

**GS: We thoroughly enjoyed GEAR EXPO 2007, and everyone I spoke with felt the same way. How do the numbers look?**


**KM:** All of the numbers, in every registration category, are much higher than they were in 2005—and those numbers were better than they were in 2003. Just as an example, at the exhibitor's request we issued 18,000 guest passes two years ago, and this year 42,000 were requested by the exhibitors. The direct result of that is the fact that advance registration was more than double that of any previous show. The implication is that exhibitors have taken a more active role in promoting the show and their presence in it. I think that says a lot about the general sense of optimism that people in this and related industries are feeling.

**GS: There was a very positive atmosphere at the show. What's the reason, from your perspective?**

**KM:** I like to refer to the "GEAR EXPO Experience," which is a combination of many things, including educational opportunities in the Solutions Center—where we had more people attending the presentations than ever before—the ease of setting up and breaking down the exhibits, the many services that were made available by the Cobo Center staff and the union workers, and the growing professionalism shown by the exhibitors' displays. This year many of the exhibits were larger than they've been in the past, with more machinery in operation for the visitors to see. I can't speak highly enough of the AGMA staff who were involved in managing the show, of course, but also the people at Cobo, the local unions, the folks with Freeman—which is a top-notch general service contractor—and also the personnel of the Detroit Metro Convention & Visitors Bureau, who went out of their way to help promote GEAR EXPO 2007. So the success of this year's show was

the result of a team effort by a great number of talented and dedicated people who took everything that was good about the 2005 event and built on it. In fact, I had union supervisors stopping by every day just to make sure everybody had what they needed, and I was very impressed by their sincere desire for everything to go smoothly for the exhibitors. Overall, I think we've managed to bring together a really nice mix of people who want to do business together. About 35 percent of the exhibitors were gear manufacturers, with the remaining 65 percent made up of suppliers and related service providers such as machine tool builders, heat treating services, and lubrication and bearing manufacturers, just to name a few. As for the visitors, it's just the opposite, with most of them being gear manufacturers who want to see the latest in equipment designs and new technologies. So that mix really sets the stage for the development of new business relationships.

**GS: You'll be retiring from the AGMA at the end of this year, and I'm wondering if holding your last GEAR EXPO in Detroit has any particular meaning for you.**

**KM:** Yes, it does. I have always had a soft spot in my heart for Detroit because I managed my first trade show here back in 1972. I've seen so many changes at Cobo Center and in the city over the years—you had to hire five men on a forklift back then, for instance. Fortunately, the union work rules are much more reasonable now, and there is more flexibility as far as how much work the exhibitors can do on their own without having to hire a union worker. But the best part is to see Detroit coming back as a hospitable, attractive venue for trade shows once again. I'd like to think that GEAR EXPO has played a role in that, and with the obvious success of this year's show, it's a really nice feeling to go out with a bang! 



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