

# Smart Textiles headline marketing forum

Smart textiles smart enough to make you feel good was a recurring theme last month for the more than 175 textile industry executives who gathered in Belmont, N.C. for the 2005 Summer Marketing Forum sponsored by the Southern Textile Association Inc.

The N.C., Center for Applied Textile Technology Center at Gaston College hosted the event at its facilities at the East Campus of Gaston College. More than 50 textile manufacturing companies and supplier companies were represented at the forum.

While the majority of presentations at the forum focused on new fiber and yarn technology, manufacturing executives also heard engaging exchanges from the retail sector on strategies for moving those new products.

Textile innovation presentations included



Gwen Perkins, textile center interim director, with Wellman Inc.'s Ed Willburn

programs from Fort Mill, S.C.-based Wellman Inc. on its Holofiber. Wellman's Terry Turner presented the Holofiber program.

Holofiber's polyester base features a permanent, proprietary, optically responsive active ingredient that transforms ambient light energy and energy emitted by the body into energy with a different wavelength that the body then can reabsorb. The body uses this reabsorbed energy in a biological process known as the Krebs cycle, which converts acetate into carbon dioxide and water; relaxing capillaries and releasing energy. This release leads to increased oxygen levels, accelerating muscle recovery and building strength and building strength attributes that aid in relieving pain associated with blood circulation loss caused by hardening of the arteries in diabetes sufferers.

So when Holofiber® is worn as clothing, or placed near a person (in a bed sheet or pillowcase) it transmits the altered energy to the body. This energy sent to the body



Close to 175 hosiery industry executives gathered at the Textile Technology Center at Gaston College in Belmont, N.C., on August 18 for the Southern Textile Association's 2005 Summer Marketing Forum. Innovation from fiber and yarn producers highlighted the program as well as engaging discussions from the retail sector.

by Holofiber® helps the body's cells to be better oxygenated. Holofiber® absorbs the light energy, altering it and re-emitting it immediately but also over a period of time,

which means it does not have to be subject to a continuous exposure of light in order to function effectively.



Joe Keith, college dean

Protex®, from Carolina Silver Technologies—a new Valdese, N.C., manufacturing company formed through a partnership with Carolina Mills Inc. of Maiden and Argentum Medical LLC.

The facility is producing silver plated yarns and fabrics for fabrication into Argentum Medical's current Silverlon® brand of wound and burn care dressings.

The company is also preparing to market the product for other applications — including possibly hosiery.

Jerry Perry, with Carolina Silver, addressed the group at the Belmont forum.

Protex is a layer of pure silver permanently adhered to the surface of textiles. The silver

plated textiles retain all of the normal textile properties, allowing traditional treatment of Protex incorporated products. The product is available in fabric, yarn and fiber:

Perry said Protex is one of the best performers when it comes to antimicrobial characteristics because of its silver ion release capability and it also offers a "feel good" factor due to the electrical and/or thermal conductivity and how that those conductivity characteristics relate to the body.

Other speakers at the forum included Mike Todaro, with the American Apparel Producers' Network; Jeff Streader, with VF Imagewear; Lee Thompson, with Optimer Performance Fibers; and Dan St. Louis, with the Hosiery Technology Center:

Gwen Perkins, interim director of the Textile Technology Center at Gaston College, said the response to the forum has been very favorable.

Perkins said the Textile Center can play a key role in helping bring textile innovation to the marketplace both through its testing services and marketing services.

She said the center's \$5 million worth of testing equipment can assist companies in testing new products for performance characteristics and fabric formation.

Joe Keith, dean of the East Campus and Textile Technology Center at Gaston College, attended the forum last month and echoed Perkins comments.

"We are very eager and anxious to work

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# Surviving In Flat World: *Run Fast, Think Change*

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its new "insourcing" program with MDI's Consolidated Services. Hosiery companies can use the extensive resources of a traditional food distributor to package and ship socks. And enjoy big savings.

The model for this collaboration started with UPS and FedEx. UPS is now re-inventing itself as a supply chain manager. Toshiba computers is a major customer. If you own a Toshiba computer than needs repair, call the company and you will be instructed to ship it out by UPS. But what you are not told is that UPS actually repairs the computer. All the administrative work is done at Toshiba while UPS handles the customer service.

UPS also acts as a fulfillment house for Nike. Order underwear from Jockey and it comes from a UPS warehouse.

Bottom line: companies are "insourcing" services to companies like UPS and upgrading their supply chain capabilities. Think Consolidated Services if you are a hosiery company.

Finally, Friedman looks at the "Steroids" in a flat world –palm-top computers, cell phones, and digital work flow programs. All the known information in the world just minutes, sometimes seconds, away.

Friedman says that being an American, he wants this country to maximize all the opportunities and benefits of a flat world, providing protection for those who have difficulty with the transition. So he offers "compassionate flatism" which entails leadership, muscle building, cushioning, social activism and parenting.

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with our North Carolina textile manufacturers to assist them in any way we can," Keith said.

Keith said a lot of textile manufacturers have lost some of the research and development capabilities and their center is ready to step in and help fill the gap with its state-of-the-art testing facilities.

Keith said another primary area in which the center can assist textile manufacturers is with their sampling programs. He said the center's equipment can run samples for companies that would find running those small quantities themselves much less time efficient.

Industry observers, including those that spoke at the forum, all agree that the ability to get sample yarn and fiber products out to manufacturers in the minimal amount of time is going play a key role as more and more manufacturers are trying to secure specialty markets.

"I think that (niche business) is going to be the future in U.S. manufacturing," Keith said.

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Leadership, Friedman insists, must come from executives who are willing to push companies into changing. Change market focus, change product development to add value, change decision-making from vertical to horizontal.

Some negotiated trade relief would be considered a cushion for industries such as sock manufacturers. But an interesting idea is "wage insurance" that would help people when they lose a job and have to take less money in new employment. The insurance would have a \$10,000 cap and would not be paid until the person took another job. But it would help cushion the blow of taking a pay cut.

The transition is going to be a stress to many people. If societies are unable to manage the strain, there will be a backlash that will result in irrational action and bring down everyone's standard of living.

Parents will bear responsibility for how well their children adapt to the flat world.

American parents need to encourage children with a bent toward science and math. In a competitive world, America is falling behind in education and the output of scientists, he concludes.

"The World is Flat" is not for people who believe the good old days will return. But it is a textbook for executives and people who believe anything is possible with the right work ethic and an open mind.

—Paul Fogleman



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