

It Takes a Team

‘The Hub’ and Wonders of Wildlife are selected for design and construction awards

by **Matthew Henderson**
 mhenderson@sbj.net

Collaboration was prominent Nov. 9 at the 33rd annual Salute to Design and Construction Awards Banquet, hosted by the Salute to Design & Construction Council.

The top award, Developer of the Year, went to Bass Pro Shops founder Johnny Morris for spearheading completion of the Wonders of Wildlife National Museum & Aquarium. Some 40 contractors and 500 professionals spent the better part of the last decade working on the 350,000-square-foot wildlife- and conservation-themed destination that was estimated to cost upwards of \$300 million at the corner of Sunshine Street and Campbell Avenue.

Design Team of the Year was awarded to the group that spent two and a half years master planning and building the first phase of a development on East Sunshine Street, now home to O'Reilly Hospitality Management LLC and Ransin Injury Law.

"You bring a group of people together with one vision, but how you get there might be 15 different ways for each person. Well, you start doing the math on that and you've got a lot of options," said Rick Quint, president of Q & Co. LLC, of the collaboration between his general contractor/construction management firm and others on the O'Reilly-Ransin project at 4045 E. Sunshine St., nicknamed The Hub by co-owner Tim O'Reilly.

Trying to find the best way to incorporate everyone's ideas, while spending the least amount of money on the 20,000-square-foot office complex, was a challenge, Quint said. The estimated cost of the project was \$3.9 million, according to city building permits.

"Sometimes the civil engineer will bring up an idea that maybe the architect hadn't thought of yet that would be a really neat thing – or vice versa," he said. "So the key is, you have to leave your ego at the door. When you come into that room, you have to roll your sleeves up and say 'Hey, we're one team. Let's figure out how to make this thing really work.'"



Jon Dodd, vice president of Buxton Kubik Dodd Creative, drew the preliminary concept, Quint said, and Q & Co. was brought in early to review the designs.

"A lot of different ideas get put on paper that don't actually get built, but they all get priced," Quint said of the process he has followed with Dodd on many projects. "The idea is that when you start building a building like this, hopefully there's no change orders involved."

Q & Co. provided constructability reviews and cost estimates continuously, Quint said, as the design took shape. Many changes were required during the design phase, in part, due to rezoning challenges.

Uphill battle

First of all, the former farmland, a mile east of U.S. Highway 65, was not connected to a public sewer system, Dodd said.

Ransin and O'Reilly, both being attorneys, were able to negotiate with surrounding landowners to share the cost of extending the sewer lines, Dodd said, allowing other properties to be developed – including Get-away Golf to the west.

"Understandably, everyone always has a not-in-my-backyard concept, and it's difficult to accept change," Ransin said of the concerns raised by neighbors after he bought the land.

Ransin originally planned to move his practice from a Battlefield Road office he leased for 27 years to a new stand-alone building he envisioned, set back from the busy road, near the existing homes.

Ransin invited O'Reilly to join the project, allowing O'Reilly to consolidate OHM and his law practice into one location. Working with their design team and the county commissioners, they made plenty of design changes, including moving the building closer to Sunshine Street.

"This was my first opportunity to undertake an endeavor of this nature and scope," Ransin said. "Rick Quint and his crew were unbelievable and helpful – and treated it like their own project and their own money. So, I had complete comfort and confidence throughout the entire project. In fact, if I ever build another building of this nature, I won't do it unless I can have their team on board."

The land also had many typography changes, Dodd said, adding to the design complexities.

"The building is actually built into the hillside so that there's grade-level entrances on the lower level and the upper level," he said. "It allows for handicap access entrances on both floors."

There was also an effort by civil engineering firm Lee Engineering and Associates LLC, Quint said, to avoid the bedrock commonly found in southwest Missouri.

"We went out and did a lot of test holes and situated the building to where we would minimize the amount of rock and minimize the amount of haul-in or haul-off," he said.

Balancing needs

Travis Miller of Miller Engineering PC, another longtime partner of Quint's, came on as structural engineer, to assist in ensuring the building was rigid, while trying to incorporate the more aesthetic features the designers wanted. Dodd's office designs incorporate a lot of glass on the exterior and interior to bring in natural light, Quint said, which makes it challenging to hide structural elements. The team also worked together to design a building that could be built within budget and on time.

"They can come up with some great ideas, but some are not cost effective, or they're going to take too long to do," he said. "So you're constantly playing that game of how do we get the most bang for the buck?"

Dodd and Quint have built a rapport over the years.

They worked together, at least 15 years ago, during the construction of Digital Monitoring Products Inc.'s headquarters in Partnership Industrial Center. They have since worked on many projects together, including a \$14 million John Deere property in Strafford and a \$40 million distribution center for Casey's General Stores Inc. in Indiana.

Additional honors

The event, held at the Oasis Convention Center, featured award recipients selected by the Salute to Design & Construction Council, including its 26 member organizations. Also recognized were 41 local scholarship recipients, Lifetime Achievement honorees and

the National Association of Women in Construction's Women of the Year.

At press time, Developer of the Year Morris was not scheduled to appear at the event. Bass Pro Group Communications Director Jack Wlezien sent a statement to Springfield Business Journal from the WOW developer: "I am grateful to the Springfield Contractors Association for this honor, which I accept on behalf of hundreds of talented local craftsmen who contributed their time, talent and boundless passion for Wonders of Wildlife to make this a reality."

One of those contributors on WOW, Eric Henderson of Performance Contracting Inc., was named Craftsman of the Year by the American Institute of Architects. Jerel Twitchell of Branco Enterprises Inc. was awarded Superintendent of the Year for leading the new Neosho Junior High School.

The Salute Council's Lifetime Achievement Awards were given to individuals for their overall contribution to the design and construction industry: Herschel Johns, retired from Harry H. Johns Inc.; Charles Hill, GHN Architects Engineers; Tim Smith, city of Springfield; Joe Jenkins, retired from Jenkins Diesel Power Inc.; and George Innes, retired from Springfield Ready Mix Co.

Design Team of the Year

A collaborative effort on the 20,000-square foot, \$3.9 million O'Reilly-Ransin complex in east Springfield earned a Salute to Design and Construction Award.

Project: O'Reilly-Ransin office building
Owners: David Ransin and Tim O'Reilly
Architecture, interior design, MEP engineer: Buxton Kubik Dodd Creative
Construction manager: Q & Co.
Structural engineer: Miller Engineering PC
Civil engineer: Lee Engineering & Associates LLC
Address: 4045 E. Sunshine St.

Source: Springfield Contractors Association