

# LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

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Let me start by saying that I'm not complaining about anyone or anything, blaming anyone, or mad in any way. Some things are going to be a certain way and there's not a thing you can do about it. Last June, at the KNA Show, the electrical circuits were overloaded and dealers were (rightfully so) restricted to using one lamp per table. I'm sure the designers of the Cessna Activity Center (an excellent facility) never dreamed eighty dealers, each armed with three 100-watt lamps, would descend to suck a whopping 24,000 watts of electricity through the electrical outlets of the facility. So, short of completely rewiring the bourse area (unrealistic, of course) there's really not much that can be done, other than restricting use to one lamp per table. But wait! Let's not restrict the lamps, but the wattage, to approximately 100 watts per table.

You see, CFLs (compact fluorescent lamps) are the light bulb of the future and can solve this problem at the 2008 KNA.

I'm not suggesting anything I'm not prepared to do myself, so I did research to find the best deal and best light output bulb. Here's what I found:

## The bulbs tested:

100-watt GE "reveal" incandescent

100-watt GE "soft white" incandescent

100-watt Phillips "soft white" incandescent

26-watt (equals 100-watt output) "daylight" CFL

26-watt (equals 100-watt output) GE "soft white" CFL

15-watt (equals 60-watt output) GE "soft white" CFL flood lamp

## **Results:**

The 100-watt “reveal” incandescent is my favorite and I will continue to use it where electrical overloads are not a problem. Hopefully a “reveal” CFL is in the works.

The 26-watt “soft white” CFL and the 100-watt “soft white” incandescents made by GE and Phillips were virtually indistinguishable from one another. All provide excellent ample light suitable for proper viewing and evaluation of coins.

The 15-watt “floodlamp” CFL surprised me. The light was ample, though obviously not as intense as the 26-watt CFL. I had no problem examining coins under this lamp. Although I did not set up more than one lamp per test, I could see where some dealers would rather run six 15-watt-lamps as opposed to four 26-watt-lamps (remember our approximately 100-watt limit?).

The 26-watt “daylight” CFL is not suitable for viewing coins, or anything else for that matter. The eerie, electronic-blue light makes it difficult to guess what your coins really look like and it might appear to customers that you are using odd light to cover something up (remember the pink fluorescent lights in the supermarket meat department?!). After testing the “daylight” CFLs, I gave them to a neighbor who I didn’t really like.

## **More Advantages of CFLs:**

More durable! Incandescents can burn out before they are supposed to because of the constant jostling in transportation and set up. When the filament ages it will tend to break (burn out) more easily than if just sitting in a lamp at home. The 26-watt CFL I tested is guaranteed for 8000 hours. If you attend (2) two days shows per month, eight hours per day, this bulb should last 20.83 years!

No burn! CFLs use so much less electricity for the same light because the electricity used is being converted to light, not heat! Even after an hour, I could easily touch and hold onto the bell shaped lamp shade. Although the part that houses the bulb socket was hot, it was still way cooler than with incandescents (This should make your lamps last longer, too!).

I found the best deals on CFLs at the membership warehouses followed by the big box department stores. Big box hardware/lumber stores occasionally have good sales to watch for. The 26-watt CFL cost me \$13 for a pack of six at a membership warehouse. I also saw three packs at a big box department store for approximately \$8. I have also noticed the price of CFLs has come down as they gain popularity.

The only drawback to CFLs is they take a few minutes to warm up to their full brightness.

I guess I would propose to the KNA bourse chair that KNA include in the bourse application a 110-watt limit on electrical use, strictly enforced. But give people their options and time to prepare. Maybe make this article available with each bourse application, confirmation, or both. This way, only those who choose not to prepare will be in the dark.

Let me make clear that I'm a coin dealer, not an electrical engineer. If there are experts out there to support or dispute my suggestions, feel free to write in and give your opinion!

John Ryan is a Kansas City coin dealer and can be seen at many of the area shows.