



Contacts:
Sarah Knutson/Enjoli Duval
BNC
310.854.4800
sknutson@bncpr.com/eduval@bncpr.com

WSA SHOW EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS AS FOOTWEAR BUSINESS MOVES FORWARD

Tough Times Made the Tough Get Going

ENCINO, Calif. (February 19, 2009) – The footwear and accessories market gathered in Las Vegas at The WSA Show, The Collections at WSA and Materials at WSA this past week, drawing 24,270 participants from every corner of the U.S. and 106 countries. There were 87 new exhibitors featuring an estimated 150 designers and brands, and industry and category leaders like H.H. Brown, Nine West Footwear Group, Brown Shoe, Geox, Skechers and Steve Madden were present alongside some of the hottest contemporary brands like Tracy Reese, Miss Sixty, Ilse Jacobsen and Luxury Rebel.

“The creativity and innovation of the footwear sector were clearly evident despite the economic challenges and many were pleasantly surprised by better than expected results,” said Diane Stone, the show’s chief operating officer. “You can’t talk about numbers without analyzing and understanding them, especially in this economy. Tradeshows are smaller due to cost containment and layoffs and retail and construction industry events are down the most. Given the fact that buying staffs are drastically reduced, travel is curtailed, and stores are going out of business, we’re fortunate to be down only 18%. But numbers never tell the entire story.”

According to many exhibitors, those who attended the most recent WSA Show were focused and buying, with many exhibitors having a much stronger show than they expected. Major brands such as Havanas and Clarks, which showed their signature brands Bostonian, Indigo, and Pr!vo, were pleased to see changes in the show floor layout, which they credited with significantly helping their business at the show. “The response was outstanding,” said Jane Feigenson, director of corporate events, Clarks. “We were pretty much busy the entire show. Despite all the doom and gloom, there was a glimmer of hope.” “We’ve been very pleased with the ‘quality’ of clients,” added AJ Majumdar, director of sales, Havanas. “We’ve also moved to a location that has better brand adjacencies, which has proven to be very good for us.”

Attendees came from all around the country and all over the world, underscoring the event’s position as the most efficient touch-point for buyers and sellers to reach each other face to face. Forty percent came from East and Central U.S.; 35% from the West; and, significantly, 25% from International territories – particularly high for a U.S. event. As a result of direct recruitment by WSA’s retail relations staff, since the summer 2008 show, exceptional international attendance gains have come from Mexico, Colombia, Japan, Venezuela, France, Germany, Costa Rica, Indonesia and Bulgaria.

More...

WSA Show Feb. '09 – 2

The WSA Show's new look and layout merely set the stage for what attendees can expect for the upcoming July 2009 event, which will take place at the Las Vegas Convention Center July 31 – August 2, 2009. The Collections at WSA, held alongside The WSA Show, will continue to be held in the suites at The Venetian.

About The WSA Show

The WSA Show is the world's largest and most comprehensive footwear, handbags, and accessories marketplace, offering a 360-degree viewpoint of the footwear industry. The semi-annual event in Las Vegas attracts participants from 95 countries and features 1,500 exhibiting companies showing thousands of brands. The Collections at WSA, an exclusive premium footwear and fashion jewelry show within The WSA Show, features 350 luxury footwear, handbag and jewelry designers from around the globe in an exclusive upscale setting. Materials at WSA, a dedicated area within The WSA Show, further expands the breadth of this industry marketplace to include the supply chain by focusing on materials, design, components, technology and sourcing alongside the finished product, becoming easily accessible to brand and retail leaders. For more details, please visit www.wsashow.com.

#