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View Canstruction RI sculptures vote for one in support of food bank on display at Providence Place Mall Skybridge Concourse until April 13

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Canstruction Rhode Island has again challenged several teams of architects, construction professionals and their team sponsors to provide a sizeable donation to the R.I. Community Food Bank (www.rifoodbank.org) in April, while raising public awareness of the problem of hunger in Rhode Island.

"Challenges often elicit great performances, and we expect this year's teams to meet and even exceed the performances of the past three Canstruction RI events," said Drayton Fair, AIA, ALA, LEED AP, co-chair for the event and a partner at LLB Architects, Pawtucket. He is a past-president of the American Institute of Architects, Rhode Island chapter (AIAri), which initiates each exhibit as part of AIA support of the Society for Design Administration's nationwide and international Canstruction community service project.

After spending the last few months on fund-raising efforts and designing astounding sculptures, each of seven teams will build its creation from approximately 3,000 to 6,000 cans of food on Saturday morning, March 31. The sculptures will be on display at the Providence Place Mall Skybridge Concourse through Friday, April 13.

They will be "de-canstructed" Saturday, April 14, when an anticipated 20,000 to 30,000 canned goods will be transported to the Food Bank. Every month, the Food Bank's network of emergency food pantries serves more than 60,000 people. One in three is a child under the age of 18.

"The Canstruction exhibit highlights the fact that more Rhode Islanders than ever need help in putting food on the table," said Andrew Schiff, chief executive officer of the Rhode Island Community Food Bank. "We're grateful to all the talented participants and to Providence Place for providing space where thousands of people can see these amazing sculptures. This impressive project serves as a reminder that the problem of hunger is close to home, affecting every community in Rhode Island."

In addition to AIAri, major donors helping to cover the a 501(c)(3) nonprofit Canstruction RI's expenses for the event include: Kasabian Construction, Providence; the R.I. Associated General Contractors (RIAGC), Providence; and Taco Inc., Cranston. Other event sponsors include: Furniture Consultants, Providence and Boston; Norman Feinstein-Branch Avenue Shopping Center, Providence; Stack Design Build, Providence; Teknion, Providence and Boston; and UNFI, Providence, as well as the Carpiionato Group, Johnston; Coastway Community Bank, Cranston; Horner Millwork, Somerset, Mass.; Maloney & Co., Guilford, Conn.; and R.I. Construction Specifications Institute, Bristol.

Co-chair Michael Busam, new business development director at Gilbane Building Co. and a member of the Young Constructors Forum of the R.I. Associated General Contractors (RIAGC), attributes

successive improvements in each sculpture competition to the "incredible commitment and motivation of the team members and their team sponsors."

The teams include four companies that entered the competition for the first time this year and nine that have participated at least once in prior years, not always with the same team partners. Six of the nine have created sculptures in all four events since the first was held in 2007. This year, the teams include:

- * Dimeo Construction Co. (third time), Providence, and Vision 3 Architects (fourth time), Providence
- * Durkee, Brown, Viveiros & Werenfels, Inc. (third time), Providence, and GTECH (second time), Providence, with four first-time and one second-time sponsor to date
- * Jo Ann Bentley Architect (first time), Fall River, Gilbane (fourth time), Providence and the Young Constructors Forum of the R.I. Associated General Contractors (fourth time), Providence
- * LLB Architects (fourth time), Pawtucket, and Shawmut Construction Co. (fourth time), Providence
- * Saccoccio Associates (fourth time), Cranston
- * Michael Warner Architect, Providence, C.A. Pretzer Associates, Inc., Cranston, and Design Built, Inc., Warwick, all first-time participants as are their 15 sponsors to date.

Awards for the sculptures will be presented in several categories at a gala event on Thursday, April 12. Photos of sculptures in the national judging categories - Jurors' Favorite, Best Use of Labels, Structural Ingenuity, Best Meal and up to two Honorable Mentions - will be entered in the international Canstruction competition. There also is a Canstruction RI "People's Choice" award. Viewers of the sculptures can vote for the "People's Choice" award at the exhibit.

Motivation

Motivation to devote the substantial time required to create the Canstruction Rhode Island exhibit springs from varied experiences among the team members and sponsors committed to the project. Many participants never exposed to hunger simply want to help those less fortunate. Others have personally witnessed or experienced difficult times. Companies support the competition for a similar range of reasons.

"We are especially drawn to this competition because of the teamwork it encourages and its powerful visual impact in bringing attention to an important local issue," said Bradford Dimeo, president of Dimeo Construction, which supports many causes throughout the region. "Seeing all the food involved in making these sculptures really allows people to grasp very quickly that there are a lot of people who will eat better as a result. That really drives us to put 110% into this effort."

That effort paid off when Dimeo and Vision 3 also partnered in the third Canstruction RI sculpture competition and recruited 49 team sponsors to supplement their own donations, enabling them to become the largest contributor in the event's history in 2010. The team's sculpture, which won the award for structural ingenuity, provided the R.I. Community Food Bank with 10,852 canned goods, several bagged items and bottled drinks, and a check for an additional \$7,500,

Vision 3, a participant in all four Canstruction RI events since they began, also places great value on supporting "a worthwhile cause." In addition, David Prengaman, AIA, LEED AP, principal, said, "It's a great way to foster increased cooperation among the design and construction industries in Rhode Island."

Another perspective comes from some of the work that the firms do. "We at Michael Warner Architect work with multiple Rhode Island agencies that fund projects for low-income families with handicapped individuals," said Jarrod Saraiva, associate AIA, CDT. "Although these projects are directed towards improving accessibility within homes, we often see first-hand some of the struggles

that these families have in getting everyday essentials. If it were not for organizations such as the R.I. Community Food Bank, the growing epidemic of hunger would be impossible to battle."

"Canstruction gives people the opportunity to help others during tough economic times," said Michael Warner, AIAri president and a member of multiple AIAri committees, who also has helped organize the past three events as a Canstruction RI board member. "They may do this as their time and resources permit - as event or team sponsors, team members or as individuals who may want to attend the awards gala or perhaps just be inspired to make a direct donation of any size to the R.I. Community Food Bank.

For more information on how you can support the Rhode Island Community Food Bank, visit www.rifoodbank.org.

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