

SEAMS Spring Networking Conference

Contempora, Unionwear, Mara Hoffman win Sewn Products Reshoring Awards

SAVANNAH, Ga. – SEAMS, with strategic partner the Reshoring Initiative, announced the winners of the inaugural Sewn Products National Reshoring Award competition during its Spring Networking Conference here in May.

Awards were presented in three categories – Textiles, Cut & Sew Manufacturing and Brands & Vertical Retailers.

The Textile Award was presented to Contempora Fabrics, while Unionwear was presented with the Cut & Sew Manufacturers Award and Mara Hoffman Brand the Brands & Vertical Retailers Award.

Harry Moser, founder and president of the Reshoring Initiative, announced the winners. Each recipient was presented with a certificate and received accolades from SEAMS and the Reshoring Initiative in front of more than a hundred SEAMS members in attendance.

“I am excited to deliver to these three progressive companies the first-ever Sewn Products Reshoring Awards,” Moser said. “They are all setting a great example for our industry on what’s possible to make in America again.”

Winners represent progressive companies focused on the made-in-America movement supporting the economy and bringing production of goods back to the U.S.

“SEAMS is thrilled to partner on this award and to be able to surprise our winners at our annual Spring Networking Conference with their peers and colleagues in attendance,” said Will Duncan, executive director, SEAMS. “Our membership continues to grow with companies represented by these winners that are focused on the mission of SEAMS with our made-in-America Movement.”

Award winners

Contempora Fabrics, Lumberton, N.C., is an established manufacturer of all types of circular knits used in the latest fashion, athletic and performance garments trending in the U.S. today. Contempora’s reshoring initiative was driven by Walmart’s commitment to purchase by 2023 an additional \$250 billion in products made, sourced or grown in the U.S.

Contempora supplied the fabric used to manufacture employee vests for all Walmart U.S. stores, generating more than \$13 million in sales in the U.S. over five years.

Unionwear, Newark, N.J., is a leading manufacturer and supplier of made-in-USA hats, bags and binders for dozens of global brands previously sourced in China. Unionwear’s reshoring initiatives included re-engineering and re-designing reshored products, generating more than 70 additional jobs in the U.S. and over \$4 million in annual revenue.

From January 2014 through December 2018, Unionwear’s reshoring increased annual revenue over \$4 million and added 74 jobs.

Unionwear attributed its reshoring success to convincing corporations of the value of a made-in-USA label, re-engineering and redesigning reshored products to be cost competitive and process innovations, including lean manufacturing, continuous improvement, just-in-time supply chain management, Cloud Mobile ERP and measuring plant efficiency via new technology to track production and efficiency.

The New York City-based Mara Hoffman Brand, which was unable to send a representative to the conference, designs and manufactures garments with an environmental impact in mind, using responsibly sourced organic, recycled and regenerated materials whenever possible. In 2015 the company moved textile printing and cut & sew back to the U.S., gaining better transparency in its supply chain and providing jobs for their community in NYC.

Offshoring for the company became less attractive as costs increased and timelines, deadlines and minimums became more of an issue. The value of the work was in the multimillions.

Made-in-America on the rise

Before announcing the winners, Moser told the audience that since 2010, 757,000 new U.S. manufacturing jobs have been announced, representing an increase of 31 percent. The apparel industry, he added, offers a huge opportunity for reshoring to the U.S. The sector has been decimated, with 90 percent of apparel manufacturing moving offshore in recent decades, but an increased preference for made-in-USA products, fiber availability and automation opportunities bode well for the U.S., he added.

U.S. reshoring is the practice of transferring offshore business operations or sourcing back to the U.S., in addition to any new or significantly increased production in the U.S. from importing. The made-in-America-movement is focused on increasing production in the U.S. to strengthen the economy and bring jobs back to the U.S.

SEAMS, the Association and Voice of the Sewn Products Industry, drives this trend with a membership of leading U.S. brands, manufacturers and retailers in the sewn products industry.