

= Centennial Light =

The Centennial Light is the world's longest @-@ lasting light bulb , burning since 1901 . It is at 4550 East Avenue , Livermore , California , and maintained by the Livermore @-@ Pleasanton Fire Department . Due to its longevity , the bulb has been noted by The Guinness Book of World Records , Ripley 's Believe It or Not ! , and General Electric . It is often cited as evidence for the existence of planned obsolescence in later @-@ produced light bulbs .

= History =

The Centennial Light was originally a 30 @-@ watt or 60 @-@ watt bulb but now is very dim , emitting about the same light as a 4 @-@ watt nightlight . The hand @-@ blown , carbon @-@ filament common light bulb was manufactured in Shelby , Ohio , by the Shelby Electric Company in the late 1890s ; many just like it still exist and can be found functioning . According to Zylpha Bernal Beck , the bulb was donated to the Fire Department by her father , Dennis Bernal , in 1901 . Bernal owned the Livermore Power and Water Company and donated the bulb to the fire station when he sold the company . That story has been supported by firefighter volunteers of that era .

Evidence suggests that the bulb has hung in at least four locations . It was originally hung in 1901 in a hose cart house on L Street , then moved to a garage in downtown Livermore used by the fire and police departments . When the fire department consolidated , it was moved again to a newly constructed City Hall that housed the unified departments .

Its unusual longevity was first noticed in 1972 by reporter Mike Dunstan . After weeks of interviewing people who had lived in Livermore all their lives , he wrote " Light Bulb May Be World 's Oldest " , published in the Tri @-@ Valley Herald . Dunstan contacted the Guinness Book of World Records , Ripley 's Believe It or Not , and General Electric , who all confirmed it as the longest @-@ lasting bulb known in existence . The article came to the attention of Charles Kuralt of the CBS @-@ TV program On the Road with Charles Kuralt .

In 1976 , the fire department moved to Fire Station # 6 with the bulb ; the bulb 's cord was severed for fear that unscrewing it could damage it . It was deprived of electricity for only 22 minutes during the transfer , which was made in a specially designed box and with full firetruck escort . An electrician was on hand to install the bulb into the new fire station 's emergency generator . Ripley 's Believe It Or Not stated that the short delay would not mar the bulb 's continuous burning record . In 2001 , the bulb 's 100th birthday was celebrated with a community barbecue and live music . Since that move , the bulb has run continuously for 38 years ; previously it had only been off the grid for short periods of time (e.g. a week in 1937 for a renovation and the odd power outage) .

On the evening of May 20 , 2013 , the general public witnessed , through a dedicated webcam , that the bulb had apparently burned out . The next morning , an electrician was called in to confirm its status . It was determined that the bulb had not burned out when the uninterruptible power supply was bypassed , using an extension cord . The dedicated power supply was found to have been faulty . Approximately seven hours had transpired before the light was reestablished .

The bulb is cared for by the Centennial Light Bulb Committee , a partnership of the Livermore @-@ Pleasanton Fire Department , Livermore Heritage Guild , Lawrence Livermore National Laboratories , and Sandia National Laboratories . The Livermore @-@ Pleasanton Fire Department plans to house and maintain the bulb for the rest of its life , regardless of length . When it does go out , they have no plans for it , although Ripley 's Believe it or Not ! has requested it for their museum . The bulb 's long life has been attributed to its low power , nearly continuous operation , and dedicated power supply .

= Publicity =

The bulb was officially listed in the Guinness Book of World Records as " the most durable light " in 1972 , replacing another bulb in Fort Worth , Texas . The bulb was listed in the book for the next 16 editions . It was not listed during 1988 ? 2006 , without a reason being given , before returning in

2007 .

2010 French ? Spanish documentary The Light Bulb Conspiracy dealing with planned obsolescence refers to the Centennial Light extensively .

According to the fire chief , every few months a news outlet will publish a story on the bulb , generating visitors and general interest , then it will drop back into obscurity for a while . Dozens of magazines and newspapers have featured articles on the bulb . The bulb has been visited and featured by many major news channels in the United States , including NBC , ABC , Fox , CBS , WB , CNN and NPR . The bulb has received letters acknowledging and celebrating its longevity from the city of Shelby , Ohio , the Alameda County Board of Supervisors , the California State Assembly , the California State Senate , Congresswoman Ellen Tauscher , Senator Barbara Boxer , and President George W. Bush . The bulb was featured on an episode of MythBusters on December 13 , 2006 . It was also in the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) documentary Livermore . It was also briefly mentioned on Warehouse 13 in the season @-@ one episode " Regrets " . The light bulb was featured in an episode of 99 % Invisible .