

Michigan reps, retailers, mfrs. gather for all-industry seminar

LANSING, Mich. — The Michigan Home Furnishings Representatives Chapter held an All-Industry Seminar themed “We Can’t Do It Alone” earlier this year at the Sheraton Lansing Hotel here.

More than 110 representatives, retailers and manufacturers from the region attended. The seminar was designed to provide members of the home furnishings industry with information and tools to cope with current and

future challenges.

Keynote speaker Bob Maricich, president and CEO of the World Market Center in Las Vegas, focused on where the furniture industry will be in the next 10 years.

Other speakers included Tom Lias, president of Gorman’s Home Furnishings of Southfield, Mich.; David Israels, general manager of Israels Design for Living in Grand Rapids, Mich.; Larry Kraft, president and CEO of

Serta Restokraft Mattress Co. of Michigan; and Kathy Parks, executive director of the International Home Furnishings Representatives Assn.

All-Industry Seminar committee members included Terry Clemens, Ric Tyler, Bob Bruns, Julie Orr and emcee Bruce Porter, all members of the Michigan Home Furnishings Representatives.

Proceeds from the event were to be donated to Children’s Hospital of Michigan.



Among the speakers and organizers of the All-Industry Seminar are Tom Lias, left, Gorman’s Home Furnishings, Southfield, Mich.; Terry Clemens and Bruce Porter, Michigan Home Furnishings Representatives; and keynote speaker Bob Maricich of World Market Center Las Vegas.

Shadow Mountain taking new Dick Idol line back to its roots

HIGH POINT — Shadow Mountain says it will reach back to capture the feel of Dick Idol’s original furniture groups with the new Montana Reflections collection launching this spring.

A spokesperson for the home furnishings source said the move represents a return to Idol’s roots, eight years after the Montana outdoorsman launched his first furniture line. The new collection will be released under the Dick Idol Legends by Shadow Mountain name.

Introductions will include case goods, upholstery, light-

ing and area rugs, among other items.

According to the company, the products will focus on elements from past Dick Idol collections that have been successful, including finishes and artistic details, drawing inspiration from original pieces in the Montana outdoorsman’s rustic Mission Valley collection launched in 2001 by Klausner as well as other later Idol pieces from its Northwood collection.

Shadow Mountain introduced its first Idol line in 2006. Dick Idol still has its license with Klausner.

The upcoming launch will target current and previous Dick Idol retailers as well as new retailers wanting proven sellers that aren’t big inventory risks, said Jim Williams, chief marketing officer of RWG Licensing, which manages the licensee.

He said the new products will feature improved embellishment, metals and hand-hammered accents and is redesigned to reflect more of Idol’s original design. Price point and the number of SKUs for the line were still being determined, Williams said.

— Heath E. Combs

Furniture Training Co. discounts Web programs

ROSEVILLE, Calif. — The Furniture Training Co., a program partner of the Western Home Furnishings Assn. and the National Home Furnishings Assn., has announced that it has lowered prices by as much as 70% for its online training courses.

In addition, WHFA and NHFA members will receive an extra 15% savings.

Company President Mark Lacy said the pricing move is in response to the weak economy and the need to train salespeople, which he said is especially vital in tough economic times.

“With this aggressive recession pricing, The Furniture

Training Co. is determined to assure that independent home furnishings retailers of all sizes not only survive, but thrive during this substantial downturn in the global economy,” said Lacy.

FTC courses teach sales associates on such topics as furniture product knowledge, selling furniture and the basics of room design. Each course is available online and makes training simple for busy retailers and salespeople unable to leave the showroom, the company says.

“E-learning programs from The Furniture Training Co. have greatly increased our employee knowledge and

skill levels,” said Jeff Moran, owner of Lapeer Furniture & Mattress Center in Lapeer, Mich. “As sales associates become better at their jobs, they sell more furniture, waste fewer customers visiting our store, and are more productive and efficient. Educated, well-trained sales associates are one of the main drivers we are using to continue profitability during low traffic periods.”

WHFA members can call (800) 422-3778 and NHFA members can call (800) 888-9590 for more information. The Furniture Training Co. is online at www.furnituretrainingcompany.com.

Seeing AICO at market? Make appointment online

PICO RIVERA, Calif. — Home furnishings supplier AICO/Amini Innovations Corp. has added a feature to its Web site at www.amini.com to allow attendees of the High Point and Las Vegas markets to schedule their visits to the company’s showrooms.

This allows marketgoers to choose a day and time to meet with their rep, who will be ready for them, reducing wait times.

“We as a company are always looking for ways to improve our relations with our dealers by finding ways to improve efficiency. We want to make sure that our dealers get the most out of their experiences at markets, and the best way to do that is make sure they get to see our products as quickly and efficiently as possible,” said AICO President Larry Rinaldi.

To schedule an appointment, a dealer can visit www.amini.com/reserve.asp, where they will be asked to fill out a card with name and contact information, as well as the time and date most convenient for an appointment. Once AICO receives the information, it will record the appointments and make sure that the appropriate sales rep is waiting in the lobby.

Broyhill, Lane head outdoors

ST. LOUIS — The Broyhill and Lane furniture names will be on a new outdoor furniture line to be developed by Foremost Groups.

Furniture Brands International, parent of the Broyhill and Lane brands, said the company has licensed the names to Foremost, which will introduce the first collections in September at the International Casual Furniture & Accessories Market in Chicago.

Foremost will design and manufacture the lines and will distribute them to national retail chains, outdoor and patio

specialty stores, and traditional furniture stores, FBI said in a press release.

Officials said the line will reflect indoor styling translated for outdoor living. They will feature traditional to transitional designs in all-weather and cast and extruded aluminum combinations across dining, casual seating and occasional pieces.

“This new relationship gives Lane and Broyhill the opportunity to leverage the power of their brands into a market segment that they have not yet addressed,” said Alex Hodges, chief marketing officer for FBI.