

Natural, organic products trade show draws in 26,000

New Hope's Expo East wraps up first year in Boston

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New Hope Natural Media said Monday attendance at its Natural Products Expo East trade show last week in Boston drew about 1,000 more attendees than was expected.

The Boulder, Colo.-based company said 26,000 attendees convened at the 24th annual gathering of the East Coast's largest natural and organic products tradeshow and conference, which wrapped up four days of events on Saturday. Earlier New Hope press releases had forecast 25,000 attendees.

New Hope said the higher turnout reflects natural retailers' growth in the Northeast, which increased 9.5 percent in 2007 and accounted for nearly 20 percent of total U.S. natural and organic product sales.

The event had been held in Baltimore for years, but New Hope made the switch citing it was necessary to "accommodate growth, attendee preference and environmentally friendly practices."

The strong attendance coupled with other events going on in Boston Thursday yielded unusually heavy traffic lines after the show closed. New Hope said it worked with city officials to resolve the bottleneck by providing subway vouchers, a dedicated bus and a fleet of pedi cabs to whisk attendees back to their hotels.

Next year's show in Boston will be held Sept. 23-26.

The show at the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center featured more than 1,300 exhibits.

As part of the events were two major award events.

Winners of the 6th Annual New Products Showcase Awards included: Peaceworks Holdings' Mango Macadamia Nutrition Bars (Food); Earth Mama Angel Baby Organics' Mama-To-Be Tea Sampler (Supplement/Herbs); VerTerra Ltd.'s Renewable Dinnerware made from fallen palm leaves (Green/Environmentally-friendly); Undercover Vegetable Co.'s Yotta Bars (Most Innovative); and Gourmé Food Co.'s Gourmé Mist (Best Packaging).

In the newly introduced "New England's Best" category, Putney Pasta's Chicken Alfredo Skillet took top honors.

Recipients of the Spirit of Organic Awards, honoring leaders of the organic movement, were: Anthony Rodale, former CEO of the Rodale Institute and advocate for organic farmers; Kelly Shea, vice president of government and industry relations at WhiteWave Foods Co.; LaRhea Pepper, a fifth-generation farmer and executive director of Organic Exchange based in O'Donnell, Texas; and Kevin Brussel, president of Ag Organics and superintendent of the Organic Dairy Research Farm at the University of New Hampshire.