

Southern City

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NC LEAGUE
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NCLM re-organizes, readies for move back to Coates Building

THE N.C. LEAGUE OF MUNICIPALITIES has reorganized and consolidated several departments to better serve its membership. The reorganization became official on January 1, 2012.

Under the re-organization, a new department of Communications and Member Relations was created. (The League is currently in the process of hiring a director of Communications and Member Relations.) Within this department are communications, which was previously called public affairs; member relations, which was previously member services; and meeting planning.

The director of Communications and Member Relations will manage the League's branding and overall communications plans; legislative messaging; publications; member education and training and marketing of the three risk management trusts. Working on the communications side of the department are Writer/Web Content Editor Matt Lail, who has served as interim director of public affairs for the past year, and Design Specialist Dana Davis Bayley.

Rob Shepherd, previously the League's manager of member services, is now the manager of member relations. He has overall responsibility for the League's annual conference as well as other meetings. Shepherd also oversees the marketing efforts of the League's non-risk management services. Working with Shepherd is Marketing Program Administrator Madeleine Henley and Survey Research Analyst Tanika Sneed, both of whom were previously in the department of member services.

Diane Godwin continues to serve as the League's principal meeting planner, assisted by Meeting Planner Athena Banks and Meeting Planning Assistant Crystal Correia.

A yet-to-be-hired member relations field consultant will fill out the Communications and Member Relations team.

Hartwell Wright, the League's human resources consultant, continues in that role but is now part of the department of field services within Risk Management Services (RMS). Lisa Kinsey and Angela Greene, who previously worked

in member services, now concentrate on marketing the RMS programs as member services field consultants. The League is currently in the process of hiring for a director of field services to oversee that department.

Charles Archer, who was previously the League's associate director for operations and federal relations, now has the title of chief operating officer. He oversees internal functions of the association including IT, human resources, printing and facilities. Archer will also continue to serve as the staff contact to the N.C. City & County Management Association; however, his duties as federal advocacy liaison (to the National League of Cities and/or to Congress) have now been shifted to Governmental Affairs Director Kelli Kukura and her team.

The re-organization has coincidentally occurred just in time for the move of some NCLM staff members back to the Albert

Coates Local Government Center. A long-overdue renovation of that facility was recently completed. The new-and-improved League side of the Coates building (the N.C. Association of County Commissioners shares the building) now boasts a new roof, reconfigured office space to allow more natural light, additional meeting space, much-needed security upgrades, and improvements in energy efficiencies and storage. In addition, the offices all feature new furniture.

Funding for the Coates building renovation came from the League's capital reserves and not the operating budget.

Executive Director S. Ellis Hankins and Executive Assistant Regan Reynolds will return to the Coates Building, as will the League's governmental affairs, legal, communications and N.C. Metropolitan Mayors Coalition staff members.



LEDs in public spaces save money, offer greater lighting efficiency

BY BRENDA PORTER-ROCKWELL

AS MUNICIPALITIES LOOK FOR cost-savings on their rising utility bills, swapping out old streetlights for newer, more modern lighting, light emitting diodes (LEDs) are becoming increasingly commonplace in municipal public spaces. Promising greater energy savings down the line, LEDs are more environmentally friendly and emit brighter light at a greater distance. A number of cities across the state including Raleigh, Chapel Hill, Charlotte and Durham have all added LED lighting to various parts of their respective communities.

In Durham, LED lighting projects have been undertaken both inside and out as older buildings undergo renovations with funding from the American Recovery and



Carolina Pines Park in Raleigh upgraded its parking lot lighting to energy-efficient LED technology.

Reinvestment Act. About a year and a half ago, seeing that electric and water/sewer rates were increasing across the board, the city and the county of Durham's Office of Sustainability adopted an energy policy to reduce usage and save money with initiatives like adjusting thermostat settings, and adding LED lights.

In addition to the aforementioned list of reasons for adding LEDs, "We looked at the long life and efficiency, the effectiveness of a more brilliant light and the ability to cover a larger area than conventional lighting," said Joel Reitzer, Durham's sustainability manager.

Further, added Durham's Senior Project Manager Kendrick Williams, "We also wanted to decrease our energy usage, but

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increase our light output.”

Durham added LED lights as part of renovations to five buildings around the city. Trying to meet tight deadlines around the stimulus funding, the project was further complicated by the challenge of renovating during business hours and the required tuning of the lights to individual settings.

“It’s not a heat-producing light. It uses about one-fifth the energy of conventional light sources, but [the emitting light] looks just like regular lights,” said Williams, who oversaw the project renovations.

Recently, Hendersonville and four downtown businesses completed energy efficiency upgrades using more than \$63,000 in federal stimulus money. The city replaced 32 light fixtures on Main Street with LED light fixtures, leaving the city with an estimated savings of \$11,500 electricity annually.

Upgrades to businesses included heating and air conditioning equipment retrofits, insulation, solar hot water installation, lighting retrofits and occupancy sensor controls. The changes will result in an overall 40 percent reduction in electricity use by the business owners.

Albemarle received some \$54,137 for retrofitting 124 existing street lights with LED fixtures on East & West Main Street corridors saving the city an estimated \$25,169 in utility costs annually.

In total, more than \$330,000 in stimulus funding has been awarded to eight North Carolina “Main Street” communities to help with energy efficiency and renewable energy initiatives.

Expanding uses

In Durham, the retrofitting covered three parking decks, a water management facility and a convention center. In total, the city added just under 1,000 LEDs for nearly a \$1 million investment – money well spent, according to Williams. Durham anticipates 18 to 25 percent electricity savings over conventional lighting.

Both Durham and Chapel Hill are part of Durham-based Cree’s LED City initiative, an international program to promote and deploy energy-efficient LED lighting to municipal infrastructure to save energy, protect the environment, reduce maintenance costs and provide better light quality for improved visibility and safety. The LED City program was established in 2007 to accelerate implementation of LED lighting in municipalities by promoting the benefits that can be achieved through LED lighting and by encouraging users to share experiences and data.

Since its inception, the LED City program has helped more than 20 cities across three continents confidently transition to solid-state lighting. As of 2010, when Cree merged the LED City program with the U.S. Department of Energy’s Municipal Street Lighting Consortium, member cities were regularly reporting energy savings of 50 to 80 percent, and significant maintenance savings over the life of the fixtures.

“Cree is extremely proud of the momentum that the LED City program developed over the five years it ran, beginning with Raleigh as the first Cree LED City in 2007. Raleigh continues to lead the LED lighting revolution with LED lighting installations around the world in a variety of applications ranging from accent and indoor lighting to street and parking lot lighting,” explained Greg Merritt, Cree’s vice president of marketing and government relations.

Raleigh’s initiative is described as a sort of “living laboratory” to deliver the economic, environmental and usage benefits of LED lighting to the residents of Raleigh.

The first project in Raleigh was focused on validating both the cost savings and technology capabilities of LEDs through



“LED pedestrian lighting illuminates Exchange Plaza off of Fayetteville Street in Raleigh.”

an installation of LED lighting in the city’s municipal building parking deck. Both Cree and Raleigh public officials correctly anticipated the initiative would serve as a model for other cities that are considering implementing energy-efficient infrastructures.

As part of the commitment to creating an “LED City,” Raleigh planned to deploy LED lighting, through its living-laboratory initiative, to serve a number of lighting applications, including garage and parking lot lights, street lights, architectural and accent lighting, portable lighting and pedestrian and walkway lighting over the next 18 months.

Chapel Hill has installed LED streetlights along the 100 block of Franklin Street, one of the town’s most recognizable landmarks. Ten high-pressure sodium streetlights have been replaced to evaluate the extension of LED street lighting. LED street lighting can reduce energy consumption by 50 percent or more. The town solicited feedback from residents about the quality of the lighting during the course of the 12-month pilot program.

Currently all of the streetlights in Conover have been switched to high pressure sodium (HPS) from the standard mercury vapor. As Conover updates its buildings, it has switched from HPS to LEDs both internally and externally where feasible.

Plusses, minuses for LED use

The changeover from traditional mercury-based lighting or other energy-saving-type lights pose a few hurdles for some communities. The up-front investment can be costly and there is no standard of measurement for the type of light emitted (kilowatt, lumens, candlepower), which at the front end makes long-term savings projections on utilities difficult to calculate, said Conover City Manager Donald Duncan.



High Point’s LED lighting includes standard and decorative fixtures.

streetlights in the downtown area, “So we could compare them to our regular streetlights and judge the public’s reaction to a possible change,” explained Assistant City Manager Randy McCaslin. “The cost for the LED streetlights is coming down, but at this time they are still much more expensive than our regular sodium vapor streetlights.”

The LED street lights are located on Hamilton Street between Green and Commerce. They are located in front of the city hall, between city hall and the International Home Furnishing Center building. That area was chosen for the high visibility to the public. Also, this location is fairly isolated from other lights and is in the downtown. When the light fixture was selected, it was based on cost and the supplier’s track record. Back then the lights were in the \$1,200 to \$1,500 range, but McCaslin believes with the reduction in cost, the city, if it wanted, could probably pay about between \$250 and \$500 for additional light fixtures — still more than their sodium vapor lights. However, presently, McCaslin said, High Point is not planning to replace any more streetlights; nor is the city planning any wholesale changes to other lights in buildings or parks right now.

Raising another concern, Conover’s Duncan said he has found the LED market is limited by production times and not having fixtures, especially for decorative lighting, that are a standard replacement.

“We have two companies in our area that build custom lights, but that is just it. There are no off-the-shelf replacement units yet,” Duncan explained. “If you want to outfit an entire building, the lead times are horrendous, some taking 90 days,” said Duncan. “So if Duke Power orders 30,000 street lights annually, they may want half of them at once,” putting smaller requests on backorder.

Even with the issues encountered, Duncan said there is a silver lining they had not counted on: outdoor LED lights do not attract bugs, if in the proper light spectrum.

“Pretty cool,” Duncan said.

CITY OF HIGH POINT

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF CREE