

## **The Neon Group responds to the *USA Today* Article: “Save Neon Signs, Fans Urge”**

Neon signs are not just for museums and collectors. Presently, they make up a majority of retail signage in this country (whether they are the exposed, boxed or channel letters variety) and have been in use for 100 years. Although landmark neon signs are considered a treasured American art form worth preserving, let's not forget that neon is still the best commercial lighting system on the market when it comes to brightness, energy-efficiency, durability and environmental impact.

Unfortunately, with the recent rise of other light sources such as LED and fiber optics, neon has been under attack with unsubstantiated claims that, due to a lack of an unbiased comparative studies, have been taken as fact. So when claims are made about neon, consider the source of these statements and their validity.

### **Brightness and Energy Efficiency**

Most people don't realize that the difference in energy consumption between neon and LED is minimal and, in most cases, non-existent. What *is* remarkably different is the brightness, measured in lumens, emitted from comparable LED and neon signs. For example, the best white LEDs produce 10-20 lumens for every Watt consumed while 6500K snow white neon produces 35-45 lumens per Watt, even up to 50-60 lumens depending on fabrication. To equal the brightness of 6500K snow white neon signage, the amount of white LEDs needed would actually consume 2-8 times more energy per linear foot, according to studies done by The EGL Company.<sup>2</sup>

### **Durability and Environmental Impact**

Let's also consider how the standard life expectancy of LED compares to that of neon and the environmental impact of replacing and transporting LED lamps (often from overseas). The truth is that neon tubes burn without brightness or color degradation for up to 15 years, requiring very little maintenance or replacement. In fact, the USA Today article “Save Neon Signs, Fans Urge” references signs that are 60- and 70-years old where, in some cases, the neon tubing has outlasted its metal housing. In the meantime, the LED industry struggles to pinpoint what the standard life-expectancy of its product should be, but *has* pinpointed how much degradation in brightness and degree of color shifting is acceptable before lamp replacement.<sup>1</sup> This represents a great liability for retailers who have invested in LED technology to illuminate their signage and logos.

Until recently, the neon industry has been silent about these facts and the negative consequences manifest in distorted public opinions and misrepresentations. As a result, The Neon Group has formed as a network of professionals representing the many facets of this American tradition from component manufacturers, supply distributors, power supply manufacturers and neon wholesalers to sign makers, lighting designers and artists.

“By creating a united front, we are protecting the interests of the neon trades, educating a misinformed public and promoting awareness of neon as a valuable lighting system,” asserts Loren Hudson owner of Hudson & Hudson Neon, Inc. and president of The Neon Group.

The Neon Group urges end-users to learn about the benefits of neon and how it compares to LED at our website at [www.TheNeonGroup.org](http://www.TheNeonGroup.org). If you are a professional in the neon trade and are interested in supporting our mission, please consider joining our group – a membership application form is available on our website.



Lab technician at Hudson & Hudson Neon, Inc. of Houston, TX processing neon tubes at their 43,000 square foot manufacturing plant. Owner Loren Hudson, also president of The Neon Group, prides himself on his company's proprietary technology and modern facilities.

<sup>1</sup> "Industry Alliance Proposes Standard Definition for LED Life" *LEDs Magazine*.  
<http://www.lrc.rpi.edu/programs/solidstate/pdf/taylorASSIST2005.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> "Dispelling the 'Inefficient Neon' Myth" *EGL Neon News*. <http://www.egl-neon.com/documents/neonefficiency.pdf>