



Mohawk's Tom Lape talks to customers about new products such as SmartStrand Silk Reserve.

A new day in Atlanta

REGIONAL TAKES SHAPE GIVING ATTENDEES SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT

By Sharyn Bernard

[Atlanta] Vendors and dealers at the inaugural Cobb Flooring Show here were both pleased with the show's new format and organization as well as strongly optimistic about their outlook for 2017 business.

"Pre-registration was extremely strong," said Tom Lape, president of residential business for Mohawk Industries. "The mood is the most positive it has been in years," and the company launched more new products in more categories than it has in the past three years, including its new Airo carpet line.

"Business overall for last year was great," said JP Penn of Penn Flooring in Ocala, Fla. "We think this year is going to be tremendous."

Vendors and attendees said the show's new organization and management was a significant improvement over past years' efforts which were in fact not really organized shows at all.

"It's been very good and a lot better than what we saw last year," said Steve Hillis, president of Beaulieu Commercial. "In Atlanta, we are showing far more merchandise. It's a better format and there's a lot of enthusiasm."

Added Janna Marsh, co-owner of Harold's Furniture & Flooring in Andalusia, Ala., "This is a great show."

Lori Kisner, managing partner of Market Maker Events, which put on the Cobb Flooring Show, said this is the

first year the event was organized as an "official" show. Previously, it was an ad-hoc experience, with companies holding business meetings in rooms in the Cobb Galleria Convention Center to coincide with Shaw and Mohawk regional events.

This year, except for Shaw and Mohawk which exhibit in the same venue but in their own spaces, vendors were organized in the main exhibit hall in a traditional tradeshow design. Kisner said there were 29 exhibitors and at press time 600 registered dealers, although she expects that number to rise to about 1,000. And Market Maker Events is already planning to expand for 2018. "We were turning people away," she said.

Q4 2016 SALES WEAK

U.S. floor coverings manufacturer sales continued their second half slowdown, according to the Catalina Research report. In the fourth quarter of 2016, dollar sales increased by an estimated 2.2 percent and square foot sales by 1.5 percent. These reflect sluggish housing demand in the third quarter of 2016.

For all of 2016, U.S. floor coverings dollar sales are estimated to have increased by 3.8 percent to \$24.6 billion and square feet sales could have risen by 3.2 percent to \$21.8 billion. Gains were sharper in the first half of 2016 due to stronger housing demand in the first quarter of the year. However, as housing demand moderated, floor covering sales growth declined from the 6.6 percent gain in dollars and the 3.8 percent increase in

square feet experienced in 2015. In 2016, dollar sales gains were also held down by relatively weak price increases as material costs remained tame through most of the year, and competition increased from competitively priced import.

The slowdown in industry growth in 2016 primarily reflects moderating gains in the builder market. Housing starts is estimated to have increased by only 2.3 percent in the second half of 2016, down from a 6.9 percent gain in the first half of the year and 10.8 percent rise of all of 2015. Despite this moderation, builder purchases continue to lead industry growth.

Relatively sluggish consumer purchases also remain a drag on floor coverings market growth since consumer floor coverings spending increased by only about 3 percent in 2016. Slower growing existing home sales held down consumer purchases. For a complete Catalina Report, see FCW1.com.

UNILIN EXPANDS PATENT PORTFOLIO

[Bertrange, Luxembourg] The cooperation between Unilin, Li&Co and Karl-Heinz Scholz will allow Unilin's IP company to sublicense the patented technologies relating to mineral based boards for flooring applications to its licensing base. Some of the patents on the

technology were already filed in 2005 and the patent portfolio is evolving.

The Micodur technologies relate to mineral based boards which are extremely well suited for flooring applications because of the dimensional stability, fireproof and waterproof features,

and environmentally-friendly character of the product. The mineral based boards can be printed or can be used as a base layer for further coverage with luxury vinyl tile (LVT), cork or other top layers. Micodur has been developed by Karl-Heinz Scholz and Li&Co.

New Stainmaster innovations

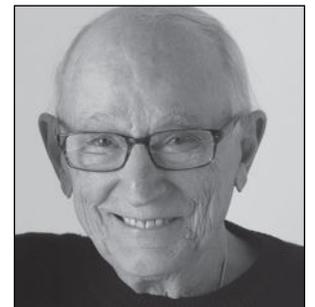
[Kennesaw, Ga.] Invista will introduce two Stainmaster brand innovations in 2017: PetProtect luxury vinyl flooring and LiveWell carpet system. PetProtect is designed to resist scratches from pet claws and odors caused from liquid accidents and will launch in early 2017. LiveWell carpet, launching later in the year, was developed to help allergy-suffering customers improve their comfort at home.



TURNER JOINS CRI

[Dalton] The Carpet and Rug Institute, Inc. (CRI) appointed Richard Turner, a 45-year veteran of the carpet industry, director of technical services and programs. According to CRI, Turner most recently served as the senior manager of sustainability & regulatory affairs at Mohawk Industries.

Obituary



Vahan Pedian, 90
[Glenview, Ill.] Vahan Pedian, a 60-year hard-surface flooring industry veteran as a partner in Pedian Rug Company in Chicago, died Dec. 23, 2016 after a long-fought battle with cancer. He was 90 years old.

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THE YEAR THAT WAS:
CELEBRATING
MANNINGTON'S
CENTENNIAL

"We have something very special here and something that we want to perpetuate."
—KEITH CAMPBELL

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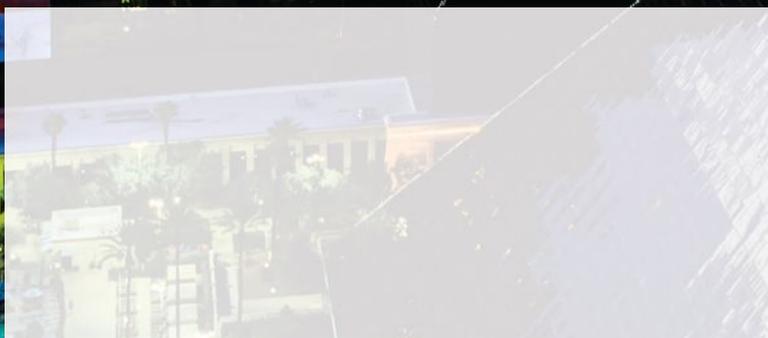
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