

## Dealers, Vendors find value at KEM shows

**By David Perry**

ORLANDO, Fla. – One of the nation's most respected retailers came to the Larry Karel show here last month and proclaimed it a valuable show venue.

Carlos Capo, executive vice president of award-winning El Dorado Furniture, based in Miami Gardens, Fla., led a delegation of family members and store employees through the 15th Orlando Furniture & Accessory Market here.

"It's important for retailers to come here to know what's going on," Capo said. "High Point is so big. This is an opportunity to see other people that we do business with."

One of those people was Gary Robinson, president of Restonic of Florida, who has been showing at Karel Exposition Management shows in Florida for 28 years. Restonic no longer exhibits at the High Point market, but Robinson finds the Karel shows a profitable niche for him.

"The fact that I wrote more than \$100,000 worth of business here last year tells met that this show is still doing good business for us," Robinson said on opening day of the most recent Orlando show last month.

Also pleased with the show was Bob Naboicheck, president of Hartford, Conn.-based Gold Bond, a futon and conventional bedding producer.

Naboicheck sees an influx of young entrepreneurs entering the Florida furniture retail scene.

Dan Kamis, president of Dixie Bedding/King Koil, and president of the Orlando market's sponsoring group, Florida



Kamis



Cochran

Furniture Markets, said Orlando is a strong show. "Typically," he observed, "it is good show. It is an opportunity to reach dealers who don't attend the national markets. Many dealers are in that category."

Kamis said the Orlando show attracts many "mom and pop" retailers who can take one weekend day out of their busy weekend schedules, but don't have the three days or so they would need to attend a national furniture market.

Kerry Cochran, regional sales manager for Coaster, said there are "lots of dealers in Florida that don't go to any markets" other than the Karel shows. "We do open new accounts here," Cochran said. "We also rub elbows with retailers I don't see at other times of the year."

El Dorado's Capo said the Karel shows have enabled his company to find vendors who have gone on to become major resources. "We started doing business with Palliser through Larry Karel," Capo recalled.

"A lot of the smaller retailers aren't coming to High Point," said Naboicheck, who has permanent space in High Point. "Florida is a very, very good market."



**Gary Robinson, third from right, of Restonic welcomes the team from El Dorado Furniture in Miami Gardens, Fla.: Suen, left, Rosy and Carlos Capo, and Susan Capo Fior and Lorenzo Fior.**