

PLACE 08 Recap

The 2008 TAPPI PLACE CONFERENCE focusing on Innovations in Flexible Consumer Packaging was held September 14-17, 2008 in Portsmouth, Virginia. By all accounts it proved to be the most successful PLACE Conference in recent memory.

Total registration increased 16% this year verses the 2007 conference. Of those total registrants, 42% were recognized as first time conference attendees; this is believed to be a Conference record. The increase is attributed in large part to the Division's Converter company outreach programs.

Outreach initiatives included the premier of the CARD program, (Converter Advanced Registration Discount). The CARD initiative was aimed at converters and end users and provided a single one-time fee for unlimited group registrations from a single facility. In addition, first time attendees were invited to a lunch in their honor. During the "Newcomers" lunch, Division officers welcomed them to the conference, presented opportunities to become involved in the many exciting activities of the PLACE Division and conducted a fun PLACE version of Jeopardy. These two initiatives represent innovative efforts by the Division leadership to reach out to the marketplace in an effort to strengthen the Division's goals of broadening its audience and improving knowledge sharing within the industries it supports.

Conference Technical Content

In addition to an excellent Technical Program, several elements highlighted the technical interchange at the Conference. During the 2008 Conference there were three distinguished keynote speakers, the well established New Technology Showcase and the extremely successful Table Top Trade Show and forum.

Keynote Presentations

Drew Gilchrist, Vice President of Sales at Vanguard Packaging & Display provided a valuable insight into Wal-Mart's Sustainability initiative from a packaging perspective, including a strong focus on the Packaging Scorecard. The Scorecard provides suppliers with a tool to evaluate/measure their performance based on identified metrics in support of Wal-Mart's plan to reduce excess packaging 5% by 2013.

Tony Burns, Associate Director at The Procter & Gamble Company provided an overview of Procter & Gamble Company innovations in sustainability. Consumer usage is a key factor in measuring package effectiveness. “Packaging is both the FIRST thing and the LAST thing that consumers experience.” A basic P&G principle used in evaluating packaging sustainability is life cycle thinking combined with sound science to ensure meaningful, substantiated benefits.

Dan Feldmeier, Senior Associate Principal Engineer at Kraft Foods discussed key technical issues associated with processed meat packaging. His discussion gave the attendees a rare chance to view in detail, complex package and product interactions from an end user perspective.

The New Technology Showcase created a wave of excitement. Reflecting on his company sales at the Conference, one supplier enthusiastically proclaimed “I won’t miss another one.” One first time attendee was so pleased with the content and presentation that he asked “Where are you going to be in 2009? We will be there.”

In conjunction with Dan Fieldmeier’s key note address an awards luncheon was held to recognize achievements of key volunteers both during the 2007 Conference and leading up to the 2008 conference.

Both volunteer leadership and TAPPI staff extend their hearty congratulations to these award winners for continuing to contribute so meaningfully to their field and their colleagues. Key award winners included:

- Dr. Otto Plassman for the Leadership & Service Award and Andreas G. Ahlbrandt Prize, and
- Duane Smith for 2008 TAPPI PLACE Technical Award and Rohm & Haas Prize

Full details are available [online](#).

In addition there were awards for [Best Paper and Best Session](#) as well as for [Scholarship](#).

Technical Session Highlights

As might be expected, the content of the Conference was broad. Below are just a few of the sessions that created extraordinary interest both during the presentations and at the later receptions.

- ACE: Adhesives, Coatings & Equipment (Session 2)
- Blown Film Technology (Session 3)
- Film Properties: Impact on Performance (Session 8)
- Regulatory Activity Discussion Panel (Session 9)
- Food Safety (Session 12)
- Collaborating for Breakthroughs in Flexible Packaging (Session 18)
- Converter Spotlight (Session 19)

New Developments for the PLACE Division

Beginning in 2009, the PLACE Division Conference schedule will change. The timing of the **PLACE in Americas Conference** will change from an annual fall event to an event in the late spring of every other year running alternately with the **PLACE in Europe Conference**. The **Extrusion Coating Committee's Short Course** will take place in the spring of the Americas Conference year and a **Hot Topic Symposium concurrent with a Tutorial Short Course** will be presented by the Flexible Packaging and Film Extrusion Committees during the European Conference year. The new PLACE program schedule will allow the worldwide PLACE community to attend events with less logistical and budgetary constraints.