



ALPEXPO GRENOBLE
26th to 28th April 2006

PRESS REPORT
Friday 28th April 2006

An excellent result for the 2006 SAM, which confirms its place as the premier worldwide event for the mountain equipment industry

The 17th World Mountain Equipment Exhibition in Grenoble has just closed after three days of intense activity. Bringing together the players in the mountain economies of 52 countries, the 2006 SAM attracted more than 500 exhibitors and brands. The exhibition organisers announced their objective of 12,000 visitors at the 2006 exhibition, a figure that was reached and even slightly exceeded.

This result was obtained thanks to a winter sports season that overall was a success but also through the combined efforts of the main players in the mountain industry together with the Rhône-Alpes Region, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry for the département of Savoie and France Neige International to attract new exhibitors and new visitors.

Operation attraction was a success, especially when it came to foreign visitors, which saw a significant increase and accounted for 18% of total visitor numbers at the exhibition. Most came from Russia, Eastern and Southern Europe and Asia but also for the first time there were visitors from Quebec, Iran, Colombia, Venezuela, Madagascar and Australia.

The industry considers that the European winter sports and mountain equipment market has reached maturity and is now concerned with the renewal and modernisation of existing installations. The race to outdo the competition is thus over; the efforts of ski lift and piste maintenance equipment manufacturers are now directed more at safety, comfort and respect for the environment.

But the more recent snowmaking sector is one area that does not follow this rule. The current percentage of 15% of the surface area of French resorts provided with artificial snow could grow to 20 to 25% in the next few years.

It is therefore no surprise that the main European equipment manufacturers are setting out to conquer new markets abroad in regions such as Asia and Latin America and attempting to diversify into sectors not connected with winter sports such as ropeway systems at tourist attractions or in urban areas, where tried and tested mountain technology is working wonders in uses subject to fewer constraints.

Lastly, when it comes to organising trade fairs, Grenoble is meant to complement the InterAlpin exhibition in Innsbruck. The two events, which take place in alternate years, have agreed to a useful collaboration to avoid harmful competition and completely fulfil their missions to be the main event for the Latin countries in the case of Grenoble and for the German-influenced regions in the case of Innsbruck.

This alternation at the same time of year (the end of the winter season) is in response to requests from a number of exhibitors and particularly the international groups to impose a limit of two worldwide events in Europe and not to dilute their effectiveness by organising too many trade events.

Photographs of the SAM are available at: www.sam-grenoble.com

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