



ON THE SPOT... Worawit Sureesarakorn

Worawit Sureesarakorn, Organising Chairman of the 40th ASEAN Glass Conference and Plant Manager of Siam Fiberglass Co Ltd speaks exclusively to *Glass Worldwide*, official journal of the AFGM.

GW: What can visitors expect from the 40th ASEAN Glass Conference in Hua Hin and Cha-am this October?

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the ASEAN Glass Conference, proving that this regional event not only has a long history but has contributed positively to the glass industry in ASEAN since 1977. Thailand has hosted the event on nine occasions, three times each in Bangkok and Chiang Mai, twice in Phuket and once in Pattaya.

This year's conference will be the first in Hua Hin and Cha-am and will be held on 17-20 October 2016 at the Dusit Thani Hua Hin Hotel. We expect to have more visitors than previously, especially first time participants. This will provide new networking opportunities and a different atmosphere.

GW: What is this year's conference theme?

The theme for this year's conference is 'A new Era of Collaboration', which can be abbreviated to 'AEC'. The official establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) at the end of December 2015 means a lot to the regional economy and to the rest of the world. The integration of ASEAN offers great opportunities from one of the world's fastest growing economies, employing more than 600 million people. The AEC will lead the ASEAN Federation of Glass Manufacturers (AFGM) towards the ASEAN vision of a more proactive stance, having had in place the structure and frameworks to co-operate as an industrial association, cultivating the collective identity of all member countries and providing strength to engage with the rest of the world. The AEC theme represents a major milestone for closer collaboration and sustainable growth in the AFGM.

GW: How beneficial will the technical conference presentations be to attendees?

The experience of previous sessions proves the benefit of these technical presentations, which attract increasing delegate numbers every year, including more than 200 technical personnel in Cebu in 2015, for example. We anticipate the inclusion of a diversity of technical papers to serve the interests of various types of glass manufacture and encourage the industry's suppliers and service providers to present their latest innovations and technologies to enhance productivity, while stimulating greater energy efficiency, quality and environmental improvements.



Worawit Sureesarakorn (right) at the 38th ASEAN Glass Conference in Malaysia.

GW: How important are networking opportunities during the event?

'Networking' is always a key element of the ASEAN Glass Conference. It is a once a year, face-to-face business opportunity for manufacturers and suppliers to exchange information and ideas. In addition, we wish to encourage greater collaboration among glass manufacturers via these networking activities.

GW: Will the event appeal to visitors from the flat and hollow sectors?

Speaking as a representative of the Organising Committee, we will maximise our efforts to ensure that the conference appeals to every sector of glass manufacture. Delegates will find new glass industry friends and new ideas from other glass manufacturing

processes. I am pleased to invite all glass manufacturers, suppliers and service providers to join our conference.

GW: What will the locations of Hua Hin and Cha-am bring to the conference?

Hua Hin has been a highlight for foreign tourists in Thailand for many years, as is its neighbouring city Cha-am. The ASEAN Glass Conference will be held in these locations for the first time this year. Participants will enjoy the conference facilities, beautiful and peaceful beaches, good foods, friendly people, distinctive culture and history. Please join us for the 40th ASEAN Glass Conference in Hua Hin/Cha-am. >



Siam Fiberglass is a market leader in residential and acoustic applications in Thailand.



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GW: On a personal level, how do you feel about being Chairman of the Organising Committee?

Being Chairman of the Organising Committee is a personal honour and at the same time, a great responsibility. Obviously, I have the full support of all GMFTI members, especially those individuals who have brought the best value to conference participants in the past. I have the good fortune to call on the support of a great team!

GW: Glass Worldwide is exclusive official journal of the AFGM. How does this benefit proceedings?

Glass Worldwide is always a good source of glass industry movements and technology trends. Our glass technicians, engineers and managers usually read this bi-monthly magazine to update their technical knowledge and enrich their management skills for the glass industry.

As official journal of the AFGM, *Glass Worldwide* regularly publishes articles about members

of our association. And as a partner, *Glass Worldwide* provides great support in promoting AFGM activities to the global glass community.

GW: What role does the Glass Manufacturers Industry Club, The Federation of Thai Industries (GMFTI) play in the glass industry in the ASEAN region?

GMFTI has participated in the ASEAN glass industry since before the AFGM's establishment in Manila in 1977 and our members cover a broad range of glass manufacture, including containers, flat glass, tableware, lighting, glass blocks and fibre. In terms of installed capacity, we are the region's leading manufacturer in some sectors, such as container and glassfibre. We supply glass products throughout ASEAN and worldwide through many finished products such as food and beverage, automotive, tableware, lighting bulb, glass block and glass wool insulation.

GMFTI was a founding member of the AFGM and continues to be an active member. AFGM offers a platform for collaboration among member countries, with many win-win solutions provided.

GW: What are the implications so far of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) to GMFTI members?

AEC represents both opportunities and challenges for our members. The elimination of all taxes and tariffs in ASEAN creates more opportunities for export, not only of our products but also those of our customers across the region. On the other hand, there are no longer barriers to newcomers investing in this high economic growth region and in the local glass industry.



The 40th ASEAN Glass Conference will take place at Hua Hin/Cha-am.

GW: What position does Siam Fiberglass hold in the Thai glass industry?

Siam Fiberglass Co Ltd (SFG) is a subsidiary of the Cement and Building Materials Business of SCG (previously called the Siam Cement Group). SFG is one of the country's two glass wool insulation manufacturers, the other being Microfiber Industries Ltd.

SFG manufactures and markets glass wool insulation in domestic and export markets. We segment the market into residential applications, project (commercial and factory buildings and mechanical) applications, acoustic applications and OEM products. OEM products are supplied to the electrical appliance and automotive industries. We are market leader in residential and acoustic applications in Thailand and export insulation products to more than 20 countries, mainly in ASEAN, Japan and Australia.

GW: What are the main challenges and opportunities facing the glassfibre sector in Thailand?

The total supply of glass wool insulation in Thailand is about 25,000 tonnes/year, which is the biggest in ASEAN. Total domestic demand is less than 50% of supply. Thailand has the most per capita insulation consumption in ASEAN but is still less than that of developed countries. We are promoting the use of insulation in Thailand and ASEAN. Using insulation can help energy conservation, both in heating and cooling modes, which not only uses less natural resources but also reduces CO₂ emissions.

GW: What are the prevailing market conditions for the hollow glass sector in Thailand?

Hollow glass production continues to grow, albeit currently at 2%-4%, in line with the country's GDP. Since most manufacturers have not expanded their production facilities in the past couple of years, however, they are currently operating at full capacity.

GW: And the flat glass sector?

Thailand's flat glass sector continues to grow, following an expansion of the real estate market, which has received the support of several government stimulus packages. The industry is expected to realise growth rates of more than 5% in 2016, despite the lack of positive news in the automotive glass sector. ■



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