotton socks from Honduras features rough-and-tumble negotiations, arm-twisting and three years of bureaucratic musings.

All of it was for just six months for a safeguard that imposes a 5 percent tariff on cotton socks from July 1 to December 31 of this year.

The socks issues goes back to congress' controversial approval of CAFTA in 2005. The CAFTA bill passed the House by only two votes. Rep. Robin Hayes of North Carolina, who switched to a "yes" vote at the last minute, almost lost his seat in 2006. Thousands of textiles workers lost their jobs in his district and many blamed CAFTA.

In a July 27, 2005 letter, U.S. Commerce Secretary Carlos M. Gutierrez and U.S. Trade Rep. Rob Portman promised Rep. Robert Aderholt of Alabama that the Bush administration was "willing to seek a modification to CAFTA that would require a 10-year phase out of tariffs on CAFTA-qualifying sock imports from Central America instead of immediate duty-free treatment.

The extended phase-out was not implemented and in January of last year, the entire North Carolina congressional delegation signed a letter to the Commerce Secretary urging him to implement a safeguard against Honduras. Eight months later the Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements (CITA) began the process.

In the meantime, the hosiery industry became divided. The hosiery manufacturer in Aderholt's Fourth District who pushed for the late-night agreement in 2005 saw his company sold to an international company that is moving production to Honduras

to reduce labor costs. Now Aderholt is facing competition from a Democrat who wants to see CAFTA "reformed."

Aderholt has remained consistent and committed to the domestic mills in his district that includes Fort Payne. Changing times. Changing allies.

♦♦♦♦

The May primaries set up a repeat contest from 1984 for the North Carolina gubernatorial nomination. Lt. Governor Beverly Perdue from New Bern in the eastern part of the state will face Charlotte Mayor Pat McCrory. Twenty-four years ago it was Secretary of State Rufus Edmisten going against Jim Martin, a Mecklenburg County commissioner.

Despite the "Charlotte curse" Martin won and became the second Republican governor in the 20th century to occupy the executive mansion. Martin identified himself as being from Davidson avoided the word "Charlotte".

McCrory is using the same strategy, launching his campaign from his hometown in Guilford County. But times have changed. With the Republicans having their top two state candidates from Charlotte—Sen. Robert Pittenger running for lieutenant governor—voters are going to make choices on a regional basis.

At the victory party for Lt. Gov. Perdue the candidacy of McCrory was discussed by political veterans. They acknowledge this battle will be tougher than the contest with Treasurer Richard Moore.

During her tenure in the State Senate, Perdue served as co-chair of Appropriations and responded to the efforts to keep funding in place for the Hosiery Technology Center.

♦♦♦♦

The Hosiery Technology Center has metamorphosed into the new Center for Emerging Manufacturing Solutions (CEMS). The program, under the direction of Dan St. Louis at Catawba Valley Community College, will expanded to help other areas of manufacturing, including furniture and packaging. The HTC will request that the annual \$600,000 appropriation it receives be now directed to CEMS. No new money will be required.

♦♦♦♦

When the 2008 session of the N.C. General Assembly opened May 13, legislators learned they will have \$150 million in new money. April tax collections were higher than expected. Some legislators would like to add money to the "rainy day" reserve fund which has \$800 million for emergencies. Other legislators have ideas for the money to beef up state programs, including mental health. State officials have estimated that \$400 million was wasted as a result of decentralizing mental health services several years ago.

♦♦♦♦

North Carolina was cited in glowing terms by national media following the recent Democratic presidential primary.

Chris Matthews, host of MSNBC, claimed that the Pennsylvania primary was a vote for the past. North Carolinians voted for the future, he allowed on his Hardball show. His panelists discussed the impact of the Research Triangle region and higher education on the changing role and image of the state. ■

TTC Outlines Dramatic Growth In Industry Services

As textile companies confront more challenges to compete for global markets, the Textile Technology Center faces more demands to support them.

Downsizing has prompted some companies to eliminate their testing laboratories. Now they turn to the center for comparable services, including prototyping and research and development.

In the past year, 72 North Carolina textile companies turned to the TTC, Director John Anderson informed regional legislators recently. The Belmont center, a division of Gaston College, doubled its client base in 2007 and helped companies in 37 counties across the state, Anderson said.

The presentation prepared legislators for a \$900,000 appropriation request in the State Community College budget to update and acquire new technologies. The equipment is needed

(see TTC on page 10)

Garment featured:
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Technology Centers, Yarn Firms Push Hosiery, Textile Green Movement

For almost two decades, retailers have set the agenda for manufacturing, setting terms for deliveries and payment and even having input in design.

Now retailers are involved in the construction of textiles and hosiery products. This has not escaped the attention of yarn and fiber manufacturers who are shifting their marketing efforts to retailers. Buyers and merchandising managers are trying to sort through hype versus reality, says Dan St. Louis, manager of the Center for Emerging Manufacturing Solutions in Hickory N.C. and its Hosiery Technology Center.

Scores of retail personnel attend the Hosiery 101 and Hosiery 102 classes taught by St. Louis and his staff at the HTC. The curriculum includes yarn and fiber properties and how they influence construction and performance.

Anderson said a “waiting list” of textile companies has emerged since the TTC acquired small weaving equipment. Mills can make small samples for tests, saving thousands of dollars.

More retail interaction is connected to the emphasis on performance, according to St. Louis. Buyers are asking: How do I make the best sock? What is best? Is it looks? Is it comfort? Is it fit? Is it green?

Yarns from recycled fabrics and discarded plastic bottles are hot issues with retailers. Some stores have run photos of men’s pants “made from recycled bottles” in their advertisements, a recent gathering of textiles companies were told.

The new paradigm has yarn company representatives calling on retailers. The objectives is to promote yarn brands as important to the marketing to consumers.

this year in Munich, Nilit introduced Nilit® Aquarius, its newest innovation in performance products for the sports industry. The yarn represents “significant advancement” in nylon 6.6 design that provides three tiers of moisture management performance, company spokespersons said.

Aquarius has an effective moisture management additive permanently embedded through the fiber. Secondly, the fiber is constructed with a specially-shaped cross section to maximize the wicking surface area. Thirdly, the yarn is designed to create micro-channels to transport moisture away from the body.

Nilit also is marketing BodyFresh anti-microbial yarn and is now rolling out Nilit Trend Collection for bodywear and activewear.

Yarns from recycled fabrics and discarded plastic bottles are hot issues with retailers. Some stores have run photos of men’s pants “made from recycled bottles” in their advertisements

Innovations are presented. Comparable programs are under way at the Textiles Technology Center in Belmont N.C.

John Anderson, manager of the Textile Technology Center, says retailers are just becoming interested in the activities of the center. With more products coming from offshore – apparel, home furnishing, upholstery fabrics – retailers are concerned about what they are getting. It is a big deal, if not impossible, to send a container of textiles products back to China, Indonesia, or Viet Nam, he observes.

The potential costs of unacceptable goods from Asia has prompted more U.S. manufacturers to intensify shift of production to CAFTA nations. This has prompted textiles and hosiery companies to close down their research and testing laboratories in the downsizing, Anderson and St. Louis report.

PrimaLoft® Initiatives

PrimaLoft® is used by manufacturers of sports and outdoors socks for its thermally-efficient insulation properties. It is promoted as being exceptionally warm and highly water repellent, while being soft, compressible and light. The family of PrimaLoft yarns is used in apparel, socks, gloves, hats, sleeping bags, and bedding.

Owned by Albany International Corp., PrimaLoft was developed in 1983 for the U.S. Army as an alternative to down because it does not lose its thermal properties when wet. Today PrimaLoft® is used in production for Lands’ End, LL Bean, Nike, Patagonia, Lorpen, Fox River and other famous brands.

Nilit® Aquarius

At the ISPO Winter show earlier

Ingeo® Earth Month

NatureWorks LLC was at the forefront of sustainable fibers with its Ingeo® which was adapted for the hosiery industry three years ago. When the Hosiery Technology Center sponsored a sales event to Japan with six hosiery companies, the socks were all developed with Ingeo fiber. Biodegradable products are popular in Japan which cannot afford to set aside valuable property for landfills.

Manufacture of Ingeo® bioplastics uses 65 percent less fossil fuels and produces 80 to 90 percent less greenhouse gas emissions than conventional polymers.

Green with Martex

Martex Fiber was founded in 1970 – the year the first Earth Day was held. Today Martex touts its offerings of green solutions to nonwovens producers, apparel companies and automotive manufacturers.

Martex is seen as an industry leader in recycling textile waste into baled fiber for a variety of industrial markets, as well as yarn offerings for the apparel industry. Materials handled by Martex Fiber include cotton, polyester, polypropylene, rayon acrylic, nylon and aramid fibers.

Performance and sustainability are the leading issues for retailers who are responding to consumer trends. ■

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At Retail

Stores Report Mixed Sales For Spring

April sales for U.S. retailers generally were up, and as expected discounters led the pack.

Same store sales for Wal-Mart were up 3.2 percent and overall growth was almost 10 percent. Overall sales figures for the month topped \$29 billion.

Target stores also reported comparable increases: 3.1 percent for same stores and 9 percent including new stores with sales at \$4.3 billion.

Teen apparel stores were standouts for retail sales. Abercrombie and Fitch reported overall sales increases of 18 percent and American Eagle Outfitters were right behind with 15 percent. But Buckle Inc. and Aeropostale Inc. outperformed all competition with sales increases of 34 percent and 25 percent respectively.

TJX, the parent company of T.J. Maxx and Marshalls, led apparel retailers with an 8 percent increase in same store sales and 12 percent for the total operations. Revenue topped \$1.4 billion.

Two standouts in department stores were Saks with a 24.3 percent overall increase and Kohl's which was up 12 percent. Higher end stores – Neiman-Marcus and Nordstrom included – were in negative territory.

Projections for May were modest, even with the federal stimulus checks in the mail. Wal-Mart predicted domestic sales would be flat to 2 percent increase. ■

Nike, Finish Line Open Co-Branded Operations

A new co-branded store by Nike Inc. and Finish Line, the nation's second largest athletic shoe retailer, opened recently in Phoenix, Arizona, aimed at gaining position in the niche market of runners and athletes in training.

For Nike, the world's largest maker of athletic shoes and apparel, the venture is the second in a series of co-branded concept stores designed to raise its profile among target groups while boosting sales through its retail customers.

The venture comes on the heels of Nike's basketball-based House of Hoops store run by Foot Locker, the leading U.S. Athletic footwear retail chain. Both Finish Line and Foot Locker have struggled with sluggish sales over the past year. ■

TTC.....from page 6

for flammability testing, quick spinning, cotton fiber tests, coarse fiber carding, yarn conditioning and material analysis.

New services added during the past year at TTC include fabric defect analysis, elemental analysis (chemical), and material identification using "IlluminatiIR II, and advanced SEM microscopy, Anderson explained. The addition of a small weaving machine has resulted in a waiting list of companies wanting to produce small samples for testing, he added.

The textile center often works with the Hosiery Technology Center in nearby Hickory for fiber analysis and trend measurement, Anderson said.

Anderson told the legislators that contributions from private companies represented millions of dollars in equipment, including \$3 million in laboratory and testing equipment from Wellman Inc. ■

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Fall Legwear Steps Up As *THE* Fashion Accessory

by Charlene H. Carpenter,
Assistant Editor

Hosiery will be *the* fashion accessory for fall 2008, say legwear designers. Tights will lead the way making a fashion statement alone or as a foundation for layering.

With oil prices driving up the prices of most retail items, lower-ticket items such as legwear are expected to be the purchases of choice for budget-conscious and fashion-savvy consumers.

Black tights are a must-have for fall and will be the best selling legwear item of the season, says Linda Measmer, director of design, research and development for

Wells Hosiery and Apparel in Asheboro, N.C. They were featured all over Europe, according to Brenda Tillman, director of design and merchandising for Commonwealth Hosiery in Randleman, N.C.

"Black tights were virtually everywhere," says Tillman. "Black opaque, of course, but also openwork in black was very strong."

"We decided there wasn't a naked leg in all of Europe. The windows of the best stores to the fast trendy low-end shops



Commonwealth Hosiery

"We decided there wasn't a naked leg in all of Europe."

— Brenda Tillman
Commonwealth Hosiery

featured some sort of leg covering on every model."

Footless tights will continue as an important accessory for fall. And, with dresses being an important fashion item, sheer legwear is making a comeback, says Measmer. Trouser socks will be a staple for the working woman because pants and boots are still strong in the workplace, says Tillman, and leggings and capris will continue to sell well.

But, tights will rule as both young and old alike layer them with trousers, knee-highs, over-the-knees, legwarmers and ankle warmers. Over-the-knees, popular especially with younger

(continued on page 15)



Commonwealth Hosiery



Wells Hosiery and Apparel



Solo Licensing



Solo Licensing



Wells Hosiery and Apparel



Wells Hosiery and Apparel



Commonwealth Hosiery (left)
Wells Hosiery and Apparel (right)



Solo Licensing



Wells Hosiery and Apparel



Mayo Knitting Mills



Mayo Knitting Mills

Manufacturing Excellence Series Rated High By Industry: Anderson

by John Anderson,
Director, Textile Technology Center

The Textile Technology Center at Gaston College is pleased with the participant response from its inaugural Manufacturing Excellence Seminar Series. Across the board, participants rated the course content and written materials as excellent, and all felt that the material presented would be of future benefit to their organization.

Weight Variation, Fiber Alignment and Quality, Improving Variation within the Yarn Plant, and a more general session entitled Textiles 101 – Basics of Yarn Manufacturing.

Not surprisingly, the manufacturing oriented seminars attracted individuals involved in the actual yarn formation process. The 101 course, however, drew a much more diverse audience in terms of function ranging from accounting, marketing and IS personnel from yarn companies to fiber companies to retail. High ratings from this group will lead to

*We set out to design a program that
would be of benefit to the textile industry
in this part of North Carolina.*

In addition, the seminars conducted so far were rated high on the cost / benefit scale by participants. "This is particularly gratifying", said John Anderson, director of the Textile Technology Center, "because we set out to design a program that would be of benefit to the textile industry in this part of North Carolina. With the pressures of global competition keeping staffs lean throughout the industry, this series was designed to deliver practical, useful information in a five to six hour learning session that would allow participants to spend a full workday or less in travel and in the classroom, at a cost that is not prohibitive."

The Textile Technology Center teamed up with Len Furlough, president of AB Consulting to design and deliver the courses. Len brings over 35 years of experience in textile yarn technology to the classroom, and is considered by many in the industry as a leading technologist.

Furlough's academic credentials include a B.S. in Industrial Engineering from N.C. State and an M.S. in Textile Engineering from Institute of Textile Technology. His broad background in the industry included research and design leadership at major equipment manufacturers, as well as two decades in the yarn manufacturing environment as a vice president of Technology at National Spinning and as a consultant to the trade.

Anderson related that he met Len Furlough for the first time last May, when Furlough conducted a technical seminar on carding as part of a Southern Textile Association technical forum. "I looked in on a room full of people who were paying very close attention going into the fifth hour of a very technical presentation. I listened for 15 minutes or so, and said to myself—this guy is good!"

The seminar offerings in February, March and April focused on particular aspects of the yarn manufacturing process. The Seminar topics included particular aspects of yarn manufacturing such as, Yield Management and Waste Optimization, Improving

more offerings of this type that educate the individual who is working in or with the textile supply chain who does not have a

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textile background.

The May seminar offerings are a combination of the two perspectives. Furlough will teach three discreet seminars on successive days focusing on the technology and application of each of the commercial short staple spinning systems practiced in the Carolinas. Open end spinning will be the focus of the seminar on May 13, followed by ring and compact spinning on the 14th and air jet and vortex spinning on the 15th. Participants are invited to attend any one, two or three of the sessions depending on their needs.

The Textile Technology Center plans to continue the series in the Fall. Some sessions will repeat, and some new areas of focus will be added. The center is looking for input on possible course topics, and if you have a topic of interest, please contact John Anderson at anderson.john@gaston.edu or by phone at 704-825-3737, Extension 254.

Textile Technology Center at Gaston College was chartered by the State of North Carolina in 2005 to be a center of excellence that serves the textile industry. The Center assumed the assets and 64 year legacy of the North Carolina Center for Applied Textile Technology, and is now in its third year of operation on the current mission, serving some 200 textile firms along the fiber to finished product supply chain. The Center was recently recognized by the U.S. Department of Commerce for its contribution in helping U.S. Textile Companies develop global markets. ■

Fashion.....from page 12

consumers, will be layered with knee-highs. Some manufacturers such as Mayo Knitting Mills of Tarboro, N.C. are trimming knee-highs with pique tops, borders and ruffles.

Fall's short skirts and tunic tops will lend themselves to layering and to accessorizing with tights of all weights, ranging from light openwork and light to medium weight opaques to sweater tights. Menswear patterns will abound as well as plaids, ribs, color blocking, diamonds of all sizes and fashionably placed florals.

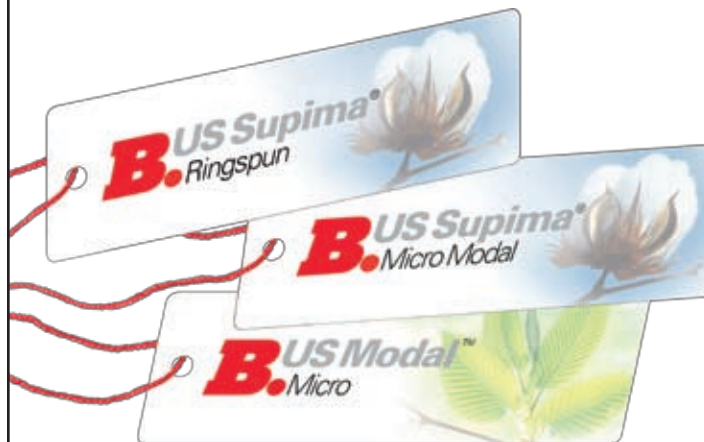
The fall legwear color palette ranges from basics such as dark brown, chocolate, navy, gray, burgundy and shades of purple, to bright opaques for younger consumers: red, green, yellow, turquoise and hot pink in neon tones.

Fall legwear will shine. Designers are using rayon yarns to infuse a hint of shine into tights, trousers and socks. There will be tights for everyday wear with metallic and iridescent highlights ranging from bold to very subtle. Metallics will be mixed in patterns such as houndstooth, heathered ribs and herringbones, according to Tillman.

As eco-friendly continues to grow as an important apparel category, legwear designers are using eco-friendly yarns in fashion legwear. Solo Licensing of New York City is making sweater tights using bamboo and Cabot Hosiery Mills of Northfield, Vt. is using both bamboo and organic cotton in men's and ladies' socks. Mayo Knitting Mills is using natural fibers in its Naturally Beautiful collection.

"Sustainability and the green aspect are important trends in socks," says Ric Cabot, executive vice president of Cabot Hosiery Mills. "What translates as important in jackets is translating as important in socks." ■

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Free Trade Socks May Get More Expensive

Over 250 million dozens pairs of socks were imported into the United States in 2007, according to government statistics. According to Dan St. Louis, director of the Hosiery Technology Center, that almost equates to total domestic production a few years back.

As China continues to develop a capitalistic economy, costs are going to rise.

But now something is happening. During the first two months of 2008, exports have fallen, a slight 2 percent. Goods from China are shrinking and are more expensive while imports from Viet Nam are on the increase. The flat world is seeing some ridges arising around national borders.

In 2007, imports of socks from China were up a strong 50 percent over the total for 2006. But the year-to-date figures for the first two months of this year reflect a 16 percent decrease from a year ago. Comparable comparisons for Viet Nam show an increase of 121 percent. For Malaysia the numbers are even more significant – up 280 percent.

Total imports of socks in 2007 were 7.3 percent over those for 2006. That was an all-time high of more than 250 million dozens. Even so, domestic manufacturers continue to produce over 35 percent of socks sold in the U.S. market, St. Louis observes.

Of special interest to St. Louis and proponents of the U.S. industry is the rising price for imported socks. The price for a dozen pairs of socks from China had risen from \$4.49 to \$5.08 during the first two months of 2007 and 2008. The numbers from Pakistan had a more modest increase for the same period: \$3.30 from \$3.17.

As China continues to develop a capitalistic economy, costs are

going to rise, St. Louis predicts. Workers are going to want more money and improved workplace environment. There will be more competition for employees.

Trade issues also are interrupting the seamless flow of goods. European countries are confronting disruption of their internal industries as a result of low-cost products from developing nations. Transshipping and other strategies to evade quotas are creating tensions in the free-trade community.

As the Democratic presidential nominating contest grinds on, Americans are forced to re-think NAFTA and CAFTA. Senators Barack Obama and Hillary Rodham Clinton are promising to revisit these agreements which have cost hundreds of thousands U.S. jobs. Both have said they will call for renegotiations if they are elected.

The world may indeed be flat. But the road ahead also contains some sharp curves. ■



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Pauline Walker, Former Del-Mark President Dies

Mrs. Pauline Dell Walker, former president of Del-Mark Inc., died after a lingering illness April 30. She was 89.

Del-Mark has supplied scores of hosiery and textiles companies with transfers and tagless labeling over the past 60 years. The company was a charter member of the Carolina Hosiery Assn. which was founded in 1959. The company continues to operate under members of the Dell family.

Mrs. Walker is survived by four sons and a sister, Suzie Dell Patton, whose late husband, Phil, served as general manager of Del-Mark. ■

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The Hosiery Technology Center at the new Center for Emerging Manufacturing Solutions (CEMS) is supporting companies

with research and development, testing and sourcing, marketing and sales. From production to retailing, the center is engaged in supply chain services. That includes training and lean manufacturing strategies.

The path to a successful future depends on open-minded management. We're here to help management open new doors in a *smaller world.*



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Consumer Plea:

Help Me Find Your Socks

U.S. manufacturers that stubbornly focus on consumers that prefer American-made products will not be surprised by this email to TRENDS magazine earlier this month. Alicia Werner in Colorado wants socks that last...socks that perform...and she prefers they reflect the made-in-America quality.

Her frustration and her search present a challenge – and an opportunity – to hosiery manufacturers in tune with 21st century marketing. Internet purchases represent the fastest-growing aspect for consumer purchasing and retailers know it. Ms. Werner suggests manufacturers need to move more aggressively.

Her comments follow:

Paul:

I just ran across your website while in utter frustration was looking for better socks on the web. Would you **PLEASE** pass on to all your manufacturers that we consumers are frustrated with the quality of socks that are available on the market?

We don't want to buy socks from China! We want American!

I live in Colorado. I want 6" high tops or higher but not knee highs, cotton or a combination of cotton and wool with some lycra (any stretchy stuff) to keep them up for more than 3 washings, a toe that might be reinforced or maybe just not holeable in the first wearing, and a toe seam that doesn't stick up and rub a sore on the tops of my toes when, oh no, I'm walking 2 blocks to get an ice cream cone.

Price is not as important to us consumers as wearability. I'd like to be able to purchase 6 or 12 prs. at a time in some boring color like mud gray or black or blue to go with my jeans (which I also wish were still made state side).

I'm in the textile industry too. And what I've found in home dec fabrics is the mills were run by old men, that's 60+, who refused to change and now the mills have closed. Change is good! And maybe the sock manufacturers need to look at radical change to stay alive.....like selling directly to the public through a made in America site. Or maybe advertising in mainstream TV or papers or magazines (Oprah's or Vanity Fair) or something crazy like left wing liberal tree hugger magazines where people care about the planet enough to purchase \$20 – 35 socks every day that 50% of the fiber has been recycled.

Please write an article that asks why the consumer isn't being considered. We all don't want white tube sock and some of us even refuse to shop at Walmart! Now we're in trouble because Sears and Kmart are selling out! I'd purchased from Land's End for years, until they were purchased by Sears and the quality of the goods became so poor. I had purchased turtlenecks from Land's End that would last 4 or 5 years. At Christmas my mom got me 2 from Land's End and they didn't even hold their black through the first washing! Shame!

Going green also means making a product that is not throw away! Some of us consumers only buy what we like and then actually want to wear it for 3 or 4 years. In Colorado, our fashion statement is jeans and Keens, and has been for the past 30 years. And for 30 years I've had a hard time finding socks...

And for pete's sake, tell these guys that they desperately need to update their websites!

Thanks!
Alicia



TRENDS

Legwear Fashions Textiles

2008 Editorial Calendar

JUNE

STATE OF THE INDUSTRY: Addressing change has been the challenge for U.S. hosiery manufacturers over the past decade. Since the late 1990s, mergers and closings have made headlines. But also there is news about start-ups and companies that have re-positioned themselves as distributors and niche players. Trends pointing to the future of domestic suppliers will include such issues as diversification, lean manufacturing and marketing. Sustainable packaging will be visited.

JULY

TEXTILES AND HUMAN RESOURCES: Developing and keeping an efficient workforce still remains a problem for the industry. Downsizing and closings in the past have hurt recruiting efforts and some companies report the problem is critical. What lies on the horizon and services that can help human resource programs are covered. Seamless apparel will be featured as the fashion article.

AUGUST

NEXT RENAISSANCE: In the 1970s and 1980s the industry experienced a new awakening, led by young executives entering the family business. They helped the industry become brand marketers and establish new strategies for reaching out to retailers. Is a new generation of executives ready to carry companies to new markets, global and within the U.S.? Profiles of new leaders.

SEPTEMBER

INDUSTRY CLUSTERS: North Carolina and the Fort Payne, Alabama area are examples of industry clusters. Hosiery manufacturing spawned companies that supply them. The same is the case with textile operations. These clusters have given manufacturers a competitive advantage. But are those clusters still working as a support mechanism? Where are the missing links in the 21st century economy?

OCTOBER

RETAILING: Is it true that Chinese consumers want products with a made-in-the-USA label? Are global retailers a market for U.S. manufacturers? How much business is going to online marketers? What is solidifying relations with U.S. retailers? Brands? Features and news stories cover trends. Holiday shipments are included.

NOVEMBER

TECHNOLOGY CENTERS AND THEIR MISSION: The technology centers in Hickory, Asheboro and Belmont, North Carolina, have adjusted to the changing needs of their clients – the manufacturers. Research and development and prototyping of new products remain priorities, along with market support. Roles also have encompassed other industries that interface with textiles and hosiery.

DECEMBER

NEW LEADERSHIP: The 2008 elections have brought changes to U.S. government and the halls in state legislatures. We will profile some of the new faces and offer some insight into the issues they will embrace that could affect manufacturers. Universal health insurance could be one. More doors open for organized labor could be another.

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A part of us is always close to you



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