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New Company to Take Over Dozens of National Stores Outposts

By Deborah Belgum *Executive Editor*

After filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in August, **National Stores** has found a way to keep some of its stores open after announcing it was closing all of them.

Second Avenue Capital Partners, a Schottenstein-family affiliate that is a finance company, said on Nov. 27 it closed a \$20-million, asset-based credit facility to fund the purchase and ongoing working capital for a new entity called **Fallas Stores**.

Fallas Stores will be purchasing 85 stores from National Stores during a bankruptcy-mandated auction, the company said. In October, National Stores said it was closing 184 of its stores, which operate under the nameplates **Fallas**, **Fallas-Paredes**, **Factory 2-U** and **Falas** in Puerto Rico.

The new Fallas Stores will operate under the same model as the National Stores, selling discounted apparel and other merchandise and buying from the same vendors who sold

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Black Friday Sees a Dip Over Last Year but Still Considered Strong

By Andrew Asch *Retail Editor*

While more than 165 million Americans shopped online or in stores during the Black Friday weekend—which now extends from Thanksgiving Day through Cyber Monday—the numbers were down by nearly 10 million shoppers from 2017.

In 2017, some 174 million shoppers hit the malls or the Web to make purchases.

This year, the **National Retail Federation** said the average consumer spent \$313.29 on gifts and holiday items during the five-day period. In 2017, they spent \$335.47 during the same period.

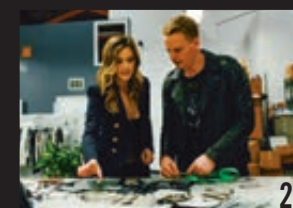
However, U.S. retailers are still forecasted to be headed into a robust season, said Bill Thorne, the NRF's senior vice president of communications and public affairs, who was speaking on a Nov. 27 conference call with reporters.

He noted that the 2018 holiday calendar features five week-

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SHOPPING SPREE

Shoppers hit the mall as soon as the turkey was eaten on Thanksgiving Day, extending their buying through Cyber Monday, when they revved up their computers to buy online.

Top row, from left: The Citadel Outlets and 2 Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills
Middle row, from left: Larchmont Village, Westfield Century City, Westfield Century City
Bottom row, from left: Beverly Center, Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills

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Organized Retail Crime Increasing in the United States

In the past year, organized retail crime has victimized 92 percent of retailers across the country, with Los Angeles taking the No. 2 spot, according to a recent survey released by the Washington, D.C.-based **National Retail Federation**.

Retail theft has increased by 7 percent over last year. Losses averaged \$777,877 per \$1 billion in sales this year compared with \$726,351 in losses last year.

Some 71 percent of retailers said that this kind of crime is increasing. Items often center around easily stolen goods such as razors, deodorant and laundry detergent and scale

up to higher-priced items such as designer clothing, blue jeans, handbags, smart phones and gift cards.

About 60 percent of merchandise stolen is recovered at places such as pawn shops and flea markets or websites where the goods are being sold online, according to the survey. Stolen gift cards have been recovered at online gift-card exchanges.

Organized retail crime is defined as more than two people illegally obtaining retail merchandise through theft or fraud, according to **Loss Prevention Media**. While this

type of crime has been going on for as long as there have been stores, the thieves' sophistication has been growing, said Bob Moraca, the NRF's vice president of loss prevention.

"These criminals find new ways to expand their networks and manipulate the retail supply chain every day. The retail industry is fighting this battle by upgrading technology, improving relationships with local law enforcement and taking steps such as tightening return policies, but it is a never-ending battle," Moraca said.

Return fraud is also a target for organized retail crime. Retailers surveyed said that 11

percent of their sales will be returned this year but 8 percent of those items will be fraudulent.

The survey ranked the top 10 regions for organized retail crime in America. Coming in at No. 1 was New York followed by Los Angeles and Miami; Chicago and Houston tied for fourth place. San Francisco/Oakland was fifth, followed by Atlanta; Baltimore; and Orlando, Fla. Northern New Jersey; Washington, D.C.; Philadelphia and the Dallas area tied for ninth place. Tied for No. 10 on the list were Seattle and Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.—*Andrew Asch*

Touché LA Rebrands as LA Collective to Support Local Fashion Culture

After a 2015 launch that grew into a vertically integrated manufacturing operation for activewear and athleisure clothing, **Touché LA** has changed its name to **LA Collective**.

LA Collective, headed by husband-and-wife team Jaynee Silvers Singer and Karl Singer, still has 80 sewers and 53 seamless machines inside its 60,000-square-foot complex in Vernon, Calif.

The new company will remain manufacturers of activewear and athleisure—a business that yields a monthly output of 120,000 units—but it is going to expand into new categories, including swimwear, streetwear, shapewear and outerwear.

"We are thrilled to announce the next step in our journey as we scale the company," Silvers Singer said. "LA Collective will be a game-changer for the American fashion scene."

A family legacy in the New York City

garment-manufacturing industry drove Singer to enter the business with his wife by developing partnerships with active-minded celebrities and fitness professionals, including a collaboration named **Touché LA x Morgan Stewart** with television personality Morgan Stewart.

The husband-and-wife team also launched a house brand named **Vita LA**. Additional partnerships include **TLA by Morgan Stewart**; **Ren Active by Alexis Ren**, which was designed with the model; and **Vita LA by Anna Victoria**, a line created with the noted certified personal trainer and fitness expert.

"Our current house line is Vita LA, which we launched about three months ago, and our next collection drops Dec. 10," Singer said. "We are actively understanding that house brand while launching talent-based brands with celebrities, influencers and personalities from different entertainment sectors us-



From left, Jaynee Silvers Singer and Karl Singer

ing Vita LA as a collaboration pipeline."

At LA Collective, the re-brand was the next business step to continue growing its platform, online presence and e-commerce, but it remains a trusted incubator for collaborations with different entertainment personalities. Contributing to the local apparel business is integral to the company's growth and remains at the forefront of its mission of supporting the Los Angeles apparel-manufacturing community.

"We make everything in L.A.," Singer said. "Our facility in Vernon houses our cut-and-sew factory, warehouse and fulfillment as well as front office. We are looking to bring back domestic manufacturing in a big way by leaning into manufacturing and designing in L.A. and taking inspiration from the L.A. culture."

Driving Los Angeles manufacturing with the introduction of new brands is an enormous undertaking that Singer views as an opportunity to grow the city's fashion industry, but he also looks forward to elevating established partner brands to the next level.

"For TLA by Morgan Stewart, it was our first collaboration. It grew so organically but quickly at the same time. It developed this cult-like following," Singer said. "We're excited to continue growing it, broaden our collection offerings and potentially go into new categories of fashion with her and building out a lifestyle brand."

The established partnerships with entertainment personalities known for having a presence in Los Angeles provides greater opportunities to create products that provide an experience for fans. To avoid diluting the

reputation of its partners and the brands, LA Collective merchandise is rarely sold at discount, creating a demand that brought the company to this level of growth.

"This expansion has always been on our roadmap," Singer said. "We've always had the operational ability to do all categories in fashion, but it was all about timing with us and teaming up with the talent that fit really well into our story and a specific category."

With its ability to produce goods quickly at a domestic space, LA Collective averages a new release of apparel every five weeks. Retail partners include **Revolve**, **Bloomingdale's**, **Saks Fifth Avenue** and New York City's **Bandier**, where LA Collective will launch the new Holiday Morgan Stewart line on Dec. 10 at the retailer's Flatiron location.

At LA Collective, Singer also understands consumer behavior is changing. With millennials enjoying greater spending power as they age and Generation Z setting trends, the company is able to feed the demands of its audience by remaining selective about its retail bricks-and-mortar partners while recognizing "social media as the new storefront."

"The millennial consumer gets extremely impatient when it comes to shopping. Speed to market, being able to offer something new and fresh on a monthly basis, is important to keep them entertained," Singer said. "It's hard to get brand loyalty out of a millennial customer."

Wholesale pricing across all LA Collective brands ranges from \$32 to \$98. Collections are available through retail partners and online at LACollective.com.

—*Dorothy Crouch*

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Swimwear Brand Lolli Debuts Lingerie

By Andrew Asch *Retail Editor*

Lingerie either is trying too hard to be sexy or it is dull and utilitarian, said Vy Nguyen, founder, designer and chief executive officer of **Lolli**, a Laguna Beach, Calif.–headquartered swimwear brand.

Nguyen hoped to offer an alternative with Lolli's new intimates capsule collection. She released the collection on Black Friday weekend on her brand's website, www.ilovelolli.com.



It will be exclusive to the brand's e-commerce site until the end of 2018. Wholesale price points range from \$9 to \$18.

The collection's mission is to be affordable and cute. "It's not super racy," Nguyen said. "We're feminine, but we are on the flirty side."

Unlike swimwear, lingerie is not seasonal. Being able to sell a collection all year-round is one reason Lolli introduced the inti-

mates line, which is only a slight design departure from the swimwear brand.

The swim collection was started in 2010 offering whimsical swimwear for women, with looks inspired by little girls' clothing and Nguyen's favorite sweets.

Even though lingerie and swimwear are similar categories, Nguyen said there was a learning curve to make lingerie. Sizing for bras is much more detailed than sizing for swim tops. Lingerie also calls for different fabrics than those used for swimwear. She also had to use different factories. Lolli's swimwear is manufactured in Bali, and the lingerie line is manufactured in China.

Lolli's lingerie line offers three sets, mostly made out of mesh and lace. One look offers a hot-pink color way with hot-pink accents. Another set was inspired by activewear where the bralette features wide elastic nylon straps reminiscent of a sports bra. Attached to the straps are metallic details such as rose gold-colored fasteners in the shape of hearts. The col-

lection also features a nude-colored bra and panties. Silhouettes for panties feature thongs and underwear with fuller bottoms.

Lolli has remained an independent label with fewer than five people on staff. But the brand has made a splash. Since 2017, it has collaborated with **Target** to sell **Sugar Coast by Lolli**, which is swimwear half the price of Lolli's regular line. Sugar Coast separates retail for \$30 while Lolli separates start at \$69. Lolli also produced a swimwear collaboration with the gift and accessories brand **ban.do**.

Kardashian-family members have been spotted in Lolli. Model and social-media star Sofia Jamora had one of her first modeling gigs with Lolli, appearing in photos in 2015 for Lolli's **Valfre** line.

One of Lolli's extracurricular activities for the brand included designing a room with pink mirrors for the **Museum of Ice Cream** in downtown Los Angeles earlier this year.

In 2019, Nguyen hopes to add more styles to her lingerie collection by introducing a collaboration with the **Hello Kitty** cartoon character and clothing line. ●



Noble Sands Offers Limitless Wardrobe Options—Using Less

By Dorothy Crouch *Associate Editor*

The idea behind Julie Habelmann's recently launched **Noble Sands** line is this: One piece of fabric can do it all.

Her resortwear line, based in Newport Beach, Calif., is meant to give chic, easy solutions to any fashion need.

The new label—named for Noble Lake behind her childhood home in Arkansas—comes after Habelmann left the United States in 2012 to travel for four years with her husband, whose career in the aerospace industry took him around the world.

Following an Italian holiday, where she was inspired by stylish women at a Sardinian beach, Habel-



Julie Habelmann

mann bought a single piece of scrap material from a fabric shop in Hamburg, Germany. By twisting, tucking and tying the piece in different ways, she was able to create multiple styles for her wardrobe, and Noble Sands' first design was born.

"These women were so confident, elegant and effortless, and I had been looking for a different type of resortwear cover-up," she said. "I started draping the fabric around myself and unknowingly came up with the prototype of 'The Strand Wrap.'"

For Habelmann, one nonnegotiable component of producing that wrap and other pieces was to have everything manufactured domestically. With limited apparel-business experience, she went to Leslie Denby, a friend who owns

the Houston-based athleisure brand **DYI** (Define Your Inspiration), who recommended **Texollini**, a textile company in Long Beach, Calif., for fabric sourcing.

"Since they are here locally, I met with Sherry Wood [director of merchandising] in their gorgeous showroom, and we went through samples after she simply looked at my piece of fabric from Germany," Habelmann explained. "We landed on one sample, and it was pretty perfect."

Through Texollini, she found the perfect blend of 92 percent nylon and 8 percent **Lycra**. With this material, Habel-

mann created The Strand Wrap, a piece of fabric that has

been cut and sewn in a way that allows customers to create a variety of styles in light gray, blue and green.

"What makes the piece unique and beautiful is that the fabric itself is a high-quality, tightly woven fabric that drapes really well," Habelmann said. "That is a key factor in the garment."

By designing a single piece of apparel that can be styled into at least 15 different garments, which include resort cover-ups, dresses, skirts and shirts, Habelmann has created an

opportunity for her clients to consume less. While The Strand Wrap can be used alone, each order is bundled with a sash in the same color as the wrap and a metal ring for additional styling choices. Habelmann has fitted the garment on women ranging from 4 feet, 8 inches tall and a size 00 to women 5 feet, 10 inches tall and a size 14.

With one piece of fabric and small-batch production at a local manufacturer in Orange County, Calif., Noble Sands reduces unnecessary waste common in the apparel industry.

"I wanted Noble Sands to have a mindful mission because

that means a lot to me. You hear a lot about it now, but it's always been the way I've been a consumer myself," Habelmann explained. "Every day, I am learning more about waste and overconsumption. I didn't want to go into production and have a lot of dead stock, especially in my first run."

This conservative production practice is factored into Habelmann's business model—from the design stage to production and shipping. While she understands manufacturing partners must make a profit, Habelmann sees new opportunities for factories that accommodate larger brands but also offer the option of producing garments with lower minimums for clients focused on creating less waste.

"When they're able to drop their

minimums from 500 to 300 or 250, it makes a huge difference," Habelmann said. "I would venture to say that would make up the difference just in the number of clients they would acquire."

With The Strand Wrap serving as Noble Sands' signature piece, Habelmann is looking toward the future of the brand. In addition to designing a shirt and pants—both of which will be designed for styling into multiple looks—she would like to explore the use of fabric made from recycled water bottles such as **Repreve**.

"They will go along with this theme of drape-y, chic style where

the top and pants will complement The Strand Wrap. The top can be worn multiple ways. The pants, as with all the styles I intend to make, are very flattering for most body shapes and heights," Habelmann said. "You are able to adjust them relative to your size and body type."

While the collection is exclusively based on an e-commerce model, Habelmann is considering luxury-resort and spa partners where retail prices for shirting and pants will begin at \$99. The Strand Wrap is currently available online at www.noblesands.com for \$159. ●





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NEWS

AAFA Announces Honorees for American Image Awards

The American Apparel & Footwear Association, a trade organization in Washington, D.C., representing hundreds of the country's largest manufacturers, named the recipients of its annual **American Image Awards**, which will be presented April 15 at the **Plaza Hotel** in New York.

The evening will be emceed by actress Brooke Shields, and the gala's charitable beneficiary will be the **Council of Fashion Designers of America Foundation**.

Isaac Ash, the chief executive of the **United Legwear and Apparel Co.**, was named the Person of the Year. Under his leadership, the company has grown into a major global designer, manufacturer and distributor of legwear, bodywear, apparel bags and accessories. It is a joint-venture partner of **Puma**, a licensee of **Skechers**, **Champion**, **Fortnite**, **Starter**, **Weatherproof** and **Pro Player**. It is also the owner of **Fun Socks**.

American Eagle Outfitters will receive the Retailer of the Year award for providing on-trend clothing, accessories and personal-care products for more than 40 years. It now has

more than 1,000 stores in the United States, Canada, Mexico, China and Hong Kong.

Birkenstock will be the recipient of the Company of the Year award. The German brand, known for its contoured foot bed, has been available in the United States for more than 50 years but only opened its first U.S.-based store, in New York, in 2018.

Eileen Fisher was chosen as the Designer of the Year for working for decades to bring awareness in the apparel industry to issues of social responsibility, sustainability and human rights. The brand was started by Eileen Fisher in 1984 with only \$350 in startup money. In 1986, she opened her first store in Manhattan.

WWD, also known as *Women's Wear Daily*, is the recipient of the Media Brand of the Year award. It has been delivering news on the apparel, footwear, beauty and fashion industries for more than 100 years.

For the Fashion Collaboration of the Year award, the winner is **Disney Princess x Ruthie Davis**, a venture between designer Ruthie Davis and **Disney**.—*Deborah Belgium*

Emerald Expositions Searches for a New CEO

Emerald Expositions continues to look for a replacement for its longtime president and chief executive officer, David Loechner.

Loechner, who announced on Nov. 1 he was resigning from the trade-show company, based in San Juan Capistrano, Calif., had been with the organization or its predecessors for some 35 years.

Philip Evans, Emerald's chief financial officer, was appointed interim president and chief executive of the organization that produces some 55 trade shows, which include **Surf Expo**, **Outdoor Retailer**, the **Imprinted Sportswear Show**, **Swim Collective** and **Active Collective**.

Loechner will work with the company until the end of the year.

The executive shift comes at a time of change for the trade-show business. On Nov. 19, **Agenda**, owned by Emerald's competitor **Reed Exhibitions**, announced it was postponing the January dates for its flagship show in Long Beach, Calif. For its summer 2019 Long Beach show, Agenda's format is scheduled to transition from a familiar business-to-business show to a consumer event.

Market analyst Jeff Harbaugh of **Jeff Harbaugh & Associates** wrote in a Nov. 29 note that Emerald is a "profitable company with a pretty solid balance sheet and good cash-flow model."

But he noted the trade-show business is in transition and Emerald must find its way in this changing market. Emerald, in its quarterly financial report, said it hopes to fuel new growth by acquiring more shows. It also plans on building the company through what it called "organic growth," or bringing in new business to its shows.

"What, then, for Emerald, is the new model for trade shows that permits this organic growth, and what is the evolving role of trade shows? We're all trying to figure that out," Harbaugh wrote.

On Nov. 1, Emerald announced its financial results for the fiscal third quarter ending Sept. 30. Revenues increased 2.7 percent to \$103.1 million compared with \$100.4 million the previous third quarter. The company's net income for the recent third quarter was \$20.9 million, up 8.9 percent over last year's third quarter.—*Andrew Asch*

Calendar

Dec. 1

Unique LA
California Market Center
Los Angeles
Through Dec. 2

Dec. 4

Webinar: Less Becomes More. Responsible Textile Consumerism
online

WWSRA Northern California
McClellan Conference Center
Sacramento, Calif.
Through Dec. 6

Dec. 5

Denim Première Vision
Old Truman Brewery
London
Through Dec. 6

Dec. 6

Art Basel
Miami Beach Convention Center
Miami Beach, Fla.
Through Dec. 9

Dec. 12

Blossom Première Vision
Carreau du Temple
Paris
Through Dec. 13

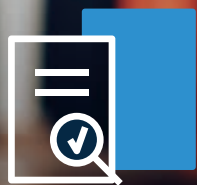
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Black Friday *Continued from page 1*

ends before Christmas instead of the traditional four, giving people more time to shop. An NRF survey noted that 12 percent of U.S. consumers have not even started shopping for gifts.

The NRF predicted that sales for the 2018 holiday season would reach the high end of the merchant group's original forecast of a 4.3 percent to 4.8 percent increase over holiday sales in 2017, Thorne said. Holiday sales in 2017 totaled \$687.87 billion, a 5.3 percent jump over the previous year.

"The top line is that this was a very strong holiday weekend and a very strong indicator of where holiday will be going," Thorne said.

In a separate announcement, **Amazon** noted that Cyber Monday on Nov. 26 was the single biggest shopping day in the company's history. The Seattle-headquartered retail giant, however, declined to announce its revenue totals for Cyber Monday or compare it to last year.

This holiday season will be supported by one of the best American economies in the past decade, said Ron Friedman, co-partner of consumer products and retail for the accounting and advisory firm **Marcum LLP**.

U.S. unemployment in October was at a low 3.7 percent, and consumer confidence is high. "Everything is moving in the right direction," Friedman said. "Between now and Christmas will be a record-breaking period."

Omnichannel shopping was a winner this year, getting a boost because retailers are giving consumers an experience they want, said Jeff Moore, senior managing director

of retail practices for the Southern California and Hawaii region for the commercial and real-estate investment company **CBRE**.

"In general, the consumer and the retailers are getting together on expectations for omnichannel and how to deliver on those expectations. That wasn't the case 24 months ago," Moore said. Omnichannel strategies include "Buy Online/Ship to Store." Retailers request consumers pick up online-purchased goods at physical stores. Picking up goods at stores cuts delivery costs and encourages consumers to shop

At the **Outlets at San Clemente**, retail traffic during the Black Friday weekend was estimated to be up more than 15 percent over last year, said Steve Craig of the **Craig Realty Group**, which owns and manages the San Clemente, Calif.-based outlet mall where items are generally 15 percent to 70 percent off retail prices.

Store promotions were about even with last year's Black Friday weekend, said Jeff Van Sinderen, an analyst with **B.Riley FBR**. However, retailers' margins will be bigger and stronger during the upcoming holiday season because

retailers have controlled inventory, so they won't be compelled to offer major discounts post-season and literally "give away the store."

"Since 2016, retailers have been controlling more on how much they order," Van Sinderen said. They are ordering fewer goods and buying closer to season, so they have a better chance to sell what is trending.

After the Black Friday weekend, retailers have to slog through a lull until the pace of shopping skyrockets 10 days before Christmas. During that lull, retail-

ers can be tempted to offer deep discounts, Van Sinderen said. "If they get too promotional, they shoot themselves in the foot," he said.

The Black Friday weekend is parsed into different shopping holidays such as Cyber Monday, the e-commerce-focused day following Black Friday. There's also Small Business Saturday, which is sponsored by **American Express**. The shopping holiday has become popular with independent retailers and also has gained cachet with those who do not even use an American Express card. ●



Tourists and shoppers took photos of a polar-bear installation at 2 Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills, Calif. Nov. 25 during Black Friday Weekend.



A Christmas tree at the Jewel Court at South Coast Plaza in Costa Mesa, Calif.

for more goods at stores.

Omnichannel also allows retailers to tailor an experience to fit consumers' needs. If they don't have time to go to a store, they can complete all of their shopping online. If they're looking for a bricks-and-mortar experience, they can go to a physical store, Moore said.

The Black Friday shopping experience is also shaped by discounts. About 65 percent of U.S. consumers purchased their gifts on sale during the Black Friday weekend, according to the NRF.

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National Continued from page 1

goods to National Stores before.

The new stores will be spread out over seven states and Puerto Rico and remain headquartered in the Harbor Gateway area of Los Angeles. Some 2,500 employees will keep their jobs at the retail outposts, but about 6,000 are losing their posts in the more than 340 stores that used to span 22 states.

Michael Fallas, who was the chief executive of National Stores, which included the Fallas-Paredes and Fallas nameplates, will

chael Fallas, who took over the company from his father, Joseph, caters to the Latino market with bargain-basement prices that fall between \$10 and \$25. Its first store opened in downtown Los Angeles at Broadway and Fifth Street in the 1960s.

The retail chain, in its bankruptcy documents filed on Aug. 6 in U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Delaware, said it had \$111.4 million in liabilities. Assets were listed between \$100 million and \$500 million.

Previously the company had said its bottom line had suffered setbacks from some underperforming stores, which was exacerbated by severe weather in various regions,



Inside a Fallas-Paredes store in downtown Los Angeles

be the CEO of the new Fallas Stores entity. "We found exactly what we needed in Second Avenue Capital Partners," he said in a statement. "We were looking for a lender committed to our business plan. What we found in SACP was a lender that understood retailers and the challenges we all encounter in today's difficult retail environment."

The Schottenstein family, affiliated with Second Avenue Capital Partners, which was launched in May, has long financed a number of fashion retailers including **American Eagle Outfitters** and **Designer Shoe Warehouse**, also known as **DSW Inc.**

Also associated with the Schottenstein family is **SB360 Holdings**, the parent company of **SB360 Capital Partners**, a liquidator that is helping to sell off some of National Stores' inventory. Jay Schottenstein, who is chairman of SB360 Holdings, is also the chairman of shoe retailer DSW Inc. and the chairman and CEO of American Eagle Outfitters.

Chris O'Connor, president of Second Avenue Capital Partners, said Fallas came to his company with a plan for carrying his business forward. "We provided the financing and flexibility he needed to put his plan into motion," O'Connor said. "With our connections to the retail space, keeping 85 stores moving forward and preserving 2,500 jobs is tremendous motivation."

National Stores, owned primarily by Mi-

including in Puerto Rico, which was badly hit by and is still recovering from last year's Hurricane Maria.

The company also suffered financial losses from its acquisition of 44 **Conway Stores** in 2014 for an undisclosed price. Earlier, in 2004, National Stores acquired the ailing **Factory 2-U** chain. In 2015 it acquired 41 **Anna's Linens** stores in a store lease-takeover auction. The stores were rebranded **Anna's Linens by Fallas**.

National Stores owes hefty sums of money to its apparel and merchandise suppliers, who have complained they may be getting only pennies on the dollars they are owed as unsecured creditors.

In court documents, National Stores said it has between 200 and 999 creditors. Some of its major creditors, all apparel manufacturers located in New York, include **Armouth International**, owed \$15.6 million; **One Step Up**, owed \$10.3 million; **Louise Paris**, owed nearly \$4 million; and **Seven Apparel**, owed \$3.9 million.

Last year the computers at the various stores in the National Stores chain were subjected to a malware attack that lasted from July 10 to Dec. 11, 2017. The affected payment-card information may have included names, payment-card numbers, expiration dates and security codes. Because of the attack, the company said its access to its operating funds diminished. ●



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Invista Unveils Lycra FreeF!t Technology at Kingpins NYC

During last week's **Kingpins NYC** show, held Nov. 28–29 at **Pier 36/Basketball City** in New York, integrated-fiber company **Invista** unveiled the new patented **Lycra FreeF!t** technology to its North American audience.

The new material lends greater comfort to denim and woven fabrics while allowing apparel to maintain its shape without the potential loss of recovery more common in softer stretchy material.

Citing consumer demand uncovered through an Invista Denim Study in 2016, the company discovered more than 65 percent of female shoppers surveyed across five countries wanted jeans that provide easy movement, but only 25 percent said the last pair they bought provided this comfort. While 56 percent of respondents reported wanting jeans that hold their shape, only 22 percent said the last pair they bought successfully maintained the garment's structure.

"It's a bit like trying to fool the laws of nature," Invista Global Director for Denim and Wovens Jean Hegedus said in a statement. "Typically, when you have soft, easy stretch, fabric recovery is compromised. What makes this technology so unique is that it combines two opposing concepts—soft stretch and excellent shape retention."

When creating Lycra FreeF!t, Invista implemented its patented and patent-pending technologies in yarn, textile processing and fabric structure. Using Lycra DualFX yarn, the fabrics are manufactured through Lycra FreeF!t technology, which includes materials treated with Invista's proprietary formula, and are woven according to the company's specific processes.



During Kingpins NYC, Invista research fellow Tianyi Liao measures the compression force of Lycra FreeF!t and compares it to a standard stretch material.

During Kingpins NYC, attendees were able to preview Invista's CoolMax Natural Touch technology, an innovative offering that blends two types of CoolMax fiber with cotton and Lycra, which remains cool and yields a soft hand.—*Dorothy Crouch*

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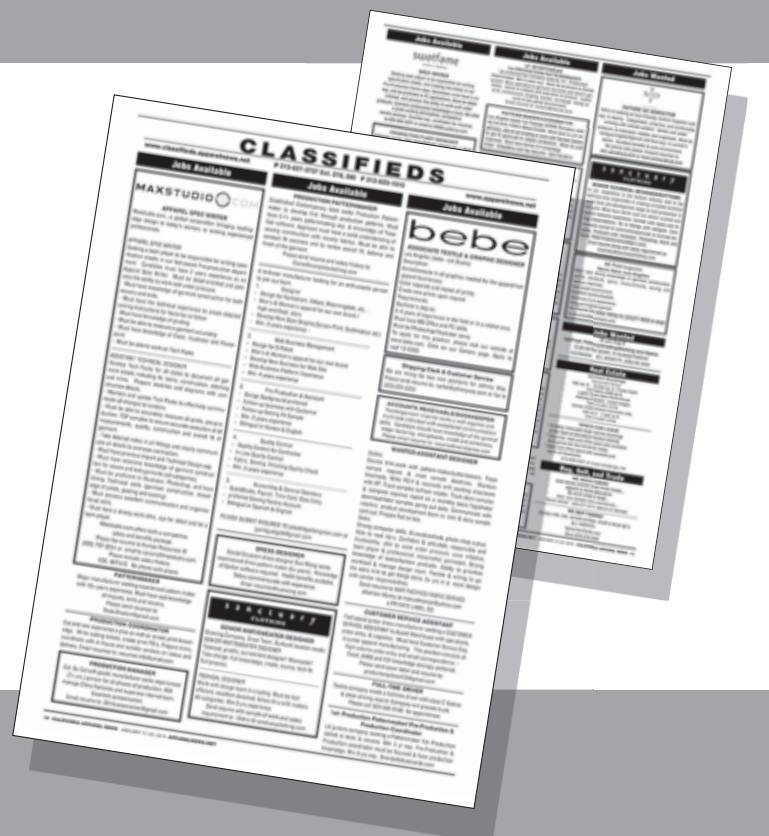
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