

Early action launches high hopes for mattress market

BY DAVID PERRY

AT THE MARKET — The bedding market here got off to a fast start, with some major retailers visiting mattress showrooms as early as mid-week.

The early action launched the mattress market on a good note, with producers proclaiming themselves pleased with early results.

Hopes for the mattress market are high, as the kickoff of the peak mattress selling season comes next month — on the key Memorial Day holiday weekend.

Several exhibitors said the industry should benefit from pent-up demand for mattresses stemming from sales lost during the storms that affected key

markets in the Northeast, Mid-west and South earlier this year.

Warmer weather across the country will soon translate into nice traffic in mattress stores, producers suggested. And they said major bedding ad programs on tap for the coming months should boost consumer interest in the category.

They offered those comments against the backdrop of solid early bedding business here.

Klaussner's Enso Sleep Systems division started the market strong, entertaining major customers long before the official opening day on Saturday. The company's new gel bedding line, which features a Total Surface Coverage (TSC) design, is resonating with retailers, said Mark Akerman, vice president of sales and merchandising. "It's easy for a retail sales associate to grab hold of an acronym like that," he said.

Enso is offering a Labor Day power buy that features a 10-inch, gel-infused memory foam mattress for \$399.

Classic Brands, showing a number of new lines here, also got off to an early start, said Mike Zippelli, president. Retailers like the company's Revo reticulated foam line and its new Sleep Trends line

of compressed mattresses aimed at ecommerce retailers, he said.

Gold Bond also started strong, according to Bob Naboichck, president.

"The independent retailers are here to differentiate themselves in the market," he said. "They want to be different and we can help them do that. We offer better products at higher margins that they won't see down the street."

Therapedic was pleased with its strong start to the market. "We've had good traffic and we've done well so far," said Gerry Borreggine, Therapedic president. "We are coming off a very successful Las Vegas Market and a strong International Sleep Products Assn. Expo, which is a good barometer of the bedding business."

Those shows indicate Therapedic is positioned for a strong year in 2014, Borreggine said.

Interest in Simmons' new ComforPedic iQ line of self-adjusting memory foam mattresses remains high, said Tony Smith, president of Simmons, which has renovated its International Home Furnishings Center showroom for this market.



Skip Naboichck sits on a new single-sided Smart series sleep set at Gold Bond.

Carolina Mattress Guild, welcoming its new partner Magniflex into its Furniture Plaza showroom, is featuring Magniflex's new line of hybrid sleep sets. Eric Hinshaw, president of CMG, described the beds as "real hybrids," with "the initial feel and conformity of foam" combined with the support of innersprings.