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# Beating the Terrible 2%; Metrics Pick Up Steam in Critical Month of May

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

*Oceanside, CA* – May was a good month for big shows. The 22 exhibitions in the *Trade Show Executive (TSE) Dashboard of Monthly Trade Show Metrics* produced some solid percentage gains over May 2012, and it was quality growth centered on key major shows.

The number of exhibiting companies rose 2.9% in May compared to the same month a year earlier. The news was even better in the other metrics. Net square feet (nsf) of exhibit space climbed 3.3% and attendance jumped a solid 5% from 2012, one of the largest month-over-month increases in a year in which growth in the 2% to 3% range has been the rule.

Ten of the 22 *Dashboard* shows reported gains or held steady in all three metrics. Twelve shows, however, declined in at least one of the three metrics, with medical shows in particular taking a beating. Six medical shows faced declines, ranging from (1.4)% to a stinging (21.1)%. Some shows in retail, hospitality and energy also dropped significantly.

## The Big and the Bold

Seven of *TSE's Dashboard* shows in May were large enough to be ranked on the *TSE Gold 100* list of the largest U.S. trade shows. Of the 22, a dozen were 100,000 nsf or larger. There were also eight shows on the *TSE Fastest 50* roster of shows with the most robust growth.

For the *Dashboard* statistical analysis, *TSE* used adjusted figures, which excluded outliers. Four of the 22 shows were considered outliers and excluded because their gains or losses were dramatically atypical, with growth or contraction exceeding 25% in at least one of the *Dashboard* metrics.

As a result of subtracting the outliers from the totals, we calculated an adjusted total of 4,098,071 nsf of exhibit space, 13,220 exhibiting companies, and an attendance of 386,061 in the May *Dashboard*. The average show in May was 204,904 nsf, and drew 630 exhibiting companies and 19,303 attendees.

**Steel City.** *AISTech* was warmly received by the steel industry when it opened this year in Pittsburgh. Attendance nearly doubled and exhibit space spiked 18.6%.

## Growth Leaders

- *AISTech - The Iron & Steel Technology Conference & Exposition* thrived in Pittsburgh, the steel industry's U.S. mecca. Exhibit space climbed 18.6% over last year's show in Atlanta, but attendance growth was the real star, up 89.3% to 8,270. A large menu of technical presentations helped lure a bigger crowd.
- The *American Psychiatric Association Annual Meeting* may have been down by three exhibitors compared to 2012, but attendance was up an amazing 25.5% to 13,949 in San Francisco. Sessions targeted issues related to diverse populations and also featured a special track on addiction.
- *Battcon International Stationary Battery Conference,* organized in Orlando by Albercorp, a manufacturer of batteries, was a fairly small show at 25,000 nsf. But it grew a whopping 42.9% in nsf from last year and was coupled with a 7.1% increase in exhibiting companies.
- GLM's *International Contemporary Furniture Fair (ICFF)* at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center in New York City marked its silver anniversary with double-digit increases in exhibit space (13.8%) and attendance (12.3%), and an exhibitor count that was higher by a respectable 6.5%. "The extent of the show's global reach was stellar," said Alexandra Cabat, sales manager. "There were 230 first-timers on the show floor, plus an entirely new category of exhibitors: the fabricators." The increased presence of production-oriented exhibitors also included a demonstration area where attendees could see machinery and technology in action. Manufacturers were brought together with up-and-coming designers at the *ICFF Studio,* which provided GLM with another sponsorship offering.

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• The *Offshore Technology Conference (OTC)* reported a growth rate of 17.2% in attendance, from 89,400 to 104,800, which was the second largest attendance in show history. (See additional impressive gains under "Booming Big Shows" below.)

## Booming Big Shows

The largest show on the *Dashboard* was *RECon, The Global Retail Real Estate Convention,* which also reported one of the larger increases in floor space among the May shows surveyed. The show ranked as the 8th largest show in the nation in the most recent *TSE Gold 100* ranking. The International Council of Shopping Centers said its exhibit space expanded 7.2% this year and covered 793,200 nsf in three halls at the Las Vegas Convention Center. The number of attendees also increased 1.5% but the exhibitor count was off (4.4)% at 1,061. The growth of the show appeared to be tied to bullishness in the retail industry. Analysis presented at the show indicated major malls were enjoying enough of a rebound in business to attract big-ticket investors back into the shopping-center market.

*RECon* was not the only large, established show to win rave reviews in the *Dashboard*. Two other perennial *Gold 100* events were also booming this Spring.

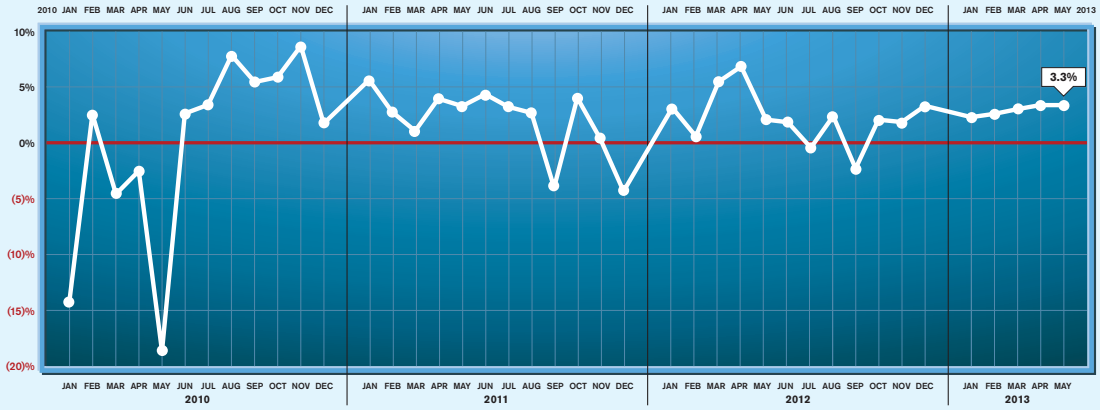
The *OTC* spanned a record-breaking 654,585 nsf of exhibit space, which was up 2.2% from 2012's floor. International companies made up 39% of the 2,728 exhibitors who set up shop inside and outside Reliant Park. Attendance participation — 104,800 delegates — was at a 30-year high.

The high price of oil has been justifying exploration in challenging waters, and that requires the cutting-edge gear on display at the *OTC*, which made the most recent rankings in the *TSE Gold 100* (#19 in the rankings) and the *TSE Fastest 50* (#43 in attendance growth). "Technology is at the heart of the offshore industry and it was all here on display at the *OTC*

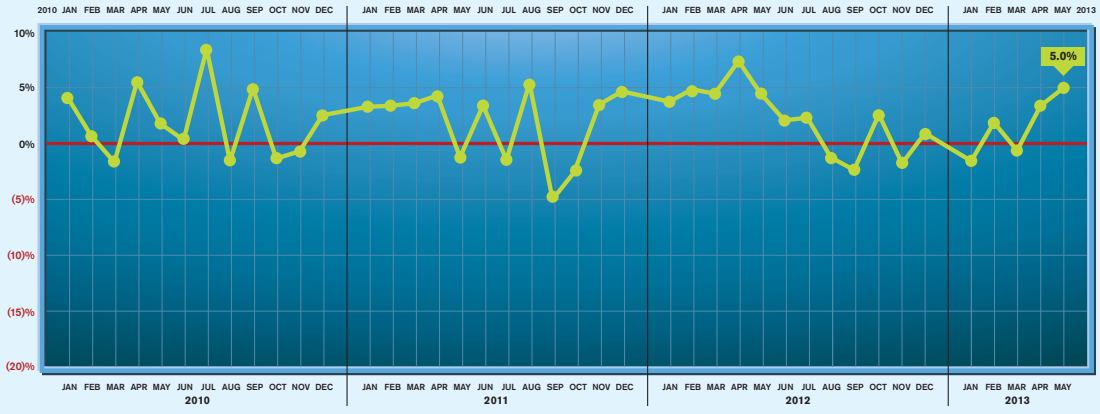
# Trade Show Executive

## Dashboard Snapshot – MAY TRADE SHOW METRICS

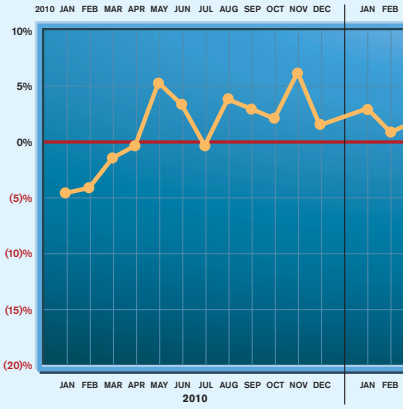
### MONTHLY OVERVIEW: NET SQUARE FEET




### MONTHLY OVERVIEW: ATTENDEES




### MONTHLY OVERVIEW: EXHIBITORS




**◀ Exhibit Space Gaining Steam?** Exhibit space (top left) was up 3.3% in May for the second month in a row. The numbers worked out to an average of 204,904 nsf per show.

**▲ Exhibitors Bouncing Along.** The exhibitor count (top right) in May was up 2.9% after drifting lower in April. The number of sellers per month has been up and down since the beginning of the year.

**◀ Jump in Attendance.** A solid 5% jump in attendance was the best news of the month. The total number of attendees who donned their name badges in May shows tracked by *TSE* topped 386,000.

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2013," said *OTC* Chairman Steve Balint.

The National Restaurant Association (NRA) reworked its marketing campaign for the *NRA Restaurant Hotel-Motel Show* to focus on individual business issues affecting the restaurant business, including healthcare reform, sustainability and nutrition for children. The strategy raised the visibility of the education component at a time when the still shaky economy might make restaurateurs a little leery about capital investments.

The icing on the cake was a 1.7% increase in attendance, which topped 62,000, and a 6.7% increase in exhibit space to 579,330 nsf.

## Top Cities

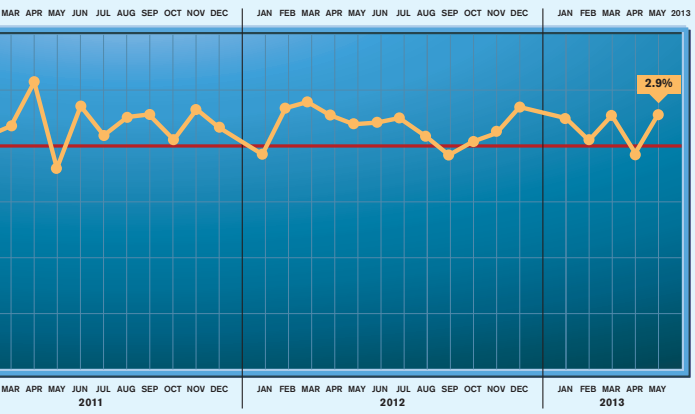
Las Vegas was as busy as ever in May and earned the top spot among *Dashboard* host cities. Five *Dashboard* shows totaling 1,826,286 nsf took place there during the month of May, including three *Gold 100* events.

Chicago hosted the second-highest total of net square footage with two *Dashboard* shows — *NRA Restaurant Hotel-Motel Show* and the American Wind Energy Association's *AWEA WINDPOWER Conference & Exhibition* — together totaling 746,930 nsf. Houston held the No. 3 spot by virtue of the *OTC* and its 654,585 nsf.

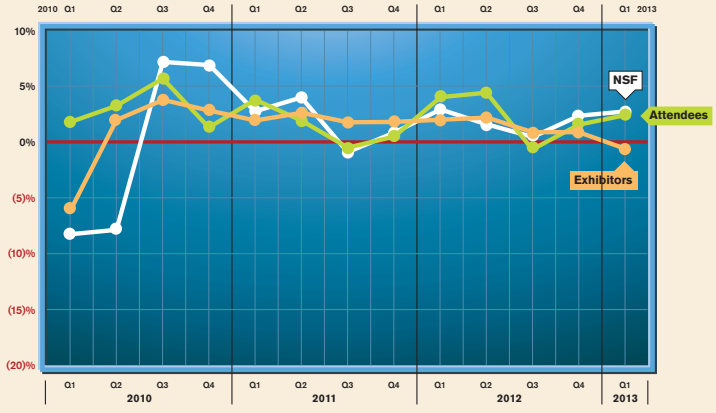
## Next Month

Summer kicked in across the U.S. with a relatively slower pace. However, three *TSE Gold 100* shows are on the docket in June including the *Summer International Fancy Food & Confection Show* in New York at the end of the month. About 2,400 exhibitors were expected to unveil a dizzying 180,000 products, *The Clean Show* and *Infocomm* are also on the schedule along with the *United States Bowling Congress Bowl Expo* in Las Vegas. TSE

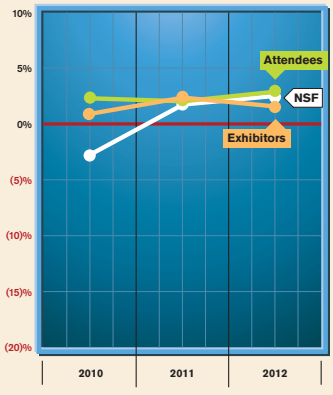
**What's Cooking?** Attendees got their fill of the latest products on display at the *NRA Restaurant, Hotel-Motel Show* in Chicago. More than 62,000 attendees followed their noses around the exhibit floor, which was 6.7% larger than last year.



### CONSOLIDATED QUARTERLY OVERVIEW




### CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL OVERVIEW




◀ **Quarter Turns.** Positive signs on the exhibit floor in Q1 were offset by a continuing downward trend in attendance. Crowds in the period were down (0.6)% from 2012, but exhibit space and exhibitors were both up more than 2%.

◀ **Respectable Growth (right).** 2012 took the trade show industry on the same moderate growth path as 2011. Of the three metrics, attendance growth was in the lead.

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# Trade Show Executive
## Dashboard – MAY TRADE SHOW METRICS

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BY CAROL ANDREWS,
*editor-at-large*

**TOP MANAGEMENTS***
- International Council of Shopping Centers
- Offshore Technology Conference
- Natl. Restaurant Assn.

**TOP CITIES***
- Las Vegas
- Chicago
- Houston

**Based on total nsf*

**GROWTH LEADERS**
- Battcon International Stationary Battery Conference
- AISTech Exposition
- ICFF

**TOP INDUSTRY SECTORS***
- Retail Real Estate
- Offshore Drilling
- Food

**BENCHMARKS: AVERAGE GROWTH**
- **NSF:** 3.3%
- **Exhibitors:** 2.9%
- **Attendance:** 5.0%

| May 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 |
| **AACN National Teaching Institute & Critical Care Exposition**<br>American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN)<br>www.aacn.org | **Boston**<br>Orlando | **106,500**<br>105,900 | **1.2%** | **399**<br>390 | **2.3%** | **10,200+**<br>9,438 | **8.1%** | Professional attendance increased 12% as a result of an excellent educational program and a return to Boston for the first time since 1991. There was a record 83 first-time exhibiting companies, including many located in the New England area. |
| **AISTech - The Iron & Steel Technology Conference & Exposition**<br>AIST - Association for Iron & Steel Technology<br>www.aist.org<br>Trade Show Executive's FASTEST 50 | **Pittsburgh**<br>Atlanta | **85,400**<br>72,000 | **18.6%** | **506**<br>435 | **16.3%** | **8,270**<br>4,368 | **89.3%** | Records were set in net square feet, number of exhibiting companies and average booth size. There were 458 technical presentations. |
| **American Psychiatric Assn. Annual Meeting**<br>American Psychiatric Assn.<br>www.psychiatry.org<br>Trade Show Executive's FASTEST 50 | **San Francisco**<br>Philadelphia | **35,600**<br>34,900 | **2.0%** | **199**<br>202 | **(1.5)%** | **13,949**<br>11,114 | **25.5%** | The meeting featured a series of sessions highlighting issues related to diverse populations, including racial and ethnic groups, immigrants, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender populations. There was also a special track on the science of addiction. |
| **American Society for Microbiology General Meeting**<br>American Society for Microbiology<br>www.asm.org | **Denver**<br>San Francisco | **43,600**<br>47,100 | **(7.4)%** | **216**<br>219 | **(1.4)%** | **7,359 est.**<br>9,323 | **(21.1)%** | Attendees, including clinical microbiologists, pathologists, physicians, and other health care professionals, spent close to 23% of their time in the exhibit hall. They ranked learning about new products and methods as one of their top reasons for attending the show. |
| **American Thoracic Society International Conference**<br>American Thoracic Society<br>www.thoracic.org<br>Trade Show Executive's FASTEST 50 | **Philadelphia**<br>San Francisco | **43,000**<br>44,500 | **(3.4)%** | **209**<br>201 | **4.0%** | **13,582 est.**<br>15,230 | **(10.8)%** | More than 500 attendees participated in the Maintenance of Certification Modules on the ATS Adult Pulmonary, Critical Care, and Sleep Core Curriculum and the Pediatric Core Curriculum. Sessions on research and clinical trials provided the latest findings from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the USDA, and others. |

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| May 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** |
| **ASI Show New York**<br>The ASI Show<br>www.asishow.com | **New York**<br>New York | **31,350**<br>37,100 | **(15.5)%** | **268**<br>305 | **(12.1)%** | **2,930**<br>3,536 | **(17.1)%** | Thousands of unique promotional products were on display in one exhibit hall over a two-day show schedule. The show also included dozens of education sessions, daily networking opportunities, travel discounts and discounted tickets to special events and local attractions. |
| **AWEA WINDPOWER Conference & Exhibition**<br>American Wind Energy Association (AWEA)<br>www.awea.org<br>Trade Show Executive GOLD 100 | **Chicago**<br>Atlanta | **167,600**<br>274,972 | **(39.0)%** | **600**<br>920 | **(34.8)%** | **9,500**<br>11,000 | **(13.6)%** | 15% of attendees were international from 56 countries, and 17% of exhibiting companies were international. There was a shift to more experienced industry professionals; this year, 47% were in the industry for more than five years vs. 32% of professionals in the industry that long in 2010. There were numerous qualified attendees, which resulted in many deals being struck on the show floor. |
| **Battcon International Stationary Battery Conference**<br>Alber<br>www.battcon.com | **Orlando**<br>Hollywood, FL | **25,000**<br>17,500 | **42.9%** | **75**<br>70 | **7.1%** | **550**<br>550 | **No change** | The event included three optional preconference seminars on Sunday. Leading authorities in the stationary battery industry participated in presentations and panel discussions. Attendees have consistently given Battcon high ratings. Attendees included decision makers in the data center, UPS, power station, telecommunication, utility, petroleum, and nuclear industries, as well as representatives from education, government and the military. |
| **Couture**<br>Nielsen Expositions<br>www.thecoutureshow.com | **Las Vegas**<br>Las Vegas | **115,520 est.**<br>103,585 | **11.5%** | **248 est.**<br>247 | **0.4%** | **6,018 est.**<br>5,564 | **8.2%** | The show presents a curated collection of more than 200 designers and brands of luxury jewelry and timepieces. Attendees are top-tier buyers from distinguished retailers, and the media represent recognized luxury consumer and trade publications and online news sources. |
| **EASTEC 2013**<br>SME - Society of Manufacturing Engineers<br>www.sme.org/eastec<br>*This show is biennial; therefore, we interpolated the data for 2012, the in-between year. Numbers for 2013 and 2011 were averaged to determine a usable number for 2012.* | **West Springfield, MA**<br>West Springfield, MA ('11) | **129,475**<br>121,750 | **6.3%** | **542**<br>521 | **4.0%** | **12,560**<br>11,780 | **6.6%** | Attendees included representatives from every level of the supply chain, from the smallest job shop to the largest OEM. 82% of these attendees influence purchase decisions in their companies. |
| **Hospitality Design Expo & Conference**<br>Nielsen Expositions<br>www.hdexpo.com<br>Trade Show Executive GOLD 100 · Trade Show Executive's FASTEST 50 | **Las Vegas**<br>Las Vegas | **246,066**<br>257,150 | **(4.3)%** | **750**<br>773 | **(3.0)%** | **13,865**<br>13,923 | **(0.4)%** | 91% of attendees indicated that they would purchase from an HD Expo exhibitor in the next 12 months. Attendees included leading hospitality design professionals involved in restaurants, hotels, spas, casinos, condominium hotels, senior living facilities, nightclubs, golf/country clubs, vacation ownership venues, cruise ships and timeshares. |

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## Dashboard – MAY TRADE SHOW METRICS

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*Continued from page 27*

| May 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** |
| **International Contemporary Furniture Fair (ICFF)**<br>GLM<br>www.icff.com | **New York**<br>New York | **165,000**<br>145,000 | **13.8%** | **570**<br>535 | **6.5%** | **29,642**<br>26,388 | **12.3%** | For ICFF's silver anniversary show, attendance was up 12% over last year. The massive marketplace for what's best and next in design had 13 special features. Exhibitors were from 31 different countries. |
| **Interop Las Vegas**<br>UBM Tech<br>www.interop.com | **Las Vegas**<br>Las Vegas | **111,000**<br>117,000 | **(5.1)%** | **341**<br>355 | **(3.9)%** | **12,171**<br>12,368 | **(1.6)%** | 14% of attendees were international and represented 98 different countries. Sponsorships/marketing promotional opportunities grew by 18%, driven by workshops and conference track sponsorships and including the new Information Week CIO Summit conference at the event. |
| **National Hardware Show**<br>Reed Exhibitions<br>nationalhardwareshow.com<br>GOLD 100 | **Las Vegas**<br>Las Vegas | **560,500**<br>560,000 | **0.1%** | **1,999**<br>1,982 | **0.9%** | **31,254**<br>29,129 | **7.3%** | For the first time, the show included a Made in USA area featuring American-made products from more than 125 companies. Also new was a building products category, reflecting the growing strength of the housing market. A special Energy Efficient Products section was sponsored by Polaroid and Intelligent Green Products. |
| **National Restaurant Association Restaurant, Hotel-Motel Show**<br>National Restaurant Assn.<br>www.restaurant.org/show<br>GOLD 100 | **Chicago**<br>Chicago | **579,330**<br>542,720 | **6.7%** | **2,078**<br>1,958 | **6.1%** | **62,550**<br>61,503 | **1.7%** | The NRA Show launched a fully integrated marketing campaign using print and online advertising, direct mail, email, social media, public relations, PPC programs and more. The show featured an unprecedented lineup of industry leaders and celebrities. In a year of economic uncertainty, the marketing campaign demonstrated value by packaging the entire event around key industry issues, including healthcare, sustainability and kids' nutrition. |
| **Northeastern Forest Products Equipment Expo**<br>Northern Loggers' Assn.<br>www.northernlogger.com<br>GOLD 100 | **Bangor, ME**<br>Essex Junction, VT | **272,965**<br>271,430 | **0.6%** | **199**<br>172 | **15.7%** | **7,023**<br>6,359 | **10.4%** | The show featured a mix of live demonstrations, static displays and booths in indoor and outdoor space. Exhibitors displayed a wide variety of forestry and forest management equipment. |
| **Offshore Technology Conference (OTC)**<br>Offshore Technology Conference<br>www.otcnet.org/2013<br>GOLD 100 FASTEST 50 | **Houston**<br>Houston | **654,585**<br>640,225 | **2.2%** | **2,728**<br>2,538 | **7.5%** | **104,800**<br>89,400 | **17.2%** | This was the largest OTC in the show's history in terms of net square feet and the second largest in attendance. The event raised $250,000 at the Annual OTC Dinner for the Offshore Energy Center. Dignitaries who spoke at this year's event included the Crown Prince of Norway, six U.S. governors and the Secretary of the Interior. |

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| May 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 |
| **Pediatric Academic Societies Annual Meeting**<br>American Academy of Pediatrics<br>www.pas-meeting.org | **Washington, DC**<br>Boston | **21,200**<br>24,900 | **(14.9)%** | **118**<br>136 | **(13.2)%** | **8,442**<br>8,073 | **4.6%** | Highlights of the show included a keynote address by HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius and a special address, "Quality and Value in Pediatrics," by Patrick Conway, Chief Medical Officer of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and Director of the Center for Clinical Standards & Quality. There was also a symposium on firearms safety and a session on childhood poverty. |
| **RECon, The Global Retail Real Estate Convention**<br>International Council of Shopping Centers<br>www.icsc.org<br>Trade Show Executive GOLD 100 · Trade Show Executive's FASTEST 50 | **Las Vegas**<br>Las Vegas | **793,200**<br>740,000 | **7.2%** | **1,061**<br>1,110 | **(4.4)%** | **33,500**<br>33,000 | **1.5%** | The show utilized all three halls of the Las Vegas Convention Center and attracted thousands of retail real estate professionals. Exhibitors included more than 100 retailers and nearly 100 public sector companies. The show also featured more than 20 educational sessions. |
| **Society of Gastroenterology Nurses & Associates 40th Annual Course**<br>The Society of Gastroenterology Nurses and Associates (SGNA)<br>www.sgna.org<br>Trade Show Executive's FASTEST 50 | **Austin, TX**<br>Phoenix | **24,600**<br>23,300 | **5.6%** | **94**<br>91 | **3.3%** | **1,940**<br>1,997 | **(2.9)%** | SGNA celebrated its 40th Annual Course with 22 new exhibitors and 40 new products displayed by 27 exhibitors. |
| **SURTEX**<br>GLM<br>www.surtex.com<br>Trade Show Executive's FASTEST 50 | **New York**<br>New York | **29,180**<br>28,016 | **4.2%** | **280**<br>274 | **2.2%** | **6,300**<br>7,150 | **(11.9)%** | Although overall attendance numbers were down, the number of businesses attending the show increased 5%. Attendees came from 49 countries. Exhibits included the work of artists from the U.S. and around the world. Post-show reports have revealed that 90% of attendees find new and unique designs for sale or license at the show, and 92% make valuable new connections at the show. |
| **The Texas Meeting**<br>Texas Dental Association<br>www.texasmeeting.com | **San Antonio**<br>San Antonio | **50,000**<br>50,000 | **No change** | **340**<br>335 | **1.5%** | **11,875**<br>12,125 | **(2.1)%** | As in 2012, there was a record number of exhibitors in 2013. However, there was a decline in sponsorship dollars. |

| DASHBOARD ANALYSIS: | Net SF of Exhibits | Exhibitors | Total Attendance |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Total**<br>(Sum of all figures submitted by show management) | **4,290,671**<br>4,259,048 | **13,820**<br>13,769 | **408,280**<br>383,318 |
| **Adjusted Total**<br>(Excludes outliers and shows in which an apples-to-apples comparison is not possible) | **4,098,071**<br>3,966,576 | **13,220**<br>12,849 | **386,061**<br>367,836 |
| **Averages**<br>(Based on Adjusted Totals) | **204,904**<br>198,329 | **630**<br>612 | **19,303**<br>18,392 |
| **Percentage of Growth**<br>(Based on Adjusted Totals) | **3.3%** | **2.9%** | **5.0%** |

**COMING UP NEXT MONTH:**

**A review of shows held in June**

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