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ICSC refocuses its Maxi Awards solely on shop. ctrs. within the U.S.

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In keeping with its tradition of recognizing and honoring the premier marketing, community outreach, sales promotion, and visual merchandising efforts within the retail real estate industry the International Council of Shopping Centers, Inc. (ICSC) has refocused its annual MAXI Awards to focus specifically on shopping center marketing, as well as specialty leasing within the United States. Now known as the ICSC U.S. MAXI Awards these awards are designed to honor and recognize the premier marketing, community outreach, sales promotions and visual merchandising programs solely for U.S.-based retail real estate professionals and companies. These awards not only enhance and compliment the other regional industry award programs currently offered by ICSC but provide information and insight to the entire retail real estate industry on what it takes to achieve the highest level of recognition in marketing and specialty leasing within the U.S.

The ICSC U.S. MAXI Awards feature 10 award categories: Cause Related Marketing (formerly Community Relations), Public Relations, Advertising, Sales Promotion and Events, Grand Opening, Expansion & Renovation, Business To Business (B2B), Alternative Revenue, Category Integration, Visual Merchandising, and new for 2010, New Media. The New Media category will recognize and honor strategic programs and plans that include Web Sites, Online Branding Campaigns, Social Media (Blogs, Social Media Sites) and/or Text Messaging to achieve brand and marketing communication goals for a shopping center or company. Programs may also include E-newsletters, email or other digital communication as entries to the New Media category.

All entries into the ICSC U.S. MAXI Awards must have been undertaken and completed between November 1, 2008 and October 31, 2009 to be eligible. In addition, all entries must be implemented and entered by a recognized U.S.-based shopping center and/or U.S.-based shopping center owner, developer and/or management company. Entries in the Visual Merchandising category may be submitted from U.S.-based specialty retailers, specialty leasing managers, marketing directors and/or general managers. For complete details on award categories, classifications, judging criteria and how to submit an entry, visit www.icsc.org/maxiawards; all entries must be submitted online by January 20, 2010

"The revamping and refocusing of the MAXI Awards on solely shopping centers within the U.S. allows ICSC and the industry to do what it does best - recognize and honor the most outstanding examples of marketing, community outreach, sales promotions and visual merchandising while raising the standard of shopping center marketing and specialty leasing in the U.S.," said Cheryl Megill, SCMD, vice president, marketing, Inland Western Retail Real Estate Trust, Inc., Oakbrook, Ill., and chairman of the 2010 MAXI Awards. "I am honored to be chairing the 2010 MAXI Awards as ICSC recognizes the most outstanding marketing and specialty leasing efforts in the U.S. with these awards," Megill added.

Winners in the ICSC U.S. MAXI Awards program will be announced during the 2010 Fusion Conference, ICSC's premier conference for shopping center marketing and specialty leasing professionals, on March 2, 2010 at the Sheraton Chicago Hotel and Towers in Chicago, Ill.

In addition, these winners, along with winners from other regional marketing programs, will automatically be entered into the ICSC's Global Awards competition, the Best-of-the-Best, and be eligible to be named the most outstanding example of shopping center marketing within the retail real estate industry. ICSC's Best-of-the-Best Awards honors and recognizes the most outstanding examples of shopping center design and development, sustainability, marketing, and community service worldwide.

The winners of the Best-of-the-Best Awards will be announced during RECon, ICSC's annual convention in Las Vegas, Nev., May 2010.

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