

SSL Postings



Although you do not often hear about growth in domestic manufacturing here in the United States, the solid-state lighting industry is steadily growing and establishing a manufacturing presence here at home. Solid-state lighting was not only born of U.S. ingenuity and R&D, but is riding the crest of a worldwide trend toward greater energy efficiency. This offers a golden opportunity for U.S. manufacturing to take a significant role in SSL. From time to time, these Postings will focus on SSL companies manufacturing here in the U.S., a series we call "SSL in America." This is not intended to endorse or promote any of the companies, but rather to describe advances in energy-efficient solid-state lighting. The activities you'll read about here are consistent with the [U.S. Department of Energy \(DOE\) white paper "Keeping Manufacturing in the United States,"](#) which grew out of DOE's 2010 SSL Manufacturing R&D Workshop.

A subsidiary of Houston-based Cooper Industries, which makes a range of electrical products, Cooper Lighting is headquartered in the Atlanta suburb of Peachtree City, GA, and manufactures lighting fixtures and controls for a variety of technologies. The company, which has 5,000 employees, has been making LED exit signs and emergency lights for more than a decade and also made LED traffic signals, but its entry into the LED general-illumination market came in 2007 with the acquisition of io Lighting, which made SSL outdoor, architectural, and indoor fixtures. Cooper Lighting's SSL portfolio expanded again in 2009 with the acquisition of Illumination Management Systems, which made a variety of LED lighting products. Since then, it has added still more LED lighting products

and now covers most interior and exterior applications, recently rolling out an integrated LED replacement system for 32 different configurations of fluorescent lighting. Cooper has also had several products recognized by the [Next Generation Luminaires™](#) design competition.

More than 10 percent of Cooper Lighting's products are LED-based, and according to president Mark Eubanks, that number is steadily increasing. Most of the company's SSL manufacturing, as well as a significant proportion of its other manufacturing, is done in the U.S., at nine different facilities located in New York, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Colorado, California, and Illinois. In 2009, Cooper Lighting – viewing SSL as a transformational technology on the cutting edge – built an LED innovation center in Peachtree City, where the company does all of its advanced SSL R&D, as well as design, reliability testing, prototyping, and pilot manufacturing.

Mark notes that Cooper Lighting has a long history of domestic manufacturing, and that the company's existing U.S. footprint mitigates the cost and difficulty of making LED lighting products here. He also notes that although Cooper Lighting has customers worldwide, most of them are located in the U.S. This, Mark says, makes it advantageous to manufacture here, because many orders require a certain degree of customization – in terms of such things as configuration, lensing, lumen output, color temperature, and CRI. By manufacturing domestically, he explains, Cooper Lighting can customize these orders much more quickly than if it were done overseas – in a matter of days or weeks, as opposed to months.

In addition, U.S.-based manufacturing makes for speedier and more reliable product launches, because it facilitates the sustained presence of engineers and product managers during ramp-up and launch. And Mark also cites the requirements that some customers have – often in order to fulfill the terms of grants or other special funding – that purchased products be U.S.-made. This, he says, gives Cooper Lighting a decided leg up over foreign competitors.

And finally, there's the advantage of being able to invite customers to visit the manufacturing plant and see where the products are made.

Mark says that as costs continue to come down and performance continues to improve, Cooper Lighting plans to broaden its SSL product offerings and expand its manufacturing in the U.S.

Cooper Lighting is among a number of companies that are working to create and strengthen a solid-state lighting manufacturing base here in the U.S. This will not only help bring significant energy savings through more efficient lighting products but will benefit our economy by adding jobs at multiple levels of the supply chain.

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