EMerge ALLIANCE ADVANCES DC POWER TO THE DESKTOP

New standard development led by Steelcase, Herman Miller; others invited to join effort

SAN RAMON, CALIF. (March 6, 2012) – The EMerge Alliance – an open industry association leading the rapid adoption of safe direct-current (DC) power distribution standards for commercial buildings – today announced it formed the Task Level / Furnishings workgroup to create a standard bringing DC power directly to the desktop.

Due to the success of the Alliance’s first standard for the Occupied Space, which focuses on distributing DC power directly at the ceiling plane, the Alliance launched this workgroup, led by Steelcase, to better optimize power use by the rising number of DC-powered devices used at or near the desktop every day. When finished, the standard will provide a consistent and convenient way for people to plug in their DC devices, eliminating the need for wasteful and cumbersome external AC-DC converters found on a variety of computing and mobile devices and chargers today.

The new standard will be harmonized with the Alliance’s 24-volt DC Occupied Space standard and the soon-to-be-released 380-volt DC Data and Telecom Center standard. The new standard will look to include consideration of contemporary power, infrastructure, device and control applications, as well as the future power needs of the latest desktop technologies, including wireless power charging and higher powered versions of the increasingly popular USB interface.

Joel Zwier, advanced applications business lead at Steelcase, will serve as the chairman of the workgroup, and Matt Banach, director of engineering at Herman Miller, will serve as the vice chairman. Other members of the Alliance, which has grown to include more than 85 members, are also involved in this effort. The group is inviting other innovative companies in the office furnishings and electronics industry to join and contribute to this standards development process.

“The EMerge Alliance is meeting pent-up demand for the establishment of standards for direct current power where people use the most devices – at their workspace,” said Zwier. “By defining how workspaces distribute power, we will enable even more organizations to take advantage of an innovative, yet simple approach to flexible and efficient power use, and improve their day-to-day mobility and sustainability.”

According to EMerge Alliance Chairman Brian Patterson, the new Task Level / Furnishings workgroup will build upon the initial Occupied Space Standard and take the Alliance a step further in achieving its larger vision for direct DC powering of entire buildings.

“From occupied spaces and data centers to building services and outdoor applications, such as electric vehicle charging, the Alliance’s mission focuses on bringing hybrid AC-DC power architectures and DC microgrids to every level of commercial buildings,” said Patterson. “In combination with the potential integration of on-site DC generation, including solar and other renewable sources, this modular standards approach is helping the industry transform the way we power buildings for greater reliability and efficiency, and ultimately delivering net-zero energy buildings.”

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A visionary DC-powered desktop concept was featured in the EMerge Alliance’s display at the 2011 U.S. Green Building Council’s annual Greenbuild International Conference and Expo in Toronto last year. The new standard will help turn that concept into reality.

Since the October conference, nine more organizations have joined the Alliance. New members include: Cisco Systems and Duke Energy Business Services at the Participating level; Semi-Materials and USAI Lighting at the General level; Acuity Power Group at the Corresponding level; and Enatel Limited, Morstar Electric, Solar Dad and Sons, and Workscape at the Supporting level.

Participation in the standards development process is open to Alliance members at the Governing, Participating and Corresponding levels. For information about how to join the nonprofit association, visit www.EMergeAlliance.org/Join/HowtoJoin.aspx.

About the EMerge Alliance
The EMerge Alliance is an open industry association leading the rapid adoption of safe DC power distribution in commercial buildings through the development of EMerge Alliance standards. These innovative standards integrate interior infrastructures, power, controls and devices in a common microgrid platform to facilitate the hybrid use of AC and DC power throughout buildings for unprecedented design and space flexibility, greater energy efficiency and improved sustainability. The nonprofit Alliance is accepting new members at various levels. For more information, please visit www.EMergeAlliance.org.

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