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**PWI's Fluorescent Light Blowing Artisan
One of the Few Left in the U.S.**

WICHITA, KS – Without flinching, PWI's Man Van Tran gingerly holds a fluorescent light cylinder to a blue-glowing flame. His fingers numb to the heat, he steadily blows air through a plastic tube on one end, guiding its shape. In his hand, the tube bends to his will as thousands of other fluorescent lights have done since he first started with PWI back in 1983. 70-year-old Tran is one of the last fluorescent light blowing artisans left in the U.S. and possibly the world.

"There are only about 2 or 3 of us left in Wichita and I trained the others", Tran says with a chuckle. "Nobody can do it like me." For the past 37 years Tran has blown thousands of fluorescent (also known as neon) lights which were bound for the interior of aircraft like King Air and Citation model aircraft. The lights are used in a wide variety of areas such as in cabins, bathrooms or aircraft galleys.

Fluorescent lights start out as empty glass cylinders. Craftsmen like Tran take the tube and hold it over flames while blowing air through a plastic tube to implant bends into the cylinders. Then he will finish the tube by filling it with gas and liquid mercury, and then capping the ends with connectors to create the glow. The light is then ready for shipment to install in aircraft all over the world.

"He's hard working and dedicated. I don't know what we would do without him", says Chris Waggoner,

Tran's supervisor at PWI. "He tried to retire once, but he had to come back to try and train someone to do what he does." Waggoner anticipates Tran will take 3 to 6 months to train his apprentice and even then, it would be hard to let Tran retire. Tran himself is not keen on the idea either.

"I like to work. At home I would sit down and watch TV. That's no good for old people. I will work!" says Tran.

Tran is able to make close to 1500 different light designs for a wide variety of aircraft. He uses patterns to remind him of how to create the designs. Tran can churn out around 30 to 50 fluorescents a day depending on the size and number of bends required. He says the few other fluorescent light artisans left cannot come close to the number of lights he creates in one day. But he has no plans to leave his love of bending fluorescents.

"I have retired once, but I still want to work," says Tran. PWI is happy to keep Tran bending fluorescents for as long as he wants to stay.

"He's good at what he does," says Waggoner. "It's an artform."

To see Man Van Tran bend fluorescent lights for PWI, please visit our YouTube page at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P0fcytPTRno>

Established in 1963, PWI has grown from constructing coil winding and magnetometers to designing electrical assemblies, electronics, contract manufacturing, and magnetometers. PWI's also specializes in producing a diverse range of customized aviation lighting, including fluorescent and LED. PWI is a FAA Repair Station and is FAR 145 certified. Aviation products can be purchased through our growing [authorized dealer network](#). All PWI products can be ordered by emailing our sales department at sales@pwi-e.com.

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