

floor covering news

[Subscribe Now!](#) | [Media Kit](#) | [Contact Us](#)

[Submit: Press Release](#) | [News Event](#) | [Product Intro](#)

[Home](#) : [News Briefs](#) : [Article Detail](#)

Faus opens U.S. plant with great fanfare

Article Number: 1407

By Matthew Spieler

Calhoun, Ga.—With state, local and foreign dignitaries on hand, the **Faus Group** officially opened its state-of-the-art U.S. manufacturing complex here.

The facility joins Faus' other plants in Shanghai and its world headquarters in Gandia, Spain, a suburb of the country's third largest city, Valencia.

Georgia governor Sonny Perdue, whose helicopter landed in the Faus parking lot a few feet from the facility's front door, told a standing-room-only audience that "Faus has honored us with its presence. It could have chosen anywhere, but placed its trust in Georgia and Calhoun for its U.S. operations and we are very pleased they see opportunity here."

He noted how fast the project took to complete from when it was first announced a little more than a year ago. "In February, Faus opened the doors here with 75 people, now there are 160 employees and it is in full production.

"This is only the first phase," Perdue continued. "A second phase is already planned with a completion date by 2008, at which time Faus will employ a total of 360 people. And, I can tell you, the workers here will not disappoint."

Craig Lesser, director of Georgia's Department of Economic Development, said the Faus project encompassed U.S. and international public and private sectors working in close partnership.

Pedro Coca, representative of the government of Valencia, pointed out that 10 years ago "Faus began its worldwide initiative and now it is in Europe, Asia and now the U.S. In 1997, Faus came to the U.S. and started with an office in Dalton, today it has a manufacturing plant here and it is proof of the strong commitment the company has to being in the U.S. and providing quality products for the most demanding market in the world.

"The philosophy of the business plan of Faus," he added, "has been a continuous effort of putting innovation into the product that customers demand." This approach is working, Coca noted, because "Faus' products have made consumers around the world happy and satisfied with their purchase."

Juan Negre, Faus' chairman and CEO, called the U.S. factory "the most important project in the company's history." For the record, the company came into existence in 1953. "We started in the U.S. nine years ago and finalized our stay today with the opening of this facility."

While a great deal of planning and coordination went into making the operation a reality, he said it could never have been done without Faus' customers. "They made this possible by recognizing the quality of our products."

Juan Flores, Faus' president, who was given the key to the city by the mayor's office, noted, "The future is bright; the sky's the limit. There are a lot of things to be done still and we want to do it ourselves."

This is the reason why Faus' top management, including Flores and Negre, were part of a leveraged buyout earlier this year ([FCNews](#), May 15/22), and why the company has changed its focus in the U.S. from being known as a technological supplier to



Georgia Gov. Sonny Perdue and Faus' Juan Negre cut the ribbon.

manufacturers to one that has set up a national distribution network to service its products, displays and programs for specialty retailers.

In fact, two weeks prior to the grand opening ceremony, Faus hosted its first distributor event in which wholesalers were not only able to see the facility but were given peeks at the new products and programs the company has planned for dealers for the rest of the year and up to **Surfaces 2007**, where the mill plans to showcase its worldwide strength in a state-of-the-art, newly designed 4,500 square foot booth.

"Our dream is to have the best products, be the most innovative and do it before anyone else; everything is done with the perspective of the product's design," said Traci Powell, Faus' director of marketing.

"This is not just a fancy statement," she added. "The products, merchandising systems and programs we have introduced are being met with great acceptance by everyone."

Award winning

Powell pointed to the recent first place Gold award Faus was given for its Fausfloor Gallery display unit for specialty retailers as a prime example of the company's commitment to being innovative and quality minded at the same time.

The competition, Design of the Times, recognizes the best displays in the retailing industry that meet the challenges of a specific retail environment and was held during the In-Store Marketing Expo in Chicago last month. A panel of more than 100 leading marketing and retailing experts evaluated, discussed and scored 400 entries in 16 categories. The 9-ft.-long Faus unit was categorized as a permanent freestanding or aisle display.

The display, in combination with Faus' products, make a formative package, she said, and noting how 4,600 units are expected to be in retail showrooms before the end of the year. Faus' original expectations may have to be modified as they projected hitting 5,000 by 2008.

Powell said the display can hold 125 SKUs and that it will be filled to capacity by Surfaces. That figure is also rapidly approaching as the company is rolling out 16 more patterns by December and then even more at Surfaces. This after just introducing a slew of products last month (FCNews, Oct. 2/9).

Starting next year, she noted two product launches a year will take place, in the spring and fall.

Products will be added to the mill's three dealer collections—Masterpieces, Classic Americana and Really Exotic. In some cases these names will start to become more of an umbrella brand for a grouping of certain collections.

For example, Powell said Faus' technological capabilities means the Exotic collection can be expanded to sub-categories of more regionalized exotics. In other words, at Surfaces, attendees will see patterns representing Asian exotics, North American exotics, among others.

More than just floors

In addition to its laminate flooring, Faus is also in the business of making and selling accessories, specifically moldings. It already has on the market FastTrim, which offers five transition options in one kit.

Mike Johnson, head of Faus' U.S. accessories operation, said two additions to the FastTrim system are being introduced. Instead of being a laminate transition kit, it will be solid wood and can be used with both solids and engineered products.

"It will have the same concept as the laminate one," he explained, "in that it allows for a 75% SKU reduction, which is a tremendous help for distributors and retailers."

He added the third generation of FastTrim is now being tested and when officially introduced will have a great impact on installation as it tackles moisture and sound issues. "It's new technology; very revolutionary."

In conjunction with the opening of its U.S. factory, Faus launched a consumer Web site, fausfloor.com. This site is separate from the company's corporate site, fausinc.com.

"We made it the place to go to find the answers to laminate-related questions that matter most to them," Powell explained, "including maintenance, care, product selection, finding dealers and more."

In the near future, she noted, the site will feature a virtual display and virtual room designer.