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Under AICC ‘Umbrella,’ Independents Present Solutions At PackExpo

by Jim Curley

Executives at Ox Box have been regular attendees at Pack Expo shows in Chicago, Illinois for years. This year, the Addison, Illinois based company will be an exhibitor, thanks to AICC’s Corrugated & Packaging Solutions Showcase.

“In previous years, we didn’t have the marketing ‘pockets’ to do this on our own,” said Ox Box’s President Guy Ockerlund. “Now we’ll be joining with other independents to market our products to box buyers.”

Eleven box companies from Utah to Massachusetts as well as two suppliers essentially sub-leased part of the 2,000-square-foot space purchased by AICC at the PMMI-sponsored show, scheduled on October 31 to November 3 at McCormick Place in Chicago.

“Providing services like this stems from one of our charges from members companies in our association’s long-range plan,” said Steve Young, AICC President. “They wanted us to be more outward looking, to focus more on the ‘user universe.’ Providing this opportunity to members does just that.”

Young recalled that AICC did a similar thing for about a dozen members last April at a WalMart Sustainability Expo in Rogers, Arkansas.

“AICC is the first association to do this at Pack Expo for its members,” Jim Pittas, Vice President, Trade Shows for PMMI, told AICC’s Director of Marketing and Communications Taryn Pyle. “It could serve as a model for other associations.”

Diverse Offerings

Packaging specifiers attending the show might well come away from their visit to AICC’s “space” struck by the diversity of offerings they see. The common thread won’t be, as you might expect, graphics, but solutions.

Ox Box specializes in solving heavy-duty packaging challenges with products such as triplewall corrugated, as well as manufacturing export-compliant packaging, often in combinations of corrugated and wood.

“We’ll be displaying a variety of these products, which we sell through distributors as well as by our own sales team,” Ockerlund said.

Among Mid-Atlantic Packaging’s specialties is inventive retail-ready packaging, including 12 patented designs, and the Montgomeryville, Pennsylvania based company will bring a full complement of these “sustainability solutions” to Chicago.

“There’s no bigger



Heavy-duty packaging is Ox Box’s forte.



A Mid-Atlantic Packaging shelf-ready solution.

show than Pack Expo, and going in with AICC on the Packaging Showcase made a lot of sense for us," said Sustainability Manager Joe Hodges. "It allows us to be part of a larger presence."

"We want to show everything that corrugated can do," said Katherine Armstrong, Marketing Coordinator at Englander Container. The Waco, Texas based company's purchase of Stribling Container & Display and Stribling's Juiced Creative unit earlier this year has widened Englander's offerings to manufacturers and retailers.

One of the more ingenious displays at AICC's space will be a corrugated living room produced by Englander Container, with corrugated being the base product for chairs, lampstands and even the rug. "Our point is that from ceiling to the floor, we've got you covered," Armstrong said.

Englander Container, which makes banners, in-store signage, exterior signage, security signage and fulfillment, as well as traditional industrial and retail packaging and point-of-purchase displays associated with corrugated, will also show a Barbie display made by Stribling for Mattel.

"We'll bring a variety of things," said Great Lakes Packaging's President Jim Nelson. "It'll be more brown box than graphics. We'll focus on engineered corrugated products that give customers sustainable solutions."

"Pack Expo is a good place to see engineering in packaging, as buyers press for increased sustainability," the executive from the Germantown,

Wisconsin based company added.

Terry Choate, Sales and Operation Planning Manager for Landaal Packaging, said that his Flint, Michigan based company will show its corrugated cooler box, which is lined with GreenCell Foam, a moldable, corn starch foam. This product, he said, is a viable alternative to styrofoam or other petroleum based coolers. The cooler, he added, is compostable, burnable, biodegradable, or can be dissolved and washed down the drain.

Landaal Packaging is also a licensee for P-O-P displays, which it will also show. These high graphic units easily pop into place for filling by the manufacturer or retailer, Choate said.

Networks Of Independents

Another purpose of the AICC's initiative in providing space to its members at Pack Expo is not only to show the diversity of its member offerings, but also their common entrepreneurial abilities. "Their diversity speaks to how successful our members are in finding unique niches to satisfy customer needs," AICC's Young said.

"The space will showcase the range of corrugated products and also show how networks of FirstPak independents can handle national accounts," added Pyle.

Nelson, from Great Lakes Packaging, agrees, "Our presence with other independents at Pack Expo will show that we can partner successfully with independents in other geographic regions to satisfy the needs of multi-plant customers."