

## ESTA Directions June 2002

*by Mike Wood*

As mentioned in last issues 'Directions' the ESTA fog informational and outreach campaign has been in rapid development over the last few months. It will be launched by the time you read this. A number of venues have volunteered to test out the systems and give us a 'running start'. The hope is that good, scientific testing and factual reporting can allay many of the fears that performers and staff have about the different types of fog technology. ESTA now has the equipment available to measure the environment in a venue and ensure that safe levels are being maintained. Let the facts speak for themselves without confusing rhetoric is the message. If you are interested in more information please contact the ESTA office.

This is the time of year when the Customer Service Surveys draw to a close and once again I'd like to thank everyone who helped make this a success by filling out the surveys. We had record response rates this year including a number of companies over 50% which raised the average to nearly 40% from 27% previously. A lot of that increase is due to a concerted effort by many of the manufacturer members involved who called recipients and encourage them to respond. Those manufacturers know how valuable this data is and are prepared to work to get it.

Also discussed in previous issues has been ESTA's involvement in the fight for sanity and common sense against the poorly thought out total ban on Mercury proposed by many State legislatures which would include many lamps used by the entertainment industry. Progress to date includes a powerful and logical position paper written by Karl Ruling, a version of the ESTA Product Stewardship Program customized for mercury containing lamps, an e-mail and letter writing campaign to representatives and influencers, Karl giving testimony to the Connecticut Legislature and a discussion panel at LDI. The message throughout always being that recycling and responsible product management are the ways to deal with the issue not short sighted bans which, in many States, could actually exacerbate the problem rather than solving it.

Karl's testimony at the Senate hearing in Connecticut was key in helping obtain an exemption for entertainment lighting in this round of legislation. ESTA has been working closely with NEMA on this issue and Ric Erdheim (Senior Manager Government Affairs – National Electrical Manufacturers Association) commented, "...Karl did a great job at the hearing and that is reflected in the exemption for entertainment lighting. "

Finally, this years LDI will mark the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the TDA and ESTA – back in Las Vegas where it all started. It was in November 1987 that the 25 founding dealers met in Las Vegas over a weekend to form the Theatrical Dealers Association. I'm sure none of those original members at that inaugural meeting would have had the temerity to hope or dream that the TDA could have achieved the success it has. Make sure you are there to help celebrate this milestone.