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NAB NEWS

Reporting from CENTRAL HALL

by James E. O'Neal

This writer, a three-decade veteran of NAB Shows, joined other attendees for the opening of the 2009 event in waiting for the magic 9 a.m. announcement that the big show was underway and the exhibits were open.

According to many pundits, the current global economic slowdown was supposed to leave attendance waaaaay down this year. And to be truthful, the lines outside the doors weren't as long as they have been in other years, but the enthusiasm was there.

Once the guards started admitting spectators, the hushed murmur in the hall that characterizes the beginning of such events quickly grew to the customary din as attendees strolled up to booths and exhibits and began to ask questions.

I'd planned a number of stops, both to visit some old friends in the business and to check out new technologies that were scheduled to premier at the show.

I hadn't gone too far before I spotted one of my targets — the Stainless LLC tower folks. Don Doty, the operation's CEO, was there with his usual big smile and was quick to tell me that he had every reason to be upbeat about the show.

"Our business has been picking up after the [DTV] delay was announced," said Doty. "People are finally getting off dead center and placing orders."

As the exhibits had only been open for a

few minutes, it was certainly too early to know just what to expect, but people were beginning to stop by the Stainless booth and I moved on to see other sights.

Linear Industries was next, as a double entendre booth poster showing the back of a young woman attired in a low-cut dress and proclaiming "low shoulders are beautiful" caught my eye.

Actually, Linear isn't in the fashion business and the poster was really addressing the very easy pre-correction adjustment on Linear's DTV transmitters — which ensures nice looking mask-response shoulders. Carl Clouse, Linear's director of marketing, noticed my interest and was quick to give an overview of several new transmitter models with the technology for instantly achieving that "low shoulders" look.

Clouse also showed me a new unit designed for gap-filler applications, as broadcasters switch off analog transmitters and discover that their DTV signals just don't reach everyone they should.

Jim Zook, president of Z Technology, was also showing some new products intended to protect a broadcaster's coverage, but in a slightly different fashion. One of these was the DM1010 signal demodulator. It features technology that can send a warning to a chief engineer should his transmitter start dropping off in power or otherwise develop a degraded signal.

"We've added text messaging to put up a warning message on your BlackBerry," Zook said.

I next moved down into the central portion of the hall and was spotted by another old friend, Ali Ahmadi, even before I

picked him out of the crowd at the Camera Dynamics booth. (No real shortage of spectators here.)

Ahmadi was quick to direct me to what has to be a first in the camera bag business that Camera Dynamics represents — an inflatable model. No, no ... it's not intended to serve as a lifejacket for cameras, but rather to provide padding when traveling.



Attendance wasn't off at the Camera Dynamics booth.

"There's no more searching for pillows and blankets to protect your camera in an airplane overhead bin," Ahmadi said. "You just inflate the chambers where you need padding and you're protected."

Just across the way from Ahmadi was the Leader booth and George Gonos, its VP of sales and marketing. Gonos gave me run-through of the latest developments in Leader's Cinelite and Cinezone technology for ensuring better camera video.

Not too far from George were the Videomagnetics folks. If you still have a tape-based workflow, you either know Videomagnetics or will eventually, as they refurbish tape heads and can even supply a "good-as-new" head for your 1956 Ampex quad VTR. ©2009 NAB