

Key retailers lift bedding sources' spirits

By David Perry

HIGH POINT — The bedding boosted market here yielded some positive results, mattress exhibitors reported. The appearance of the right retailers made a big difference in key showrooms.

Bedding producers generally reported light traffic, but said key retailers lifted their fortunes. In a tough economy those retailers could help provide a spark in sales, the producers said.

"We had a consistent flow of traffic in our showroom," said Jodi Allen, chief marketing officer at Sealy. "We use this market as an opportunity to work with our retail partners on near-term and long-term growth opportunities."

Eric Johnson, senior vice president of marketing and merchandising at International Bedding, said his company was pleased with its High Point showing.

"We saw another layer of our customer base, one we don't see in Las Vegas," he said. "I was pleasantly surprised."

Comfort Solutions enjoyed an "excellent" market, said Richard Fleck, senior vice president of sales and marketing with that producer's Norfolk, Va.-based licensee.

"We doubled our traffic numbers from April. Our results were better than anticipated," said Fleck.

He said his company worked hard to bring dealers to the market. "We made a concerted effort not to treat this as a show but to get in front of our customers," Fleck said.

Laurie Tokarz, vice president of sales for Restonic's Fayetteville, N.C.-based licensee, had a similar story. "We came in here with appointments and we have been very pleased," she said.

The increase in bedding exhibitors at his market was beneficial, Tokarz noted, as it encouraged furniture retailers to bring their bedding buyers to High Point.

Gold Bond President Bob Naboicheck was in buoyant spirits.

"I'm glad we're back in High Point," he said, citing some "amazing" traffic and the appearance of some key prospects. "We had two key retailers who have never walked into our space before."

Dormia President Mike Zippelli said his company returned to High Point to see retailers who skipped the Las Vegas Market. It worked with a list of appointments. "High Point is too big and spread out for there to be much walk-in traffic," Zippelli said.

