

# NATIONAL HARDWARE SHOW

## A SPRINKLING OF NICE NEW TOOLS AND EASY VENDOR ACCESS

From wrenches and paint brushes to lawn chairs and fire pits, *The National Hardware Show* has something for everyone in the hardware channel — even the chance to meet some real shady characters.

The National Hardware Show continues to mix things up to keep things fresh for attendees. In addition to shifting its schedule to Wednesday through Friday (May 4-6) and compacting the event into two halls, this year's NHS offered breakfast for attendees who could wake up on time (a perennial challenge in Las Vegas) and end-of day happy hours to keep folks at the show as long as possible each day.

In addition to seminars on topics from payment systems to mobile marketing, new product, retailer's choice and merchandising awards, this year's lures included celebrity

appearances by TV star Lorenzo Lamas and race car driver Brandy Flores, and several home-improvement stars; Bob Vila, Mark Portney, the Carey Brothers and yardies Sara Bendrick and Peyton Lambton.

Other stars flew under the radar, including Joe Gannascoli, better known as Vito from *"The Sopranos,"* who was on hand to harass unwary booth walkers. It's not often you get to play "Do I know you?" with a genuine mobster, even in Vegas.

This article was written before official attendance figures were released, but based on last year's estimated 19,000 attendees, we would guess this year was also in

that ballpark or a bit less. The unofficial exhibitor count was 1,000-plus companies for the entire show.

The National Hardware Show continues to struggle with its dual identity and can be an either-or proposition for people in search of either construction tools or lawn and garden products. For tool heads, the pickings are not very deep, but at least they are conveniently located in the same hall.

That said, booth traffic was fairly healthy, yet key players were always easy to reach for show-and-tell on their new products, which is why we came anyway. On that standpoint, we did not leave disappointed.

### WELCOME BACK

When you are in the industry long enough, the cyclical dominance of brands emerges. A brand may be strong in a given market for a few (or many) years and then just disappear. Sometimes they are gone forever, others not.

Which is why our visit to the Campbell Hausfeld booth was so encouraging. After years away from the pro channel while they concentrated on DIY products, CH is back with a new lineup of air compressors for professional users. Andy Nowak, Campbell Hausfeld's director of business development, showed us some of the new line.

"We've gotten serious with our product offering and have launched a whole new line of DIY and light-

Campbell Hausfeld returns to the professional market with a lineup of upgraded, ruggedized, low-noise job site and stationary air compressors, including the eight-gallon DC080500.

commercial whisper-silent compressors with 1,000-hour pumps," Nowak explained. "We've also upgraded all of our commercial-industrial cast-iron compressors with commercial-industrial components, industrial-grade belt drives, wide bases and dual-voltage 120-240 motors."

The new DC080500 is a case in point. This oil-free eight-gallon quiet air compressor bridges the



gap between DIY and the contractor market. Its 10-amp, 1-hp motor produces 125 psi at just 68 decibels. The company has also upgraded its large stationary units too.

"We have made our commercial industrial compressors more robust, with new metal belt guards, all-copper fittings are copper, dual-voltage motors and industrial-grade notched D-belt drives that add longevity."

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**NEW AND COOL**

Admittedly, one of the big charms of this trade show is finding novel products, and all one needed was eager eyes to find them. One such company hails from Vancouver, Canada, and was set up in the sweltering outdoor lot. Ergonomic shovels keep cropping up, but we liked this device for its ability to be used with any tool a contractor already owns.

“HEFT stands for highly effective fulcrum tool,” explains Ann Longley, one of the owners of HEFT USA. “It is an auxiliary handle attachment for long-shaft tools that instantly makes them ergonomic. You just click it on; there’s no tool, bolts, nuts or screws.”

Longley explains the device was primarily invented by her husband to reduce strain on his back when shoveling snow. In 2012 the concept was featured on “Dragon’s Den,” the Canadian version of “Shark Tank.” It gained traction from there and is now sold in 1,100 stores across Canada. Now, HEFT is ready to begin expanding in the U.S. The company offers a version for each of the two most common shaft diameters of long handle tools. As a testimonial to its effectiveness in reducing back

*Below: HEFT co-owner Ann Longley demonstrates her company’s ingeniously simple (and fast selling) Highly Effective Fulcrum Tool that converts any shovel into an ergonomic wonder in a snap.*



and wrist strain, the HEFT has also been adopted by mining unions in Australia and South Africa.

**IT CUTS WHAT?**

Another company attracting steady traffic was Jake Cuzdey’s Cuz-D Industries. His novel Straight Flush Saw is a modified 8 1/2-inch circular saw that performs all the typical cuts and zero-clearance flush cuts. It features a 3 1/8-inch depth of cut and has a 1 9/16-inch retractable front deck to enable nose cuts through material. Another unique feature is a left-and-right-handed trigger-actuated lower guard which allows the user to retract the blade guard “hands-free.”

*Left: Former contractor Jake Cuzdey invented his innovative Cuz-D Straight Flush Saw to take the place of six different tools on the job site. Judging from his booth traffic, it is striking a chord.*



*Above: Grip-Tite Tools’ Alex Gordon believes his company’s easy-to-use Triple-Drive Ratchet wrench is the industry’s fastest.*

When asked where the saw came from, Cuzdey gleefully quipped, “From its mother, originally,” and laughed. “Actually, I was a general contractor for 10 years and, like any good invention, this came from a need to be able to do more than a typical saw could deliver.”

Cuzdey says his worm saw replaces six standard job site tools — circular, undercut, reciprocating, worm drive and metal saw and even a router for some applications.

“Although building materials have changed over the last 100 years, we still use a standard framing saw that was designed in the 1920s. As the industry changed and invented other materials to cut and other cutting styles, we just added more saws to accomplish those jobs. I just put them all into one, hit the ‘blend’ button and here we go.”

The Cuz-D Straight Flush Saw offers 31.5 percent more depth of cut than a standard 7 1/4-inch saw and delivers 11.3 percent more torque. It can cut stacked 2x4s in one pass,

plunge cut through a 2x4 and make bevel cuts from -5 to 65 degrees. Oh, and those zero-clearance flush cuts, too. The saw has gained the backing of some “major dudes” in the cutting industry, who are helping to expand Cuz-D’s distribution network. It’s worth a look.

**A NEW TWIST**

Alex Gordon, director of marketing for BT&F’s Grip-Tite brand hand tools, was showing off his company’s new Triple-Drive Ratchet wrench.

“Our Triple-Drive Ratchet has a gear box on top of the head. When you hold the gear box dial and ratchet at the same time, the wrench continually drives — even on the back swing — at three times your normal speed.”

Gordon says similar wrenches have much larger profile heads and only deliver two times normal ratcheting speed, which led Grip-Tite to develop this new tool. The Triple-Drive Ratchet is currently a Menard’s exclusive but will be open for distribution beginning in Q3 of this year.

**BIG NAMES**

Not of be out done by newcomers, established brands also like to show off their newest products here. Channellock is always sure to be on hand with new innovations.

“We’ve got a full line of aviation and tinner snips coming in just a few weeks,” explained Ryan DeArment, Channellock vice president of sales and marketing. “They have completely forged heads, threaded nuts



*As you read this, Ryan DeArment and Channellock expect to be shipping five new aviator and tinner snips, all with heavy-duty features such as forged heads and threaded nuts and bolts instead of rivets.*

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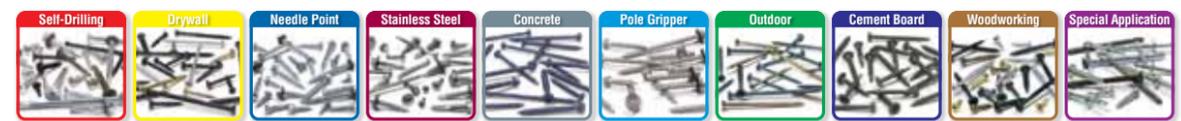
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6-20 x 3/8" - 10-16 x 3"	6-20 x 1" - 10-16 x 5"	10-12 x 3/4"
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Above: Arrow Fastener's Gregg Malanga fires off a few rounds with the brand new T50DCD Lithium-ion-powered cordless stapler, which can shoot 500 staples per charge.

and bolts versus rivet fasteners and heavy-duty handles and heavy-duty springs so they'll last a long time and be just what the pros need. They will be offered in tinnerns, standard aviation snips, upright, offset and bull nose styles."

Arrow Fastener is another familiar face that was launching new tools at the show. Gregg Malanga, Arrow product manager, showed us a new cordless stapler.

"The T50DCD has a rechargeable 3.6-volt Lithium-ion battery that will give you 500 shots out of every charge," he said. "It fires T50 staples from 1/4- to 1/2-inch in leg length. You load the staples in the bottom, close the magazine and you're ready to fire."

Arrow's corded electric tools, launched last year, are also selling well. These tools are solenoid-driven and won't suffer voltage-drop issues; they will deliver the same fire power whether plugged straight into a socket or a 200-foot extension cord.

Below: Stinger product manager Roger Szotko poses with the company's new merchadising unit, which organizes and displays pneumatic and manual fastening tools and fasteners.



"The pro version, model T50AC, features an LED light and a low-staple light that indicates when you are about to run out of staples," Mangala says. "It will fire all sizes of T50 staples, including 5/8-inch brad nails."

For retailers, National Nails showcased a new display for its Stinger brand tools and fasteners.

"One solution we came up with for our retailers is this new merchadiser," said Roger Szotko, product manager. "It will display all three of our pneumatic tools and at least one hand tool, and has room for fastener inventory and even synthetic underlayment as well."

### SO MANY SHOWS, SO LITTLE TIME

Is the National Hardware Show a must-go event every year? For retailers who serve the general public and a few contractors, maybe. But for contractor-focused tool and supply houses like STAFDA

member distributors, no. For focus and concentration of professional-grade product lines, no show compares to STAFDA. Pro-only distributors are far better served by STAFDA, or, if their line cards skew that way, the World of Concrete.

Rather than trek to Las Vegas every May, some distributors (and manufacturers) prefer to go to Cologne once every two years for the International Hardware Fair. The economics of two trips to Vegas versus one to Cologne work out to be about the same, and the Cologne show is twice the size; 2,700-plus exhibitors and well over 40,000 attendees each time. You might also be surprised at how many of your U.S.-based suppliers also exhibit there.

The next **National Hardware Show** is set for May 9-11, 2017 in Las Vegas. Visit [www.nationalhardwareshow.com](http://www.nationalhardwareshow.com) to learn more.

For comparison purposes, the next **Cologne EISENWAREN-MESSE - International Hardware Fair** is set for March 6-8, 2018 in gorgeous (trust us) Cologne, Germany.

Finally, for calendar completeness, this year's **STAFDA Convention & Trade Show** — its 40th annual event — takes place Nov. 6-8 in Atlanta. But you already have that on your calendar, right? **cs**

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**KREG**

» The Kreg Jig K5 Master System combines the popular Kreg Jig K5 with premium accessories which now include Kreg's new Automaxx clamps. Automaxx clamps have a unique auto-adjust technology that simplifies project construction by allowing users to clamp pieces of varying thicknesses without having to adjust the clamp, which saves significant time.

[www.kregtool.com](http://www.kregtool.com)

**ROCKWELL**

» Rockwell's new Sonicrafter F80 oscillating tool has a 4.2-amp motor with Duotech technology, which makes it the first tool on the market with two oscillating angles, 3.4 and 5.0 degrees. (Most other tools have a set angle of 3.2 degrees). Users now have the option of selecting the 5.0-degree oscillating angle for faster, more aggressive cuts with quicker results, or 3.4 degrees for continuous control. Both the Sonicrafter F50 and F80 feature the industry's best maximum cutting load of 35 pounds of force. These tools can be pushed harder than any other oscillating tool before the blade stalls out.

[www.rockwelltools.com](http://www.rockwelltools.com)

**BOSSE TOOLS**

» Bosse Tools' ergonomic shovels increase productivity while decreasing injuries on job sites. Based on ergonomic and bio-mechanical research conducted by Arizona State University, the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Noraxon's Evidence Based Biomechanics lab, Bosse shovels feature 16-position locking handles and are customizable for different jobs, tasks and users. Models include flat head, round point, scoop and snow shovels priced from \$79 to \$99.

[www.bossetools.com](http://www.bossetools.com)

**LANSKY SHARPENERS**

» Kim Houston, assistant national sales manager for Lansky, introduced us to the QuadSharp, which contains four separate sharpening angles, 17, 20, 25 and 30 degrees for breathing new life into blades ranging from filet knives to utility blades. The QuadSharp will come with a finishing polish and ceramic on the top. It's a great little tool for pockets, tool belts and toolboxes.

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