

Construction show sets new record

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The Big 5 organisers reported more than 57,000 visitors; expect sustained growth for 2009 show As The Big 5, the Middle East's biggest trade fair for the building and construction sector, drew to a close today, the organisers reported in excess of 57,000 visitors over the five day event - a new record.

'While these may be testing times as far as the economic situation is concerned, we are delighted that the undisputed industry forum for the region has beaten all previous attendance figures,' said Simon Mellor, Vice President Construction for show organisers dmg media Dubai.

Exhibition space at this year's The Big 5 was completely sold out with 3,200 exhibiting companies from 53 countries. 'Based on advance registrations for next year's event, we are anticipating the same challenge as this year in fitting in all those who want to exhibit,' Mellor added.

The next Big 5 show will take place at the Dubai International Exhibition and Convention Centre from 23-27 November 2009 and the deadline for pre-registration for exhibitors that took part this year will be 14 February.

'We had even more requests this year from governments around the world for more space at the 2009 event,' Mellor added. 'We are seeing a truly international audience from throughout the world with senior executives from chairman down attending. It underlines that whatever the changing state of the world economy, The Big 5 is where the industry comes to network and maintain contact and that business goes on.'

Mellor added: 'There is still a lot of investment and growth in the region, despite a little cooling of the market which many see as something of a relief.'

This year's show also saw the introduction for the first time at a major Dubai Exhibition Centre event of a park-and-ride system to help deal with traffic around the venue.

'The Big 5 did not bring Dubai to a standstill as other events have,' said Mellor. 'For that we have to thank the Roads and Transport Authority, Dubai Police and the venue management. Next year, with the Dubai Metro up and running with a dedicated station we expect it to be even easier.'

The Big 5 also introduced this year a strong sustainability and 'green' theme which proved popular, Mellor said. Products and services that reduce the impact on the environment were on show - winners of the Gaia Awards - named after the mythical Greek goddess of the earth.

He added: 'We developed the sustainability theme further at The Big 5 Technical Conference which introduced an academic element to the event with debate on energy efficient green building solutions and environmentally friendly technologies for the construction industry.'

Exhibitors dispelled predictions of gloom in the industry and reported high visitor interest as well as potential deals.

'I feel our products are very much wanted here going by the number of inquiries,' said Tunc Pekmen, chief of export development for Turkey's Firat. 'The response has been fantastic,' reported Nick Smith, sales and marketing director of Airblast of the Netherlands.

'This is the country's biggest trade showpiece as far as we are concerned,' said Graham Smith, General Manager of Sameer Abbas General Trading.

'Hopefully next year I will be able to get a bigger area for display,' said Fukio Kaneko, General Manager of Japan's Nippon Kanzai Center Company. 'We have been surprised at the good turnout from the UAE's neighbouring countries,'

said Keith Stubbs, coordinator of the Australian pavilion.

'New Zealand's participants are happy with the number of visitors they have had at the show,' said Richard Laverty, organiser of the New Zealand pavilion. 'We will certainly be here next year,' said David Jung, overseas sales manager for Spacelink of Korea.

'We are impressed with quality of the visitors to our stand,' said Andreas Giannaros, Managing Director of G Style of Greece. 'This is our third year at The Big 5 and it is looking better year after year,' said Ratan Bhatia, of Sigma Enterprises, UAE.

'We plan to join The Big 5 again next year,' said Mattia Tognana of Tognana of Italy. 'We will be back next year,' said Angelo Uber Guilini Neri, President of Nuova Osmo, of Italy.

Italy and Germany had the biggest pavilions at this year's show. Other country pavilions included: Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, Canada, Cyprus, France, Belgium, Finland, Austria, Switzerland, Greece, Luxembourg, Korea, Malaysia, Portugal, Malta, Spain, Taiwan, Turkey, UK and the Philippines. In addition, there are exhibitors from Bahrain, Chile, China, Czech Republic, Egypt, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Iran, Ireland, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Netherlands, Oman, Pakistan, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Syria, Thailand, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Ukraine, United States of America and Vietnam.

Alongside The Big 5 exhibition this year was The Big 5 PMV - The Middle East's premier construction plant, machinery and vehicles.

Dedicated to suppliers and manufacturers of construction plant, machinery and vehicles, The Big 5 PMV featured a huge outdoor arena showcasing outsized equipment, including cranes, excavators, lifting platforms, mobile concrete pumps, dumpers and cement mixers.

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