

ESTA Directions December 2001

by Mike Wood

Well, LDI 2001 happened – and what's more, it was an excellent show. Sure gross visitor numbers were down on previous years, but everyone who came was a quality visitor there to do business. The fact that very few tire kickers showed up in Orlando helped make for a very professional, productive show. In fact the only negative was the sadly low numbers of overseas visitors, particularly noticeable by their absence were the Central and South American customers who usually attend when LDI is in Orlando. The industry should pat itself on the back that we didn't let the prophecies of doom become self-fulfilling and went ahead with a successful trade show. The dismally quiet show in the adjacent hall of the Orange County Convention Center showed what it could have been like without the industry rally.

That's not to say that times aren't still tough – I don't think there's a single company in ESTA which isn't having to tighten its belt and take some hard decisions on how to run their business over the next few months. As I write this in mid December I've heard a number of recent reports that suggest the holiday season is looking somewhat more positive and projects are starting to appear again – we all hope that's true and we will climb up out of this recession over the next year. ESTA will do everything it can to assist with programs to help control expenses – if you aren't already participating in the ESTA programs now could be the ideal time to take a look – they are all detailed on the ESTA web site or call MaryLisa in the New York office.

Other good news at LDI was the record turnout we had at the ESTA dinner – over 300 attendees! Thanks to all of you for coming. During the dinner a number of well deserved awards were distributed including the prestigious Swan Award – read the article in this issue for full details. Thanks to all of you who took the time and trouble to participate in the nominations and voting.

In this article last year I announced the release of the Product Stewardship program. Originally written around the needs of the Fog and Smoke community the program was expanded to suggest the benefits of 'cradle to tomb' management of many of our products. Well, this may have been timely, as you may know many States are enacting legislation to either ban or severely curtail the use of mercury in products. This move started by sensibly seeking to ban mercury in fever thermometers – after all there is no question that mercury is toxic and that there is no need to use mercury based thermometers anymore; there are plenty of viable alternatives. These products are safe in use but the problem is after the product reaches the end of its life and is disposed of – mercury in a rubbish tip or land fill can end up seeping through to contaminate the ground water. So far so good – however a number of States haven't stopped with fever thermometers and are seeking to ban mercury use completely. When you realize that just about every discharge lamp manufactured incorporates some mercury you can see how big a problem this could be. Karl Ruling has written an informative article on this topic in this edition – read it, it's important.

Another ESTA initiative moving into high gear is the Certification Program – Bill Maiman, appointed this year as the Program Manager for certification, details the good news in this issue. This is starting to get very exciting.

Finally - It's time for my annual reminder on ESTA dues. You will receive your renewal in the mail in December. ESTA is heavily reliant on membership dues as a source of income to drive all the programs so please take the time to make sure the invoice isn't still sitting in your in tray and pass it through for payment. Remember too that, this year, the timing of the printing of the annual ESTA directory has changed and the new edition will only include your company if you renew on time. As I said earlier in this article – times are tough – so ESTA dues are not being increased this year and will remain at 2000 levels – don't let the date slip by.

