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ALYSON BENDER

LIFESTYLE LAUNCH: Activewear brand Soybu was one of the new exhibitors showing in Swim Collective's newly launched sister show, Active Collective. The two shows were held at the St. Regis Monarch Beach Resort in Dana Point, Calif.

TRADE SHOW REPORT

Active Collective Debuts Alongside Swim Collective

By Alyson Bender *Contributing Writer*

Buyer attendance doubled over last August's edition of **Swim Collective**, according to Executive Show Director Shannon Leggett. The show ran concurrently with the hard-launch debut of **Active Collective** at the **St. Regis Monarch Beach Resort** in Dana Point, Calif., Jan. 15-16. With a maximum total capacity of 130 exhibitors, the shows were sold out months in advance.

"We experienced a fantastic turnout this edition," Leggett said.

Although very little buyer crossover traffic was reported between the Swim and Active shows, brands that offer both categories appreciated the co-location to show their Spring and Summer '15 collections. Noteworthy retailers in atten-

dance included **Neiman Marcus**, **ShopBop**, **Amazon.com**, **MGM Resorts**, **Bloomingdale's**, **Nordstrom**, **Gilt Groupe** and **Everything But Water**, plus others from over 22 states.

"Buyers have been very happy with this show," said Debbie Martin, national sales manager of **L*Space by Monica Wise**, who reported seeing over 30 accounts the first day, including **The Venetian** in Las Vegas, **Butterflies and Bikinis** and **Sundance Resort**. "There has been a great energy to this show, and buyers are writing. While we have seen many local and national accounts, we feel there has been a lack of international buyers, though," Martin said. "We had a very good show and were able to establish new relationships, which is always exciting."

Raj Manufacturing—who manufactures and represents
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TRADE SHOW REPORT

SoCal Materials Show Debuts With Bustling Traffic

By Alison A. Nieder *Executive Editor*

The debut run of the **SoCal Materials Show** got off to a brisk start as manufacturers and brands crowded the aisles of the **California Market Center's** penthouse on the hunt for sourcing materials for footwear, accessories and apparel.

Traffic was consistently busy over the course of the two-day show, organized by Portland, Ore.-based **American Events Inc.**, which also runs the **NW Materials Show** in Portland and the **NE Materials Show** in Boston.

"This show has been great," said Leah Soles, the Portland-based representative for **Yuan Ling Knitting Industrial Co. Ltd.**, a family-run vertical knitter in Changhua City, Taiwan. "I was surprised. It's nice to connect with Southern California."

Yuan Ling manufactures circular knits for footwear linings. **Nike** is one of its largest customers. At the SoCal Materials Show, Soles said, she primarily met with manufacturers based in Southern California, but she did meet with one person from Mexico.

Many of the exhibitors also show at one or both of the other American Events shows.

That was the case with **Auburn Leather**, a manufacturer of made-in-America shoelaces in Auburn, Ky.

"This is an opportunity to expand outreach to brands who don't make it out to Boston," said Adam D. Simon, director of sales and marketing.

Auburn Leather, which recently celebrated its 150th anniversary, is a family-owned business that sells footwear laces to brands such as **Sperry**, **Timberland** and **L.L. Bean**. On the West Coast, the company works with **Deckers** and **DC Shoes**, Simon said. Plus, he added, "We always pick up a little new business [at the shows]."

Simon said he is seeing a growing interest in made-in-America product. Although the company works with the large manufacturers—or "the big global guys," as Simon put it—the company is also able to work with smaller companies.

"We definitely support our domestic manufacturers where
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Wet Seal Files for Bankruptcy

By Andrew Asch *Retail Editor*

Juniors retailer **The Wet Seal Inc.** announced Jan. 16 that it had filed a voluntary petition for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Delaware.

The announcement follows a tumultuous period when it suddenly shuttered two-thirds of its fleet of stores, which was announced on Jan. 7. In a Dec. 10 conference call, Ed Thomas, Wet Seal's chief executive officer, told Wall Street analysts there was a possibility that this company, which was founded in 1962, might go bankrupt.

In the Jan. 16 announcement, Thomas said that the Foot-hill Ranch, Calif.-based retailer negotiated a debtor in possession (DIP) financing arrangement and plan sponsorship agreement with **B. Riley Financial Inc.**, the parent of **B. Riley & Co. LLC** and the **Great American Group LLC**.

On Jan. 16, Thomas said, "After careful consideration, the

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TRADE SHOW REPORT

More Business for Giant T-shirt Market at ISS Long Beach

By Andrew Asch *Retail Editor*

With screen-printing machines whirring and salespeople talking about the next big thing in T-shirts, the **Imprinted Sportswear Show Long Beach** ran Jan. 16-18 at the **Long Beach Convention Center**, located by one of America's busiest ports, in Long Beach, Calif.

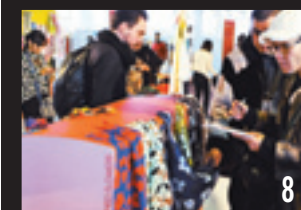
The annual show is devoted to one of America's biggest apparel markets, the multi-billion-dollar T-shirts market, along with hoodies and athleticwear. The U.S. market for sweatshirts alone was \$7.2 billion during the period from December 2013 to November 2014, according to market researchers **The NPD Group Inc.** The show included embellishments from screen-printed designs to embroidery and sublimation printing.

The trade show stretched out over 103,000 square feet of space at the sprawling Long Beach Convention Center, said

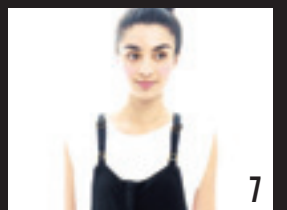
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Jeff Brown, the show director of ISS Long Beach. Booth space, which increased 10 percent over last year, was sold out, and 350 exhibitors displayed goods at the show, Brown said, adding that there were 100 new booths at the show. The Long Beach show is the biggest in the family of ISS shows, also held in Atlantic City, N.J.; Nashville, Tenn.; Orlando, Fla.; and Forth Worth, Texas.

Exhibiting were some of the high-marquee names in T-shirts and basics, including **Fruit of the Loom**, **Hanes** and **Delta Apparel**. Also showing were well-known brands that put a fashion edge on T-shirts and basics, such as the Los Angeles-headquartered brands **Bella + Canvas** and **American Apparel** as well as **Alternative Apparel**, which maintains a design studio in downtown Los Angeles.

These vendors sell basics to manufacturers and occasionally to artisans who make new silhouettes from the basic tees. Technology vendors such as **Murakami USA**, headquartered in Monterey Park, Calif.; **Workhorse Products Inc.**, based in Phoenix; and **Epson** also displayed the latest in technology to put decorations on T-shirts and hoodies.

All of the vendors interviewed for this article estimated that attendee traffic increased. Mark S. Mertens of **A4**, an apparel company headquartered in Vernon, Calif., estimated that attendee traffic increased 30 percent over last year. Mertens said ISS is very important to his company, which makes clothing with an athletic, technical edge. However, like many trade shows, orders are typically made after the show. "It's not a writing show," Mertens said. "It is a meet-and-greet."

For Kevin Kelly, chief executive officer of **US Blanks**,

headquartered in downtown Los Angeles, ISS Long Beach is a crucial show for his business.

"It's the best show of the year, as far as qualified clients," Kelly said. "We see the greatest amount of T-shirt screen-printers and embellishment houses."

Kelly estimated that his 10-by-20-foot booth enjoyed double the number of visits compared with last January. There were more attendees this year because the economy has been showing signs of improvement, Kelly said. Most of the visits were from companies headquartered in the Western U.S. However, the show also enjoyed international attendees, representing companies from Korea and Japan.

For Cassie Stanczyk, a sales rep for **Bella + Canvas**, ISS Long Beach has a special entrepreneurial edge, and many attendees represent start-up lines. "Everyone wants to come, touch and feel the product and see what is new," she said.

Bella + Canvas introduced new fabrications such as a multi-colored speckled fabric for blank T-shirts available

come across that is entirely made out of recycled fabrics. Other recycled shirts blend fabric remnants and new cotton.

American Apparel displayed an "Ultra Wash" T-shirt, which is a sheer cotton jersey with a soft hand. Other looks were performance-inspired looks for women such as **American Apparel's** "Motion Short" and its "Christie" bra.

Cygnus Apparel, headquartered in Commerce, Calif., showed T-shirts made out of ringspun cotton.

Independent Trading Co., headquartered in San Clemente, Calif., makes hoodies for many action-sports brands. For this edition of ISS, the company doubled the size of its booth to 40 by 60 feet. The company introduced a 50/50 cotton/poly pull-over, a "Baja" style hoodie that features a fat loop French terry and offers a "Mexican blanket vibe," said Andrew "Franky" Lawson of **Independent**. While coaches' jackets have been increasing in popularity at streetwear trade shows, **Independent** introduced a new look for the jacket by placing a hood with its version of the jacket.

Education played a big part at ISS Long Beach. The show hosted many seminars on subjects such as marketing, recycling, sales and technology. One of the speakers was Charlie Taublieb of **Taublieb Consulting**, headquartered outside of Denver. Taublieb typically speaks on screen-printing, and he said that the trend in screen-printing machines is that they are becoming bigger in order to handle more operations and there is an initiative for them to solely use inks that are deemed environmentally friendly.

These environmentally friendly inks react differently to machine operations such as heating, so engineers have been developing new versions of screen-printing machines to handle the environmentally friendly inks. Taublieb said that screen-printing machines could range in price from \$50,000 to half a million dollars.

Next year's ISS Long Beach is scheduled to run Jan. 22-24. ●



T-SHIRT TV: Stahls', a heat-printing decorating-system company, screened tutorials on heat-transfer techniques at ISS Long Beach.



THE MACHINE: Equipment producers had a big presence at ISS Long Beach.

in different colorways. Other looks included an acid-wash shirt, which features a burnout look without the sheer details typical of other acid-wash styles. Another look was a slouchy shirt for women that would provide a fashionable silhouette but not be as form fitting.

At the show, **US Blanks** introduced its 100 percent recycled shirt, which Kelly said is the first shirt that he has

Swim Collective *Continued from page 1*

Ella Moss Swim, **Hurley**, **Reef**, **Splendid Swim**, **Luxe** and **Next**—also reported that buyers were writing. "This show has been awesome for us, and we have connected with many new accounts," Giuseppe DeMasi, account manager, said. "This show has provided a nice cross-section of the industries."

Jacqueline Collins, owner of **Kate & Lace**, a lingerie and swim boutique in Westlake Village, Calif., reported attending Swim Collective "regularly." Although her boutique does not carry activewear, she was "happy" with the selection of swim resources at the show.

First-time exhibitors Camille and Jackie Brady, sisters behind the swim label **Cami and Jax**, who launched their line in April 2014 via an online store and bricks-and-mortar

retail store on Montana Avenue in Santa Monica, Calif., decided to break into wholesale distribution via Swim Collective. "We heard good things about this show and decided to try it out," the sisters said. "It has surpassed our expectations, and we were able to meet with retailers such as **Revolve Clothing**, **Great Shapes** from New York and **Diane's Beachwear**. We have already signed up to participate in the August show and look forward to it."

Veteran Swim Collective exhibitor Odette Leach, retail merchandiser for **ViX Paulahermanny** and juniors swim line **Sofia by Vix**, reported being very busy selling Summer 2015 (which starts shipping in March) and High Summer (June through August deliveries). "This show has gone really well for us. We have had a mix of appointments and walk-ins," Leach said, and she reported working with retailers the **Beverly Hills Bikini Shop**, **Molly Brown's** and **Diane's**. The brands also plan to return to Swim Collective in August.

The debut of Active Collective included over 30 brands, including **Trina Turk Recreation**, **Under Armour**, **Blue Life**, **LVR**, **Jetanna**, **Million Dollar Tan**, **Mika Yoga Wear**, **Ultra-corr** and **Radiant Active**.

"It was nice they added activewear brands," said Cori French, a buyer for **Revolve Clothing**. "They have a good assortment here, and we have discovered lots of new brands."

Blue Life by **Planet Blue**, which introduced swim and active last year, reported "amazing traffic" in the Active Collective Show. "Buyers have been very receptive to the crossover," stated Cassie Palmeri, a sales representative for **Blue Life**. She reported working with **Bloomingdale's**, **Nordstrom** and **Style Runner** from Australia at the show.

Soybu, an activewear and yoga wear brand, was a first-time exhibitor and reported being happy with the turnout. "We have opened lots of new accounts and met with existing accounts,"



Viox by Paula Hermanny

Chrissy O'Callaghan, sales manager, said. "We saw mainly regional buyers such as Amazon.com and **KSL Resorts** and enjoyed showing alongside like brands."

Swim Collective will next host a swim preview, June 23-24, with a select 30 exhibitors and 40 top buyers at the **Hyatt Regency Hotel** in Huntington Beach, Calif. ●



L*Space's Monica Wise