



THE ASSOCIATION & VOICE OF THE US SEWN PRODUCTS INDUSTRY

SEAMS' 2023 review and 2024 focus

Empowering U.S. textile, sewn products industry

By Will Duncan, Executive Director, SEAMS Association

Many SEAMS members navigated a somewhat challenging year marked by resilience, collaboration and industry advocacy, but SEAMS was there to help support and promote you through our various resources and events – and we will remain your go-to partner and champion in 2024.

Some of the pain points that lingered into 2023 included inflation, global wars, supply chain disruptions, inventory issues, labor shortages, upskilling requirements, sustainability pressures and regulations and more.

The Association and Voice of the U.S. Sewn Products Industry for over 50 years, made substantial strides in fortifying the domestic supply chain and championing the resurgence of Made in America. Comprising more than 200 prominent fashion brands, retailers, manufacturers and textile providers, SEAMS is a relevant force in shaping the growth and acceleration of this movement by providing access to people, processes and products in the new global economy.

SEAMS' ability to serve as the major bridge for linking retailers and brands to the U.S. manufacturing supplier base is more critical than ever. The connected consumer, direct to consumer and Made in America models have changed our industry and we want to support our members to be better prepared to tackle these new initiatives.

2023: A year of communication, connection and cooperation

Undoubtedly, 2023 taught us the power of communication, connection and cooperation as we continued to work together to remain a viable industry. There is still much work to be done to re-establish a substantial and vibrant sewn products supply chain presence here in the U.S., and it will require you to continue to expend the same or more effort this year to make this happen.

SEAMS' endeavors this year were underscored by impactful events, notably SEAMS West Coast "Meet-and-Greet", Texprocess Americas and our Annual Networking Conference at NC State in Raleigh.

About 50 visitors gathered at LA Apparel's manufacturing center in downtown Los Angeles on March 2nd for SEAMS' West Coast "Meet-and-Greet" event. A wide-ranging factory tour was given by LA Apparel Founder & Owner Dov Charney, where attendees were able to see and interact with all of LA Apparel's production processes. Following the 90-minute tour, a happy hour was hosted at LA Apparel, where SEAMS' President Ron Roach, President of Contempora Fabrics, and SEAMS VP Britt Moore, Director of Sales and Customer Services at Minnesota Knitting Mills, presented an overview of the benefits of SEAMS membership.

The event was sponsored and coordinated by SEAMS' member Tukatech, Inc., also based in Los Angeles, in conjunction with LA Apparel.

EMPOWERING THE MADE IN AMERICA MOVEMENT



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Participation in our SEAMS Supply Chain USA Pavilion at Texprocess Americas May 10-12 in Atlanta allowed members to showcase their services and wares and wave the American flag while showing their commitment to the industry and Made in the USA. By all accounts, it was a successful show for our 25 members who exhibited in this prominent space on the show floor.

For the second year in a row at Texprocess, SEAMS hosted a Networking Bash at Top Golf, allowing attendees to enjoy food and beverage together and get to know each other a little better in a relaxing atmosphere.

Another highlight was the Annual Networking Conference – held for the first time in Raleigh – which emerged as a nexus for industry education, knowledge exchange and, of course, NETWORKING. Held September 12-15, the day-and-a-half conference was preceded by a golf tournament on Day 1, and featured for the first time at this event tours of local industry stalwarts. Participants were able to spend a day visiting NC State’s Wilson College of Textiles and Cotton Incorporated, two entities that play a strong role in the textile industry’s success and viability.

Engaging panels, keynotes and fireside chats featured industry luminaries, imparting invaluable insights into sustainable practices, circularity, trade legislation and industry challenges.

A unique aspect of the conference was that more than 20 NC State Wilson College of Textiles seniors were invited and attended the gathering in order to learn more about the broader textile/cut-and-sew/apparel industry beyond the classroom, and many of them noted in their introductions that this was the first conference they had ever attended. Most of them engaged with SEAMS’ members during breaks, and they undoubtedly made some great connections while also collecting numerous takeaways from speakers. This effort underscores our commitment to nurturing talent, inspiring future leaders and raising awareness of our association and the industry’s successes and challenges.

SEAMS was also present at numerous other industry focused events throughout 2023, such as:

- SPESA’s Executive Conference - San Juan, PR
- STA’s Annual Meeting - Myrtle Beach, SC
- NIB/Source America’s TAG Conference - Philadelphia, PA
- SPESA/IAF World Fashion Convention - Philadelphia, PA
- ATA Expo - Orlando
- Lectra’s Ideation Fashion Tech Conference - New York, NY

Looking ahead to 2024: Strengthening partnerships and education

As SEAMS propels into 2024, our commitment to bolstering the American supply chain remains unwavering. Our presence at Texworld New York City, featuring the “Local Sourcing” segment, signifies a strategic alliance aiming to amplify the Made-in-America movement. This expansion, coupled with SEAMS’ partnership for the event, is poised to provide a dynamic platform for exhibitors and attendees, fostering collaborations and showcasing the best of American manufacturing. This is SEAMS’ first time participating in Texworld New York City, set for January 22-24 at the Javits Center in NYC, and we are proud to officially partner with organizer Messe Frankfurt to help empower and engage the industry.

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SEAMS' Spring Networking Conference in Myrtle Beach, SC, slated for May 1-3 at the Marina Inn at Grand Dunes, and our Fall Networking Conference in a city yet to be determined promise to be pivotal events. These gatherings will likely continue the tradition of fostering industry connections, sharing best practices and exploring emerging trends, further solidifying SEAMS' role as an invaluable resource for its members.

SEAMS' unwavering commitment to steering the U.S. Sewn Products Industry towards resilience and growth is strong. Through our collaborative initiatives, knowledge-sharing platforms and strategic partnerships, SEAMS has established itself as an essential catalyst in reviving the domestic supply chain.

As 2024 unfolds, SEAMS remains poised to continue its legacy as a pivotal resource, empowering our members and driving the resurgence of American textiles and sewn products industries.

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