



Domestic Vs. International: A Balancing Act, Says Toomey

Kevin Toomey, president and CEO of Kayser-Roth Hosiery Co. Inc., sees domestic manufacturing and international sourcing as a balancing act. His company will do both, he told some 60 manufacturers and suppliers at the annual CHA meeting recently in Winston-Salem.



FIBER AND YARN PRODUCTS--Bob Johnson, right, president, and members of his management team enjoy the annual holiday dinner of the Carolina Hosiery Association chapter.

As a company that is committed to vertical integration, domestic manufacturing will continue to drive Kayser-Roth, Toomey asserted. "We're here to stay ...we're not leaving America."
Kayser-Roth is owned by Golden Lady Hosiery of Italy.



NATIONAL SPINNING--David Ross and Robert Woodard of the sales team are enjoying the CHA luncheon with other hosiery executives.



LOOKING AHEAD--Discussing the industry outlook, from left, are Rusty Holt, of Holt Hosiery, Burlington, NC, Bill Cobble, Valley Knit Hosiery, Fort Payne, AL, and Dan St. Louis, Hosiery Technology Center.

Toomey said the company will source outside -- domestically and internationally. "But we're not interested in a mill relationship ...we want a business partner," he insisted.

Speaking to industry professionals, he acknowledged the hosiery industry has become a house divided. "If you're going to be domestic, you can make a go of it ...if you're going to be international, you can make a go of it ...but for me, balance is the best equation," the former THA chairman said.

As for international sourcing, it has to be more than price, Toomey said. "I am convinced that as we go down the road, something is going to change."

Toomey also noted that a major challenge will be to convince retailers why going direct with offshore sources may not be in their best interest. He said quality control, deliveries, and innovation will be part of the argument: "Free trade is coming. It is not going away."

"We (at Kayser-Roth) believe in free trade as long it is fair trade," he added.