



THE ASSOCIATION & VOICE OF THE US SEWN PRODUCTS INDUSTRY

SEAMS' members, leadership stayed on the go in summer, fall

By Devin Steele

It's great to see SEAMS' members out and about on the "Textile Circuit" during one of the industry's busy seasons and helping to spread the word about not only their company but the value of SEAMS' membership.

Including Techtextil North America in Raleigh in August (as reported [here](#)), members and leaders of SEAMS have had a jam-packed summer and fall attending various trade shows and conferences.

Despite the looming threat of Hurricane Francine, SEAMS successfully hosted its Fall Networking Conference in Mobile, AL, last month. The hurricane made landfall in neighboring Louisiana on the first evening of the event, but the conference proceeded without disruption. The only casualty was the golf tournament that typically takes place during the conference, but players were treated to brunch in lieu of playing a round.

Under the theme, "Domestic Sourcing: Land of Opportunity, attendees were treated to two days of solid educational and informational sessions and plenty of networking opportunities.

During an evening dinner session, SEAMS board member Xochil Herrera Scheer of the Chicago Pattern Maker was presented the Sarah Friedman Award, the association's highest honor. Presenting the award was SEAMS President Britt Moore of Minnesota Knitting Mills and SEAMS Executive Director, Will Duncan.

The award is named in honor of SEAMS' former Executive Director who helped transform the association from a small, regional apparel manufacturing group into the widely recognized national association for the sewn products industry. Friedman was the original recipient of the award in 2017. Scheer, a strong supporter and advocate for SEAMS, writes a blog, the X-Files, for the association's bi-monthly newsletter.

The event kicked off with a compelling keynote by Pete Roberts, Founder & CEO of ORIGIN®, at Maine-based company with operations in North Carolina that produces top-quality workwear, streetwear, fightwear and boots.

Other speakers included Robert Antoshak, partner at Gherzi Textile Organisation and an expert on the textile and apparel market, who presented "Hanging Tough in a Tough Market;" Roger Tutterow, Ph.D., professor of Economics at Kennesaw State University; Rachel Slade, national best-selling author of the newly released book "Making It In America," who discussed the inspiration for the book and the importance of US manufacturing during a Fireside Chat moderated by Scheer; Auggie Tantillo, President of SRG & Associates and former President &

CEO of the National Council of Textile Organizations (NCTO), who presented a Washington Policy Update; and Bill Mahaffey, President of Pleneri led an all-attendee group discussion.

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During SEAMS' Annual Conference, members elected new directors, including Anthony Marini of Heartland Manufacturing, Edgewood, NY; Mindy Martell of Clothier Design Source, St. Paul, MN; Steve Hawkins of America Knits, Swainsboro, GA.; Marty Bailey of TSG Apparel, Long Beach, CA; Brian Alhanati of CustomFab, Garden Grove, CA; Geoff Senko of Ocean State Innovations, Portsmouth, RI; William Mebane of Unifi, Greensboro, NC; Ryan Smith of Printcraft, Lexington, NC; and Stacey Bridges, of Hanes Dye & Finish, Winston-Salem, NC.

SEAMS represented elsewhere, too

Executive Director Will Duncan attended the Southern Textile Association's (STA's) Annual Meeting at Myrtle Beach, SC, in July and SPESA's Annual Executive Conference in Montréal in October. Both STA and SPESA are allied organizations and part of the industry's new Alphabet Soup Collective, a collaborative platform for textile and apparel industry associations to maximize their offerings and benefits to all industry professionals. Our members were present in full force at the Coalition's first get-together for the various entities, the [Alphabet Soup Shindig](#), held in conjunction with Techtexil North America in August.

In addition, Chad Bolick of Unifi, Inc. and Bethany Pollack of Draper Knitting spoke on a sustainability and circularity panel at the AATCC Textile Discovery in Savannah, GA., in October, and other SEAMS' members were in attendance.

And besides Techtexil and, of course, SEAMS Annual Networking Conference, the most well-represented event by SEAMS members this fall was the Advanced Textiles Expo® in Anaheim, CA, in September. No less than 26 member companies – plus our association – exhibited at the trade fair, which for a century has been the industrial fabrics industry's flagship show. Co-located with Sun Shading Expo North America, the show floor bustled with about 380 exhibitors between the two expos. Several members also attended Glen Raven's Customer Appreciation event at Angels Stadium. (See photo gallery featuring a number of SEAMS' members in Anaheim [here](#).)

Members who exhibited included, American & Efird, Apex Mills, A+ Products, Carolina CoverTech, Champion Thread, CustomFab, DirecTex, Diversitex, Eastex Products, The Fox Company, Gehring Textiles, Lectra, Henderson Machinery, Jason Mills, Kuraray, the Manufacturing Solutions Center, NC State's Wilson College of Textiles, MMI Textiles, Ocean State Innovations, the Textile Technology Center at Gaston College, Juki, Amann, Wayne Mills, YKK, Halco USA, and Zund

As the events calendar begins to look barren compared to recent weeks and as we wind down a successful year, we appreciate our members' advocacy and support of SEAMS and participation in these industry gatherings. Your presence helps us remain a powerful organization and resource within the sewn products, textile and apparel sector.

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