



Lumalon founder Tom Murray is overseeing installation of new LED lighting at the New York State fairgrounds.

## Pittsford company brings LED lighting to state fairgrounds

By DIANA LOUISE CARTER

The autos were rolling in, so the lumalon people had to pack up and move aside temporarily.

Lumalon, a Pittsford company specializing in light-emitting diode, or LED, illumination, is executing an \$866,000 contract to install LED lighting at six buildings at the New York State Fairgrounds.

But that means juggling the work around the busy schedule of events at the fairgrounds year-round. Earlier this month, the company temporarily halted work at the fairgrounds' Center of Progress Building to accommodate move-in for the Syracuse Nationals auto show on July 21.

"We've got to get out of there today, because they're moving in the Nationals car show," Tom Murray, founder of the com-



Photo by Trish Hennessy

Lumalon is installing LED lighting in the Center of Progress Building at the New York State Fair.

pany, said in his Old Pickle Factory office recently.

A bigger halt will happen Aug. 10 when lumalon is due to be finished with the first three buildings in time for the State Fair to start moving in. After the fair ends Sept. 3 and moves out, lumalon will finish the other three buildings.

"Energy efficiencies help keep our beautiful, classic buildings viable," said Richard A. Ball, state commissioner of agriculture. "We are grateful for these upgrades and are very happy that they will help reduce our energy footprint."

The benefits of adding LED lights are already apparent. Murray said that in the Center of Progress Building, the lighting's energy demands have already dropped by 70 percent. The New York Power Authority, which is financing and overseeing the installation, estimates that the state Department of Agriculture and Markets, which runs the fair, will save \$23,000 annually, recouping the cost of the installation in 13 years.

Byron Schlenker, property manager at the fairgrounds, said the difference is noticeable, especially since some of the fluorescent lights were so old they were operating at only 60 percent of capacity.

"It's a much cleaner light. You don't get that vibration — the fluorescent flickers. It's more like sunlight. It's a much more natural type of light," Schlenker said.

Home use of LED lights typically involves just replacing an incandescent or fluorescent bulb with a LED bulb, Murray said. With the 400-watt lamps being converted in the fair's exhibit spaces — or the recent gymnasium work lumalon did for the Brighton High School — the lamp and ballast are replaced with a new fixture. Each 400-watt light experiences a savings of about 250 watts.

"This is our first New York State project," Murray said, and he hopes it will forge a path for more state contracts for the company. To win the business of the state fairgrounds, lumalon had to contend with specifications laid out in a 400-page document, he said. Even so, information is always changing.

"We used to measure twice, cut once. Now we triple confirm," Murray said.

The company was founded six years ago and is growing at a rate of 20 percent a year, Murray said. Lumalon has 10 employees and hires subcontractors as needed to fulfill its contracts. Three teams of subcontractors from the Syracuse area are working on the fairgrounds job.

"We like working with people in the

market," Murray said. Lumalon did the same when it worked on a project on Long Island and in the Albany area.

While big-box home improvement stores have cornered the market on home use of LEDs, no one was doing much in the commercial, municipal and institutional arenas a few years ago, Murray said. Lumalon's willingness to create custom lights and solutions for customers has established it as a leader among the LED companies that have sprung up, he said.

"We really like to think we're an innovative LED company that builds solutions,"



Photo by Trish Hennessy

A Syracuse subcontractor for Pittsford's lumalon installs lights at a New York State Fairgrounds building.

Murray said. Lumalon recently won a contract for an auto facility in Troy, Mich., he said, because as part of its proposal, the company built a special light for the auto manufacturer and drove it seven hours to Michigan to show the executives.

"That's kind of the lumalon way," Murray said.

At a local hospital, lumalon is installing lights that adjust to incoming daylight, automatically cutting energy consumption when sunlight filtering in from outdoors bears some of the load. The project also uses lighting in hallways that goes a step or two beyond motion detection. To provide more of a sense of security in a darkened hall, the lights can dim when there's no movement instead of turning off completely, and then snap on to full illumination when movement is detected. It's possible for one fixture to have both "daylight harvesting" and motion-detection features, Murray said.

With Gov. Andrew Cuomo setting carbon reduction and sustainable energy goals

for the state over the next decade or two, LED lighting is sure to catch on even faster than it is growing now.

"LED is the quickest payback for accomplishing sustainability," Murray said. Some projects — particularly those where the lights are on all day, every day — can recover their initial investment in as little as two years, he said.

Schlenker said LED lighting is helping the fairgrounds meet Cuomo's mandate that state buildings reduce their energy consumption 20 percent by 2020.

Murray said installation costs of LED lighting have come down about 60 percent in the last few years, but those initial costs are still 25 percent higher than other forms of lighting. The lights save money in the long run, though, by reducing energy use substantially but also in maintenance costs.

Lighting of parking lots is an example. Murray said it can cost hundreds of dollars to replace bulbs each time you have to rent a lift to reach the fixtures. LED lights require less replacement because they last 50,000 to 75,000 hours compared to 10,000 hours for a fluorescent bulb, he said.

Schlenker expects the fairgrounds to realize maintenance savings, as electricians will no longer spend so much time replacing bulbs, even in places that don't require lifts.

"The maintenance group is going to be able to recoup time," Schlenker said. "The electricians will be able to get more things done... They're really excited about that, and so am I."

The halogen lights used in the fairgrounds buildings also throw off considerable heat. Schlenker said that heat is especially prevalent in the Dairy Cattle Exhibit

Building, which is one of the largest buildings at the fairgrounds, has a low ceiling and is not air conditioned.

"It's really hot. Those are 400-watt halogen lights in those buildings. We have large exhaust fans — they have to actually put fans on the cows," Schlenker said. People "complain about it every year."

In fairgrounds buildings that have air conditioning, he noted that additional energy will be saved now that the air system no longer needs to contend with extra heat from the lights.

Fairgoers can look for a difference in lighting this year in the Center for Progress Building, the Administration Building, and the Art and Home Center. After the 2018 fair, lumalon will replace lighting in the Dairy Cattle Exhibit Building, the Main Horse Barn, and the Horticulture Building. Murray said he expects to have all the work completed before the end of 2018.

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