



THE WIRE

Dispatches from the lighting industry

Lighting Industry Helps Spread EPA's Message

Conserving energy doesn't have to be a herculean task. That's the message the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) hopes to impart this month with the help of lighting retailers and manufacturers during its Change a Light, Change the World Campaign.

An annual part of Energy Awareness Month, the marketing outreach effort aims to increase public awareness of the benefits of switching to energy-efficient lighting. Throughout October and November, the EPA encourages consumers to replace the five most frequently used fixtures in their home (or the bulbs in them) with those granted the Energy Star® designation for outstanding efficiency.

And while the campaign, now in its fifth year, has become increasingly visible, the EPA still relies heavily on industry professionals to help get the word out.

"Most people make purchasing decisions at the store level," says Wendy Reed, EPA spokesperson. "They're not at home thinking, 'Today I'm going to go buy an energy-efficient

light bulb.'"

It's therefore a priority for the EPA, she says, to equip retailers with information to guide their customers toward environmentally friendly choices. Retailers who partner with the EPA for the campaign are given promotional materials to display in their stores or incorporate into their own existing marketing efforts.

"We want them to educate consumers on what a smart purchase this is," she says.

Thanks to a strong, positive consumer response, the lighting industry becomes more involved and more excited about the idea of promoting energy-efficient lighting with each passing year, Reed says. Accordingly, the Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (NEEA) sponsored

a trade show symposium in late September dedicated to helping retailers, builders and electrical distributors understand technological advancements. In particular, this year has seen a remarkable increase in the number of manufacturers interested in designing fixtures that are both decorative and environmentally friendly.

"[Manufacturers] believe that consumers are ready for this technology," Reed says.

As part of the Change a Light campaign, some state and local organizations are taking steps to ensure these conscientious retailers and manufacturers are rewarded for their efforts. The state of New York plans to recognize retailers who carry Energy Star products by airing advertisements in October that will direct customers to a Web site with their names. Likewise, the New England-based Conservation Services Group will provide consumers with instant coupon rebates and an online catalog of qualified lighting fixtures that directs them to participating retail partners.

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CHANGE A LIGHT CHANGE THE WORLD ENERGY STAR

Uttermost Opens New Lamp Factory

The Uttermost Co. recently started production at its new factory in Shenzhen, China. Dedicated exclusively to the manufacturing of the company's portable lighting line, the factory comprises three three-story buildings and a worker dormitory.

"This new factory will allow us to protect our exclusive designs in a way that we haven't been able to in the past, yet give us both cost advantages and additional flexibility in adjusting to our customers' needs," says Uttermost President and CEO Mac Cooper.

