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AGC awards highlight noteworthy projects



Courtesy of Rachlin Partners

The Sage Creek High School Performing Arts Center in Carlsbad drew an award at the AGC's Build San Diego Awards event, held last week.

By Mark Armao

The San Diego Chapter of the Associated General Contractors of America recognized several local projects last week, during the trade group's biennial Build San Diego Awards banquet.

More than 300 guests gathered at the Hilton San Diego Bayfront to attend the program, which also highlighted public agencies for "getting the best value out of every construction dollar," according to a news release.

Drawing from more than 30 nominations, eight construction projects in San Diego County received one of the juried awards.

"A panel of four judges evaluated the nominees in terms of excellence in project management, innovation in construction techniques or materials, excellence in client service, contractor's contribution to the community as it relates to the project, and meeting the challenges of a difficult job," the release stated.

In the Building Construction -- Public Work category, Erickson-Hall Construction was given the award for the Sage Creek High School Performing Arts Center in Carlsbad.

The project features a two-story lobby, 345-seat auditorium and a multi-purpose room that doubles as a black-box theater. Designed by Culver City-based Rachlin Partners, the 17,000-square-foot building is wrapped in a transparent, curvilinear façade.

"Perforated metal panels on the entry façade are suspended in front of a structural glazed curtain wall to control the amount of sunlight cascading into the building," states a description on the architect's website.

Construction crews working under Erickson-Hall performed the build with minimal disruption to the active campus, according to the Escondido-based contractor.

Colorado-based builder Hensel Phelps took home the award in the Building Construction -- Private Work category for its work on the InterContinental San Diego hotel.

The 400-room hotel rises 210 feet above the Embarcadero and features multiple eateries, a rooftop bar and 35,000 square feet of indoor gathering space. The construction firm performed much of the concrete work itself, and poured 8,500 cubic yards of concrete for the foundation in a single, 24-hour pour, according to the release.

Mid-Coast Transit Constructors received a Build San Diego Award for highway projects for the Gilman Drive Bridge, which links UC San Diego's east and west campuses.

Spanning eight lanes on Interstate 5, the 400-foot-long arch bridge was designed by Moffat & Nichol, which collaborated with Safdie Rabines Architects on the project.

"The superstructure, including the arch legs, consists of over 9 million pounds of concrete," stated the release. "The bridge was pre-stressed using 25 miles of high-strength steel strands pulled with enough force to create over 14 million pounds of compression."

In the Unique Small Project -- Public Work category, the award was given to Swinerton for its renovations at the entrance of the San Diego Zoo. The 5,000-square-foot project included the installation of a 10-ton lion sculpture known as Rex's Roar.

San Diego-based TC Construction Co. was honored for a roadway project at the Sycamore Ranch residential community. The project, which took more than 20 years to approve, involved the installation of an enviro-flex erosion system and a unique arch culvert, according to the release.

R.E. Staite's work on a complex cofferdam project for General Dynamics NASSCO garnered an award in the somewhat redundantly named Unique Special Project category. Built using more than 750 tons of custom-fabricated steel components, the project entailed driving 120-foot-long piles into the muddy bottom of San Diego Bay.

"The biggest challenge faced was working in an active shipyard under intense schedule completion constraints, while concurrently maintaining the owner's active schedule and operational continuity," stated the release.

Orion Construction Corp. was awarded for its emergency repair of a deteriorated sewer main in Escondido, and Hensel Phelps received a sustainability award for a student housing project at UC San Diego.

The university was also recognized as the "best of the best" public client, based on a survey of AGC members. The cities of Encinitas, Santee and Vista, as well as the Padre Dam Municipal Water District, received merit awards.