

European Influence Clear At FDIC Exhibits

BY ED BALLAM

It wasn't quite an invasion, but the influence of European technology in fire apparatus was prevalent at this year's Fire Department Instructors Conference in Indianapolis, with French and German maker Gimaex making a big showing, as well as Rosenbauer and Plastisol.

The U.S. apparatus manufacturers also brought new designs to the show with Pierce, E-ONE, Ferrara Fire Apparatus and Crimson Fire Apparatus impressing show attendees with innovations.

Big Splash By Gimaex

Arguably first-time show exhibitor Gimaex made the biggest splash with a large booth filled with products heavily influenced by its European roots as well as an aerial in the outside demonstration area.

Firefighters and show participants flocked to the booth to see apparatus designs that are not customary to the American fire markets, including a large hazmat response unit built on a familiar Freightliner cab and chassis. It was the body design that was attracting the interest.

Both sides of the apparatus open with what Keith Purdy, Gimaex of America's vice president of sales and marketing, described as clam-shell style side doors. The entire sides are exposed floor to roof with the top half of the door retracting over the top and the bottom half sliding down to create a large step to access items on the highest shelves.

"These are designs that the U.S. hasn't seen very much before, and there's a lot of interest in what we have," Purdy said. "We've got a variety of ideas, and we're inviting people to come in and take a look to see what we have and tell us what they like."

Gimaex has partnered with builders in

the United States to manufacture apparatus with European features, he said.

Also on display at the booth, representing an international apparatus building effort, was a rapid response unit featuring a Gimaex design using French and German technology and a Plastisol glass-fibre composite body built by Alexis Fire Equipment of Alexis, Ill. The body was built in The Netherlands and marketed by Plastisol Composites North America.

Outside the exhibit hall, a Gimaex rear-mount aerial platform, built on a Spartan cab and chassis with a Plastisol body, was demonstrated. It featured low, underslung jacks with a narrow span as well as the ability to deploy on a front-to-rear grade of 18 degrees and a side-to-side slope envelope of 7 degrees. The unit had an operator seat and control panel at the turntable.

The two Plastisol bodies for Gimaex were not the only ones on the show floor. Plastisol Composites North America president Alan Saulsbury had his own booth showing two finished apparatus bodies. Another Plastisol body was on a tanker in the Alexis booth, another was on a compact rescue apparatus in Foster Rescue's booth and Performance Advantage Company (PAC) had a Plastisol body mounted on a 4-door GMC cab and chassis. PAC is using the vehicle for its tool mounting system demonstration.

Plastisol And Rosenbauer

"We're making progress slowly, but surely," Saulsbury commented while gesturing as if climbing a ladder. Plastisol Composites is planning to open its North American facility in Groton, N.Y., this summer.

In the RCA Dome, Rosenbauer America, with its Central States and General Safety divisions, showcased a number of apparatus heavily influenced by its Austrian partners.



RK Aerials and Rosenbauer America introduced their Aerial Command Seat (ACS) and envelope control system on a new 102-foot, three-section platform. Increased visibility and operator comfort are two features of this system along with a single joystick control for all ladder and nozzle functions. (Rosenbauer Photo)

Perhaps the most innovative product in Rosenbauer's booth was a rear-mount aerial platform with a newly designed Aerial Command Seat (ACS) and a single joystick controller, all mounted on the turntable.

"This is the first U.S.-made aerial with a turntable mounted seat," said Harold Boer, president of Rosenbauer America. "There have been an incredible number of people checking it out... It's unusual to see a seat on an aerial turntable."

The single joystick control can raise and lower the aerial device as well as

FDIC Apparatus 14

7,000 WATTS!



Raven's Blackbird™ generator is now available in a 7000 watt 120/240 volt model. The system uses the same underhood and PTO mounts as the 5kW model. Now trucks with higher power needs can have convenient, economical, maintenance free power at the flick of a switch.



Ferrara Fire Apparatus had several unfinished fire pumper components on display allowing show visitors to see exactly how the company makes its products. The founder of the company, Chris Ferrara, called it a factory tour on wheels.

FDIC Apparatus

Continued from Page 12

extend and retract it and move it left to right.

"Plus there are controls for the monitor and lights, right there at the fingertips," said Rob Kreikemeier, president of Rosenbauer America's aerial division. "It's very cool."

Rosenbauer also had a new body style used on a pumper it calls the Revolution. It was designed using computer software to develop a body that is durable and economical, according to Rosenbauer.

Boer explained that the individual compartment modules are assembled and welded using a notch and tab

method in which the individual panels interlock for perfect alignment and easy replacement if body parts are damaged.

The new Revolution body was placed on Spartan's Furion cab and chassis, one of several at FDIC this year.

Around the corner from Rosenbauer in the dome, which was hosting its last FDIC before demolition for a new facility, was Pierce Manufacturing, which was displaying an expanded line of its PUC (Pierce Ultimate Configuration) apparatus.

A new PUC pumper featured a top-mount side-mount pump panel that places the pump operator off the street and in an elevated position for better safety and visibility while reducing the wheelbase three to four feet.

Pierce also introduced a 75-foot alu-



Gimaex demonstrated its unique platform aerial at FDIC this year. The apparatus is built on a Spartan cab and chassis and features a controller's seat on the turntable. *(Fire Apparatus Photos by Ed Ballam)*

minum aerial ladder version of the PUC as well as a Contender by Pierce PUC.

Pierce President Wilson Jones told a crowd of show attendees that the new PUC versions were designed "to help you do your jobs safer."

In a press release issued during the trade show, Jones said the expanded PUC line "gives firefighters additional options in selecting a truck that meets the specific needs of their department without making compromises. We took a design that revolutionized the industry when it was launched in April 2007 and due to its success and industry demand, we now have it available in a variety of

configurations to meet the needs of our customers, no matter the application."

Directly behind the Pierce booth was E-ONE's exhibit featuring a new top-mount pumper called the Synergy. On the company's custom cabs and chassis, the new pumper can be equipped with an enclosed pump panel and climate control.

The Synergy pumper, according to E-ONE, features an ultra-compact pump module and increased storage compartments with up to 538 cubic feet of useable space.

"The E-ONE Synergy also takes versatility to the road with a compact wheelbase, giving it exceptional maneuver-



E-ONE exhibited a custom cab and chassis pumper with top-mount controls and an enclosed pump panel. The unit also featured a trimmed down pump module to shorten the overall length and increase maneuverability.

ability on city streets and in tight spaces," the company said.

Ferrara Fire Apparatus attracted lots of visitors to its booth, also in the dome, with a variety of apparatus components that Chris Ferrara, chief financial officer of Ferrara, described as a "factory tour on wheels."

"Everybody likes to see what's underneath," he said, "and this is a way for us to show them."

The booth included a bare custom chassis with its running gear and suspension in place, a cab in which half was finished down to the paint and trim with the other half remaining only in the primer. Ferrara also had a body that allowed visitors to see how the company

constructs its products and what goes into making a Ferrara truck.

Crimson Fire introduced a 100-foot mid-mount aerial platform at the show, its fifth vehicle developed by Crimson President Jim Salmi and his team of engineers since the company launched its aerial line in 2004.

"This new mid-mount aerial rounds out the CFA line of aerials, which deliver better performance and require less maintenance than those of our competitors," Salmi said in a news release. "In just four years, CFA has introduced six new aerial products [including the Boomer] establishing us as an industry leader in innovations."

Grace PASS Certification Boosts Interspiro's SCBA

BY LYN BIXBY

This spring Grace Industries, Inc., became the only manufacturer of a stand-alone personal alert safety system (PASS) device to attain National Fire Protection Association certification under a demanding new standard that took effect last fall.

That was welcome news at Interspiro, Inc., a company that uses the Grace PASS on its self-contained breathing apparatus, which was certified by NFPA seven months earlier.

"It was frustrating," said Interspiro President Mike Brookman. "We were the first with SCBA certification, but we were almost last with the PASS approval."

Despite the delay, he said the Grace PASS gives Interspiro advantages over its competitors because the device is integrated with the company's Spiromatic S6 SCBA, but can also be removed from its SCBA holster and attached to turnout gear.

"There are plenty of situations where incident commanders would want to know the whereabouts and safety of their responders and those responders may not be wearing SCBA," Brookman said. "When it's a stand-alone PASS, it's a Grace PASS. When it's an integrated PASS, it's an Interspiro PASS."

The Spiromatic S6 was on display at the Fire Department Instructors' Conference trade show in Indianapolis last month, as were Grace's newly-certified PASS products.

Grace offers a range of PASS devices, from basic inexpensive motion-sensing units to others that display temperature and are capable of two-way communication with a base station as part of an accountability system that can handle up to 3,000 individuals, according to Jack Jarboe, the company's vice president of regulatory affairs and a retired division fire chief from Prince George's County, Md.

"We're using software that we tie into our telemetry system so it keeps track of everybody," he said. "You know where you placed everybody, and when an alarm goes off you've got a pretty good indicator of where they're at."

In addition to alerting commanders to firefighters in trouble, the Grace accountability system can send an evacuation alarm to specific firefighters or all firefighters at an incident. "You really need both things," Jarboe said. "You need immediate notification of fire-