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Carbon Fibers 2008 – Global Supply vs. Demand

In last month's issue we began our coverage of the **CompositeWorld Conferences'** Carbon Fibers 2008 executive conference, held in Charleston, SC. In that issue, we covered a number of competitive topics related to the manufacturing of carbon fiber. Among these were the appearance of new carbon fiber suppliers and the fluctuating impact of oil and energy prices on the cost of manufacturing carbon fiber. Also addressed was progress in the commercialization of flywheel energy storage devices which may find significant application in the building of a "green po

friendly electrical grid. This issue continues our coverage of the Carbon Fibers event, expanding coverage to include:

- Manufacturer nameplate capacity outlooks for PAN-based small- and large-tow carbon products
- Capacity and application of pitch-based carbon fibers;
- Total end-user demand for carbon fiber
- Improvements in carbon fiber processing equipment
- Potential opportunities for nano-materials used in the production of multifunctional composites

With regards to the supply-side and demand-side of the carbon fiber food chain, the Carbon Fibers 2008 event featured many discussions to illuminate the dynamics of this industry. On the first day of the conference, carbon fiber industry veteran and consultant Tony Roberts provided an in-depth discussion of the carbon fiber manufacturing industry and forecasted end-user demand for carbon fiber products. **Grafil, Inc.**'s (a subsidiary of **Mitsubishi Rayon Co.**) Director of Sales and Marketing, Steven Carmichael pro-

vided some perspective as a representative of one of the world's leading suppliers of PAN-based carbon fiber materials. **Nippon Graphite Fiber Corp.**'s General Manager, Hideyuki Ohno commented on issues and figures related to the pitch-based segment of the carbon fiber industry. Further issues dealt with how the entrance of new suppliers might impact the carbon fiber market were part of a six-member (including both conference co-chairs) panel discussion held on the second day of general presentations. The following several passages regarding the general carbon fiber supply and demand discussions has tried to weave the contributions of these various sources into a cohesive dialog.

PAN-BASED CARBON FIBER SUPPLY

One of the key features of the Carbon Fibers event was Tony Robert's seminar, *"When and Where Will Carbon Fiber Be Used & Precursor Outlook."* This three-and-a-half hour program focused on the time period between 2008 and 2014

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