

Publisher's Note: NeoCon



Mark Langman, President,
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Well it was two years ago that I attended the NeoCon show in Chicago, and the traffic at the show then was slim and the Commercial wallcovering showrooms and booths were quiet, too, except for sales reps complaining about the lack of business. It was obvious what an impact 9/11 had on our industry. So you can imagine how I felt when entering this year's show - with overall attendance at 46,352, which was up 10.8% to quote NeoCon organizers at Merchandise Mart Properties, Inc.



Charlie Lennon of Len-Tex in front of their swatch display.



Al Rothschild & Mike Glynn of MDC.

Many of the showrooms were standing room only and the busiest areas appeared to be the wallcovering showrooms, which featured many new exciting designs. New burnished and tinted metal effects, and rare and exotic wood veneers, and murals of proprietary designs, licensed, and custom designs. Many of the murals can be individually produced with very specific design elements to create a total theme for an individual client. It is certainly interesting how murals are making their way across the commercial and residential marketplace as customers are looking for more unique eye-catching design, perhaps as a focal point to complement the faux and textural finishes that are still being utilized today.

I also was impressed by Set Design, which premiered some of their wallcovering and murals by photographer Geof Kern, which were truly an avant-garde, attention-grabbing look. These murals of photographic images reduced and tiled to take on a textural effect are available in tone-on-tone sepia, and from a distance they have a mosaic tile look. Set Design then puts together a most unique packaging concept with recycled papers putting them at the head of the pack with regards to the Green products movement.

I was also made aware that several companies are introducing the new non-woven substrates into



WA spokesperson Robert Verdi addressing the NeoCon crowd.

their product mix. For those of you out there who do not know the advantages of these new products, you need check them out - finally, a product that works well in damp areas and can be removed without harming a properly prepared wall surface.

Our industry's spokesperson and one of NeoCon's keynote speakers, Robert Verdi took the stage to discuss elements of runway fashion in home decor.

His Discovery Channel program "Surprise by Design" has become the most watched "home makeover show" on television. Ron Pietrzak from the Wallcoverings Association introduced Verdi to almost 400 enthusiastic professional fans.

In closing, I cannot say enough about the enthusiasm that was very apparent at each of the wallcovering companies that presented at this show!



Aaron Kirsch & Steven Abrams of Astek.

NeoCon 2006:
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www.merchandisemart.com