PSA Dewberry Stacks Up Awards In The Library
Hello everybody and welcome to the March issue which is dedicated to all things outside - a place where we will soon be spending more time. Our exterior cover shot comes to us courtesy of the talented folks at PSA-Dewberry. If you’re wondering about exterior finishes – specifically paint, our affiliate profile is about your local Benjamin Moore rep who specializes in helping designers solve problems with coatings.

Despite the dire economic news we’re all sick of hearing about, things are still happening in Member’s News, the calendar is full of activities and we also have an update on the Architecture in Schools program being run by the Washington Architectural Foundation.

Here’s one more, nuts and bolts item. If you’re using the portal on the AIA|DC website to submit your Member News items – excellent! If you are still sending items to MemberNews@aiadc.com or my personal e-mail we encourage you to change your ways.

The portal provides fields for text, images, image captions and credits. Keep in mind that I can’t edit text off jpegs or pull hi-rez images off pdfs or html documents which means your items might not make it into the News. To use the portal, go to AIADC.com, click on Marketing Opportunities, click on Member News Submission and you’re in.

The end of winter also brings sadness and reflection with the passing of Eric Snellings, one of the chapter’s own and J. Max Bond Junior, an influential design pioneer who was working on the museum portion of the 9-11 Memorial in Manhattan at the time of his passing. Rest in peace, gentlemen.

The Ashburn Library in Ashburn, VA, was recently recognized with a “2008 Signatures of Loudoun Design Excellence Award,” which commends notable building projects throughout Loudoun County.

Designed by PSA-Dewberry, the popular library’s distinctive architecture and interior design were cited during the awards presentation. The 23,000-square-foot library was designed to incorporate regional materials, including traditional brick, split-faced masonry, and a zinc-coated metal roof. The exterior features a metal panel skin that reflects a contemporary aesthetic in keeping with the area’s focus on the high-technology market. An extensive use of glass along the façade allows for generous amounts of natural light within the building.

A carefully planned interior supports both traditional library and ambitious community programs, with meeting rooms as well as intimate reading areas. New landscaping and the restoration of a stormwater retention pond enable the site to be used as a community amenity, with walkways, an outdoor overlook, and a small performing arts area.

In addition to the Signatures of Loudoun award, the Ashburn Library earned a “Best New Building Award” from the Northern Virginia chapter of the National Association of Industrial and Office Parks (NAIOP) and has been featured in Inform, the magazine of the Virginia Society of the American Institute of Architects.
The Onyx Group is pleased to announce that Albert H. McCoubrey III, AIA has joined the firm as the Director of Architecture. In his role, he will be leading the Design Division and responsible for the business development, coordinating large multi-disciplinary teams, and serving as a liaison for ongoing federal programs.

The new Thurmont Regional Library, a 25,000-square-foot facility that highlights the rural community’s agricultural heritage, recently opened in Frederick County, Maryland. The library was designed by the Fairfax, Virginia, office of PSA-Dewberry, an architectural and engineering firm known nationally for its work in the design of libraries and other community facilities.

The spacious new building is more than ten times the size of Thurmont’s previous library, which had been housed in a former church. The facility includes two meeting rooms, spaces for children and teens, an outdoor reading deck, and the county’s first drive-through service window. The community’s
new Thurmont Center for Agricultural History, which highlights the region’s agrarian roots, is located just off the lobby.

The climate-controlled space contains historic documents, paintings, photographs, 4-H and Grange records, and histories of family farms and orchards. The center also features historic windows that were removed from the previous library structure and relocated to the new building. In designing the building, the PSA-Dewberry team took cues from the rural landscape and the prevalence of farm structures still scattered throughout the area. Local materials, such as stone and wood, are used throughout, and where possible, the team selected sustainable, low-cost alternatives such as Hardy Board.

Interior spaces are designed to recall agrarian structures such as barns, sheds, and covered bridges. Heavy timber roof trusses also add warmth and drama to the interior. A soaring tower on the exterior acts as a centerpiece and the 40-foot-high lobby represents the historic Catoctin Furnace, a local landmark that influenced the form of the building.

The tower is constructed of calcium silicate, a durable, low-cost material that resembles stone. Iron elements throughout the building echo the details found in the furnace itself. The children’s area features a small, barn-shaped “room within a room” for stories with a child-sized door and a corrugated metal, shed-type roof. The ceiling in the children’s area is reminiscent of a covered bridge.

The children’s area also has a puppet stage, a child-sized information desk, and low shelving and windows. An area for teens allows for visual monitoring from the main circulation desk but offers a sophisticated, separate gathering area for reading and socializing. The space has informal seating, coffee tables, and access to computers. The site presented a number of challenges, as the buildable area was impacted by the presence of encroaching wetlands. Ultimately, the building parcel was narrowed to five acres—much smaller than originally anticipated.

The design team optimized use of the site by creating an outdoor deck and a small boardwalk that extends to the adjacent wetlands. Environmental graphics and interpretive signage introduce library patrons to the wetland environment and other aspects of the surrounding natural landscape. In addition to PSA-Dewberry, the consulting team included Rich Lawson & Associates for mechanical/electrical and plumbing engineering and Adtek Associates for civil engineering and landscape architecture.

The following people from RTKL recently received their LEED AP status: June Park, Michelle Denyer, Yuval Zohar, Karen Pottebaum, Gary Maule and Mark Lindgren.

RTKL will also be moving their office location, effective Monday, March 9, 2009. Please note our new address - phone numbers and faxes will remain the same. 2101 L Street, NW Suite 200 Washington, DC 20037 Main Number 202.833.4400 Fax Number: 202.887.5168 www.rtkl.com

The firm designed their new space at 2101 L Street, NW, not only to showcase the international design firm’s commitment to sustainable architecture but also reflect their collaborative culture and work processes. A classic example of “practice what you preach,” the 60,000 square-foot space, will accommodate more than 240 employees and is on track to receive LEED-CI Platinum. HITT Contracting is the general contractor.