



Lighting designers assemble to learn the latest developments at Tech Lighting.



Tech Lighting's facility tour included behind-the-scenes views of the Skokie, Ill. operation.

CHICAGO SEMINAR ASSEMBLES 'BRIGHTEST' DESIGNERS

Tech Lighting's fourth annual LIGHTSPEAK two-day symposium provided a relaxed atmosphere for learning about lighting. The gathering featured 35 designers focused on residential and commercial projects. Through roundtable sessions, executives at Tech Lighting were eager to hear the professionals' response to its line of ELEMENT recessed downlights plus LED MonoRail LED FreeJack systems.

"We fielded an overwhelming number of questions about the line, future developments, and availability," notes Steve Harriott, president of Encompass Lighting Group, parent of Tech Lighting. "It seems to us that the market is indeed ready for the line and our excitement about the LED products continues to build."

Presenters emphasized that each new LED product is carefully reviewed before acceptance and use. "This was very encouraging to the attendees helping them understand that our line is not only a real, viable alternative, but is also fully supported," Harriott adds.

Afterwards, guests were treated to an architectural boat tour of downtown Chicago, plus dinner at Gibson's Steakhouse. They were also able to view Tech Lighting's product scheduling area as well as the parts and finished goods departments.

LIGHTING SHIPMENTS HIT 10-YEAR LOW

Silver Spring, Md.-based The National Lighting Bureau (NLB) released its third-quarter 2008 NEMA Lighting Systems Index data, which revealed lighting equipment shipments down 4.3 percent from this year's second-quarter level, reaching a ten-year low.

Established in 1998, the NEMA Lighting Systems Index is a composite measure of lamps, luminaires, ballasts, emergency lighting, exit signs, and other lighting products shipped nationally and internationally from the U.S. by the 450 companies that comprise the National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA). NEMA members manufacture a wide range of products used in the generation, transmission, distribution, and control of electricity, as well as innumerable end-use products in addition to those employed in lighting. The value of NEMA members' annual shipments totals \$100 billion.

The Index uses 2002 data for its 100-point benchmark; third-quarter 2008 performance receded to the 92.5-point level. The prior low point was reached during the fourth quarter of 2006 (93.5), followed by the first quarter of 1999 (94.5).

The third quarter's discouraging performance was expected by the NLB, even though data from the prior two quarters indicated expansion rather than contraction: Second-quarter 2008 Index performance was about 1.5 percent ahead of first-quarter performance, which itself exceeded fourth-quarter 2007 results by 1.1 percent.

NEMA's economic analysis director Brian Lego observes that, "Lighting equipment demand continues to take a significant hit from the residential market" on both the supply side and demand side. "On the supply side, builders are loath to begin new homes as many local markets are bloated with inventories caused by record foreclosure rates. On the demand side, a weaker economy is prompting a pullback in household growth and creating a disincentive for consumers to make major purchases such as a new home. Moreover, lenders have reined in standards for loans, which will also reduce the ability of consumers to buy a new home. Even consumer purchases of energy-efficient lighting equipment such as CFLs have taken a hit as of late, as buyers have balked at their higher first-cost pricing."

The impact of the housing-market slowdown has for several quarters been offset by continued construction in the non-residential market. However, Lego reports that source of support "is beginning to wane as inflation-adjusted outlays on commercial and industrial construction projects declined during the third quarter of 2008, marking the first such drop since 2005. Five consecutive quarters of shrinking corporate profits, slow-to-thaw credit markets and tougher lending terms have eroded the prospects for construction activity going forward, and thus will lead to diminished demand for lighting equipment."

The NEMA Lighting Systems Index can be viewed at nlb.org/Index.

CONTRACT LIGHTING WINS EDITORIAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

Editorial director **Linda Longo** has earned the 2008 APEX Award for overall magazine excellence for her work on *Contract Lighting* magazine. The designation was bestowed by Springfield, Va.-based Communication Concepts, publishers of *Writing That Works*.

Longo also won a Feature Writing award of excellence for her story on Abe Kleinberg, founder of manufacturer Crystorama. That article appeared in *Contract Lighting's* sister publication, *Home Lighting & Accessories*. In all, more than 4,400 entries were judged in the competition.



LUTRON PLANTS TRAINING CENTER WITHIN THE BIG APPLE

Coopersburg, Pa.-based Lutron Electronics will be unveiling its fourth Experience Center in the heart of midtown Manhattan in early 2009.

The new, 1,800-sq.-ft. Experience Center will be located on the ground floor of the Decoration & Design (D&D) Building on Third Avenue. The site will feature a variety of lighting controls showcased in space typical of New York City living. In addition to bedroom, kitchen and media/family room vignettes, the showroom and design center will give clients the opportunity to view a wide variety of product colors, finishes, sustainable lighting control options, and shade fabrics.

Other Experience Center locations include Irvine, Calif., Plantation, Fla., and the company's headquarters in Pennsylvania.

The D&D Building represents more than 3,000 manufacturers offering high-quality residential and business interior furnishings, educational opportunities, and resource information. Products range from fabrics, wall coverings, traditional and contemporary furniture, carpets, lighting, antiques, art and accessories to one-of-a-kind custom items. The D&D Building is open exclusively to the trade.

OSRAM SYLVANIA OPENS ENERGY-EFFICIENT LIGHTING OPERATION IN KENTUCKY

OSRAM SYLVANIA has opened a \$30-million manufacturing operation for energy-efficient T5 fluorescent lamps. Located in Versailles, Ky., it is reportedly the first such facility in North America.

The new highly automated production line will hire approximately 25 people and produce tens of millions of energy-efficient lamps each year. The plant employs approximately 800 workers.

"OSRAM SYLVANIA is proud to bring T5 lamp production to North America and keep manufacturing jobs here in Kentucky," notes Charlie Jerabek, president and CEO. "Our investment in this green technology shows that what is good for our environment can also be good for our economy."

SYLVANIA PENTRON® T5 fluorescent lamps are up to 30 percent more efficient than older T12 and T8 fluorescent lamp types. The company previously imported PENTRON T5 lamps from manufacturing facilities in Europe.

"Our unique position as a U.S. producer of [these] T5 fluorescent lamps allows us to provide energy-conscious businesses with superior lighting, world-class service and competitive pricing," Jerabek adds.

IALD PARTNERS WITH DOE TO IMPROVE ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN LIGHTING SYSTEMS

The International Association of Lighting Designers (IALD) and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to work cooperatively toward improving the efficient use of energy by lighting equipment and systems. The MOU emphasizes the importance of minimizing the impact of energy use on the environment in support of DOE SSL programs on lighting quality.

DOE's collaboration with IALD further strengthens its commitment to developing innovative, energy-efficient lighting solutions. The MOU highlights four key areas of collaboration:

- Promoting lighting design principles and technologies that improve lighting quality, energy efficiency, and environmental sustainability.
- Developing and disseminating technical information to assist the lighting design community in the assessment and specification of SSL and other efficient technologies to support DOE programs on lighting quality such as ENERGY STAR® and SSL quality advocates.
- Jointly facilitating forums in which lighting designers can exchange ideas and information with DOE and provide input to DOE lighting program planning.
- Encouraging professional lighting designers to participate in DOE lighting projects, such as GATEWAY demonstrations, with particular attention to helping DOE assess lighting quality.

In addition, IALD and IESNA are co-sponsors of the new DOE Next Generation Luminaires™ Design Competition, which recognizes excellence in the design of energy-efficient LED commercial lighting luminaires.

IALD members also contribute to DOE GATEWAY demonstration activities, including a recent tour and roundtable discussion on the LED roadway lighting for the new I-35W Bridge in Minneapolis.