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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

WSJ.com

SEPTEMBER 20, 2007

Wal-Mart Brands Its Green Strategy

Retailer to Unveil Energy-Saving Line Of Own Light Bulbs

By KRIS HUDSON

One of the biggest U.S. proponents of energy-saving, compact-fluorescent light bulbs will double its bet on the technology as [Wal-Mart Stores Inc.](#) unveils its own line of the spiral-shaped bulbs under one of its in-house brands.

Wal-Mart, the world's largest retailer by sales, plans for its Great Value CFL bulbs to cost less than brand-name bulbs, pricing a pack of four bulbs at \$7.58, or roughly the price of a three-pack of brand-name bulbs. The Bentonville, Ark., retailer intends to stock its bulbs in 3,000 -- or nearly three-quarters -- of its U.S. stores this month. It is expected to announce its plan today.



Wal-Mart

Wal-Mart plans to sell its own private-label CFL bulbs alongside those from GE.

"The introduction of our Great Value bulbs makes CFLs a more accessible option for our shoppers," said Andy Barron, Wal-Mart's senior vice president and general merchandise manager.

Wal-Mart has promoted CFLs for the past two years as a cornerstone of its green strategy to cut its waste and offer environmentally friendly products. Working with suppliers such as [General Electric Co.](#), the retailer pledged in November to sell 100 million CFL bulbs by the end of 2007. At last public disclosure, it had sold more than 80 million. Andy Ruben, Wal-Mart's vice president of strategy and sustainability, said during a Sept. 4 speech that CFLs account for 15% of light-bulb sales at Wal-Mart, up from 5% nine months ago.

CFL bulbs have gained popularity in recent years as their technology has improved and shoppers have become more energy conscious. A 13-watt CFL bulb emits the equivalent light of a 60-watt incandescent bulb, translating to 75% less energy use. CFLs also last eight to 10 times as long as incandescent bulbs, often for eight to 10 years. States such as California are encouraging residents to switch to CFLs to conserve energy, and Canada and Australia are moving to restrict, if not ban, use of incandescent bulbs. CFLs are relatively costly, selling for \$2 to \$5 per bulb, while incandescent bulbs sell for 25 cents to 50 cents apiece.

North American sales of CFLs have tripled in the past five years, according to Susan Bloom, spokeswoman for Philips Lighting Co., a division of [Philips Electronics NV's](#) North American unit.

"We're very supportive of Wal-Mart and any decision they make to help increase penetration of this

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product in the marketplace," Ms. Bloom said.

Kim Freeman, a spokeswoman for GE's consumer and industrial division, declined to comment on Wal-Mart's plans.

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Printed in The Wall Street Journal, page D3

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