“The meeting presents a tremendous year-end buying opportunity,” Seldin said. “We have more than 550 exhibitors and 1,500 booths, as well as over 950 courses ranging from seminars to hands-on workshops.”

Courses are being offered in Spanish as well as English, a feature Seldin credited for the show’s ability to attract so many attendees from other countries.

“We make a strong effort to promote the meeting in other countries,” added general chairman John S. McIntyre. “Our emphasis is international as well as domestic.”

New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg was the guest speaker at the president’s luncheon, held Monday, November 26. Meredith Viera, current “Today Show” co-anchor, host of the afternoon game show “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire,” and former panelist on the morning kafeflaktham program “The View,” was the featured speaker at the event.

“Welcome to the Big Apple,” Bloomberg said before adding, jokingly, “I owe people a lot of money, and you’re here. We need the sales tax revenue.”

Luncheon emcee McIntyre presented an “I Love New York” sweatshirt to NYU School of Dentistry Dean Charles Bertolami and thanked Sullivan Schein for the company’s ongoing support for both the GNYDM and the president’s luncheon. He also presented a plaque with the event to the Latin American Dental Association, FOLA (Federacion Odontologica Latinoamericana) in honor of the organization’s 90th anniversary.

Viera, who spoke with Dental Tribune America’s today newspaper after her Q&A-style presentation, said she rarely gives speeches like the one she gave at the president’s luncheon.

“I don’t do a lot at all, because my time is so limited,” she said. “But this seemed like an interesting or organization, and the timing of the event was such that I felt I could do it. But I don’t do very many. Depending on the audience, you may tweet [your speech], but most people just want to know your story.”

Referring to her recent dental visit for her cracked tooth, she said, “Teeth are important. I try to be good and see my dentist regularly.” Then she added with a chuckle, “What do you think I’m going to tell you?”

Viera has interviewed scores of celebrities, many of whom sport blindingly white movie star smiles.

“You sometimes start looking at the teeth,” she said. “People will look to see: ‘Has this one had plastic surgery?’ In the same way, you sometimes look at teeth and say, ‘Are those real, or are they fake?’ If they look fake, that’s no good. So the best dentists are the ones that make them look real. If you see the real white, white ones, it’s like, ‘hmm.’”

She includes her own Manhattan dentist in the “best” category.

“My oldest was very scared of the dentist,” said the mother of three. “My middle guy, so-so. After Lillie, my daughter, had her first time at the dentist, the dentist said he’d never met such a tough kid. No novocaine, nothing. She’s a tough cookie. Our dentist here in Manhattan is Dr. Jed Best. He’s phenominal. He’s made it a positive experience. Even Ben now, my oldest is fine. Of course now he’s on his way to college and he’s an adult.”

A rainstorm on the 26th put a damper on show floor attendance, some exhibitors said, but they correctly predicted that Tuesday traffic would rebound.

“Sunday was an madhouse. Monday was really slow, and today is also quiet,” one exhibitor said on the 27th. “Wednesday should really have been as busy as people who stayed away because of the rain try to see all the exhibits before the show ends. We’re hoping for good customer interest of course, but it’s the old story that either the hall seems dead or you’re swamped. You’re either scrambling to answer questions or you worry that you’re not reaching people.”

In companies in all branches of dentistry and related services presented an array of products on the floor of the Javits Center. Melanie Olscher, territory manager for Solmetex, said interest in the Solmetex Hg5 amalgam separator was high because of tougher state regulations against mercury waste from dental offices. Both New York and New Jersey are implementing strict new regulations, making the Greater New York Dental Meeting ideal for showcasing the technology.

Kuraray used a six foot tall robot to attract customers and emphasize its reputation for high technology. Regional manager Dan Bazzano said a lot of people are looking at Clearfil Majesty Flow, the company’s new restorative composite resin.

Another product that attracted attention because of its physical appearance was Discus Dental’s Zoom, its lamp and tooth whitening system. “This is our big new product,” a floor representative said. “It’s what we’re emphasizing and what is attracting the most attention.”

A maturing population that has more disposable income drove interest in sophisticated new over-the-counter products. “People are flocking to us,” said Lisa Newson, vice president of international sales for Laclede Inc.’s Biotene. “Dry mouth is becoming more and more of a problem as the American population matures.”

During a trade seminar on Nov. 26, The Department of Commerce (DOC) encouraged American dental manufacturers to export to overseas markets. Although the U.S. represents imports, but its medical device manufacturers are already exporting to over 100 countries. The U.S. is the largest foreign supplier, followed by Germany and Japan.

For more on the Greater New York Dental Meeting, see page 17.

Dental Tribune Managing Editor Matt Connor contributed to this story.