



CALIFORNIA FASHION ASSOCIATION

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2014 Newsmakers: Ilse Metchek and the California Fashion Association

By Alison A. Nieder | Thursday, December 11, 2014



For nearly 20 years, **Ilse Metchek**, president of the **California Fashion Association**, has served as the spokesperson for the California apparel community. She is the person to call for business intelligence or a pithy comment for the press or to consult about a new business strategy or the ramifications of a new piece of legislation.

Metchek has led the organization since it was founded in 1995 in the wake of the discovery of 70 Thai nationals forced to work in slave-like conditions in a garment factory in El Monte, Calif. Then-Mayor Richard Riordan hosted a roundtable with members of the fashion industry, who agreed that an organization was needed to field media questions, gather industry statistics and data, and work with city, state and federal officials to investigate the incident in El Monte. Over the years, the organization has grown in scope to include outreach to allied associations and keeping its members apprised of all matters affecting their business, from economic trends to financing opportunities to legal issues.

This year, **Metchek** hosted seminars on a wide range of current topics, including intellectual-property issues, licensing and new technologies, held at the Los Angeles International Textile Show; new innovations in denim, held at the Kingpins trade show; and the U.S. manufacturing revival, held at the West Coast Manufacturing Conference.

At the biannual MAGIC trade show, the **CFA** hosted a finance seminar with CIT and organized a seminar examining export and import issues for U.S. denim. **Metchek** also hosted panel discussions on U.S. market entry for delegations from Hong Kong, Brazil, China and Saudi Arabia.

Metchek and the **CFA** worked with French technology company Lectra to host a panel discussion on technology and fashion, hosted a panel with Wells Fargo on opportunities for growth through private label and branded manufacturing, and co-moderated a panel with CIT on strategies and innovations in financing fashion.

In March, she traveled to Hangzhou, China, to present a seminar for online platform Alibaba titled "Understanding the U.S. Market for Apparel & Textiles." She presented a similar discussion for the China Office of Trade in Shanghai.

Back in Los Angeles, she discussed U.S. market opportunities for delegations from Peru, Thailand, Hong Kong, Colombia, Singapore, Italy, Mexico and Sweden.



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And **Metchek** continued to work with the **Fashion Industries Human Resources Association** on key human-resources issues affecting the apparel industry.

The **CFA** also serves as a hub of industry information. The **Textile Association of Los Angeles**, a unit of the **CFA**, fielded inquiries for textile resources and provided more than 760 referrals this year.

Its charitable arm, the **California Fashion Foundation**, continued to raise funds for scholarships and other philanthropic efforts related to the fashion industry. In May, the **CFF** and **TALA** hosted the annual Scholarship Awards Luncheon, presenting scholarship funds to students from California State University–Los Angeles, the Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising, Long Beach City College, Los Angeles Trade-Technical College, Mt. San Antonio College, Otis College of Art and Design, Santa Monica College and Woodbury University.

And on Dec. 17, the organization hosts the 67th annual Christmas Event for Children, a holiday party for children from area boys' and girls' clubs and after-school programs.