

Interphex returns to Puerto Rico

Conference to include 50 first-time exhibitors, continuing-education credits

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The 7th Annual Interphex Puerto Rico Conference & Exhibition, the island's top industrial event for the life sciences industry, will take place March 4-5 at the Puerto Rico Convention Center in Isla Grande.

The 2010 event will include more than 250 exhibitors (of which 50 are exhibiting for the first time), an enhanced educational program, a focus on sustainable solutions and automation technologies and a co-location with the new Latin American Supply Chain Expo produced by the Multi-Sector Alliance.

"We have 250 exhibitors confirmed so far. The interest has been great and we continue to sell more space. I hope to get 275 exhibitors confirmed before the show," said Cindy Strachan, director of industry development for Reed Exhibitions, the producer of Interphex and a leading events organizer with more 440 events in 36 countries.

"This year, there are 50 new first-time exhibitors. Half of these companies are not familiar names to the Puerto Rico market, and most of those have not done business on the island in the past. That says something about the strength of the Puerto Rico market," Strachan said.

"Interphex drives business strategy, delivers manufacturing solutions and truly brings a global offering of suppliers to the island," said Strachan, adding that a significant number of participating exhibitors go around the world and participate in other Interphex global events.

At least 80 exhibitors scheduled so far at the Puerto Rico show do at least two Interphex shows and 12 do at least three in China, Japan, Mexico and/or New York, she said.

The conference program offers technical educa-



tion, with an emphasis on case studies and global best practices, in the areas of productivity, quality, biotechnology, regulatory, energy efficiency and operational excellence. All content is geared toward an intermediate-to-advanced audience and is being presented at the event for the first time.

Continuing-education units are being provided by the Puerto Rico Engineers & Surveyors Association (CIAPR by its Spanish initials). In addition, two days of comprehensive automation training will be presented by Rockwell Automation for technicians and technical personnel.

An exciting new feature of the event will be two free general sessions to help drive business strategy through leadership and innovation.

"Attending Interphex Puerto Rico is more important than ever. It's an investment that allows you to keep up in today's challenging market

and tough economic environment. You don't have to leave the island to find opportunities for education, training, networking and marketing," said Barbara McAuliffe, Interphex Puerto Rico's event director.

Asked if Interphex would consider incorporating Puerto Rico's growing aerospace industry into its conference, Strachan said: "Aerospace is an area that we are looking to develop in the Puerto Rico conference. Ultimately, the goal of Interphex is to be an effective platform for science and technology on the island."

Global Interphex events in 2010 will be featured in the mainland U.S., China, Japan, Singapore and Mexico. For complete information on Interphex Puerto Rico, including exhibitor lists, educational programs and online registration, visit www.interphexpuertorico.com. ■

Alliance aims to make Puerto Rico into 'Hub of the Americas'

Looks to maximize island's distribution and export market, further develop supply chain

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With its sights set on increasing Puerto Rico's global competitiveness, the Multi-Sector Buyers & Sellers Alliance is focused on maximizing the island's exports and further developing the supply chain.

As part of these efforts, the group will introduce next month the first Latin American Supply Chain Expo, which will co-locate with this year's 7th annual Interphex Puerto Rico Conference & Exhibition (March 4-5), the island's top industrial event for the life sciences industry, at the Puerto Rico Convention Center.

This year's event that will feature a host of new additions, including more than 250 exhibitors, an enhanced educational program, a focus on sustainable solutions and automation technologies.

"We think this event co-located with Interphex, is a unique opportunity. Our mission is to foster communication and to make sure we educate people; not only our colleagues in the industry, but also potential investors about the opportunities that exist in Puerto Rico for new business based on actual legislation and the actual capacity available that we have to try to maximize exports from Puerto Rico. By doing that, we are going to bring competitiveness to Puerto Rico," said Herminio Bosques, of the pharmaceutical

company Merck and leader of the alliance.

Puerto Rico imports approximately 90% of its goods for consumption, meaning that all shipping containers inbound are full.

"All the shipments (containers) that leave Puerto Rico don't leave full. We are focused on maximizing the outbound (export container) shipments, that's one of the key things. In addition, my intention to foster investment in Puerto Rico and we need to have a strong local supply chain to do that," Bosques said.

With Law 73 (industrial tax incentives), the CAFTA-DR free trade agreement and the

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Alliance

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necessary transportation infrastructure Puerto Rico is poised to become the distribution “Hub of the Americas,” said Juan Carle, vice president of the alliance.

“The Latin American region understands that Puerto Rico has a lot of capabilities (both by air and sea) for distribution for the Latin American and domestic market, and for some reason we are not taking advantage of that. We cannot only focus on doing business in Puerto Rico, we have to look globally,” said Carle.

Carle gave an example of how Puerto Rico can take advantage of its unique business environment.

“In the Dominican Republic, they are promoting cable television now and they are paying 29% in taxes for the cable television boxes that they are importing from Korea. If we bring the parts (for cable boxes) from Korea to Puerto Rico and we assemble it here, the Dominican Republic won’t have to pay taxes,” he said.

“From a legislation standpoint, basically our position is a single one right now; we want to



From left: Juan Carlos Kuang, president, Medical Devices Cluster; Juan Carle, vice president, Multi-Sector Alliance of Buyers & Suppliers; PRIDCO Executive Director Javier Vázquez; Herminio Bosques, president, Multi-Sector Alliance of Buyers & Suppliers; Daneris Fernández, president, PIA

maintain the focus on the things that we have under our control at this stage. What is important is that we maximize the current benefits that we have instead of trying to change the overall environment. What I mean by that is we already have good infrastructure with the Port of the Americas (POA) in Ponce, the San Juan Port, good air cargo capabilities, Luis Muñoz Marín

International Airport, the Aguadilla airport, as well as other regional airports that we can maximize to facilitate exports. We need to promote and maximize Law 73,” he said.

“We need to execute. A lot of countries copy our legislation and economic development business model, we just need to execute,” Carle concluded. ■



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