



AFA FENCETECH/ NOMMA METALFAB 2023 IN REVIEW

By Vicki Jones, Editor

The AFA Fencetech/Nomma MetalFab trade show was held in Oklahoma City from Feb. 28 to Mar. 3. Attendee and exhibitor numbers show that the 2023 show was a huge success.

Throughout the event, the trade show floor was bustling with people and manufacturer booths appeared to be crowded with attendees. AFA Executive Director Michel Reed said, “The show was busy from the time the floor opened. At the beginning of the show, people were happy to be connecting with one another; toward the end of the show, people were getting excited for Nashville in January 2024.”

AFA reported that there were 4,601 attendees (4,334 Fencetech and 267 MetalFab) at the 2023 show. The numbers reflect an



increase in attendance of over 30% compared to 2022.

Reed thinks there are several reasons that Fencetech had great participation. He said, “Our exhibitor partners brought their newest innovations and best sales programs to the show, and attendees came with questions about how to build their businesses and to see new products.”

We welcomed people who have been coming to the show for years and people new to the industry. This mix gave the show a special energy and people loved it!”

4,601 Attendees

Fencetech/MetalFab Attendees (Combined)

Year	Attendee total
2023	4,601
2022	3000+

281 Exhibits at Expo 2022



The event featured 281 exhibiting companies, from 13 countries, representing the fence, gate, perimeter security, and ornamental and miscellaneous metals industries. The exhibitor total had an increase of 15% compared to last year’s show in New Orleans.

Exhibitors showcased their companies and product lines, occupying a total of 71,300 square feet of space in the Oklahoma City Convention Center. Manufacturers seemed to be pleased with the attendance and foot traffic during the show.

Exhibit Totals

Year	Exhibit total
2023	281
2022	240

OKC for the win



The reviews were overwhelmingly positive for the location. According to Reed, “Feedback has been tremendous. Attendees loved the location and the facilities. It was the first Fencetech in Oklahoma City, and it was a pleasant surprise for many people who fell in love with the city.”

The weather, delicious food options, and friendly locals made the location a fun spot for everyone. Also, most restaurants and hotels were conveniently walkable from the convention center.

Training, education, and networking

Fencetech/MetalFab included a week of diverse educational sessions beginning with the Gate

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Automation Design School (GADS). The day-and-a-half course covered project design and configuration of an automated gate system, UL and ASTM standards, and more.

In addition, 45 educational seminars (29 Fencetech and 16 MetalFab) were offered, and AFA reported standing room only for many of the seminars. Featured events included the “Women in fence” seminar and the Young Fence Professionals “Afterglow” offsite event held at Bricktown Brewery on Wednesday night.

Certification opportunities

All certification and exams were administered through the Accreditation and Certification Institute (ACI). AFA reported that 125 people participated and 144 certification exams were administered for the various programs, including Certified Gate Automation Designer, Certified Gate Automation Technician, and Certified Operations Manager.

ACI certification program	Number of certifications awarded
Certified Gate Automation Designer	61
Certified Gate Automation Technician	46
Certified Operations Manager	19

For a list of upcoming testing events, please visit <https://acieducation.org/events>.

Key presentations

Before the ribbon cutting and opening of the exhibit floor, Steve Gilliland, a recognized speaker, author, and business leader, provided the joint keynote presentation titled “Making a difference.”

Gilliland emphasized the power every individual holds to make a positive influence on others by sharing real-life experiences and personal takeaways for growth. Immediately following his address, Eric Quanbeck took the stage.

Quanbeck shared a moving presentation about his son Alex, a seven-year-old first grader who died from a manual gate accident in 2019, and then provided an overview of additional gate accidents that have occurred over the past 10 years. He detailed his mission to educate the industry and increase regulations for manual gate installations.

For more about Quanbeck’s story and to learn how you can make a difference, see page 38. ■



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Fencetech/MetalFab
Jan. 23-26, 2024
Nashville, Tenn.

IDAExpo
Apr. 22-27, 2024
Las Vegas, Nev.



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