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Industry Update

Noteworthy developments impacting the kitchen and bath market

New Organization Aimed At Dealers, Distributors

Marietta, GA — A new organization, termed by organizers as "the first strategic partnership of its kind in the kitchen and bath industry," has been formed as a buying and services cooperative aimed at dealers and distributors throughout the U.S.

Organizers last month announced the formation of KBx, a Marietta, GA-based organization of dealers and distributors "ready to make a positive impact on the industry."

"We are all re-evaluating our businesses to adapt to the tremendous changes in the construction industry today, and have come together to address how to do business in this 'new marketplace,'" said KBx managing director Kathy Turner. "KBx members are facing challenges we could not even imagine two years ago, and we're leading intensive discussions on how members are dealing with and adjusting to these challenges."

"KBx Members are looking for new, innovative ways to grow and prosper in a challenging marketplace," Turner said.

According to Turner, KBx is professionally managed by the FEI Group, a division of CCA Global Partners, a major business cooperative organization. FEI has for 10 years managed



New York's leading interior designers, architects and kitchen designers gathered during a recent reception at Blackman's Fifth Avenue showroom to meet designers Fu-Tung Cheng (pictured, right) and Jamie Drake, and preview their newest designs for Elkay. Elkay executives joined hosts Laurie Lyon, showroom manager, and David Lyon, managing director of operations for Blackman. Both Drake's and Cheng's collections are showcased in the new kitchen center at the Blackman showroom.

the nation's largest flooring contractor cooperative, FloorExpo, and it was through its flooring-contractor relationships that FEI became involved in the formation of KBx, Turner said.

As a result of existing affiliations, KBx began "with a tremendous head start: it has the resources and market clout of \$10 billion in total member sales and more than 5,000 total member companies."

"So while KBx is a new stand-alone organization, it does have some powerful infrastructure to lean on," said Turner, adding that KBx members service builders, remodelers, property managers and consumers in their respective markets. According

to Turner, current KBx members represent a "Who's Who" of cabinet dealers, are located in 12 states, and serve more than 30 major U.S. markets. The organization, she added, is "aggressively growing and adding new members."

"In general, KBx is working to bring the strongest cabinet dealer-distributors together and make them better," Turner said, noting that the organization is aimed at facilitating networking and communication between members, and offering informational programs aimed at business issues, as well as at technology, benchmarking and marketing.

"We will also develop supply programs that protect and improve KBx

members and provide a competitive advantage in the marketplace," Turner said. "We will do this in a way that adds value to every link of the industry chain, from manufacturing through to the customer."

Turner said KBx also envisions "collective opportunities in sales and marketing. For example, a primary goal is to have exclusive, preferred supplier relationships with the largest national and regional customers and create comprehensive, turnkey cabinet programs for property management companies, whether they involve multi-family, senior housing, military housing or student housing."

KBx will be participating in K/BIS as well as in remodeling events and other local and regional trade shows, according to Turner. The organization is scheduling its first annual National Conference, and is conducting conference calls, e-mails and regional meetings, she added.

"KBx members are leveraging the KBx relationship to strengthen their businesses and create greater value for their customers," Turner said.

"We want to be known as the highest-quality cabinetwork provider in the industry."

Information is available at (770) 528-4747 or by visiting the organization's Web site, www.kb-x.com.