

## A Partnership for Architectural Awareness in Columbia, S.C.

Contributed by AIA Columbia. Excerpted and adapted from a 2008 Grassroots Excellence Award-winning entry. January 2008

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### SUMMARY

AIA Columbia partnered with the Columbia Museum of Art in 2006 to celebrate architecture and the contributions of Frank Lloyd Wright. The component's Board of Directors contacted the Columbia Museum of Art once they learned the Frank Lloyd Wright "House Beautiful" exhibit was traveling to the museum. Together the two organizations formed a mutually beneficial partnership to encourage AIA member involvement in the exhibit and the museum's activities.

### PURPOSE

The exhibit sought to teach and show how Frank Lloyd Wright's efforts made American lives better and richer through his vision of architecture and interiors. AIA Columbia recognized the exhibit as an opportunity to promote architecture within the greater community.

### STRATEGY

The exhibit ran from November 10, 2006, to February 4, 2007, and was one of the largest exhibitions the museum has presented to date, occupying all six main gallery floors.

AIA Columbia's sponsorship of the event provided a venue to connect with the community and promote AIA Columbia architects as valued members of the design and arts community.

To fulfill AIA Columbia's sponsorship agreement, the component

- Donated \$10,000 to sponsor the exhibit
- Provided AIA architect members as docents at the Auldbrass Plantation tour
- Hosted a Kids in Architecture workshop at the museum
- Allotted continuing education credits for architects who attended lectures, films, and panel discussions pertaining to the exhibit



In return, the Columbia Museum of Art

- Included the AIA Columbia logo on exhibition brochures, exhibit walls in the gallery, the opening-night invitation, and advertisements in *The State* newspaper and *Collections* magazine
- Gave AIA Columbia Board members complimentary invitations to the exhibit's opening reception
- Provided free use of the museum's community gallery to display AIA awards submissions, December 6, 2006, through January 5, 2007
- Allowed the use of the museum on a Friday evening for the AIA awards banquet

### RESULTS

The Frank Lloyd Wright Exhibition was the most-attended exhibit in the museum's history, with 26,389 total visitors, including 922 on the last day. Editorial coverage appeared in 42 publications with an estimated gross combined circulation of more than 37 million people.

The relationship developed between AIA Columbia and the Columbia Museum of Art proved successful for both organizations. Following the Frank Lloyd Wright exhibition, the two organizations have collaborated on an educational program for school-age children, Teens in Architecture.

## RESOURCES

### More Best Practices

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

- 21.06.01 The Shape of Texas: Enhancing Public Awareness through Public Radio
- 22.06.02 AIA Kansas City: River Crown Plaza Forum Series
- 22.08.02 Community Leadership in Urban Design

### Feedback

The AIA welcomes member feedback on Best Practice articles. To provide feedback on this article, contact [bestpractices@aia.org](mailto:bestpractices@aia.org).

### Key Terms

- Leadership
- Associations
- Design associations
- Architectural associations
- The American Institute of Architects
- AIA components