

SSL Postings

At a time of year when many people are in a back-to-school state of mind, it's especially appropriate for us to take a look at the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) expanded commitment to education. Not that education is a new focus for DOE's solid-state lighting program – in fact, it's central to nearly everything we do. But lately we've increased our educational efforts in order to reach an even wider audience, so that as many people as possible can cut through the hype and misinformation to make the most appropriate use of this rapidly evolving technology.

For instance, a few weeks ago in these Postings, we gave you an update on a series of regional workshops that were held by DOE's [Municipal Solid-State Street Lighting Consortium](#). Those workshops – which targeted municipalities, utilities, and energy efficiency organizations – are just one example of the various ways DOE is fulfilling its mission to educate and inform as broad an audience as possible about SSL.

Another example is the workshop series we're conducting in partnership with the International Association of Lighting Designers (IALD). Two of those workshops have already been held this summer – in San Francisco and New York – with the next and final one scheduled for October 11 in Chicago (visit [the IALD website](#) for more information or to register). Their purpose is twofold: to provide information that will enable lighting designers and specifiers to better educate their clients about SSL (i.e., we want to educate the educators), and to provide the tools and background that will help them accurately evaluate the ever-growing number of SSL products

that are coming onto the market.

Recognizing that SSL education is not a "one size fits all" proposition because each particular audience has its own unique requirements, the DOE-IALD workshops are tailored to the needs of lighting designers and specifiers. Attendees rotate among a series of round-robin exercises that are hands-on and interactive. At one station, they evaluate the color temperature and rendering of LED and benchmark products to see how each stacks up compared to its stated color quality. At another station, they compare the actual light levels, distribution, beam angles, and beam spread with the photometric reports and learn to use those reports to maximum effectiveness in evaluating LED products. A third station features multiple dimmers with a variety of lamps to illustrate the tricky issue of dimming compatibility.

Based on attendee feedback, an advanced DOE-IALD workshop is being added next month in New York – a "master class" that goes into more depth for those lighting designers and specifiers who are already familiar with SSL and want to take their knowledge to the next level. The addition of that master class underscores the need for SSL education to be tailored to a variety of levels of understanding.

Another important thread in DOE's SSL educational efforts involves speaking at various conferences across the country. A key player on our team of speakers is Jack Curran of LED Transformations, who's well-known in the lighting world for his accessible, no-nonsense, and entertaining approach to providing education and training to those who are entering the SSL market. Jack's mandate is to expand the reach of DOE's LED education efforts, and as such he's given talks on our 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, to the American Institute of Architects.

Because these different audiences range from buyers with no idea what a lumen is to tech-savvy manufacturers, Jack tailors his talks to the needs of each setting. But his goal is always to give attendees an understanding of how SSL technology works, and a familiarity with the tools available to help them determine what LED products they should be buying – and *whether* they should be buying.

Jack gave a mini-workshop on LEDs and even a talk on OLEDs at GovEnergy in Cincinnati last month, and next month he'll be in San Diego at the National Electrical Contractors Association convention and in Las Vegas at the Facility Decisions Expo. More immediately, next Thursday (September 8) he'll be giving a talk at the National Building Museum in Washington, DC (see [the museum website](#) for more info or to sign up).

DOE will continue to talk with its partners and other stakeholders about how best to spread the word, as we continue to expand our commitment to SSL education. Educating as broad a range of the buying public as possible is the best way to ensure that the technology lives up to its bright potential.

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