

# N.Y. Textile Shows Face Gloomy Climate

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Texworld USA has added an area dedicated to denim mills.

Photo By Courtesy Photo

**NEW YORK** — Organizers of next week's international textile shows here were counting on pent-up demand and a lull in the barrage of negative economic reports to help buoy buyers' spirits.

Instead, the bad news has picked up and will be fresh in buyers' minds as they hunt for fabrics that can give them the most value for their buck.

Key economic indicators for June didn't paint a picture of the U.S. economy being on the upswing. The unemployment rate hit a 26-year high at 9.5 percent and more jobs, 467,000, were lost during the month than expected.

The disclosure sent retail shares falling, along with the overall stock market, and brought the total number of jobs lost since the beginning of the recession to 6.5 million.

In a research note released Thursday, Citigroup broadlines retail analyst Deborah Weinswig cited several factors that kept consumers out of stores in June.

"Rising unemployment, lower consumer confidence, and the cycling of last year's tax rebate checks weighed on sales, and a cool and wet start to the month gave consumers an excuse to stay home," Weinswig said in a report.

California alone represents the world's eighth largest economy and is in a financial meltdown. The Golden State has started issuing IOUs and is facing a budget deficit of at least \$26 billion. Its unemployment rate surged to 11.5 percent in May, the highest level in more than 30 years.

Weak economic conditions have already taken a heavy toll on textile shows around the world, with winter editions seeing declines in the number of exhibitors and attendees. As a result, buyers will have fewer shows and exhibitors to survey next week.

Trend-leading *Première Vision Preview* will anchor the week's events at the Metropolitan Pavilion July 15 to 16, along with *Texworld USA* at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center July 14 to 16. They will be joined by *Kingpins*, the boutique show targeting the premium denim segment that will take place at *Skyline Studios* July 14 and 15.

*Prefab*: The *Supima Premium Fabric Show* won't return to New York for the summer session, opting to show once a year during January market week.

"The January shows focus on spring-summer, and that really is the strongest season for Supima in terms of lighter-weight fabrics and the types of fabrics that are being marketed at that time," said Buxton Midyette, marketing director for Supima. "That's where we want to channel and focus our energy."

Alexandra d'Archangelo, marketing manager of textile shows for *Texworld USA* organizer *Messe Frankfurt*, said the upcoming show is looking better than the February edition. The struggling economy combined with a scheduling conflict at the convention center forced the show to take place two weeks later than the other shows and ultimately led to an almost 40 percent decline in exhibitors to 96 in February. D'Archangelo said the number of exhibitors registered for next week's show is at 140.

"Something that we have seen is everybody wanting to work leaner, with shorter turnaround times," said d'Archangelo. "Having items in stock will be a very good selling point. People also seem to be straddling the seasons, partially because they're shopping late. Buyers will be interested in spring-summer, as well as fall-winter, even though all the show will be billing collections for fall."

Buyers will also be looking for fabrics that can be used across seasons, she added. Multipurpose fabrics that have a number of selling features catch buyers' eyes in trying times.

The show's organizers have also added a dedicated area to showcase denim mills. The area will feature 10 mills, including Firemount Textiles, RS Denim Ltd., S.M. Denim Mills and Xingtai Blue Diamond Dyeing & Weaving Co. A denim trends seminar hosted by trend forecasting firm MPDClick will be at 3 p.m. on July 14.

Jacques Brunel, Première Vision's general manager and international director, said the number of exhibitors at Première Vision Preview is expected to be around 100, representing a 10 percent decline from last year's edition. Brunel believes the July shows will serve as a barometer for the apparel industry.

"We will discover the real situation of this new environment," Brunel said. "We are preparing the first collections for after the crisis, collections that will be hitting stores in September 2010."

Brunel conceded that doing business in this environment will be difficult, but ultimately he has confidence in the power of creative product and the purchasing power of U.S. buyers. Maintaining a presence in the market must be a priority for mills.

"The one condition to survive the crisis in the U.S. is to stay in the market," he said.

The July edition of Première Vision Preview will be the 19th and the January show will mark the show's 10th anniversary.

Kingpins, sponsored by Dow XLA, has expanded to 23 exhibitors, including Orta Anadolu, Kurabo, Tavex, Cone Denim, Denimatrix and FesslerUSA.

Andrew Olah, chief executive officer of Olah Inc., a U.S. agent for foreign contract manufacturers and textile and hardware vendors targeting denim designers who is also the show's organizer, said his goal has been to make Kingpins a supply chain show, as well as a fabric event.

"We wanted garment factories from each global zone," Olah said. "There's a serious attempt to have a global sourcing show."

Olah has seen the number of exhibitors and attendees steadily grow over the years, although he has no desire to carry more than 25 exhibitors. He's also not expecting a significant rebound in the business soon.

"I'm acting as if this is the way it's going to be from now on," he said. "We're not waiting around because we think it's going to get better next year. I will be happy if it's this way next year."

The week after the shows, a newcomer will enter the New York scene. The SpinExpo yarn fair will take place at the Metropolitan Pavillion July 20 to 22 and intends to present buyers with some of the world's best spinners. A Shanghai version of the show has been under way for seven years.

Karine Van Tassel, the show's director, said buyers are looking for clear direction in the market.

"Hanging fabric like shiny laundry in a trend area is not what they need," Van Tassel said. "Buyers need clear information on what they can do with the material they buy."

With yarns, in particular, Van Tassel said buyers need to see how it functions as a fabric and a garment. Exhibitors will have examples on hand. The show will also feature four trend areas, including spring and summer fashion, home and accessories yarns and an area dedicated to sustainable practices.

SpinExpo will host 75 exhibitors from 15 countries. Van Tassel said more than 350 people had preregistered and she expected about 3,000 to attend.