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GMIC

## 'Glasstec' Equivalent

I visited Glasstec in October. The biennial glass "super-show" takes place in Dusseldorf, Germany, in even-numbered years. More than 54,000 visitors from all around the world attend the event to see 1300 companies present the latest glassmaking, forming and handling technologies, support equipment, plant engineering, and raw materials.

Glass Technology Live—a series of juried papers—enjoyed a great deal of attention and introduced us to the real cutting edge of glass innovation. It mostly related to energy-conservation in the building industry. It also provided a glimpse of the latest developments in thin special glass, insulation glass, laser technology, photovoltaics, solar thermal systems, colored thin-film cells and photochromic switchable glass.

It was impossible to study all the displays, but I observed a number of technologies (including sensors, and inspection and measurement equipment) that, to the best of my knowledge, are not widely available today in the United States. We would be wise to learn about these and ensure that the best available technology is available to the U.S. glass industry.

### Nothing Quite Comparable

There is no equivalent to Glasstec in the United States. A number of trade shows focus on glass, but, for the most part, relate to the window industries. Glassman America brings a broader exhibition opportunity, but is held on a 4-year cycle. These events focus on the "exhibition," with few or no technical papers, and a minimum of workshops.

Traditionally, the U.S. event that has exposed glass industry professionals to technical papers on industry challenges and opportunities has been the Conference on Glass Problems (better known as Glass Problems Conference or GPC). This event includes supplier hospitality suites that permit viewing and discussion of new technologies and products over the course of two evenings. Large displays and operating equipment usually are not possible.

GPC alternated between The Ohio State University and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Presently, only OSU is actively sponsoring the event in Columbus.

In recent years, GMIC and other organizations have offered add-on workshops at GPC and Glassman America to present topics such as new melting technologies, safety procedures, alternative fuels and energy reduction opportunities.

### Is There a U.S. Glasstec Equivalent in Our Future?

The challenge we face is how to provide the glass industry in this part of the world an event that will attract a diverse range of glass industry professionals.

What single event will attract exhibitors with new products, services and expertise; technology and product development engineers seeking to learn of problems that are being addressed at universities, laboratories and other companies; plant floor professionals and managers looking to improve efficiencies and processes; and management interested in exchanging ideas about the strategic direction the glass industry?

Over the last two years, a coalition of DMG World Media (publisher of *Glass International*), the GPC Advisory Committee and GMIC have been planning the creation of an event that would, in odd-numbered years, provide a venue for the above offerings. This will be a merger of the formats of the GPC, Glassman and GMIC technical workshops.

This merger will start with a transition GPC in 2007 (Oct. 15–17). This event, in addition to its technical papers, hospitality suites, and before-and-after workshops, will, for the first time, feature cost-effective table-top exhibits allowing a wider range of exhibitors to display their products and services.

The big change will occur in 2009, when a coordinated event (tentatively named Glass USA 2009) will take place at the Columbus Convention Center. It will combine the best features of GPC, Glassman and GMIC workshops and meetings into one week of events.

The week will move through the following sequence:

- Engineering and scientific papers will emphasize new applications of glass.
- Additional papers will address commercial applications and practical solutions to industry challenges.
- The exhibition, open in the afternoons, will be interspersed with short workshops on specific topics of interest to various sectors and specialties.
- Evenings will feature exhibitions, social activities and awards.
- On the final day, more extensive workshops or optional organization/association meetings will take place.

This structure will permit some to come for the first couple of days, others to attend the later days, and, of course, some to attend the full week.

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