

# December Trade Shows Experience Slight Growth

BY DARLENE GUDEA, *president*; CAROL ANDREWS, *editor-at-large*; and HIL ANDERSON, *senior editor*

*Oceanside, CA* – Last year wound down quietly for trade show organizers with relatively low growth in all three categories of the *Trade Show Executive (TSE) Dashboard of Monthly Trade Show Metrics*.

The compressed calendar of trade shows wedged in between Thanksgiving and the Christmas holiday season had significantly fewer attendees on the road than the nearly 514,000 who had visited exhibitions a month earlier in November, but attendance and the other metrics for the month of December remained in the black compared to the same month in 2012.

December attendance actually could be more accurately described as flat. The total gain was a mere 0.5% above December 2012. Exhibit space increased a modest 1.0% while the number of exhibitors moved up 2.5%.

The adjusted totals for the 16 shows surveyed for the *Dashboard* (there were 23 shows held in November) pegged attendance at 148,618. Exhibit space

totaled 1,608,565 net square feet (nsf) and exhibitors hit 3,937. That boiled down to a per-show average of 11,432 attendees, 114,898 nsf and 262 exhibitors.

Three shows in December were not included in the adjusted totals in at least one *Dashboard* metric. Two shows were outliers, growing more than 25%. The *Running Event* jumped more than 25% in exhibit space and attendance, and the *Performance Racing Industry Trade Show* zoomed more than 25% higher in all three metrics. A two-year comparison of attendance figures for the *American Epilepsy Society Annual Meeting* was not available.

There were five shows in December that featured 100,000 nsf or more of exhibit space compared to a dozen such shows in November. Three of the five shows were large enough to make the *TSE Gold 100* rankings of the largest U.S. trade shows. Another show to watch, *The Running Event*, was part of the *TSE Fastest 50* honor roll of fastest-growing exhibitions.

## Plenty of Parking

While the Winter storm clouds gathered across much of the U.S., the largest trade show of the month enjoyed pleasant weather in Louisville, KY.

The *51st Annual National RV Trade Show* featured the latest in recreational vehicles and accessories, spanning 726,209 nsf at Kentucky Exposition Center. Of that, more than 669,000 nsf was taken up by parked display vehicles and the remainder by 10'x10' booths.

The exhibit floor was (0.2)% smaller than it was in 2012, reflecting a (2.3)% dip in the number of exhibitors. In 2012, the show was 727,443 nsf and was ranked 15th on the *Gold 100*.

On the plus side, attendance was up 1.2% over the previous year at 7,751, which sounded a positive note about the prospects for the overall industry. "Everywhere I went, there was a strong feeling that the industry was doing well," said Richard Coon, president of the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association (RVIA). "The RV market is coming back and the key economic indicators are pointed in the right direction."

The RVIA used the show to release a bullish report on increased RV shipments from factories. The show was also the venue for two well-attended ticketed sessions featuring marketing and sales experts aimed at increasing the salesmanship savvy of dealers in the field.

## Growth Leaders

- *The Running Event* continues to have legs and will be honored this May as a *Fastest 50* honoree for the third year in a row. The exhibit space in Austin broke into triple figures with a 25.5% increase in exhibit space to 118,000 nsf. Exhibitor count was up to 6.1% to 313 and attendance jumped 39.4% to 2,963. Show Director Troy Leonard and Formula4-Media maintained their emphasis on courting retail attendees by using the



**A Run for Their Money.** Business was brisk for exhibitors at *The Running Event* with a 39.4% increase in attendance over the 2012 event.

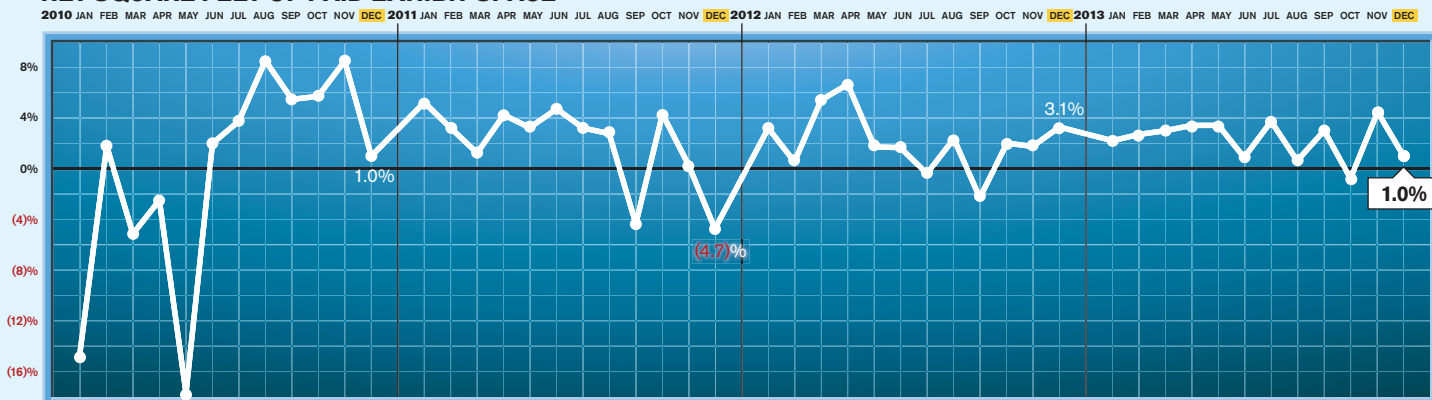
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# Trade Show Executive

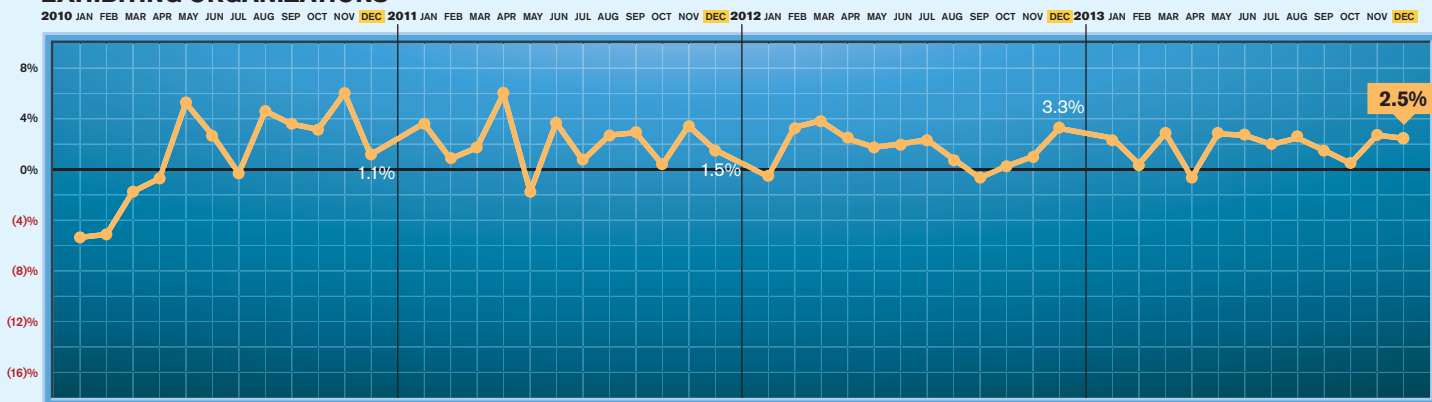
## Dashboard Snapshot – MONTHLY OVERVIEWS

**Filling the Floor.** Exhibitor growth in December reached 2.5%, one of the strongest performances of the year in the metric. Exhibitor confidence during the holiday-shortened month contributed to a 1.0% increase in exhibit space. Attendance, however, rose only a modest 0.5%.

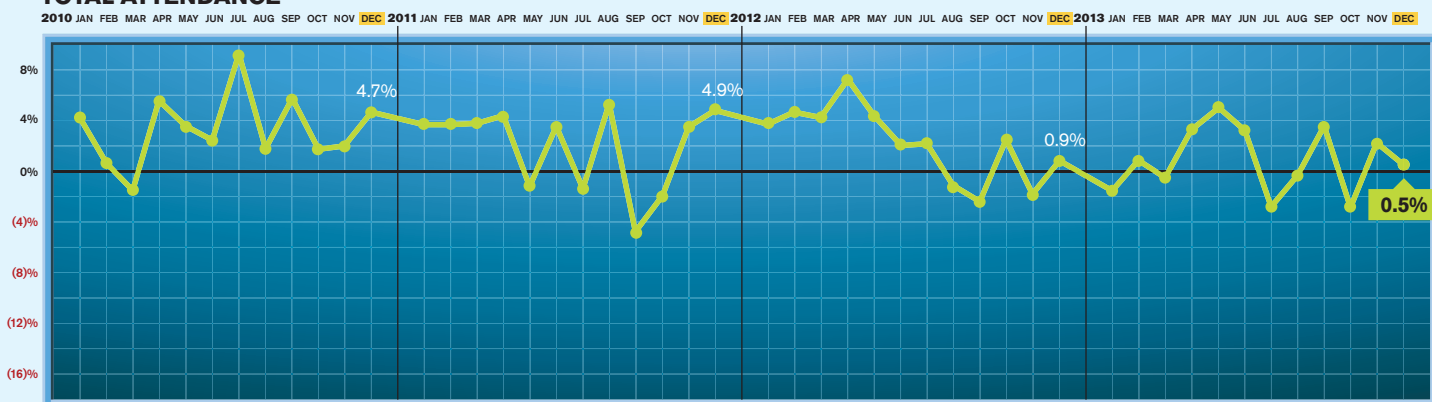
### NET SQUARE FEET OF PAID EXHIBIT SPACE



### EXHIBITING ORGANIZATIONS



### TOTAL ATTENDANCE



### Methodology

Survey questionnaires were sent to December shows listed in *TSE's ZOOM Trade Show Locator* and *Gold 100 directory*. All responses were cross-checked by *TSE* editors for discrepancies.

The *Trade Show Executive Dashboard* was created to give show organizers and

CEOs a fast read on trade show performance at a time when up-to-date, quality information is paramount to making decisions in today's business world. We recognize that simple statistics don't tell the full story about a show, and year-over-year growth is not the key factor in a show's value to the industry it serves. The *TSE Dashboard* still provides

the traditional metrics of show growth but also lists other significant characteristics and accomplishments such as quality of attendees, international attendance, sales transactions and conference and sponsorship growth.

We are grateful to the organizers who shared both quantitative and qualitative data.

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show as a venue for a sponsored awards banquet honoring the 50 top stores in the U.S. for running gear.

- *The Performance Racing Industry (PRI) Trade Show* was back home in Indiana in 2013 and enjoyed three brisk days highlighted by double-digit growth in all three metrics. “It was the busiest *PRI Trade Show* ever,” said Show Producer John Kilroy. “Our return to Indianapolis was a spectacular success for our attend-

ees and exhibitors.” Coming back to the heartland of the auto-racing world in the U.S. spurred a 26.5% increase in attendance with 47,441 visitors. Exhibit space surged 25.2% to 342,300 nsf. The 2012 event was 273,500 nsf and placed 66th on the Gold 100.

- *The Northwest Mining Association Annual Meeting, Exposition & Short Courses* was heavy on the educational side. A mother lode of sessions and the geographically

convenient location in Reno-Sparks, NV helped drive attendance up 13.6% to 2,500. Exhibit space was 62,500 nsf, which was 21.4% larger than the previous year.

## Science Season

December proved to be a productive month for medical and scientific associations.

*The Radiological Society of North America (RSNA) Scientific Assembly & Annual Meeting* was the largest event with 437,675 nsf and just over 54,000 attendees. The conference usually takes place in November; however the late Thanksgiving in 2013 pushed it into early December.

Attendance was basically flat, but international participation was boosted by the 1,000 delegates from France who journeyed to Chicago as part of the conference’s *France Presents* feature.

## How Shows Fared in the Fourth Quarter of 2013

The *Dashboard* metrics for the fourth and final quarter of 2013 were not much different than the performance for the month of December — modest gains across the board led by an increase in the number of exhibitors manning booths in the precious final weeks before the holidays.

Call it the Flat Fourth. Exhibitors increased 2.1% in the Fourth Quarter. Exhibit space increased 1.6% and attendance was up a barely noticeable 0.6%.

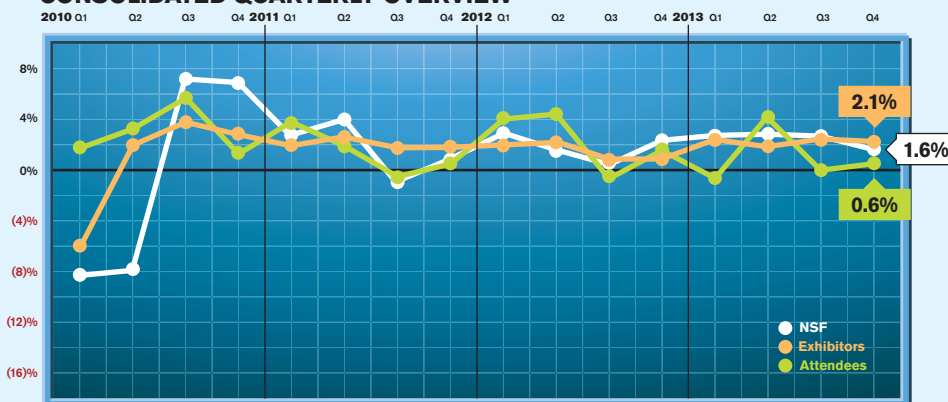
That compared to an equally blasé Q4 in 2012, which included a 0.9% increase in exhibitors, 2.1% growth in exhibit space and 1.3% increase in attendance.

Along with the record cold temperatures and the usual risks of bad traveling weather at this time of the year, some companies did the usual Q4 deep freeze by halting spending or scaling back year-end budgets.

Event dates were modified due to the relatively late date for Thanksgiving. The calendar pushed the annual meeting of the *Radiological Society of North America Scientific Assembly & Annual Meeting* from its traditional late-November dates into early December. The effect of the later date was unclear since attendance was basically unchanged from 2012 and the exhibitor count grew 2.0%.

The month of December included only two other *Gold 100* shows: *POWER-GEN International* and the *International Work Boat Show*. November 2013 was an off-year for the massive *PACK EXPO International*, but *The SEMA Show* and *AAPEX* in Las Vegas packed them in and the *IAAPA Attractions Expo* set a 10-year high for exhibit space with 528,578 nsf, an increase of 6.8% from the previous year.

### CONSOLIDATED QUARTERLY OVERVIEW



**Quarterly Wrap-Up.** Exhibitor count was the brightest growth spot in the final quarter of 2013, up 2.1% compared to Q4 of 2012. Exhibit space grew 1.6% and attendance was up 0.6%.

*The National RV Trade Show* with 726,209 nsf, was enough to make Louisville the leading host city of the month in terms of exhibit space. Chicago was ranked second with two shows totaling 460,075 nsf and Indianapolis was in third place with the *PRI Trade Show* and its 342,300 nsf.

*The American Society of Hematology Annual Meeting & Exposition* in New Orleans had a 5.7% increase in exhibit space to 123,100 nsf and an 8.7% boost in attendance to 22,369.

## Top Cities

*The National RV Trade Show* was enough to make Louisville the leading host city of the month in terms of exhibit space. The show covered 726,209 nsf just two months after *GIE+EXPO* and



ICUEE, *The International Construction & Utility Equipment Exposition* had placed Louisville atop the October leader board.

Chicago was ranked second with two shows totaling 460,075 nsf. The largest of the two was RSNA with 437,675 nsf.

Indianapolis was in third place with the PRI Trade Show and its 342,300 nsf.

## Next Month

January roared in with the blizzard of the year, which caused the usual avalanche of flight delays and cancellations and also some unusually dire warnings from officials about venturing outside at all.

The frightful weather steered clear of Las Vegas where the *International CES* kicked off the year with a bang by cracking 2 million nsf of exhibit space.

Las Vegas also hosted the PPAI Expo, *Las Vegas Winter Market* and the SHOT Show, which is under the management of ConvExx for the first time since parting ways with Reed Exhibitions.

"The National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF), Sands Expo and ConvExx worked diligently to provide our industry with the premier trade show in the world," said Chris Dolnack, senior vice president

and chief marketing officer for the NSSF, the owner of the show. The NSSF reported 630,000 nsf of exhibit space.

Elsewhere, the *North American International Auto Show* spotlighted the latest updates to both automobiles and Detroit's Cobo Center.

Finally, *Outdoor Retailer Winter Market* in Salt Lake City and the *SIA Snow Show* in Denver catered to the Winter sports industry while Reed and the *PGA Merchandise Show* welcomed approximately 40,000 members of the retail golf world to Orlando. **TSE**



**Packed to the Gills.** Row after row of the 51st Annual National RV Trade Show at the Kentucky Exposition Center was packed with recreational vehicles, adding up to 726,209 nsf, and catapulting Louisville into the top trade show site in December.

## Back in the Black for Another Year

Trade shows ended 2013 with across-the-board gains, but not by much. TSE's *Dashboard* metrics for the entire year showed slight gains over 2012 in exhibit space and exhibitor count, and even slighter gains in attendance, which at 0.7% could be considered virtually flat.

Exhibitors were more enthusiastic about exhibiting as the overall economy continued slogging forward in first gear. The number of exhibitors hitting the floors in 2013 grew 2.0% over the previous year while exhibit space increased 2.2%.

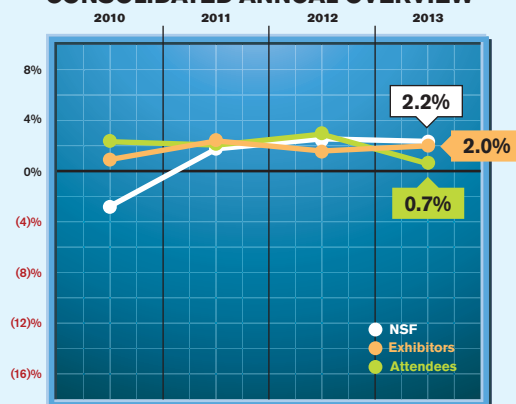
The 2012 year ended with exhibit space up by 2.4% over 2011 as the recovery inched ahead. Exhibitor numbers were up 1.5%, but attendance was an encouraging

2.9% higher and the *Trade Show Executive Exposition Forecasting Board* predicted growth of around 2.6% to 2.8% in all three metrics.

The *International CES*, the perennial largest annual show of the year, outdid itself 12 months ago with a record 3.4% increase in exhibit space to just under 2 million nsf. The only red mark for CES was a (2.7)% dip in attendance.

ICUEE, *the International Construction & Utility Equipment Exposition*, was the second-largest show of the year. The biennial event in Louisville grew 2.7% to 1,173,957 nsf. Attendance was up 5.7% and the number of exhibitors jumped 7.6% as the construction industry continued pulling itself out of the recession doldrums.

### CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL OVERVIEW



**Flat Year for Attendance.** A nagging lack of enthusiasm in the attendance metric was evident all year long. But all three metrics were higher over the course of the year. Attendance rose only 0.7% when compared to 2012. Exhibit space bumped up 2.2% and the number of exhibitors increased 2.0%.

# Trade Show Executive

## Dashboard – DECEMBER TRADE SHOW METRICS

BY CAROL ANDREWS,  
editor-at-large



**BENCHMARKS:  
AVERAGE GROWTH**

- NSF: 1.0%
- Exhibitors: 2.5%
- Attendance: 0.5%



**TOP MANAGEMENTS\***

- Recreation Vehicle Industry Association
- RSNA
- Performance Racing Industry



**GROWTH LEADERS**

- The Running Event
- Performance Racing Industry Trade Show
- Northwest Mining Association



**TOP SECTORS\***


- RV/Transportation
- Medical
- Automotive




**TOP CITIES\***

- Louisville
- Chicago
- Indianapolis

*\*Based on total nsf*



December 2013	Show Site	Net SF of Exhibits		Exhibitors		Total Attendance		Qualitative Data
SHOW INFORMATION	2013/2012	2013/2012	VARIANCE	2013/2012	VARIANCE	2013/2012	VARIANCE	2013 VS. 2012
<b>American Epilepsy Society Annual Meeting</b> Corcoran Expositions www.corcexpo.com  <i>CU = Comparison Unavailable</i>	Washington, DC San Diego	17,421 15,920	9.4%	105 92	14.1%	4,800 N/A	CU	The show enjoyed record-breaking attendance, and there were 31 new exhibitors. Attendees included neurologists, epileptologists, neurophysiologists, neuroscientists, neurosurgeons, internists and pediatricians. More than 1,000 scientific reports were presented.
<b>American Geophysical Union Fall Meeting</b> American Geophysical Union www.agu.org	San Francisco San Francisco	43,400 42,840	1.3%	285 272	4.8%	22,000 est. 21,702	1.4%	Attendees came from 95 countries. There were more than 7,000 oral and 14,000 poster presentations, with 3.2 miles of posterboards each day. The virtual options program was expanded to include remote poster presentations as well as the popular electronic posters; 2,000 attendees participated virtually by using on-demand and live stream options.
<b>American Society of Hematology Annual Meeting &amp; Exposition</b> J. Spargo & Associates, Inc. www.jspargo.com	New Orleans Atlanta	123,100 116,515	5.7%	240 242	(0.8)%	22,369 20,578	8.7%	Attendees had the opportunity to review more than 3,000 scientific abstracts highlighting developments in hematology, interact with the global community of more than 20,000 hematology professionals from every subspecialty, and attend education and scientific program sessions.
<b>25th Annual Natl. Forum on Quality Improvement in Health Care</b> Institute for Healthcare Improvement www.IHI.org	Orlando Orlando	16,000 17,200	(7.0)%	134 149	(10.1)%	5,020 5,624	(10.7)%	The show drew thousands of health care professionals from around the world in person and thousands more via satellite broadcast. Attendees included front-line staff, quality professionals, safety professionals, nurses, physicians and researchers.
<b>51st Annual National RV Trade Show</b> Recreation Vehicle Industry Association www.rvia.org  	Louisville Louisville	726,209 727,443	(0.2)%	292 299	(2.3)%	7,751 7,658	1.2%	Optimism on the show floor has fueled rising RV shipments for four years straight. The rise in shipments to 316,000 units in 2013 was an 11% gain over the 2012 total of 285,749, and 2013 was the first year since 2007 that shipments surpassed 300,000 units.

December 2013	Show Site	Net SF of Exhibits		Exhibitors		Total Attendance		Qualitative Data
SHOW INFORMATION	2013/2012	2013/2012	VARIANCE	2013/2012	VARIANCE	2013/2012	VARIANCE	2013 VS. 2012
<b>Expo! Expo! IAEE's Annual Meeting &amp; Exhibition</b> International Association of Exhibitions & Events www.iaee.com  <i>* Pre-audit</i>	<b>Houston</b> Orlando	<b>36,400</b> 36,600	<b>(0.5)%</b>	<b>246</b> 255	<b>(3.5)%</b>	<b>1,930*</b> 1,997	<b>(3.4)%</b>	Total pre-audited attendance for 2013 is based on final registration reports. International attendance was up more than 20%, with representation from 28 countries outside of the U.S. There were 42 new exhibitors and 100 exhibiting companies that have participated for 10 years or more. The number of Expo! Expo! Mobile app downloads increased 12%.
<b>Holiday Showcase</b> Association Forum of Chicagoland www.associationforum.org	<b>Chicago</b> Chicago	<b>22,400</b> 23,424	<b>(4.4)%</b>	<b>348</b> 357	<b>(2.5)%</b>	<b>2,596</b> 2,419	<b>7.3%</b>	The show celebrated 25 years. Attendees included more than 1,200 qualified buyers, and attendance at educational sessions continued to grow. A new feature, "Floorplan Faceoff," enabled exhibitors to demonstrate how their technologies provide solutions to specific association challenges. Other sessions targeted healthcare associations.
<b>MRS (Materials Research Society) Fall Meeting &amp; Exhibit</b> Materials Research Society www.mrs.org	<b>Boston</b> Boston	<b>29,160</b> 27,900	<b>4.5%</b>	<b>277</b> 255	<b>8.6%</b>	<b>5,245</b> 6,735	<b>(22.1)%</b>	The sold-out show was attended by researchers from around the world. It featured more than 50 technical symposia, professional development opportunities, awards presentations and a number of special events.
<b>MWFPA (Midwest Food Processors Association) Annual Convention &amp; Processing Crops Cnfr.</b> Midwest Food Processors Assn. www.mwfpa.org	<b>Milwaukee, WI</b> Madison, WI	<b>15,800</b> 15,900	<b>(0.6)%</b>	<b>135</b> 139	<b>(2.9)%</b>	<b>1,009</b> 947	<b>6.5%</b>	Leaders in the food processing industry discussed trends, viewed new technologies, shared expertise and networked with professionals in various companies and disciplines. Events included a keynote presentation by corporate strategist Hank Moore, a food safety panel discussion and a session on the Affordable Care Act.
<b>NSTA (National Science Teachers Association) Area Conference</b> National Science Teachers Association www.nsta.org	<b>Denver</b> Phoenix	<b>13,500</b> 13,000	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>105</b> 98	<b>7.1%</b>	<b>1,990</b> 1,870	<b>6.4%</b>	Exhibitors utilizing the lead retrieval service generated over 6,600 unique leads with an average lead count of 171. Attendees included decision-makers in every discipline, grade level and position.
<b>NWMA (Northwest Mining Assn.) Annual Meeting, Exposition &amp; Short Courses</b> Northwest Mining Association www.nwma.org	<b>Sparks, NV</b> Spokane, WA	<b>62,500</b> 51,480	<b>21.4%</b>	<b>245</b> 240	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>2,500 est.</b> 2,200	<b>13.6%</b>	The show reported a successful technical session program and increases in equipment sales, networking opportunities and the number of sponsorships. Sessions focused on mineral deposits, exploration and development, operations, business and finance, environmental technology, regulation and policy and legislative affairs.
<b>Performance Racing Industry Trade Show</b> Performance Racing Industry www.performanceracing.com  	<b>Indianapolis</b> Orlando	<b>342,300</b> 273,500	<b>25.2%</b>	<b>1,227</b> 970	<b>26.5%</b>	<b>47,441</b> 37,500	<b>26.5%</b>	The show grew dramatically across the board. Show management attributed this growth to the move back to Indianapolis and the acquisition of the International Motorsports Industry Show (IMIS). However, IMIS numbers are not included in the data listing for PRI Trade Show in this report.

# Trade Show Executive

## Dashboard – DECEMBER TRADE SHOW METRICS

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December 2013	Show Site	Net SF of Exhibits		Exhibitors		Total Attendance		Qualitative Data
SHOW INFORMATION	2013/2012	2013/2012	VARIANCE	2013/2012	VARIANCE	2013/2012	VARIANCE	2013 VS. 2012
<b>Radiological Society of North America (RSNA) Scientific Assembly &amp; Annual Meeting</b> Radiological Society of North America www.rsna.org 	<b>Chicago</b> Chicago	<b>437,675</b> 444,900	<b>(1.6)%</b>	<b>662</b> 649	<b>2.0%</b>	<b>54,008</b> 53,778	<b>0.4%</b>	Attendees included a wide variety of healthcare professionals, including physicians, administrators, executives, researchers, medical physicists, nurses, technologists and students. There were more than 1,000 attendees from France and a featured session, France Presents, highlighted new discoveries, techniques and practical clinical applications for diagnosing and treating cancer.
<b>The Running Event</b> Formula4Media, LLC www.therunningevent.com 	<b>Austin, TX</b> Austin, TX	<b>118,000</b> 94,000	<b>25.5%</b>	<b>313</b> 295	<b>6.1%</b>	<b>2,963</b> 2,126	<b>39.4%</b>	The 2013 show was the largest ever. Exhibitors included ASICS, Nike, New Balance, Reebok and Saucony. Approximately 860 running specialty retail buyers from North America and other parts of the world attended. Retail attendees represented the show's highest quality attendance ever, accounting for 70% to 80% of the buyer power in the U.S. running specialty trade channel. The event has a growing international following, with attendees from 21 countries.
<b>TransWorld's Jewelry, Fashion &amp; Accessories Show</b> TransWorld Exhibits, Inc. www.jfashow.com	<b>Schaumburg, IL</b> Schaumburg, IL	<b>35,000</b> 35,000	<b>No change</b>	<b>250</b> 250	<b>No change</b>	<b>15,000 est.</b> 15,000	<b>No change</b>	The show remained successful during a rough economic period. It provided a marketplace for jewelry, fashion and accessories as well as new pavilions for gourmet foods, health and beauty.
<b>Triple Play REALTOR Convention &amp; Trade Expo</b> New Jersey, New York State and Pennsylvania Associations of Realtors www.realtorstripleplay.com	<b>Atlantic City</b> Atlantic City	<b>30,000</b> 25,000	<b>20.0%</b>	<b>300</b> 250	<b>20.0%</b>	<b>7,200</b> 7,375	<b>(2.4)%</b>	Attendees included realtors, brokers, appraisers and other real estate professionals. More than half of attendees were realtors who hold at least one designation. Post-convention surveys revealed that 89% of attendees visited the show because of the show's value and 85% rated the expo and exhibitors as excellent, very good or good.
DASHBOARD ANALYSIS:		Net SF of Exhibits		Exhibitors		Total Attendance		
<b>Total</b> (Sum of all figures submitted by show management)		<b>2,068,865</b> 1,960,622		<b>5,164</b> 4,812		<b>203,822</b> 187,509		
<b>Adjusted Total</b> (Excludes outliers and shows in which an apples-to-apples comparison is not possible)		<b>1,608,565</b> 1,593,122		<b>3,937</b> 3,842		<b>148,618</b> 147,883		
<b>Averages</b> (Based on Adjusted Totals)		<b>114,898</b> 113,794		<b>262</b> 256		<b>11,432</b> 11,376		
<b>Percentage of Growth</b> (Based on Adjusted Totals2)		<b>1.0%</b>		<b>2.5%</b>		<b>0.5%</b>		


**COMING UP NEXT MONTH:**

**A review of shows held in January**