

## **New Jersey Architects Recognized by National Organization**

### ***Newark and Suburban Section of AIA-NJ Wins Award For "Live the Box" Design Competition***

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (February 2010)** -- The Newark and Suburban Architects section of the New Jersey Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA-NJ) was recently recognized by the American Institute of Architects (AIA) with a "Grassroots" excellence award for its 2008 "Live the Box" international design competition.

The design competition challenged innovative designers to "re-invent the box" by using shipping containers as both building blocks and primary design elements in a conceptual urban, multi-family, mixed-use project for Newark, N.J. The containers could be used in any configuration or quantity and in whole or in part.

The section won the award in the "Component Outreach Communications: Outstanding Overall Program" category.

The award was presented at the recent AIA Grassroots Annual Leadership and Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C., and accepted before an audience of more than 500 attendees by Judy Donnelly, AIA, 2010 president of Newark and Suburban Architects and Kim de Freitas, AIA, New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) School of Architecture instructor and co-coordinator of the competition.

"This was a proud and exciting moment for Newark and Suburban," Donnelly said. "Live the Box was our first international design competition, and we were surprised and pleased by the interest it generated -- and the innovative and hopeful designs it produced -- from applicants from throughout the United States and the world."

One hundred and fifty participants from 13 countries, including those as far away as Turkey, South Korea and Romania, and from 26 states responded to the Web-only competition.

The proposed site was located at the tip of Newark's Central Ward, once known as the Central Business District, near Broad Street Station. The site, which is within walking distance of the downtown and major cultural centers, was originally home to a Westinghouse Electric Corp. facility, which has been demolished.

The first prize of \$10,000 went to Felix Heidgen and Thomas Nagy for their design of "NewPark Station." Both are associates at RMJM Architects in Princeton, N.J., although they worked independently on this project. Noting the many neighborhoods that make up Newark, Haidgen said their goal was to create a project celebrating the "community within the community." Second place of \$7,000 went to Modulaire of Miami, Fla., and third place of \$3,000 to Tang & Yang Architects of Savannah, Ga.

Moving beyond the boundaries of familiar urban architecture, the competitors stacked the multi-hued containers in imaginative designs that took advantage of the modular nature of the building material by creating repetitive themes.

Many of the designs aimed to reflect the cultural diversity of the city. The desire of urban residents for green space and places to exercise was expressed in the incorporation of recreational elements and rooftop gardens. Sustainable elements included solar panels, wind turbines, rainwater harvesting and compost chambers.

The competition was the brainchild of Christopher Stone, AIA, then vice president of Newark and Suburban Architects. He was inspired by the view from his office window of the discarded shipping containers near Newark Liberty International Airport, seemingly waiting to be put to a new purpose.

“As design standards change and evolve and building resources become more limited, Newark and Suburban Architects has demonstrated through the Live the Box competition that architects remain at the forefront of solving design needs,” said Justin Mihalik, AIA, the section president at the time the competition took place.

The “Live the Box” competition was followed in 2009 by a conceptual design competition for a Newark Visitors Center, also sponsored by Newark and Suburban Architects. That competition drew nearly 200 entries submitted by architects from 31 countries.

### ***About AIA and AIA New Jersey***

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) is the professional organization that helps architects serve the public’s needs and builds awareness of the role of architects and architecture in American society. The organization, which was founded in 1857, celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2007. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., its 300 plus local chapters represent 83,000 licensed architects and associated professionals. AIA New Jersey, based in Trenton, is the state chapter and region of the national AIA. In 2000, AIA-NJ celebrated its 100th anniversary. AIA New Jersey has about 2,000 members in six regional sections. For more information, please visit [www.aia-nj.org](http://www.aia-nj.org).

### ***About AIA Newark and Suburban Architects***

AIA Newark and Suburban Architects is a section of AIA New Jersey and a chapter and region of the American Institute of Architects. It is a non-profit organization that serves more than 500 members in Morris, Union and Essex Counties. Through public education and outreach, community redevelopment and government advocacy and partnerships, AIA Newark and Suburban Architects protects the professional interests of its members while working to create a responsive public environment for architectural and redevelopment projects.



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