



HO – The LEC Co-ordinator Activities

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Educating the general public in residential, business, industrial, educational and other sectors is a main responsibility of the LEC Co-ordinator. Usually car lot managers require education as they consistently overlight the lots, apparently believing more light eliminates night theft and vandalism. Frequently, this has shown to be false.

A. Background

Since community lighting is a vital part of the community culture, changes to it are of great concern to most residents. A wide variety of questions immediately come to mind as soon as one learns that lighting in the community is about to change. Indeed, in some cases, this concern is more aptly described as panic.

Good communications with the community by someone in the know helps to alleviate many of these concerns and ensure the success of the transition. Most of us have seen similar major under-takings in the community create much adversity and stress, simply because people have not been involved in the decision making

process and have no idea as to how the changes will affect them.

Education is the key to understanding, acceptance and change.

These communications do not have to be multi-million dollar operations but they must be done in an intelligent, forthright manner which addresses the major components of the transition to a Light-Efficient Community. (See the handout titled "***Why We Are Becoming a Light-Efficient Community***" - LEC Resources)

A well-designed and written brochure delivered early in the process to each



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residence, business, industry, educational institution and other sectors will do much to introduce the LEC concept, what the advantages will be, how and when the changes will occur and how community expectations will be met.

Other media such as local radio, TV and newspapers along with the city's web site should also receive materials that help to spread the word in a positive manner.

Since not every administrator is a great communicator, it is most advantageous to have someone with these particular skills work with the community council and relevant departments as well as the rest of the community. This helps to ensure that people know the contact person, his/her contact information and what is to transpire, when, why and how so that the transition occurs in a smooth, educated, positive manner.

It is recommended that the city council establish the position of LEC Co-ordinator (LECC) to facilitate communications between city hall, the municipal lighting department, the LEC group, the community league councils, city councilors, and all members of the community.

This vital position would help to ensure that all relevant information flows through a common communicator, thus dramatically reducing the possibility that there will be miscommunication and misunderstandings.

As many people can attest, many municipal departments are not known for their ability to communicate well forthcoming changes

within the community and how these will affect the local population. This inability (or perhaps unwillingness) to properly and timely communicate is the source of many problems for the community and city hall as well and only serves to complicate a relatively simple process to the point of exasperation for those affected.

Thus, it is highly recommended that the individual chosen as co-ordinator have an interest in science, communications, community improvement, lighting, its technologies and its effects on the community, environment, health, flora and fauna.

It is also recommended that the LECC have an enquiring spirit and excellent communications and organizational skills as he/she will have to deal with a wide variety of individuals from various backgrounds who may lack necessary communications skills.

This individual must also be able to communicate with his/her community league councils and the rest of the community through a variety of media including town hall meetings, speakers, newsletters, web sites, television, multi-media, etc.

The LECC must also know the sources of and how to access relevant information on street, business, industrial and home lighting, its technologies, effects, problems and solutions.

The LECC must also be aware of change and its implications for people, problems which arise when people are undergoing change and how to resolve problems.



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B. Activities:

The LEC Co-ordinator may undertake the following activities in pursuit of creating a Light Efficient Community.

The LECC will communicate with

- Members of the community at large
- Community league council members
- City council members
- Business, industry, and government leaders
- City department personnel: Environment, Maintenance, Transportation, Lighting Department, Police personnel
- Lighting consultants
- Streetlight installation workers
- Media representatives, consultants and producers
- Special interest groups
- Change resisters

It is recommended that council hire or appoint someone to the position as soon as possible after the decision to create a LEC. This will then enable the person to quickly become familiar with the changes that are going to occur as the program gets underway and the communications problems that will be forthcoming.

The LECC will work towards

- a. facilitating understanding of the goals, approaches, processes and outcomes of a Light-Efficient Community (LEC) throughout the community and its members (homeowners, businesses, organizations, government agencies, educational institutions, industries, etc.)

- b. assisting in identifying lighting problems within the community, including conducting light surveys of various types, etc. (e.g.; "Evaluating Your LEC" Survey)
- c. collating survey data, analyzing and preparing reports and recommendations
- d. using report data to identify areas of concern for the LEC program and acting to resolve these as appropriate
- e. facilitating communications between various individuals, organizations and the community as well as the lighting department, etc. through a variety of media
- f. representing the program and providing information on it to relevant departments within the community government
- g. ensuring that LEC goals and objectives of the lighting plan and construction information will be communicated to the community and interest groups through appropriate, effective means
- h. creating and/or locating and distributing educational materials for individuals and various interest groups
- i. providing educational materials and resource listings as requested and as necessary
- j. attending meetings of any relevance to attaining LEC goals in the community with individuals, organizations, community league executives, city councilors, the lighting department, and other personnel, as necessary



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k. organizing meetings, workshops, etc. to familiarize the community with LEC goals and how these are going to be met with the lighting plans for the community

l. working with the mass media to ensure that the message on LEC initiatives is being conveyed to the masses

m. providing material on the LEC program, initiatives and operations to the community's web site. Through the web site gather community feedback and prepare communications or reports to council and the lighting department. Provide feedback to the community on goals and objectives, problems and successes in the program.

n. providing input into the decision making processes regarding lighting for the community with community league and other relevant personnel

o. identifying, acquiring and utilizing relevant resources, including people, to meet LEC communications goals

p. reviewing information and materials from LEC-related sources and assess their relevance and application to the community's needs.

q. supporting LEC-related projects within the community through consultations, media, resources, speakers, etc. (e.g.; the creation/ designation of a dark site for star-gazers, star parties, educational programs, etc.)

r. reviewing and assisting LEC-related projects proposed by departments and/or

members of the community.

Obviously, this is a complex job requiring highly developed knowledge, attitudes and interpersonal skills. It would also preferably employ a person with a great deal of knowledge about the local political system as well as city hall and the public.

Dealing with bureaucrats is another skill that must be considered as many departments are not appreciative of change and/or other people making decisions about what they consider to be their territory. (It must be noted that the lighting industry is not considered to be leaders of change in this field.

City hall must take a positive, stiff approach to ensure that the changes to community lighting are indeed going to take place and provide a solid schedule that must be met by all concerned.

Information on the reasons for changing community lighting must be well identified and thoughtfully advertised through the media in order to educate the public as to why the changes must take place.

The usual questions of who, what, where, when, why and how must be answered in any media releases.

In many respects, it is important to have a person separate from the involved city departments ensuring that appropriate actions are to take place and when so that appropriate feedback to city hall and the public is not viewed by councilors and the community as just another departmental project. Creating a LEC is a community



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project and that means that departments are expected to do their duty to ensure it is handled in a manner which will prove successful.

(Before dealing with our lighting department, I became very aware of the fact that my neighbours viewed the department in a very bad light. The dealings they had had previously with the department left a very bad taste in their mouths and they did not want to communicate with them at all. I also then found out that a supervisor in the department was lying to me about costs and specifications of full cut-off luminaires in order to make them appear unsuitable for use in our community!) These I wanted installed as they would have dramatically improved our lighting situation with no increase in costs.

There was no way that an outsider was going to tell the department what was the best lighting for our community. Eventually, when this was brought up at a meeting with Council, I believe this situation helped to result in changes in the department to our benefit!)

Having city council understand, approve and support the need for a LEC is vitally important in the path to attaining that goal. As elected representatives, they are supposed to have the good of the community at heart. We know however, that that is not necessarily the way the system works sometimes.

That is why it is a good move to get to know your council members and who to contact for information and who to give information to. It is important to have well-developed

materials that are quick to read and understand while educating council members and their staff.

Councillors must all be taken back to the question of "Why should we be concerned about light waste, trespass, glare and pollution?"

They must take the short period of time to experience "*Demons in the Light*" and learn of the many, serious negative effects of artificial light at night, the way we currently experience it.

The job of the LECC is not an easy one but can also be very rewarding as various aspects of the project come to fruition.

The project will also be highly educational and the LECC will carry away many new skills and much new knowledge applicable to other areas. Indeed, this person and his/her work is vital to the success of the project and to the changes which must occur in each person's knowledge, attitudes and skills as they work to create a community where concern is not only expressed but well acted upon.

If we are truly concerned about the incredible amount of light waste we are creating every night and have a desire to eliminate that waste while protecting our resources, finances, health and well being as for other living things and the night environment, we must be working towards the establishment of LEC's in every community.