

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

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The 2007 International Sign Contest Winners p.114



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The 2007 ST International Sign Contest!

The Wheel Deal

A bumper crop of unique projects yields a memorable competition.

Amassing the talent pool for our annual International Sign Contest represents a monumental labor of love. Contacting prospective contestants, assigning submissions to their appropriate categories and making judging arrangements are time-consuming enterprises, but the end product more than justifies the expended effort.

This year's opus carries added significance because it marks the competition's 30th year. When the Commercial Sign Contest was first launched in 1978 (the Electric competition debuted three years later – *ST* merged the contests in 2003), *Grease* and *Superman* were the top-grossing films, and Andy Gibb's "Shadow Dancing" topped the pop charts. The inaugural competition featured categories such as window lettering; flat, painted signs; and shop-ID signage – proof positive that the contest has evolved equally with hairstyles and clothes.

For this year's contest, 77 companies dispatched 354 qualified entries that spanned the gamut from the

sober to the surreal. As we streamlined the field, the prevailing entries comprised a lively mixture of distinctive (and occasionally overstated) design, outside-the-box creativity and an emphasis on appropriate location and scale.

The judges vigorously debated the merits of competing entries. The insights provided by our adjudicators, who comprised a balanced ticket of designers and fabricators, provided invaluable insights about size, color, location and other factors that could dictate a sign's success or failure.

Ultimately, three signs distinguished themselves among the field: Integrated Signs' (Lexington, KY) and Lorenc + Yoo's (Roswell, GA) fabrication/design collaboration for gateway signage and environmental graphics for the Firewheel Town Center in suburban Dallas; DaVinci Sign's (Windsor, CO) illuminated building façade for Southlands Cinema; and Green Valley Signs (Farmington, PA) folksy pole sign for a private residence. The simple, stately font; powerful, yet tasteful,

illumination; and a well-suited typeface pushed the Firewheel project to the Best of Show apex.

Entry quantities across categories remained relatively consistent, although Vehicle Graphics commanded an unusually large share (61) – a compelling reason why *ST* will devote a separate contest to vehicle graphics in its December issue. Commercial Building Signs (46) maintained a consistently strong showing, while Electric Building Signs (36) and Commercial Pole/Pylon Signs (33) also attracted large fields.

Commercial Monument Signs (31), Electric Pole/Pylon Signs (25), Electric Monument Signs (23), Commercial Sign Systems (22), Unique Signs (20), Electronic Message Centers (17), Electric Sign Systems (16), Murals/Supergraphics (13) and Banners (11) rounded out the field.

Enough hype and hoopla – the pictures and descriptions the winning companies provided will tell the story. ■

2007 International Sign Contest

Electric Pole/Pylon Signs

Compiled by Susan Conner

BEST OF SHOW

FIRST PLACE

Fabricator

Albert Oberst
Integrated Sign and Graphic Inc.
Lexington, KY
(859) 263-2800
aoberst@isginc.net

Designers

Jan Lorenc
David Park
Steve McCall
Lorenc + Yoo Design
Roswell, GA
(770) 645-2828
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Client

Jane Davis
Simon Property Group

Selling Price

\$800,000

Lorenc + Yoo emphasized walkability, neighborhood authenticity and small-town ambience when the firm designed environmental graphics for the Firewheel Town Center, Garland, TX's new lifestyle center. The gateway sign's bricks and wrought iron reinforce the center's main-street Americana theme. Integrated Signs built halo-lit channel letters, which are illuminated by neon, and installed them onto the galvanized-steel support. Push-through, acrylic letters spell out "Town Center" in the oval below. Placards bearing the logo decorate the pillars. High-intensity floodlights sit at ground level and within the structure.

