

## **SEAMS Fall Networking Conference**

There are many reasons why The SEAMS Fall Networking Conference, held October 18<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at the Westin Hilton Head Island Resort and Spa, was special to me. The support we received from all our sponsors was outstanding. It was the first one fully managed and coordinated by WDA. And, I must pay a special thanks to Nancy Kinderknecht, SEAMS Business Manager, for all her efforts in making the conference such a success. It was another opportunity to celebrate 50 years of SEAMS. I had a chance to share my vision for the Association moving forward towards our next 50 years. Currently, there exists a large void between Brands and Retailers and the U.S. Sewn Products Supply Chain. We plan to build a bridge enabling linkages to occur with SEAMS serving as that bridge. And, we will do this through:

- Collaboration and Partnering
- Increasing our Sphere of Influence
- Improving the Value of SEAMS membership

The conference tag line was “Empowering the Made in America Movement” and our speakers did a great job of embracing this theme. Key takeaways are as follows.

### **KEYNOTE:**

#### **“Green Growth & the Expansion of Sustainability in the U.S. Apparel Industry”**

Jimmy Barnhardt, Unifi Manufacturing

- Sustainability starts at home and in the office. Leave no trace!
- If you wait for the consumer to green your company, you are too late.
- We did not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we are borrowing it from our children.
- Remember to reuse, repurpose, renew, and recycle.

### **TECH FORUM:**

#### **“Intelligence Inspires Innovation in Sewing Technology”**

Frank Henderson, Henderson Sewing Machine Company

- “We in America can compete in the global Textile & Sewn Products Industries by utilizing Robotics & Automation in our facilities”.
- If your plant “Looks and is the Same” as it was 10-15 years Ago... You must change or be bypassed by your competition.
- “Speed to Market” and “Fast Fashion” are King today.

#### **“MADE IN AMERICA with Smart Cutting Room 4.0”**

Rick Vizziello, Lectra

- Industry 4.0 places U.S. factories at the heart of the value chain.
- Industry 4.0, leaves more room for large scale personalization.
- Industry 4.0 will propel a new digitalized lifecycle for products, for the benefit of consumers.

#### **“Advancements in Digital Textile Printing – The MicroFactory”**

Andy Arkin, Nextwave

- The digital textile revolution is reshoring to the U.S. These new age production facilities will be simple, clean, streamlined, green and automated with easy to use software and equipment with minimal labor requirements.
- Today digital textile printing represents only 4%, over the next 5 years it will represent over 40%.
- The cost to produce textiles digitally has finally surpassed conventional printing methods making the digital textile apparel Microfactory a viable solution to produce apparel efficiently and in hours rather than weeks.

## **SPEAKERS:**

### **“What’s Your Brand’s Digital & Door Index?”**

Jerry Inman, Demand Worldwide

- With industry challenges like mass personalization and customization for a new generation of consumers, SEAMS members can help “big time” if they build the right supply chain partnerships.
- Blockchain, RFID/eThread/Sensors, PIM and AR/VR are NEED TO KNOW technologies for the sewn products industry in the US supply chain in order to thrive and survive.
- The trucker jacket will be a “must have item” for Fall/Winter 18 and SEAMS members should try to be part of the supply chain that helps produce them in America (and other on-trend items).

### **“Trump & Trade: What You Need to Know Now”**

Chunlian (Lian) Yang Alston & Bird

- The Trump Administration’s international trade agenda will continue to evolve as it pushes for “better deals” with trading partners. However, it is far from clear whether the efforts will achieve the intended goals of reducing U.S. trade deficits and bringing manufacturing jobs back to the United States, or backfire.
- The trend of increasing trade remedy actions and trade enforcement will continue.
- NAFTA renegotiations will resume in November 2017. Major breakthroughs are unlikely if the Administration makes no compromise on issues relating to the rules of origin, sunset clause and dispute settlement.

### **“Making Sense of the DoD 2018 Budget”**

Ron Houle, Pivot Step Consultants

- “Sequestration continues to put pressure on the defense budget and needs to be repealed”.
- While the defense budget is experiencing growth, the demands on the US military continue to grow and continue to place stress on the current force structure.
- Modernization remains underfunded.

But, the biggest reason this conference was special to me was that we had the opportunity to celebrate a person that for more than 20 years has been the driving force behind this association. She has been a special person to me and thousands more as she has worked tirelessly to serve our membership with grace, dignity, and integrity. To honor her devotion, Sarah Friedman was presented with SEAMS Lifetime Achievement Award. And, moving forward SEAMS Person of the Year Award will be named in her honor. Thank you Sarah Friedman!

Will Duncan  
Executive Director