

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. That issue covered a number of interesting subjects, including: the appearance of new carbon fiber suppliers to the market, the fluctuating impact of oil and energy prices on the cost of manufacturing carbon fiber, and flywheel energy storage devices which may find significant application in the building of a "green power"-friendly electrical grid. This month's installment will cover some of the other key presentations and discussions

related to the demand and supply of carbon fiber and the balance between them.

With regards to the supply and demand sides 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 a depth discussion of the carbon fiber manufacturing industry and forecasted end-user demand for carbon fiber production. **Mitsubishi Rayon Corp.** General Manager, Hiroyuki Ohno, commented on issues and figures related to the pitch-based segment of the carbon fiber industry. **Grafil, Inc.**'s (a subsidiary of **Mitsubishi Rayon Co.**) Director of Sales and Marketing, Steven Carmichael, provided some perspective as a representative of one of the world's leading suppliers of PAN-based carbon fiber materials. Further issues dealing with how the entrance of new suppliers might impact the carbon fiber market were part of a six-member (including both confer-

ence 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 - detailing the "balance" between anticipated demand growth and the expansion of the carbon fiber base chain. As Robert's presentation provided critical context from which other conference speakers often referenced, his comments provide the informational source of much of the following commentary.

Carbon Fibers 2008 Coverage Continued
Pan-based Carbon Fiber Supply...1
Pitch-based Carbon Fibers...3
Demand for Carbon Fibers...5
CF Driven by Industrial...5
Carbon Fiber Panel Discussion...7
Quick Takes
8