

LEGGWEAR TRENDS

& TEXTILES OF TOMORROW

VOLUME 48 NUMBER 12

SERVING THE HOSIERY AND TEXTILE INDUSTRIES EACH MONTH

*More Free Trade Agreements Pushed;
Presidential Candidates Say 'Slow Down'*





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LEGWEAR TRENDS

& TEXTILES OF TOMORROW

VOLUME 48 NUMBER 12

SERVING THE HOSIERY AND TEXTILE INDUSTRIES EACH MONTH

**The only monthly publication that offers
News About The Industry, From The Industry, For The Industry.**

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*The ONLY monthly magazine
dedicated to the hosiery industry*

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legislative column

by PAUL FOGLEMAN, Director, Hosiery Governmental Affairs Council

Look for trade issues to emerge in the heat of the U.S. Senate race in North Carolina, the national center for hosiery manufacturing, next year.

GOP Sen. Elizabeth Dole, who rode to office in 2002 as a celebrity campaigner, has seen her approval rating among N.C. voters decline—less than 50 percent according to recent Elon University pollsters. Also, Republicans blame her for the poor funds-raising efforts which resulted in Democratic control of the U.S. Senate in 2006. Sen. Dole has been a strong defender of the trade policies of the Bush administration.

suffered job losses to Asia and CAFTA countries.

Sen. Hagan faces three Democratic primary opponents, none of whom have held a state office. They are Jim Neal, a wealthy Chapel Hill investment manager who announced he is gay, and John Ross Hendrix of Cary, a graphic artist who ran for Congress as a Republican before changing his party registration.

Another state senator—Fred Smith of Johnson County—is seeking his party’s nomination for governor and learning to love

Piedmont and west, Smith serves Lexington-style barbecue with some variations.

State Sen. Walter Dalton of Rutherford County raised more than \$100,000 at an event in Raleigh that launched his campaign. More than 100 people gathered at the home of Wallace and Jeanette Hyde in October. The gathering was a “who’s who” of Democratic notables. His opponents in a Democratic primary will be Hampton Dellinger of Durham, former Clinton administration White House aide, and Dan Besse, a Winston-Salem city councilman.

Among the Democrats who will attempt to unseat Sen. Dole is State Senator Kay Hagan of Greensboro who has served as co-chair of the powerful Appropriations Committee.

Among the Democrats who will attempt to unseat Sen. Dole is State Senator Kay Hagan of Greensboro who has served as co-chair of the powerful Appropriations Committee. State Sen. Hagan is the niece of the late Lawton Childs who died while serving as Florida governor. She knows politics and has contacts outside her state. She also represents an area that has

barbecue. He has been scheduling barbecue fund-raisers in every North Carolina county as part of his campaign strategies.

There are 100 counties in the state and tastes for barbecue vary greatly.

Smith says he tries to learn the preference of the voters in each county before serving the meal. In the east, the vinegar and pepper sauce is preferred. In the

U.S. Rep. Patrick McHenry, former state House member from Gaston County, will have serious opposition in a bid for his third term. McHenry, a Republican, will face Democrat Daniel Johnson of Hickory, son of the Rev. Wallace Johnson, minister at First Presbyterian Church.

Johnson is a military hero who lost both his legs in an accident while he was saving the life of another Navy seaman. A cable snapped striking Johnson after he pushed the other man aside. Johnson has returned to Hickory after serving as a prosecutor in Raleigh.

The 10th congressional district represented by McHenry is heavily tilted toward Republicans. The last Democrat to represent the district was defeated 47 years ago. ■

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More Free Trade Agreements Pushed; Presidential Candidates Say ‘Slow Down’

By Paul Fogleman
Publisher

While the U.S. Trade Representative's office pushes hard to expand America's free trade agreements (FTAs), presidential candidates are promising to give the agreements "a second look."

The first—North American Free Trade Agreement—was negotiated by the administration of President Bill Clinton with strong bipartisan support. Now his wife, leading the pack among Democrats, is telling her audiences that changes should be made.

Joining Sen. Hillary Clinton in her skepticism are Republican and Democratic candidates who are responding to concerns of local officials who are looking at empty buildings and higher unemployment. Unions have made trade agreements a top priority.

Now on the front burner in the USTR offices are proposed agreements with Peru, South Korea, Columbia and Panama. All have implications for

hosiery and textile states. According to USTR figures, they ship goods valued at more than \$1.5 billion combined each year, but mostly in equipment, computers, and chemicals. The market for textiles products is very limited.

In 2006, Alabama's export sales to South Korea came to \$486 million, followed by North Carolina with \$542 million and Tennessee with \$440 million.

Exports to the central and South American destinations drop off significantly. Alabama's shipments to Peru, mostly agricultural crops, are worth about \$33 million. Tennessee also ships crops to Peru to the tune of \$36 million and North Carolina's sales come to \$29 million in machinery and chemicals. No classifications are listed for hosiery or textiles.

The numbers rise for Columbia which sends millions of dollars in coffee and cocaine to the U.S. Alabama's sales are \$206 million, half of which are by equipment manufacturers. N.C. sales hover around \$154 million in chemicals and "others", while the Volunteer state gets about \$100 million in crops and computers.

Tiny Panama is an \$11 million market for Alabama exports, most of whom are transportation equipment producers. N.C. exports involve a wide range of products involving chemicals and paper products and of the \$23 million for Tennessee, half are for metals and chemicals.

NAFTA which started it all reportedly has resulted in sales of more than \$6 billion for North Carolina and Tennessee producers, and almost \$4 billion for Alabama businesses. Later came CAFTA-

The cost to the U.S. was an estimated 200,000 jobs. And that's why presidential candidates are talking about "a second look."

textiles and hosiery producers in key states where 90 per cent of U.S. socks are made: Alabama, North Carolina and Tennessee.

The impact of a free trade agreement with South Korea is more significant for the



Current U.S. Free Trade

Agreements:

- Australia
- Bahrain
- Central America-Dominican Republic (CAFTA-DR)
- Chile
- Israel
- Jordan
- Morocco
- North American (NAFTA)
- Oman
- Singapore

Pending:

- South Korea
- Peru
- Columbia
- Panama

Note: The World Trade Organization members are limited in the use of quota or other trade barriers as spelled out in the Uruguay talks. However, countries may be a call on imports if market disruption is proved.

Dominican Republic which also involves shipments back to the U.S. from plants owned by American companies.

Of the \$463 million collected from CAFTA sales in Alabama, textiles and apparel shows up in a major way. Some \$163 million was for apparel and \$89 million for fibers and yarns sent to plants in those countries.

North Carolina businesses collected \$1.7 billion in 2006 from CAFTA-DR sales and almost half was for apparel and fiber and yarn. Some \$40 million of the \$201 million enjoyed by Tennessee firms was from apparel operations which included hosiery.

The USTR reports in 2006, North Carolina exports worldwide came to \$18 billion, with Tennessee shipping almost \$10 billion and Alabama \$9 billion.

While U.S. Trade officials applaud the exports, the other side is imports. One retailer—Wal-Mart—paid \$15 billion for goods coming from offshore, some \$12 billion from China alone. The cost to the U.S. was an estimated 200,000 jobs. And that's why presidential candidates are talking about "a second look." ■

Hosiery Government Council Promoting 2008 Memberships

The 2008 campaign for the Hosiery Governmental Affairs Council is seeking

includes inclusion of funds for the Hosiery Technology Center and its new

2008 to provide services.

The legislative program of the Hosiery Governmental Affairs Council (HGAC) will focus on preservation of the \$500,000 annual appropriation to operate the technology center and help secure non-recurring money to invest in research and development. In 2007, the General Assembly provided \$250,000 for equipment and supplies to help the seamless industry.

Annual dues for all hosiery companies is only \$350. Membership is by company and can be deducted as a business expense.

Paul Fogleman, who served as executive director for the Carolina Hosiery Association and its predecessor

(continued on page 13)

Industries must have advocates from both political parties, especially leaders who can take the lead on bills and initiatives. The council and its political action committee (HOSEPAC) have supported business-friendly legislators over the past 18 years.

to add 30 companies to the membership rolls.

Members will be involved in the support of a legislative agenda that

parent entity—the Center for Emerging Manufacturing Solutions. As part of a broader manufacturing service program, the HTC will have more resources in

New Owner Stresses Innovation Services At Conover Plastics

Conover Plastics Inc., a major supplier of plastic hangers to the hosiery manufacturing industry, has been acquired by a new owner.

Sal Hazboun, an engineer with an extensive background in plastics and injection molding, has purchased the company from B.J. Frye and members of her family. The company was founded 35 years ago by Ms. Frye's father, the late Wade Fox. Under Ms. Frye's leadership, the company has enjoyed significant growth, supplying hosiery companies throughout the United States.

Hazboun moved to North Carolina two years to accept a position with another company in the Hickory area. He previously worked in a thermoforming operation in Huntington Beach, CA.

Conover Plastics will continue to offer a range of hanger styles and sizes, Hazboun stressed. "We will not take our eyes off the ball and will always be supportive of the hosiery industry. We will bring customization and diversification to our customers," he asserted.

Hazboun holds an undergraduate degree in engineering and a masters degree in business administration, with



emphasis in operations management and logistics. He also has specialized in management of innovation and technology. His experience includes sales and marketing and supply chain strategies.

"My vision for Conover Plastics is to

be the customer choice for designing and molding," Hazboun said. "We will start adding value the moment the decision is made to allow the consumer to interact and examine the products."

Hosiery Sales Help Embattled Retailers In Challenging Economic Environment

Cautious consumers are trimming their spending and shortening their shopping hours, according to reports released on October retail sales.

Record oil prices are translated to higher prices at the pump

products are still in demand. Consumers are not going to sacrifice comfort as they rein in spending for other goods they would consider “luxury items.”

Popularly-priced hosiery that embraces fashion trends is

The term “aspirational” refers to upper middle class shoppers who patronize higher end stores—Macy’s, Nordstrom, Bloomingdale’s, Dillard’s—leaving upper end stores to the super rich.

and also higher winter heating bills. News of record job layoffs in the financial and automobile operations are raising cautious flags as well.

But hosiery manufacturers say that socks and other hosiery

moving on retail shelves, especially in discount stores and those appealing to “aspirational” consumers.

The term “aspirational” refers to upper middle class shoppers who patronize higher end stores—Macy’s, Nordstrom, Bloomingdale’s, Dillard’s—leaving upper end stores to the super rich.

The figures for October sales underscored the movement of shoppers in uncertain economic times.

The “affordable luxury” stores in October reported higher declines than expected. Nordstrom Inc. has a rare 2.4 per cent decline. Polo Ralph Lauren and Coach were warning that sales will rise at the slowest rate in six years.

In addition to worrisome economic trends and a swooning housing market, shoppers were influenced by a warmer than usual fall. Retailers now are facing a holiday season with an inventory of fall fashions and a movement to early markdowns.

Among the big chains, Costco turned in a 13 per cent increase over a year ago, with same store sales up 7 per cent. Wal-Mart had a respectable 8 per cent increase, with same-store receipts up 4 per cent. Target was somewhat better with increases of almost 10 per cent and same store revenues 4.1 per cent higher.

J.C. Penney Co. barely beat year-ago sales by 1.1 per cent and same store sales were actually off by 1.8 per cent. Also in negative territory for same store sales were Kohl’s (3.8 per cent) Dillard’s (7 per cent), and Macy’s (1.5). Among department stores, Neiman Marcus and Saks were the stores with increases of 10.9 per cent and 15.9 per cent respectively.

Specialty stores were generally reporting lower sales for the year, with the exception of TJX stores and Ann Taylor.

Collectively, retailers reported same-store sales were up 1.6 per cent, compared with 3 per cent in 2006.

In the meantime, hosiery manufacturers are saying hosiery shipments are up from a year ago, although they continue to battle the price war and offshore inroads.

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November Milestones Important To Progress of Hosiery Manufacturing

November drifts in on blue smoke curling up toward autumn skies. The Big Dipper is dropping toward the northern horizon and soon will yield to the stars of winter.

In some homes, fires still crackle in the fireplace as shorter days bow to the longer hours of darkness. Thanksgiving meals and reunions have warmed our souls as the outside landscape becomes bleaker. The Christmas season has arrived. Another year is drawing to a close.

Hosiery and textile manufacturers have a November pace that feeds the yearly cycle. Orders received only days—even hours—ago are being loaded on the shipping docks. Budgets are being reviewed. Inventories are tracked with precision not available in the past. Foreign currency rates against the dollar are followed. Global trade agreements are faced. It's November 2007.

Archives reflect another era for Novembers of the past. The progressive changes experienced by businesses have carried the DNA of hard working executives. Many are gone. But their creativity has been the backbone of survival and their genes are fueling successful companies of this first decade in the 21st century.

Yes, November 2007 is experiencing start-up companies. They are the inheritors of Novembers past. They carry the genes.

1967

November 1967: In an interview with editors of Catawba Valley Hosiery News, forerunner of Legwear Trends, Duke University Prof. Louis D. Volpp talked about the demands on future business leaders.

Forty years ago, Dr. Volpp, preparing for Duke's new business school, advised "mass production continues to dominate the energy of big business, but also significant is the recent to develop a few unique products requiring massive output of labor and money...

"...So important will be the computers in future industry and distribution firms that Volpp believes the age of the computer is yet to be born..."

Hosiery manufacturers reported that while most

holiday orders have been shipped, "business remains strong." Over-the-calf products were the fastest-moving items for men's hosiery producers. Orlon and nylon combinations and some white crews are making advances on the market...

Times were good. Oil was selling for \$3.20 a barrel. The Viet Nam war was about to bring down a president. The minimum wage was \$1.25 an hour.

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1977

November 1977: The federal minimum wage was expected to go up to \$2.65 an hour and hosiery executives were announcing price increases. Hosiery executives in the Western Piedmont area of North Carolina were visiting schools to create interest in hosiery careers. Promoting the image of the industry was a top priority for the Catawba Valley Hosiery Association which was spending thousands of dollars for the annual Hosiery Holiday Jamboree to entertain manufacturing personnel and their families.

Billy “Crash” Craddock was the featured entertainer who was hugely popular with his Elvis Presley-style acts. The “king” has died just three months earlier. More than 3,000 hosiery employees turned out for Craddock’s performance which had some women



1977 EXPO: The annual Hosiery Exposition attracted hundreds of executives from across the nation. The ribbon-cutting featured, from left: Fielding Clark, founder of Catawba Sox Inc.; Marion Roseman, CVHA President; Elsie Childres of Arlene Hosiery; Morris Speizman, founder of Speizman Industries; CVHA Vice President Allen Bolick; Expo Chairman E.W. Walton Jr.; and Hickory Mayor George D. Murphy.

swooning at the stage.

In the meantime, Jimmy Buffet had others captured by his “Margaritaville” and “Changes in Attitudes, Changes in Latitudes.” The average worker in the U.S. was taking home \$7,635 each year.

1987

November 1987: Hosiery manufacturing was hot! Companies were pushing their suppliers to refine their products and problems surrounding ring-spun cotton brought executives of yarn companies and hosiery mills together for a face-to-face session. Open-end yarn issues also were addressed under the umbrella of the CVHA which had grown to over 110 manufacturing companies. In 1987, the organization started its Wrap-Up sessions, monthly meetings for small and medium-size companies to share problems and solutions.

As the association grew, so did its outreach. In November 1987, a scholarship fund was set up with an initial \$10,000 earmark. The association gave out two \$1,500 scholarships each year until its end in 2001.

Competition for personnel prompted the CVHA to explore setting up child care centers to attract working women. A model for this was set up at Neville



1987 WRAP-UP: Hosiery executives and textile suppliers gathered to discuss industry concerns with ring-spun and open-end yarn.

Industries, which operated a center with national acclaim.

Women were making strides in other areas. That year the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Rotary Clubs had to start admitting women. Other civic

groups quickly followed. The national unemployment rate was 6.2 per cent—considerably higher than the 4.8 per cent in 2007.

(continued on page 12)

1997

November 1997: Was it only 10 year ago that....Princess Diana died? That J.K. Rowling introduced Harry Potter? That House Speaker Newt Gingrich was forced to resign?

Big changes were taking place. The Sara Lee Corp. announced it would "deverticalize" by selling off manufacturing operations. The concept assumed that some companies are best at marketing while others specialize in efficient production strategies.

The expectation was that Sara Lee would outsource its production. That happened, but to offshore companies. Retailers were beginning to drive manufacturing and pricing strategies.

Moretz Inc. had hit its stride as a marketing company and in November unveiled its new

celebrity brand from Dianne Carroll. The Carolina Hosiery Association (formerly CVHA) was reading change with plans for a Focus marketing session with a theme "Parallels for Profit." A new series of association-sponsored marketing workshops was called "Update."

By November 1997, the CHA had a successful governmental affairs program in place, supporting state lobbying efforts for the Hosiery Technology Center. The association was 38 years old and matured. It represented an industry far more diverse than that of 2007. And for many companies in business today, it set the foundation for services that continue through the Hosiery Technology Center. ■



1997 AWARD WINNER: Joe Richardson, second from left, chairman of Clayton Knitting Inc., received the CHA Distinguished Service Award. He is pictured with, from left, his daughter Joanne Richardson, Mrs. Richardson, U.S. Senator Lauch Faircloth, and son, Charles Richardson.



GOVERNMENT LOBBYING: North Carolina Lt. Gov. Dennis Wicker in 1997 met with CHA officials seeking funds for the Hosiery Technology Center. From left are: Hugh Simmons, Wicker, CHA President Denise Yow, and Jim Good, CHA director.

House Divided: Honduras Free Trade Splits Manufacturers In Fort Payne

All across America in late November people were listening or reading about the crisis that dramatically shrunk the socks industry in Fort Payne, Alabama.

National Public Radio which broadcasts in every U.S. state and Canada carried a nine-minutes presentation on its popular news program All Things Considered.

"There's no question that globalization has been really bad for the sock industry of Fort Payne, Alabama," began broadcaster Adam Davidson. "There were more than 150 sock factories (in Fort Payne) churning out a big chunk of the socks worn in the U.S."

But lately, there has been a flood of cheaper socks coming in from China, Pakistan and Honduras. It has devastated Fort Payne. Two-thirds of the town's sock mills have closed...."

The story then turned to Jimmy Baker, owner of Baker Hosiery. Baker started the company 30 years ago when he was 22.

"Baker doesn't have a lot of education, but he's smart," Davidson reported.

The story went on to tell about the 250 Matec knitting machines in Baker's mill, and the few employees required to keep them operating. Baker said he could make the sock as cheaply as sources in China or Honduras. Toe-seaming, he allowed, involves a cost that is killing the U.S. sock industry.

Baker is supporting re-implementation of a tariff on socks from Honduras to help offset costs incurred in toe-seaming. The Bush administration is expected to go along with the tariff because of a deal he cut with Alabama Rep. Robert Aderholt to get the congressman's vote for CAFTA in 2005.

The Story Takes A Twist.

Charles Cole, former chair of The Hosiery Association Domestic Manufacturers Committee, urged

Aderholt to cut the deal. But now Cole wants the free trade policy to remain in place. The company where he is now employed, V.I. Prewett and Son, is owned by Canada-based Gildan which has extensive operations in Honduras.

In a newspaper article published by the Birmingham News, Cole was quoted as saying it is impossible to turn back the clock.

Now Fort Payne is a city divided. Baker wants to survive as do others. Cole and his associates at Prewett now say the die has been cast.

In the meantime, the city's economic development department has successfully recruited dozens of new businesses to occupy old sock factories, paying higher wages. Most of the 4,000 hosiery workers who were laid off in Fort Payne have found new jobs with new companies. ■

Hosiery Government Council from page 8

for 25 years, is the registered lobbyist for the Council. He has represented the hosiery industry in the state legislature since 1990 when initial funding for the HTC was obtained. He also has worked to obtain ongoing state services for the industry through state agencies, including the Department of Labor, Department of Commerce, and Insurance Commissioner.

"While the industry has changed significantly during the past decade, the Council remains the opportunity for companies of all sizes to unite for a common cause," Fogleman said. "For suppliers to the industry, the council is the vehicle to invest in the future of their customers."

Fogleman and Darrell Frye, chairman of the Council, stressed the importance of being visible in government circles. Legislators are sensitive to the needs of businesses, including small and medium-sized companies, but they need to be informed of issues, they insisted.

Industries must have advocates from both political parties, especially leaders who can take the lead on bills and initiatives. The council and its political action committee (HOSEPAC) have supported business-friendly legislators over the past 18 years.

The council also communicates with members of the North Carolina and Alabama congressional delegations on behalf of hosiery manufacturers.

Fiber And Yarn Product, Inc. Announces New Sale Chief

November 1, 2007

Fiber & Yarn Products, Inc., of Hickory, NC, is pleased to announce that Lee Gordon has become associated with them in a marketing, product development, and sales capacity. Mr. Gordon brings to Fiber & Yarn Products many years of experience in the extrusion of man-made fibers with Allied/Honeywell and in various product development and quality control functions as well as marketing and technical sales positions with Macfield and Unifi. Mr. Gordon has recently focused on serving the performance apparel markets with innovative new products through his consulting firm located in Greensboro, NC. Fiber & Yarn Products is an innovative producer of textured nylon and polyester yarns and air covered specialty yarns designed to service the sock industry as well as other apparel markets such as seamless, circular knits, warp knit, weaving, and other related markets. Mr. Gordon began working with Fiber & Yarn Products effective November 1st and will work closely with Floyd G. Stewart, one of the owners and president of the company. Mr. Gordon will maintain offices in Greensboro as well as Hickory, NC.



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California Regulations Get Attention Of Hosiery Execs

For decades California has been regarded as a place where trends begin. And this worries some hosiery, apparel and textile manufacturers because of regulations prompted by Proposition 65.

Adopted through a voter initiative in 1986, Proposition 65 is known as the Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act. The title has a positive ring: who would oppose laws aimed at insuring the safety of drinking water? But the regulations have been interpreted to go much further and have been a boom to “bounty hunter” lawyers looking to make a quick buck, according to some in the legal community.

In August, the Hosiery Technology Center through simulcasting technology offered industry leaders the opportunity to learn how such regulations could put them or their California customers in jeopardy. Ruth Ann Castro and Chris Locke of Farella

The title has a positive ring: who would oppose laws aimed at insuring the safety of drinking water?

Braun and Martel LLP conducted a workshop via the internet to gatherings of hosiery and supplier executives at HTC facilities in Hickory and Asheboro, NC, and the hosiery center in Fort Payne AL.

In California, it was explained, some 750 chemicals have been added to a list of toxics “known to cause cancer or reproductive toxicity.” The list is an entity in motion. Chemicals are added and removed as cases are resolved by the state’s Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment. Private “attorneys general” have prosecuted manufacturers and retailers to earn fees. The rash even prompted Attorney General Jerry Brown, a former governor, to warn lawyers against initiating trivial lawsuits.

The regulations require warning labels on products that carry any of the 750 chemicals, notably lead, but a number of other metals often found in dyes. The enforcement is targeted only at products made in the U.S.

Castro and Locke said most of the cases are settled out of court, meaning that manufacturers would prefer to pay attorneys than go through the expense of lengthy hearings, research costs, and other defensive issues.

While the regulations have a greater impact on manufacturing operations in California, any product is susceptible.

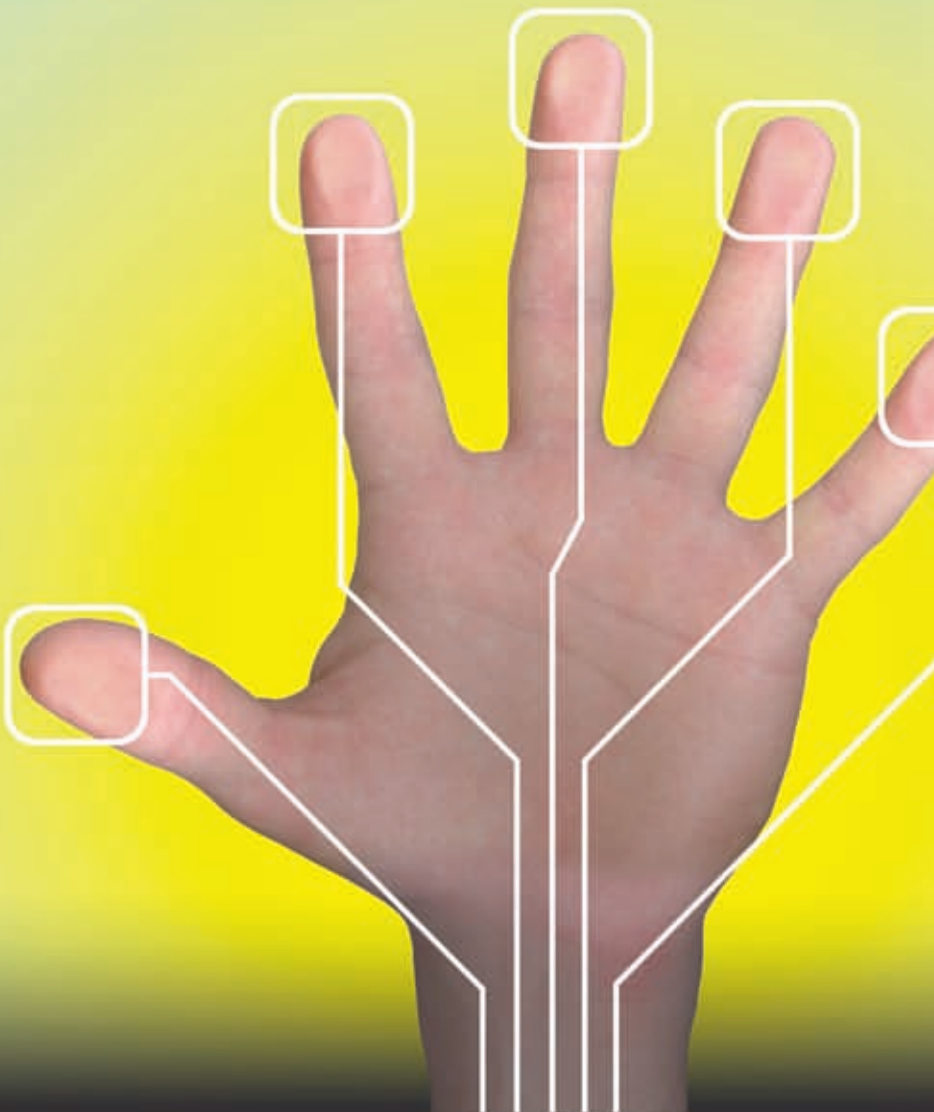
So manufacturers hope Proposition 65 is one trend that dies in the state where it was born.

Note: Voter initiatives are not provided for in the North Carolina, Alabama, Iowa or other state constitutions where hosiery and textiles manufacturing are clustered.

Any regulatory initiatives must move through the legislatures.

Ready!

Hosiery Technology Center Prepares Industry For The Brave New World Marketplace



Ready or not, the global marketplace is a reality. The Hosiery Technology Center will help manufacturers be ready and pursue opportunities to grow and diversify.

Research and development services will help your development of innovative products. Prototypes are developed with help of our technicians. Testing services build credibility with retailers and their customers. Sales and marketing resources even lead to new business.

When the next New Year rings in a quota-free marketplace, you will be better prepared with support from the Hosiery Technology Center.

Get ready!

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email: legsource.com

*Fabulous Apparel
Softer Fabrics*

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Incredibly Silky Legwear

Looking for that special product whose innovation and quality will captivate consumers.

FYnesseTM

The First Innovation in Air Covered spandex in years. Its superior uniformity creates silkier, softer and smoother hand in socks, apparel and other knit fabric applications.



We specialize in:

- Stretch Nylon 6 and Nylon 66 Yarns
- Stretch polyester
- Solution-dyed Nylon 6 products available
- Quality control via Lawson Knit-and-Dye-Select
- Complete in-house Lab to Help with R&D
- Experienced technical support staff
- Rapid Response to orders and sample request
- Experience in wide range of knit markets