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September 4, 2008

CREE AND CITY LIGHT UP THE SHIMMER WALL

Mayor Charles Meeker and Cree, Inc. CEO and Chairman Chuck Swoboda threw the switch this evening lighting the Cree Shimmer Wall for the first time.

The lighting party came on the eve of the opening of the Raleigh Convention Center and was held directly across McDowell Street from the Cree Shimmer Wall.

CREE gave \$1 million to the City of Raleigh for the creation of contemporary artwork for the western wall of the Raleigh Convention Center. The gift funded the creation of the shimmer wall that serves as the signature symbol, welcoming all not only to the new convention center but to downtown Raleigh as well.

Cree is a Durham-based innovator and manufacturer of semiconductors and devices that enhance the value of solid-state lighting, power and communications products. It is a world leader in light emitting diodes (LED) technology.

"The Cree Shimmer Wall helps to create a dramatic façade for the Raleigh Convention Center and will be a focal point for downtown Raleigh," said Mr. Swoboda. "As a leading LED innovator and manufacturer, Cree is excited to support the new Raleigh Convention Center in a way that showcases the benefits of LED light. LEDs provide dramatic visual impact, deliver meaningful energy savings and are environmentally friendly."

"This generous gift by Cree solidifies the coming together of the Triangle to downtown Raleigh," Mayor Meeker said. "The City of Raleigh is most grateful to Cree and is delighted to further our relationship with this company that is doing so much to advance technology to reduce energy consumption."

In February 2007, the City of Raleigh and Cree announced a partnership to analyze the cost savings potential and capability of using LED technology. It is hoped that the "LED City" initiative will serve as a model for other cities that are considering implementing energy-efficient infrastructures.

WHY A SHIMMER WALL

There is no entrance to the Raleigh Convention Center from the western side. The wall houses the 500,000-square-foot facility's chillers and boilers that require significant air flow. Yet the wall facing McDowell Street is the most visible as motorists enter downtown Raleigh. Some 20,000 vehicles arrive downtown via the thoroughfare each day. Even those not destined for the center city are offered downtown's most inviting vista as they motor east and west along Western Boulevard.

The convention center's design team of TVS, O'Brien Atkins and Clearscapes saw the wall as a canvas yearning for artwork that defined the essence of Raleigh.

"The design team wanted to do something that would add visually to downtown," Clearscapes' Stephen Shuster said.

In addition to the wall's visibility, it also benefits from spectacular southern and western sunlight.

So what would make maximum use of this visibility and light?

Shimmer wall thought the design team; the ultimate coupling of these two natural elements.

"To gleam; to shine with an unsteady light; to glimmer" is the definition of shimmer. So how to make a wall do that? The design team, working with artistic inventor Ned Kahn, decided to put 79,464 4-inch by 4-inch aluminum pixels hinged on louvers to allow for free motion on 4-foot by 4-foot grids. The design is 211-feet by 44-feet. To aid nighttime "shimmering," the design team chose to backlight the 9,284-square-foot wall with 56 LED fixtures.

But not just a shimmer wall, the design team demanded. Rather a shimmer wall that offered an iconic image of our city. The oak tree, the design team exclaimed!

The oak tree – the symbol borne on the Great Seal of the City of Raleigh; Raleigh's unofficial tag line – the "City of Oaks." But the oak tree for oh so much more.

"We wanted an image that could be understood and appreciated by all – children and techies," Mr. Shuster said. "A tree is a complex system. It symbolizes growth. It symbolizes the environment."

At rest the almost 80,000 4-inch by 4-inch pixels will offer a clear depiction of a mighty oak in shades of silver. And yet this oak tree will be ever changing. The flow from the boilers and chillers; the natural breeze, the whoosh of the stream of cars along McDowell will keep the image at flux. As will the shifting slant of sun rays. Adding further to the uniqueness of this shimmer wall will be the back lighting from Cree's LEDs. And the LED colors will vary, depending on the season, the celebration – whenever and whatever!

"The Cree Shimmer Wall will never be the same twice," Mr. Shuster promises. "And it will be magnificent when viewed by motorists."

Mr. Shuster said that this approach to a shimmer wall is unique in that it is the first used as an integrated architectural element.

So will such a marvel be a maintenance menace? "Not at all," the Raleigh architect said. The aluminum pixels are anodized so that the color will not wear and it will never need painting. In addition to their meager use of energy, the LEDs have a lifespan of 15 years.

ABOUT CREE

Cree is a market leading innovator and manufacturer of semiconductors and devices that enhance the value of solid-state lighting, power and communications products by significantly increasing their energy performance and efficiency. Key top Cree's market advantage is its world-class materials expertise in silicon carbide (SiC) and gallium nitride (GaN) for chips and packaged devices that can handle more power in a smaller space while producing less heat than other available technologies, materials and products.

CREE drives its increased performance technology into multiple applications, including exciting alternatives in brighter and more tunable light for general illumination, backlighting for more vivid displays, optimized power management for high-current, switch-mode power supplies and variable-speed motors, and more effective wireless infrastructure for data and voice communications. Cree customers range from innovative lighting-fixture makers to defense-related federal agencies.

Cree's product families include blue and green LED chips, lighting LEDs, LED backlighting solutions, power-switching devices and radio-frequency/wireless devices. For additional product specifications, refer to www.cree.com.

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