HIGH IMPACT PROJECTS DAZZLE THE JUDGES

Annual awards honor exceptional design and construction

Now in its 15th year, ENR Southwest's Best Projects competition honors an impressive group of winners. Despite the lingering slowdown in construction work caused by the recession, this year's entries—spanning work completed between July 1, 2011, and June 30, 2012—were some of the best ever received, according to industry judges, some of whom have served in previous years.

There was no shortage of entries either. Using a new online system, the Southwest region received 338 submissions. To conquer such a magnitude of entries, a panel of 15 judges was assembled, representing all facets of the design and construction industry.

Judges reviewed and scored each entry based on five criteria: overarching challenges and teamwork; safety, innovation and contribution to the community; construction quality and craftsmanship; and the function and/or aesthetic quality of the design. Projects with a construction-related death were disqualified.

If a judge's employer submitted an entry, that judge was assigned to a different category and did not participate in the scoring or discussion of any competing projects.

Taking the top-scoring projects, the judges then met to argue the merits of each finalist and determine the ultimate winners, which were selected in 19 main categories, ranging from civil infrastructure to offices and education. Judges chose a main category winner and one or more awards of merit.

The judges also selected an overall winner for the Southwest region. Three Phoenix projects rose to the top as the finalists for Project of the Year: PCHS Sky Train, DPR Construction's Phoenix Office and Gateway Community College's Integrated Education Building. The winners are profiled in the following pages.

New this year, a separate panel of safety experts was assembled to review the entries for ENR Southwest's first annual safety award. More than 50 projects were considered and judged based on their OSHA incident rates, lost-time accidents, total man-hours and the quality of the project's safety programs.

Urbana Campus
Designer of K-12 education category winner
Del Norte High School in Alhambra gave the facade a modern appeal.

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