Postings: from the desk of Jim Brodrick

The number of LED lighting products on display at LIGHTFAIR® International in Philadelphia next week is sure to be even greater than at last year's event, where they dominated the show. We've been seeing SSL products getting better and better lately, and I'd like to think that the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) multipronged efforts have played some small part in helping to bring that about. But with the kind of rapid growth that's taking place in solid-state lighting, there inevitably comes a certain amount of confusion, as people struggle to understand a new technology and cut through the hype and misinformation to find products whose performance matches the claims.

That's why, once again, DOE will have a booth at LIGHTFAIR. Our mission is educational rather than commercial; we'll be answering questions about solid-state lighting and encouraging attendees to ask the right questions of sales reps and manufacturers when considering SSL products – such as what the delivered lumens are at each correlated color temperature, whether there's a written binning policy, and whether chromaticity measurements were performed according to LM-79 by an independent lab. We'll also be offering free SSL tutorials throughout the show on topics ranging from LED T8 replacement lamps, to the Municipal Solid-State Street Lighting Consortium, to recent findings from the CALiPER testing program, to flicker and dimming. So if you're coming to LIGHTFAIR, please make it a point to stop by booth #3011.

But the educational efforts of DOE's solid-state lighting program aren't confined to LIGHTFAIR. As many of you know, DOE has

made a major commitment to SSL education, which cuts across a number of fronts. One, of course, involves the three annual SSL workshops we host, which drew more than 1,000 attendees last year and are designed to share updates and insights and help people keep a finger on the pulse of this fast-moving technology. One of the few venues that draw government and industry as well as utilities and retailers, these workshops are vendor-neutral forums where representatives from every link in the supply chain can find common ground and exchange ideas in a hype-free environment.

Less widely known is the educational outreach we do at other conferences across the country. We do this not only by speaking at conferences, but also by giving seminars and mini-workshops on SSL. Last year we added Jack Curran of LED Transformations to the mix of our presenters. Jack is well-known in the lighting world for his informative, accessible, and no-nonsense approach to providing education and training to those who are entering the SSL market, and he has given talks on DOE's behalf across the country – from federal facility managers at GovEnergy, to electrical distributors and manufacturers at the IMARK Energy Sales Summit, to the National Association of Independent Lighting Distributors. Because of the diversity of audiences in terms of their knowledge of SSL – ranging from buyers with no idea what a lumen is, to tech-savvy manufacturers – these efforts have to be tailored to the needs of each setting.

DOE has also joined forces with the International Association of Lighting Designers in an education initiative to provide training in SSL for lighting professionals through a series of three regional workshops to be held this year. The workshops will not only provide information that will enable lighting designers and specifiers to better educate clients about solid-state lighting, but will also provide the tools and background to deal with the increasing amount of information, and in some cases misinformation, being used to tout SSL products. Attendees will learn such things as the subtleties of LM-79 and LM-80 reports, and how to use them to make informed

product selections. Funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the workshops will be one-day affairs and will be held in San Francisco on June 15, New York on July 20, and Chicago on October 11. While designed for specifiers, the events are open to all; registration is at http://www.regonline.com/ssl_lighting_education.

DOE is engaged in these education efforts about solid-state lighting to counteract the confusion and misinformation that come with any new technology. Our goal is to inform the public about SSL, so that people can make intelligent choices. They say that knowledge is power, but in this case our hope is that the knowledge we impart will have the opposite effect – that is, we hope it will reduce our need for electric power so that we consume less of it.

As always, if you have questions or comments, you can reach me at postings@lightingfacts.com.