

Barnhardt Heads West for Hygienix 2019

The Barnhardt team never stops, with a never-ending focus on research and development fueled by our understanding of the markets we serve. Produced by [INDA](#), the annual Hygienix conference, recently held in Houston, Texas, offers our company perhaps the best venue for understanding the needs of manufacturers in the personal care and hygiene sector.

The premier event serving the personal care and hygiene industry, which features products ranging from feminine pads and adult incontinence to diapers and wipes for babies, took place from November 11-14. This year's Barnhardt Hygienix team included Barnhardt President and Chief Operating Officer Lewis Barnhardt, Vice President of Sales and Marketing George Hargrove, Director of Fiber Sales for Nonwovens Ginny Casstevens, Director of Research and Development Wade Hubbard, and Levin Lynch from fiber sales. For Hargrove, Hygienix serves as a capstone on his 45-year stint as an executive at Barnhardt, marking his final industry event before retiring at the end of 2019.

Much of the agenda for Hygienix 2019 centered on the environmental impacts of absorbent hygiene products, game-changers in femcare as well market and industry trends. The conference was well-attended, with more than 500 personal care professionals representing 30 countries.

The conference featured multiple presentations germane to the impact of absorbent hygiene in the global marketplace, including the opening presentation by sustainability consultant Marcus Eriksen, co-founder and Research Director of the 5 Gyres Institute, an organization committed to leading the reduction of plastics pollution worldwide. Eriksen's team has been tracking microplastics in our oceans, lakes and rivers for more than a decade, and the impact of microplastics on our environment is, in a word, alarming. To illustrate the point, Eriksen and an associate made a boat from plastic bottles and floated from California to Hawaii over a three-and-a-half month period, using ocean currents as their engine. During that time, they collected surface samples of microplastics in the ocean. Their findings were astounding as to how much pollution human consumption has contributed to the ocean ecosystem over time, with much of the pollution non-biodegradable like plastic.

In addition to the many discussions on environmental impact of the nonwovens industry, Hygienix 2019 covered an array of topics relevant to developing our understanding of evolving global markets for personal care and hygiene products. We looked at the changing demographics of the absorbent hygiene market, game-changes in R&D related to feminine care, and many innovations in the overall hygiene market.

Innovation is critical to our space, and it's more than notable that INDA (the Nonwovens Institute) places a high priority annually on awarding innovation at its Hygienix gathering. This year, the organization awarded Vemarei's breakthrough FEUR System for helping people who deal with fecal urgency. We salute Vemarei and other developers who continue to push our industry forward with product innovations.

For more information on Hygienix, the premier industry event for personal care professionals,



visit <https://www.hygienix.org/>. We look forward to seeing our personal care counterparts in New Orleans in 2020.