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Obama Administration Pushing Swift Passage of Free-Trade Pacts

By Deborah Belgium Senior Editor

The three pending free-trade agreements with South Korea, Colombia and Panama should be ready to be introduced to Congress soon after lawmakers return from their summer break on Sept. 6.

The Obama administration is pushing hard to get the accords approved, particularly after the European Union's free-trade accord with South Korea was launched and Canada now has a free-trade accord with Colombia.

"The free-trade agreement between Europe and Korea went into effect July 1, and already Europe's exports to Korea are up 17 percent in 45 days," said U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk, who was touring the **Port of Los Angeles** on Aug. 16 aboard the *Angelena II*, the port's 40-passenger harbor tour boat.

Kirk was making a whirlwind tour through California, meeting with exporters in Los Angeles, San Francisco and Sacramento and trying to spread the word that free-trade agreements are, indeed, good for the United States.

He noted that these free-trade accords, signed under the Bush administration, would add \$12 billion a year to the United States' gross domestic product and increase U.S. exports by \$10 billion to \$11 billion.

Joining Kirk on the boat tour were Geraldine Knatz, executive director of the Port of Los Angeles, and Richard Steinke, executive director of the **Port of Long Beach**.

The port executives stressed the need to improve infrastructure if new free-trade agreements boost cargo traffic at the two ports, which now handle about 43 percent of all goods brought in across the ocean.

Knatz pointed out the dredging project at the **Evergreen** terminal will deepen the water to a depth of 53 feet. Three more of the port's eight cargo terminals have to be dredged before the \$400 million project is complete, Knatz said. The deeper water allows larger ships carrying 15,000 20-foot (TEU) containers to dock, whereas smaller ships in the 6,000 to 8,000 TEU category have been predominant in the past.

Newly elected U.S. Rep. Janice Hahn (D.-Calif.)—whose district covers Redondo Beach, Manhattan Beach and San Pedro—was on hand for the tour as well as U.S. Rep. Laura Richardson (D.-Calif.), whose district covers Compton, Carson and parts of Long Beach. However, the ports are in the district of U.S. Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (R.-Calif.).

At a press conference after the one-hour boat tour, Kirk outlined the timeline for getting the free-trade agreements passed.

First, the Obama administration will introduce the Trade Adjustment Assistance program, a \$1 billion retraining program for U.S. workers who lose their jobs because of the new free-trade agreements. The president has

been adamant that the job-retraining program, which expired in February, be implemented before the free-trade accords are introduced.

Once the Republican-controlled House of Representatives approves the retraining program, the legislation will be sent to the Democrat-controlled U.S. Senate. Then, the White House will send the three free-trade agreements to the House and Senate for an up-or-down vote to be completed within 90 days.

"One of the things we can do right now is make sure we take advantage of the opportunities to find new homes for what we grow, raise, create, innovate and make in America to our partners and friends around the world," Kirk said, noting that South Korea is a major trading



MORE TRADE: U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk explains how the Obama administration hopes to introduce three free-trade agreements to Congress after the summer recess.

partner that can only grow when the average 17 percent tariff is eliminated on most goods traded between the two countries.

However, U.S. labor unions have been concerned that many of their jobs will be exported overseas. In addition, labor unions have opposed a pact with Colombia, where, they allege, 51 labor unionists were killed in 2010. Just outside the press conference, a small group of people representing the Colombia Peace Project held up signs protesting the pact with Colombia. They also handed out a letter sent in June to Congress and signed by 431 organizations and individuals opposing the Colombian free-trade agreement because of labor-rights abuses.

However, the United States in April negotiated a Labor Action Plan with Colombia to hire 480 new labor inspectors over a four-year period to inspect factories. Colombia is also supposed to improve the system for citizens to file complaints.

"Colombia has come a very long way to transform their society from where workers have been exploited," Kirk said. "Do we stay on the sidelines until everything is perfect or leverage this free-trade agreement with this country?"

Canada Takes on Latin America as Free-Trade Partner

Canada has been busy paving a trade path to Latin America.

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper was on a Latin American tour when he stood by on Aug. 12 and saw the Canadian secretary of commerce sign a free-trade agreement with Honduras in the country's industrial town of San Pedro Sula.

On Aug. 15, Canada's free-trade accord with Colombia went into effect.

In Central America, Honduras is a powerhouse in apparel exports, sending nearly \$3 billion in clothing every year to other countries.

Merchandise trade between Canada and Honduras totaled \$194 million last year. With the new free-trade agreement, Honduras expects to increase its total exports to Canada by \$350 million a year.

The free-trade negotiations with Honduras weren't without a few bumps. Opponents to the deal noted that **Amnesty International**, in its 2011 report, said the government of Honduran President Porfirio Lobo had not sufficiently investigated human-rights abuses, including arbitrary detention and mistreatment of protesters. Canada will contribute \$9 million to help set up better security plans in Honduras.—D.B.

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NetSuite Picks Up Where Spreadsheets Leave Off

Mountain Khakis was just a few years old when Chief Executive Officer Ross Saldarini realized he needed more than the combination of **QuickBooks**, **Microsoft Excel** and **Outlook** to run the business.

The then-3-year-old company has seen its business grow rapidly, Saldarini said, adding that the company had expanded to 350 SKUs—today it's well over 1,000—and over 10,000 customers, including retail accounts and distributors, as well as direct consumers.

Saldarini began looking for an Enterprise Resource Planning solution but said he was concerned about the costs as a small-business owner.

"The standard options are systems that the entry points are \$50,000 plus and lots of cost and time to customize, probably a major-league step back in terms of reporting and responsiveness, and there's training," he said.

Founded in 2003, Mountain Khakis is based in Jackson Hole,

Wyo., with operations in Colorado and North Carolina and production in China, Vietnam, Cambodia and the United States.

"I was interested in finding a tool we can access from anywhere—because we have staff members in three different states and warehouse in a fourth location, and I've got people

through to their website or e-commerce to their marketing and sales activities—all as a cloud-based web service.

Canadian flash-sale site **Beyond the Rack** began using NetSuite after outgrowing its previous accounting software. Beyond the Rack needed a system that could manage business and e-commerce operations

and grow with the company.

"Businesses are looking to increase their integration between the website and their ERP system, and that's what Beyond the Rack got with NetSuite," Turner said. "They streamlined the order process to take the order through the website all the way through to fulfillment and processing and invoicing—all the way through the chain."

Beyond the Rack is running **NetSuite One World**, which allows the flash-sale site to handle multiple currencies and languages.

"It has all the same financials, the inventory management, sales, marketing automation and e-commerce management capabilities," Turner said. "It enables companies to grow globally without creating a mess of ERP systems or on-premises IT resources in different countries."

NetSuite also runs a "marketplace" called **SuiteApp.com**, which features more than 1,000 "SuiteApps" that plug into the NetSuite, allowing companies to integrate the system with other software systems, such as warehouse-management systems, EDI providers or PLM (product life-cycle management) solutions.

The company also recently introduced a **Demand Planning** module, which allows a company to forecast inventory levels based on historical or projected demand.

Although Mountain Khakis does not use NetSuite's e-commerce applications and doesn't need to integrate NetSuite with a PLM system, Saldarini said the company has implemented some of NetSuite's modules and was able to customize the solution for his business's needs.

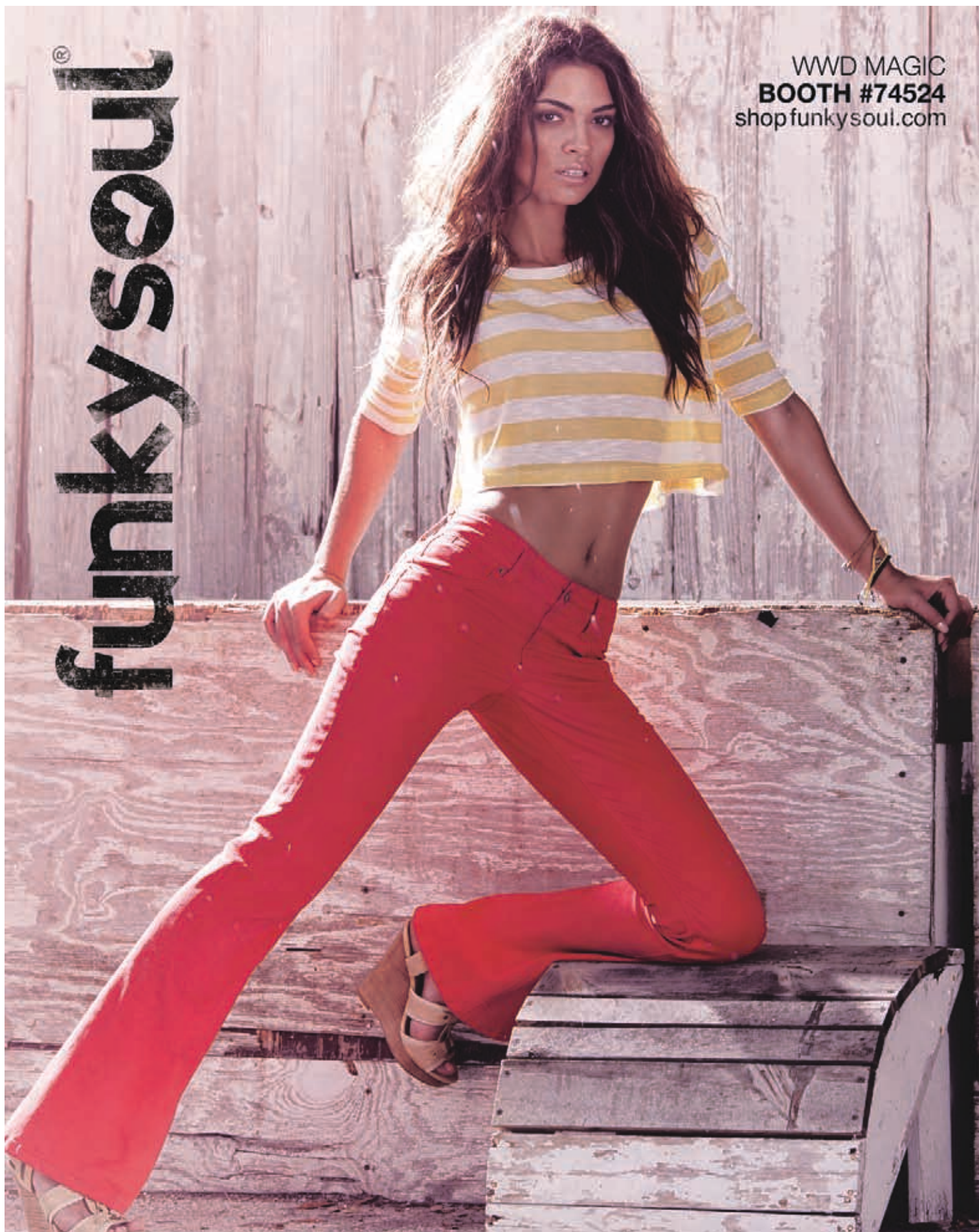
"That's why no one wants to move away from QuickBooks—until you discover that there is a QuickBooks-like next step that performs tremendously well and is customizable and doesn't take a lot of training," he said. "In addition to having those [modules, NetSuite is] very customizable, and they're very user friendly—so, low friction in terms of training and very high and quick uptake in terms of learning and customizing the system."

For more information, visit www.netsuite.com.

—Alison A. Nieder

Key Performance Indicators		
Indicator	Period	Current
Sales (Orders)	☑ This Month	\$3,165,728
Open Purchase Orders	Current	97
Inventory Asset Value	Current	\$46,473,663
Landed Cost Tracked Items	Current	3
Today's Open Orders	Current	146
Vendor RMAs to be Shipped	Current	11
Outstanding Vendor Credits	Current	\$5,096
Late Work Orders	Current	0
Customer Item Returns by Quantity	Current	139.0
Inspected Work Orders	Current	18

CLOUD-BASED ERP: NetSuite can help a company track key performance indicators through an online system.



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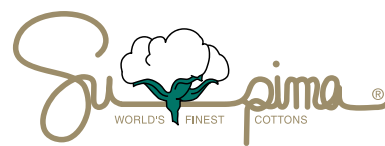
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From Sheep to Sewing, Ramblers Way Is Made in the U.S.A.

By Deborah Belgum Senior Editor

Tom's of Maine founder Tom Chappell was on a chilly hiking trip to Wales when he recognized the need for fine, worsted-wool clothing that is lightweight and can keep people warm without irritating their skin.

Ever the entrepreneur, Chappell envisioned a collection of wool clothing manufactured entirely in the United States—from using U.S. wool to knitting, cutting, sewing and dyeing the product in the United States with as little harm done to the environment as possible.

"Keeping people connected with nature is one of my personal aims," said Chappell, who still lives in Kennebunk, Maine, where Tom's of Maine was born. "When you make products out of nature, people feel more connected to nature."

Also, Chappell was disturbed to see the way the textile industry had shrunk in the United States. His father had been in the woolen business, having worked for Roger Milliken at **Milliken & Co.** Chappell remembers the days of robust production. "I have been unhappy we've lost our textile industry over the decades," he said.

So, a few years ago, the man from Maine started doing some research and found that Rambouillet sheep, raised in the United States, produce a fine wool similar to the finest grades of Merino wool. A little more research and consultation with a fashion designer, and **Ramblers Way**, a line of men's and women's soft wool apparel and underwear, was born in October 2009.

Western wool

The company buys its wool from about 10



NATURAL DYES: Ramblers Way uses natural dyes in its collection, which includes hoodies and henleys.

ranches in Montana, Idaho, Texas and Nevada, getting long-fiber wool that currently costs about \$7 a pound, double what it cost when the company started buying wool in 2009. (Flooding and drought in Australia, the world's largest producer of wool, have pushed global wool prices up.) Then the wool is scoured, spun and knitted in mills in South Carolina and North Carolina before being shipped to Fall River, Mass., south of Boston, to be cut and sewn.

From there, it travels to Maine, where the company's natural-dye house, in Saco, eight miles north of Kennebunk, opened one year ago. The company shuns petroleum-based dyes, using plant-based dyes such as madder, indigo, logwood, chestnut, pomegranate, cutch and osage to create the collection's colors.

The washable line of henleys, turtlenecks, hoodies, tank tops, camisoles, V-neck tops, short-sleeved polos, long johns and loungewear retails for \$100 to \$300 and sells primarily to customers between the ages of 35 and 65.

"I think the baby boomer is our customer, but, on the other hand, the values for sustain-

ability are very strong with a younger adult, particularly a younger professional," Chappell said.

Building a sustainable company has always been on the top of Chappell's to-do list. The main office, located in a 1790 structure, has a geothermal and solar system. The same thing goes for the Chappell family home nearby. "We really go the extra mile to operate with a clean carbon footprint," Chappell said.

Last year, the first full year the company was in business, revenues totaled \$350,000. This year, revenues are expected to more than double, Chappell said.

Retail from East to West

The label is now stocked by more than 230 stores, mostly on the East Coast and in the Midwest. One of the early adopters of the line was **Bergdorf Goodman** in New York.

Yet Ramblers Way is making inroads on the West Coast, primarily in affluent California communities such as Newport Beach and Carmel, as well as areas around San Francisco.

"We love Ramblers Way for its comfort, style, beauty and rich colors," said Heather Wright, manager of **Upstairs at Pierre Le-fond**, a high-end boutique in Montecito, Calif. "We are also appreciative of the company's commitment to create an American-made, natural product while respecting the environment. Those qualities make it unique in today's fast-clothing market."

J. Lawrence Khaki's Men's Clothier in Carmel-by-the-Sea, Calif., has been stocking the line in its 12,000-square-foot store since June.

"They certainly have this perspective of doing things naturally," said Jim Ockert, co-owner of the store. "It is a great little layering piece, and they focus on quality and getting the right color. It has a niche." ●

Natural Evolution: From Toothpaste to Menswear

Tom Chappell has a penchant for doing things naturally.

It all started in 1970 when he and his wife, Kate, took a \$5,000 loan and launched a line of natural-ingredient personal-care products that eschewed testing on animals.

In those days, not many entrepreneurs took the natural approach to business.

But soon, **Tom's of Maine** became a household name and was snapped up by consumers con-



Tom Chappell

cerned about the contents of their toothpaste, deodorant, mouthwash and soap.

When Chappell sold 84 percent of his company to **Colgate-Palmolive** in 2006 for \$100 million, he took a small break to enjoy life. But once an entrepreneur, always an entrepreneur. Chappell was back in business in 2009—this time, producing **Ramblers Way**, a collection of wool menswear crafted from sheep to shipping in the United States.—D.B.

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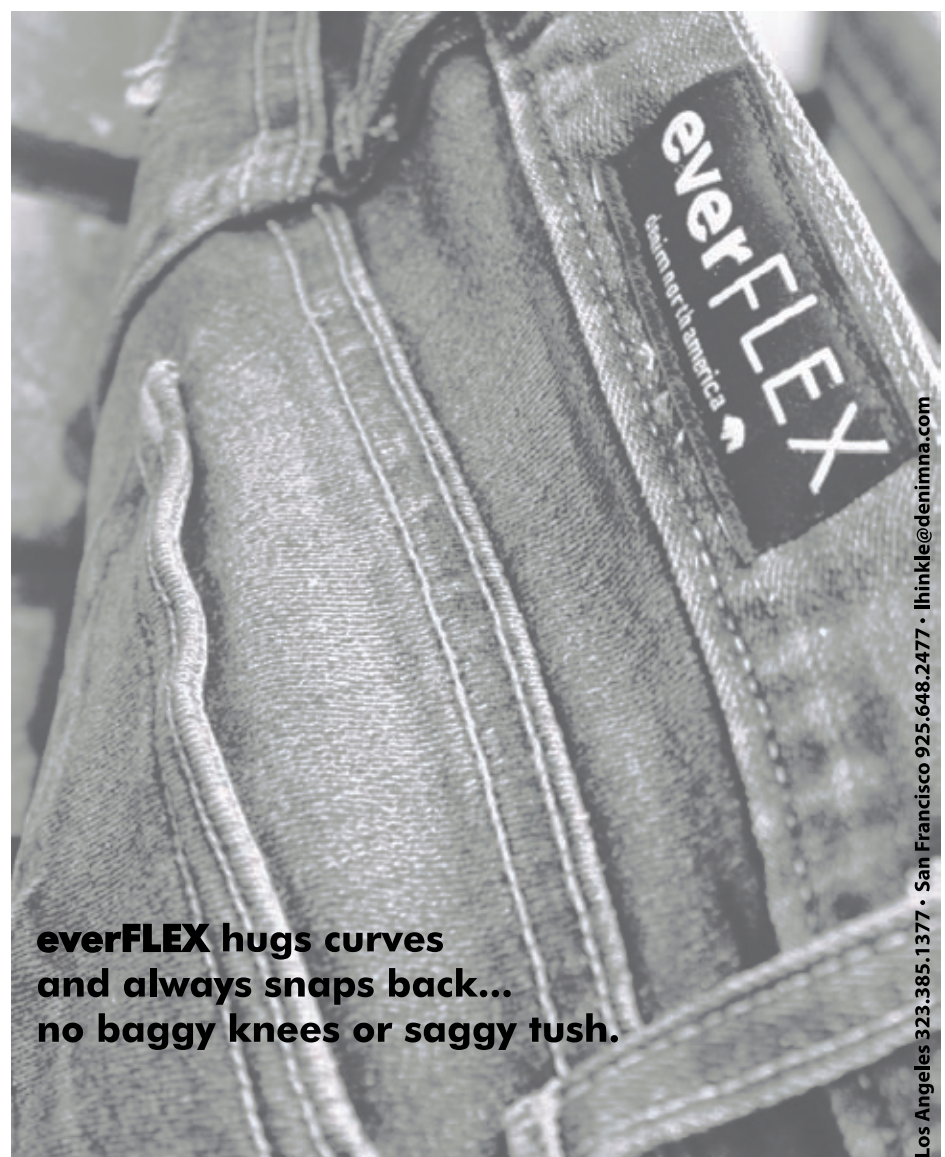
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Urban Manufacturing Alliance: Bringing Manufacturing Back to the City

By Deidre Crawford *Manufacturing Editor*

With many U.S. manufacturing hubs having fallen victim to the volatile economy and companies outsourcing to foreign countries, Kate Sofis, founding executive director for San Francisco nonprofit **SFMade**, is helping launch the **Urban Manufacturing Alliance**, a new initiative to help develop manufacturing in cities across the United States. The program aims to strengthen apparel and other types of manufacturing, as well as provide leadership and resources in the field.

"The goal is to build a national network of major U.S. cities with inner-city manufacturing capability," Sofis explained. "Over time, this will include both cities well-known for their manufacturing sectors—cities like Detroit; Chicago; Newark, [N.J.]; Pittsburgh; and L.A.—as well as cities where local manufacturing might be one of their better-kept secrets, including San Francisco."

The program has been launched in partnership with the **Pratt Center for Community Development** in Brooklyn, N.Y., and will be modeled after SFMade's approach to encouraging and integrating urban manufacturing.

"With San Francisco, for the apparel sector, we have in-house expertise in that industry, and we're connecting manufacturers to designers," Sofis said. "By comparison, with food manufacturing, we're doing things like helping companies finance equipment and dealing with health codes. We tailor the work to each industry."

San Francisco and New York will be the first two cities to participate in the alliance, but the program is actively looking for more cities to take part. After receiving recognition from President Clinton at the **Clinton Global**



URBAN MANUFACTURING: Rickshaw Bags is just one of San Francisco's factories in a city where local manufacturing is not well-known, according to Kate Sofis, executive director for SFMade and a co-founder of the Urban Manufacturing Alliance.

Initiative conference in June, they have been approached by Seattle, Portland, San Diego, Chicago, Detroit, Newark, Cleveland, Atlanta and Philadelphia—and even from abroad, by Copenhagen, Denmark; Sydney; Melbourne; Bergen, Norway; and Cambridge, England.

The alliance will provide support on everything from branding to finding physical space and skilled laborers and aims to work within the strengths of each city rather than on bringing in manufacturing from the outside.

"We're not taking the approach of attracting manufacturing. Each city needs to look into what is already there and build on it," Sofis said. "Let's see what kinds of businesses are trying to start there, and let's try to help them grow."

In addition to providing knowledge and local resources, the initiative will focus on connecting cities with one another, whether for suppliers or fellowship.

"There is so much [apparel manufactur-

ing] strength in L.A., and we have San Francisco designers with connections in L.A. Why wouldn't you want to reinforce that?" she said. "San Francisco has lots of shoe designers, and they need manufacturing, but there's no shoe manufacturing in San Francisco, and we know that there's capacity in L.A."

Sofis said the program eventually hopes to have a database where information such as this would be stored. "We would like to see the ability for urban manufacturing centers to have an easy way to access the supply base for that city."

The program will be open to all cities and will aim to represent a variety of sectors and geographies.

"In some of the really expensive U.S. cities, like New York, people imagine there's no manufacturing left," Sofis said. "They are well aware of Brooklyn, but most people don't think there's much going on in Manhattan. There actually is—there's the garment district, metal working, silver making, jewelry making, bag making—but it's primarily smaller scale. Cities with high-priced real estate and higher competition have a hard time sustaining larger manufacturers, so there are more medium or small manufacturers."

Many Americans think of the "rust belt" cities—such as Pittsburgh, Cleveland and Buffalo, N.Y.—as having a manufacturing past and being economically challenged. However, these cities have experienced a renaissance of smaller-scale manufacturing that sometimes has to do with their past and sometimes has nothing to do with it, explained Sofis.

"Each city needs to think about what it has going for it and really hone that," Sofis said.

One of the challenges facing American companies is finding workers that have the ex-

isting technical and physical skills required in manufacturing, Sofis explained.

"We're not doing a great job in the U.S. of developing vocational skills and training programs. There's not a lot of people with excellent sewing skills or chocolate-making skills," she said. "One of the things that L.A. has going for it is this incredible monopoly of immigrant communities. Most cities don't have that diversity of people with real skills coming from other parts of the world, particularly in sewing or metal working or beading. It gives L.A. and that area an advantage."

Sofis hopes that the program will also help change the perception of manufacturing and highlight career possibilities.

"We've let the perception of manufacturing devolve into huge union jobs or that they've all gone overseas. We're not inspiring the next generation of young people," she said.

The alliance hopes to expose a new view of manufacturing, including highlighting what a career in a modern manufacturing company might look like through factory tours and a youth apprenticeship program.

"There are highly creative jobs and a lot of advancement potential," Sofis said. "Even a skilled sewer gets to collaborate on design and work with teams on a finished product."

While SFMade is a charter organization in the Urban Manufacturing Alliance, it will be an "alliance of equals," and each city would comprise an independent initiative, Sofis said.

"We're hoping to inspire other cities who may not be as focused on their own manufacturing to do so," she explained. "There is something very special about doing manufacturing in dense, urban cities. We think we've been missing the power that cities in particular have to make products in innovative ways." ●

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(212) 730-5213
Fax: (212) 730-6080
www.shopfunkysoul.com

Description: For Fall, Funky Soul was inspired by the '70s and '80s trends and presented a collection of fashion-forward items with a twist. Our denim collection "The Enhancers™" is offered in many different washes and treatments. From the skinny, skinny flair, bell-bottom and boot cut, our creation in denim will keep our customers up with the latest fashion while still providing special fits to enhance their individual body type. We provide special cuts and private-label services. Our denims range from \$18 to \$34, and our collection ranges from \$16 to \$48. Our design team travels the world and through inspiration creates a look to fit every lifestyle. Visit us at WWDMAGIC (booth #YC 74524) in Las Vegas in August.

Heartbreaker Fashion

441 West Allen Ave., Suite 119
San Dimas, CA 91773
(909) 599-0715
Contact: Teresa Becker

Teresa@heartbreakerfashion.com

Description: Teresa and Amanda Becker are a mother-daughter team that found their niche in the vintage-inspired fashion market through what was initially a home-based business in 2005 but now employs its owners full-time and 14 others. They call it Heartbreaker Fashion, and it is making its own history. From serving two local Los Angeles-area shops in 2005 to over 400 now in the U.S. and internationally, Heartbreaker provides efficiency in shipping its products, which are mostly cut to order. The quality of fabrics and workmanship prove to be appreciated by its customers, as reorders for the products are remarkable.

In addition, the beautifully crafted dresses, tops, and skirts are all made in the USA, now cut to order in four rented business suites in the San Dimas Business Center, and assembled by three contract sewing shops in the Los Angeles area. By manufacturing quality products in the USA and creating local jobs, Heartbreaker Fashion is proud to have been honored with the "Businesswomen of the Year" award from the San Dimas Chamber of Commerce in 2009. Come see us at the Pool trade show, booth #108. Sales Inquiries: wholesalecustomerservice@heartbreakerfashion.com

Lectra

889 Franklin Rd. SE
Marietta, GA 30067
(770) 422 8050
Fax: (770) 422 1503
www.lectra.com

Description: Over the past 37 years, Lectra has acquired a unique expertise in the fashion market, fueling the constant search for innovative ways to serve our customers. As a dedicated apparel technology provider, Lectra has developed a worldwide network of specialists in areas from R&D to implementation strategies and change-management methodologies to respond to challenges facing the apparel and fashion industry. With our fashion-specific PLM, Lectra delivers an unrivalled solution covering the whole value chain from line planning and scheduling through design, development, and sourcing, all the way to manufacturing, in a truly collaborative platform.

PeruModa

Av. Republica de Panama
San Isidro, Lima, Peru
www.perumoda.com

Show Dates: Sourcing at MAGIC Aug. 21-24 (Las Vegas Convention Center, South Hall, second floor, ODM 66812 to 66815 and 66912 to 66915); WWD Aug. 21-24 (Las Vegas Convention Center, North Hall, WH 81806, and Central Hall, YC 76304 to 76404); Pooltradeshows Aug. 21-24 (Mandalay Bay Convention Center, 992). Come and discover the best that Peru has to offer. Find out more at PeruModa in Lima (April 26-28, 2012).

Description: PeruModa is the main event of the Peruvian fashion industry. It showcases the best of the Peruvian export supply in apparel, footwear, accessories, and jewelry. Learn about the advantages of the Peruvian fashion industry in terms of quality, design, competitive costs, response-to-client capacity, and product development. PeruModa also promotes the direct contact between the Peruvian export companies and the international buyers from all continents.

Sourcing at MAGIC

2501 Colorado Ave, Suite 280
Santa Monica, CA 90404
(310) 857-7558
cs@MAGICOnline.com
www.magiconline.com

Show Dates: Aug. 21–24, 2011, Las Vegas Convention Center/South Hall

Description: SOURCING at MAGIC is North America's largest sourcing event, reflecting the fashion supply chain at its most complete. Offering unmatched access to over 40 countries, SOURCING at MAGIC showcases more than 700 apparel, accessories, and footwear resources: contract and original design manufacturers; fabric, trim, and component suppliers; and service and technology providers. With a productive four-day format opening a day before MAGIC, SOURCING at MAGIC is proud to present The Americas, a region offering quality, speed-to-market and fast-fashion deliveries, as the August 2011 focus region with over 70 exhibitors from North, Central, and South America. Represented countries include the U.S., Mexico, Peru, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Colombia, El Salvador, Haiti, and many more. By bringing the world to the world of fashion, SOURCING at MAGIC provides resources and opportunities unparalleled in international scope—from fiber to finished product.

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Brazil Fashion Abounds at Las Vegas Shows

Visitors to the apparel and footwear trade shows in Las Vegas will find a wide range of Brazilian brands, including contemporary collections, swimwear and footwear.

The **Brazilian Textile and Apparel Industry Association** will once again host a Brazil Pavilion at the **Project** trade show in Las Vegas. This season's designers include **André Ungaretto, Karin Feller, Cavage, Cecilia Prado, Madrih, Morena Rosa, Maria Valentina** and **Totem**. Project runs Aug. 22–24 at the **Mandalay Bay Convention Center**.

FN Platform, the footwear trade show organized by **MAGIC**, will also feature Brazilian resources in a pavilion hosted by **Brazilian Footwear**, a program organized in partnership with the **Brazilian Trade and Investments Promotion Agency**. The pavilion will feature 15 footwear brands, includ-

ing **Luiza Barcelos, Piccadilly, Morenatom, Amazona, Ipanema, Paula Fujita Brazilian, Mel, Schultz, Joana Schneider Brazilian, Radamés, Fio Terra, Eastman-Orkss, D. Milton, Anatomic & Co., Bruno Halabi Brazilian, Pampili, Stephanie Classic** and **Ceconello Divas**. **FN Platform** runs Aug. 22–24 at the **Las Vegas Convention Center**.

Brazilian swim and fitness labels are among the exhibitors at lingerie trade show **CurveNV**, which runs Aug. 22–24 at **The Venetian**. Exhibitors include swim brands **Ank Swimwear, Clube Bossa, Desiree Nercesian** and **Guria Beach Wear** as well as Brazilian fitness brand **Bia Brazil**.

—Alison A. Nieder

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Sustainability and the Supply Chain Key for RILA

Retailers are increasingly interested in expanding their sustainable practices across the supply chain. That was the finding of a recent white paper released by the **Retail Industry Leaders Association**.

RILA, based outside Washington, D.C., found that some retailers are taking a more active interest in the environmental impact of their supply chains and how business is conducted all along the supply chain, according to its research paper, released on Aug. 11.

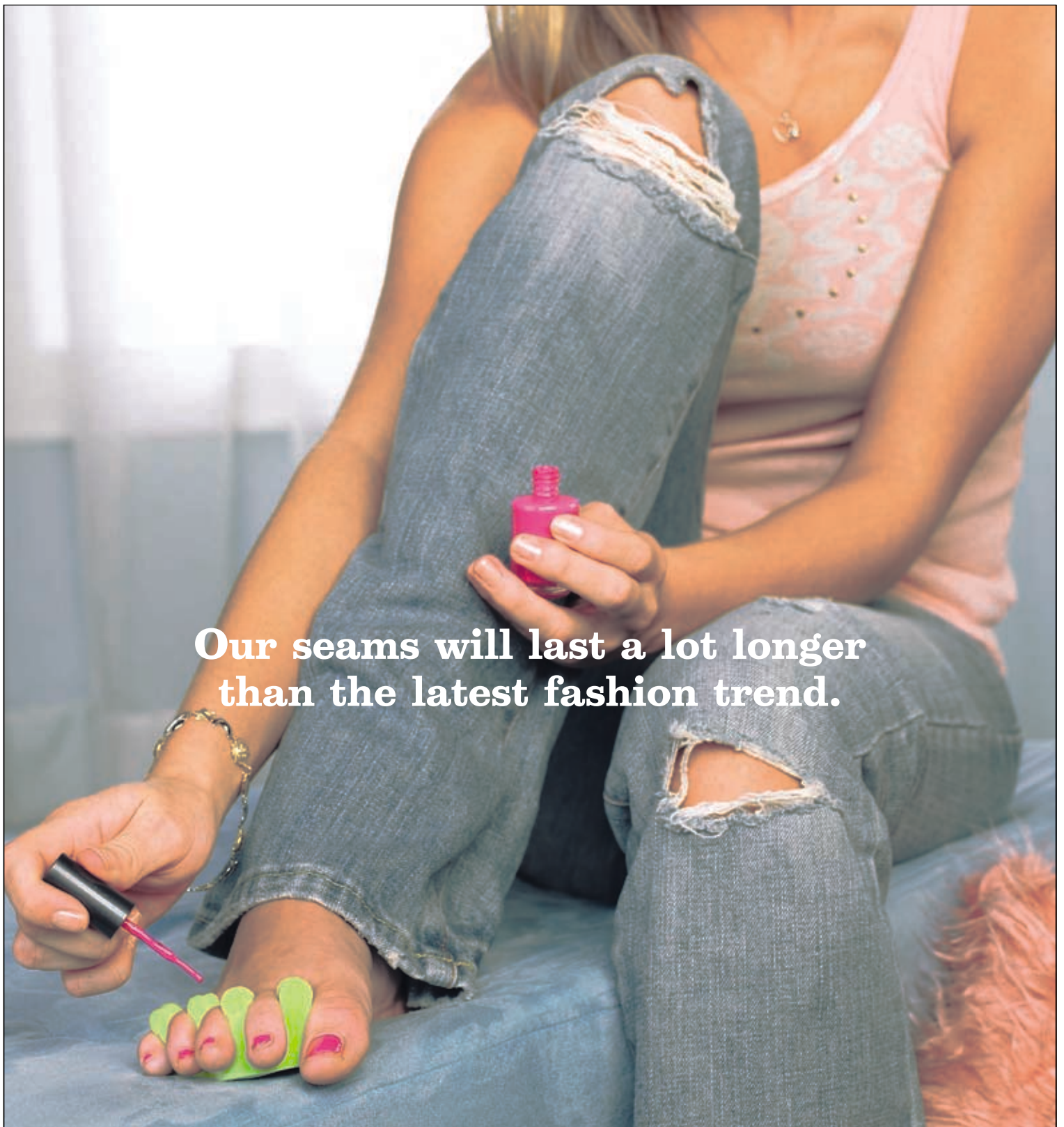
Supplier practices regarding labor and the environmental impacts of manufacturing, as well as safety issues in manufacturing, have received a deeper look from retailers, according to the report. The white paper contended that if retailers exhibit a deeper engagement with supplier issues, much of the risk found in their supply chain will be reduced.

On Aug. 12, Adam Siegel, RILA's vice president of sustainability, helped lead a discussion on **Twitter** about sustainability issues between retailers and their suppliers throughout the supply chain. One discussion participant, Rashmi Tewari, noted on the Twitter chat that the "Supplier-retailer relationship is adversarial—not enuf buy-in for the supplier's employees to address retailers goals."

Siegel later noted on the Twitter chat: "More collaborations are forming & more retailers are engaging their suppliers—generally I see a rapid growth in activities."

Sustainability and environmental issues are hot topics for RILA. In October, the organization will help sponsor the **Retail Sustainability Conference 2011** in Orlando, Fla. The conference will discuss supply-chain issues, issues in constructing ecologically friendly buildings, and working with state and federal regulators.

—Andrew Asch



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