



Photos



Lightolier's Fall River facility is shown in this file photo. The lighting manufacturing company will be recognized at a Statehouse ceremony on Wednesday by the University of Massachusetts Lowell Toxics Use Reduction Institute for reducing use of toxic chemicals. Lightolier is one of only three businesses in the state that will receive this recognition.

'Green' light

City company recognized for helping environment

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Fall River, MA —

Companies typically get more attention for violating state laws regarding interaction with the environment than when helping the planet, but the opposite will be true this Wednesday when longtime industrial park company Lightolier will be recognized at a State House ceremony for reducing use of toxic chemicals.

Only three businesses in the state received the recognition from the University of Massachusetts Lowell Toxics Use Reduction Institute. Lightolier, Skyworks Solutions Inc. of Woburn and Silver Hanger Cleaners of Bellingham will receive the designation of "Industry Toxic Use Reductions Champions."

Jack Luskin, senior associate director of the institute, said the recognition does not have a set of criteria, but is given more as "a matter of people, companies and organizations that are clearly outstanding in their work to reduce the use of toxic chemicals and other substances.

"(Lightolier's Fall River Facility Manager Ron) Westgate has also been a toxic use reduction planner for nearly two decades. He provided early information on the now famous 'Lampworks' case study that has been used in TURI's classes to train other companies how to reduce toxics," said Luskin.

"More recently, Ron worked with TURI staff to develop a case study for the institute's new resource conservation training," he said.

Westgate said Lightolier designs energy-efficient lighting systems with the goal of using the least amount of chemicals, energy and other natural resources in the manufacturing process. He added

that it's nice for the company to be recognized for those efforts.

"Achieving these goals is important both in providing our customers with green products from green processes, and in improving our ability to compete in a global market by reducing our overhead cost per unit of product.

"Over 70 percent of the Lightolier brand products are manufactured in the U.S. and a good portion of these, including our new solid state down lighting products, are from our facilities in Fall River," said Westgate.

"We've had some success stories over the years, such as reducing our VOC (volatile organic compound) emissions by 95 percent, reducing our use of toxics by 58 percent, and reductions in electricity and natural gas consumption of 19 percent and 30 percent, respectively. These projects have literally saved us millions of dollars in operating costs. The return on investment, as well as the benefits to the environment, have been very favorable," said Westgate.

Westgate said that in 2007, when Lightolier, which has about 400 employees, first learned of the Toxic Use Reduction Act amendments they were excited to have the option of preparing a resource conservation plan.

The company completed a water conservation plan in 2008 and set the goal of reducing its water usage by 30 percent, or 27 million gallons, per year. With focus, and by applying some of the tools and techniques employees learned from TURI and the Office of Technical Assistance, Lightolier achieved a 78 percent water usage reduction, saving 70 million gallons of water per year, Westgate said.

"It is very gratifying for us to receive this recognition. We have worked with the Toxic Use Reduction Institute and the Office of Technical Assistance over the last two decades, developing case studies of our business and projects. These case studies are used in the certification training for toxic use reduction planners and resource conservation planners throughout the state," said Westgate.

"The Toxic Use Reduction Act goals for the state have been met and we are very proud to have contributed to these efforts. It is one thing for us to improve our own facility, but we take a lot of pride in reaching out beyond our own walls to the community."

Lightolier President William Schoettler said his company's core sales strategy is to provide

customers with energy-efficient lighting solutions that have been produced responsibly.

“By reducing energy use, we limit the environmental impact our products have on our environment,” said Schoettler. “We must practice what we preach by manufacturing these products with that same environmental concern in order to achieve our sustainability goals.”

The TURI ceremony will be held at the Massachusetts State House great hall beginning at 11 a.m. Guests will be Michael Ellenbecker, director of TURI; State Sen. Anthony Petrucci, D-Boston, and State Rep. William Strauss, D-Mattapoisett, co-chairs of the Environment, Natural Resources Agriculture Committee.

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