



# HEADED TO THE SHOW

## INTERNATIONAL HARDWARE WEEK<sup>SM</sup> Showcases Global Marketplace in Chicago

**H**ardware and home improvement companies have redirected their focus and created new strategies to adapt to a rapidly evolving marketplace. The learning curve has taken a sharp turn upward, and businesses that want to thrive in this new era are challenged to keep up with this evolution through education and innovative ideas. And yet, the simplest adage still rings true. Give the customers what they want.

Solutions to both approaches are available during INTERNATIONAL HARDWARE WEEK<sup>SM</sup> (IHW<sup>SM</sup>), which is held in conjunction with the NATIONAL HARDWARE SHOW<sup>SM</sup> and BUILDING PRODUCTS EXPOSITION, and it's why this event remains critical to the hardware/home improvement industry. Sponsored and conducted by the American Hardware Manufacturers Association (AHMA), IHW<sup>SM</sup> offers buyers and sellers from around the world the opportunity to interact and build relationships, putting in motion the process of bringing product to the end user. The show, which is produced and managed by Association Expositions & Services, also features a



series of informative seminars that deliver expert accounts of topics timely to the industry.

The "World's Fair of the Home Improvement Industry" opens Sunday, Aug. 13 in Chicago's McCormick Place Complex and continues through Wednesday, Aug. 16. More than 3,000 exhibitors will showcase their wares, services and programs across 1.3 million square

### SHOW PREVIEW

feet in three halls at McCormick. More than 65,000 trade professionals are expected to attend, and the increasing international presence among the attendees is evident in IHW's ongoing theme: "We All Speak the Same Language."

"We operate in a global marketplace today, so it's imperative that the show reflect that fact," says William P. Farrell, president and ceo of AHMA. "We have tried to make it easier for our international visitors to take advantage of everything INTERNATIONAL HARDWARE WEEK<sup>SM</sup> has to offer."

The move toward a global hardware/home improvement marketplace is proceeding rapidly. Home Depot recently acquired three Sam's Club locations in Argentina to expand on its current presence in Chile and make more inroads into South America. The largest markets will continue to spend. China is expected to surpass the United States for the lead in total construction spending by 2010, tripling its 1999 expenditures to \$1.2 trillion, according to a joint study by the economic forecasting firm Standard & Poor's DRI and the construction information firm F.W. Dodge. Construction spending in the U.S. will reach \$958 billion, up from \$725 billion in 1999, and Japan is expected to be the third-highest spender with \$916 billion.

Strong markets for home improvement products can be found in many emerging and developed regions of the world. IHW<sup>SM</sup> reflects this trend of increasing prosperity. About 20 percent of attendees in 1999 were international visitors (up from 16 percent at the previous show), as were 975 of the exhibitors, almost a third from outside the United States as compared to 25 percent in 1998. There were 19 international pavilions in 1999 and 93 countries were represented.

"As consolidation at retail has impacted the number of hardware/home center buyers coming to the show, we have absorbed the loss by broadening our marketing efforts and trying to attract more specialty retailers as well as more international buyers," Farrell says.

In addition to attracting a wider range of international buyers and sellers, the show attracts mass merchants such as Wal-Mart and Kmart, specialty retailers like Bed, Bath and Beyond and Radio Shack, as well as emerging dot.com companies. Expanded consumer interest in lawn and garden, outdoor living and home decor projects and products is also fueling