

International Home Furnishings Market ^[1]

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by Elizabeth H. Conner, 2006

See also: [High Point](#) ^[2]; [Furniture industry - Part 1: Overview](#) ^[3]

The [International Home Furnishings Market](#) ^[4] in [High Point](#) ^[2] and Thomasville is the largest furniture market in the world,



Southern Furniture Exposition
Building, High Point, N.C.
Available from North Carolina
Postcard Collection, UNC-Chapel
Hill.

^[5]drawing more people than the next four largest furniture markets combined (Cologne, Tokyo, Guadalajara, and Milan). An average of 74,000 people come twice a year to High Point and Thomasville to attend the nine-day event, which features 8 million square feet of permanent showroom space displaying all types of furniture, decorative accessories, lighting, rugs, and bedding. There are 2,400 exhibitors, about 105 of whom are international. Attendees hail from all 50 states and include representatives from 106 foreign countries. The market is held in April and October, the dates being set 20 years in advance. Manufacturers, home furnishings retailers, interior designers, architects, suppliers, and news media come in numbers to buy, sell, research, and publicize the latest furniture trends. The event is not open to the public, but its highlights are covered in many national publications.

The International Home Furnishings Market originated in 1909, when a group of manufacturers in High Point and neighboring towns used two buildings to show their wares to buyers from other states. Their efforts prospered, and in June 1921 the ten-story [Southern Furniture Exposition Building](#) ^[5] was opened for two shows a year. Eventually the number of buyers increased, but larger furniture markets continued to be held in Grand Rapids, Mich., Chicago, and New York City. As southern manufacturers began producing more upscale furniture and travel became easier, buyers from other states began to attend the High Point market in larger numbers. More exhibitors soon came as well, and other showrooms were built at many local factory sites. After the International Home Furnishings Market had become the top market in the country, new showrooms were created in the former downtown area of High Point. By 2000 the showroom complex, which after 1988 was officially called the [International Home Furnishings Center](#) ^[4], had spread into 160 separate buildings.

References:

Holt McPherson, *High Pointers of High Point* (1976).

F. J. Sizemore, *The Building and Builders of a City* (1947).

Additional Resources:

[International Home Furnishings Center](#) ^[4]

Image Credit:

Southern Furniture Exposition Building, High Point, N.C. Available from North Carolina Postcard Collection, UNC-Chapel Hill. Available from http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/nc_post/id/8283 ^[5] (accessed October 11, 2012).

Subjects:

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Authors:

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Origin - location:

High Point [9]

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Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press. [10]

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