

AIA Iowa Celebrates 100 Years, Increases Architecture Awareness

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SUMMARY

A Century of Iowa Architecture is an event created by AIA Iowa to celebrate Iowa's built environment and to increase the public's architectural awareness. The component products created for this event helped Iowans develop a deeper appreciation and understanding of Iowa's architectural history.

BACKGROUND

In April 2001, AIA Iowa formed a task force to plan a celebration of Iowa's architectural heritage. Resultantly, a celebration coined A Century of Iowa Architecture emerged to highlight the aesthetic qualities of Iowan buildings and to explore the impact of the built environment on Iowa's culture, politics, and economy.

A Century of Iowa Architecture focused on gaining insight and knowledge from artifacts that are often taken for granted. As a part of the celebration, 50 buildings that represented the best of Iowan 20th-century architecture were named Buildings of the Century, based upon their aesthetic value, social context, and contribution. This theme engaged the public, stimulated pride in Iowa, and inspired curiosity among Iowans about the buildings in their own communities.

A CENTURY OF IOWA ARCHITECTURE PRODUCTS

In developing A Century of Iowa Architecture, AIA Iowa intended each "product" to reach hundreds of Iowans at each location represented. The effort succeeded; the program reached thousands of Iowans, advancing the public's knowledge and appreciation of the built environment for years to come.

The following component products were part of the Century of Iowa Architecture outreach effort:

- **Traveling exhibition.** The 62-panel *A Century of Iowa Architecture* exhibition opened at the State Historical Museum of Iowa in Des Moines on October 14, 2004 (in the middle of the governor's proclaimed Architecture Month in

Iowa). The show toured the state's major metropolitan areas.

- **Commemorative book.** The 112-page book—*A Century of Iowa Architecture: 1900–1999*—includes dramatic black-and-white images of each of the 50 Iowa Buildings of the Century as well as text analyzing Iowa's architectural history within a changing cultural and economic context.
- **Iowa Public Television (IPTV) documentary.** Through support and funding by AIA Iowa, IPTV developed a 40-minute documentary that featured some of the 50 Buildings of the Century. The show debuted as part of the IPTV fund drive in December 2004 and has been rebroadcast in different formats several times. The original broadcast was 40 minutes; however, IPTV developed a series of four 30-minute segments that included much more footage.
- **DVD of IPTV series.** The DVD includes all four 30-minute segments developed by IPTV. It is currently available to teachers (via loan) as part of the Iowa Architectural Foundation's successful Architecture in the Schools program. The component hopes to distribute copies of the DVD to every school in Iowa and is currently seeking funding for that project. On the weekend the program aired during the IPTV fund-raiser, the DVD was the third most requested subscriber gift.
- **100 Iowa Events for 100 Years.** Component staff and members collected a database of 100 architecture- and design-related events across Iowa during 2004 and posted them on the AIA Iowa Web site.
- **Street banners.** A competition was held for street banners to be used in multiple cities during the year. They were hung in downtown Des Moines throughout October 2004.
- **Iowa Architect magazine.** An issue of *Iowa Architect* was devoted to the Buildings of the

Century, including articles on the five Buildings of the Decade and the Building of the Century.

- **Celebration.** On October 14, 2004, the Buildings of the Century were announced during an event at the State Historical Museum of Iowa, in conjunction with the exhibit opening at that venue. Owners of the five Buildings of the Decade and Building of the Century were invited to attend and were recognized.
- **Tagline.** The component developed a tagline for AIA Iowa stationery and other communication vehicles: “Celebrating 100 Years, Promoting Iowa Architecture, 1904–2004.”
- **AIA Central States Regional Convention.** October 14–15, 2004, AIA Iowa hosted the five-state Central States Regional Convention coinciding with the component’s 100th-anniversary celebration.
- **The *Iowan* magazine insert.** AIA Iowa has an ongoing relationship with *The Iowan* magazine by which it supplies the magazine with editorial content for two 10- to 12-page inserts each year. The November/December 2004 issue carried the AIA Iowa insert, “Four Century Firms.”

Key Terms

- Leadership
- Events
- Sponsored events
- Exhibits
- Art exhibits
- AIA state and local components
- Publicity

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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RESOURCES

More Best Practices

The following AIA Best Practices provide additional information related to this topic:

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| 22.07.03 | How to Gain Publicity and Architectural Awareness |
| 22.08.13 | Plan Savannah: Reaching Out with an Unstaffed Component |
| 22.08.15 | Celebrating Architecture, Educating the Public |

Feedback

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