The Ohio Masonry Association has a Charter Of Affiliation with the NCMA, and is the State Chapter of the MCAA. Tri-State Masonry Institute is the Southwest Regional Promotional Partner of the OMA.

The Tri-State Masonry Institute, the Southwest Regional Partner of the Ohio Masonry Association held its 16th Annual Excellence in Masonry Design competition. Hosted at the Cincinnati Museum Center, in November 2015. Attendees were treated to a behind the scenes tour of the facility while enjoying a full reception with the award winners.

Architects, Owners and Contractors were honored for their masonry projects in the Tri-State area. Twelve projects were awarded, and one was given the distinction of being the “Peoples Choice”.

Once again TMI allowed the attendees to vote for their favorite project, before the judges’ comments are heard and the awards presentation starts.

This year, it showed that the judges and the attendees were on the same wavelength. The judges were torn between Princeton High School/Viking Village and the Cincinnati Fire Station 35 for the top honor of the Excellence in Masonry. The judges awarded Princeton High School as the Excellence in Masonry and the Cincinnati Fire Station 35 as an Honor recipient. The attendees awarded Cincinnati Fire Station 35 as the People’s Choice echoing the judges comments their tough decision. Both projects were worthy of the top award.

The entire evening was a success with many positive comments from TMI members and guests.

**TMI MASONRY AWARDS Winners**

The following are the projects that were submitted and judged to earn either a Merit, Honor or Excellence Award. Each project met or exceeded the rules set forth by the TMI Awards Committee, and were judged individually for their use in masonry design, use and installation. Jurors’ comments for each project are included.

Call Josh Naragon, Executive Director, to set up your next Lunch And Learn, AIA Accredited Courses. 800-443-6779
Princeton High School and Viking Village Excellence in Masonry Design
Architect: CR architecture + design
Masonry Contractor: Weisbrod Masonry
Masonry Suppliers: Division 4, Inc. / Essroc Cement

After several rounds of reviewing the four honor award winners as well as much discussion and careful deliberations, the jury unanimously arrived at their decision to award this project the 2015 TMI Excellence in Masonry Award.

In reviewing the criteria that informs their decisions, this project emerged as the one that elevated itself to the level of excellence in virtually every category. Like many other projects submitted, the jury appreciated that this exemplary piece of architecture was accomplished within the constraints imposed by school budgets that continue to challenge school boards, architects and contractors to create stimulating teaching and learning environments that are continually becoming more complex due to the integration of electronic technology and student bodies who have high expectations for their education... that also includes athletic, fine and performing arts and, very importantly social interaction spaces.

In addition, concerns for safety and security continue to increase as do the expectations for buildings that are sustainable to operate and maintain.

Given its ability to meet these challenges and produce an exemplary school building, this project truly deserves this highest recognition in this year’s TMI Design Awards Program.

Cincinnati Fire Station 35 Honor Award - Public Service Masonry Design & People’s Choice Award
Architect: MSA Architects
Masonry Contractor: Kurzhals, Inc.
Masonry Supplier: Division 4, Inc. / Essroc Cement

From its first review of the images of this fire station, the jury knew that they were seeing a very impressive piece of architecture that harkened back to the days when fire stations were considered important statements of civic pride in addition to that of housing the equipment and living quarters of brave firefighters.

In this era of tight municipal budgets, the City of Cincinnati is to be lauded for challenging the architect, contractor and construction crews to deliver a final product that the city government and all citizens of the city can take pride in.

The jury commended the architects for developing a very functional plan concept that is essential in a public safety building where response time is critical on every run. This informs the distinctive imagery of each major component... the apparatus bay, operational support spaces and “the house”... in which the pallet of masonry materials and metal panel systems are expertly juxtaposed and beautifully detailed.

Lastly, this design skill is obvious in how the CMU masonry material is employed as the major interior material with careful detailing and skillful craftsmanship obvious throughout.
The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County Reading Branch

Honor Award – Public Service, Education Masonry Design

Architect: Champlin Architecture
Masonry Contractor: Weisbrod Masonry
Masonry Supplier: Division 4, Inc.

The jury referenced the famous statement made by German American architect, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, “less is more.”

In the case of this small library, they were referring to the architect’s ability to create an impressive piece of civic architecture through the skillful handling of just two major design forms ... both of which were noteworthy for their contrast in materiality and transparency.

The truly iconic form is the aluminum and glass pavilions with the inverted, pyramidal cap. Skillfully used: at the main entrance; for the reading room located at the prominent corner of the site; and, in an translated form that effortlessly creates a clerestory, these elements create an amazing lighting quality both within and as macro-scaled, lanterns on the site at night.

The second element ... the one-story box-like form that acts as the container or carton for the aforementioned pavilions is designed with equal restraint and sophistication in the clean brick-clad planes that frame the large solar-screened, mullioned windows.

Client, architect, contractor and all who constructed this jewel of a building deserve kudos!

Wyoming Middle School Addition

Honor Award – Educational Masonry Design

Architect: Ruetschle Architects
Masonry Contractor: Jess Hauer Masonry
Masonry Supplier: Division 4, Inc.

The jury was very impressed by the architects’ design skill in both restoring the existing and creating an addition to a historic school building of noteworthy design quality. The final result is a project that illustrates three major design points.

First; an addition that is informed by a careful study and understanding of design elements found in the historic buildings such as the basic tripartite wall elements of base, shaft, and cornice and the scale, proportion of solid and void of the windows and wall bays can result in both having their own identity while complimenting each other.

Second; the critical juncture where existing /historical meets new / contemporary must be dealt with so as to resolve issues with both architectural form and material interface.

Third; projects like this give the opportunity to celebrate both brick as an enduring material and craftsmanship that harkens back to a time when the ability of masons to execute the seamless integration of ornamentation in brick was commonplace. This projects achieves all three with great distinction.

The jury was very impressed by the architects’ design skill in both restoring the existing and creating an addition to a historic school building of noteworthy design quality. The final result is a project that illustrates three major design points.
The Esther Marie Hatton Center for Women Merit Award – Public Service Masonry Design
Architect: GBBN Architects
Masonry Contractor: Weisbrod Masonry
Masonry Manufacturer: Reading Rock

The jury complimented the entire client / architect / construction team for a project that represents the best of both providing a much needed, socially-responsible facility for a cliental that deserves a safe and secure residential environment with a very well-conceived and executed architectural statement.

They especially lauded the: simplified massing that is enriched by use of a limited pallet of masonry materials; integration of signage with building and landscape elements; skillful handling of the sloped site with cantilevered masses above a rusticated base; and, well considered use of masonry in the public interior spaces.

East Fork State Park Beach House Merit Award – Public & Parks Service Masonry Design
Architect: Schorr Architects Inc.
Masonry Manufacturer: Oberfields LLC

The jury stated that this relatively small building provides an excellent example for other park districts that meritorious design can be achieved when a client and architect have a common goal. That goal is achieving a piece of architecture that is informed by a logical response to site or context and functional requirements as well as a strong esthetic statement, long-term durability and low maintenance achieved through affordable materials.

Taking advantage of the sloped to create barrier-free entries at both levels, all of the other goals are achieved by the skillful selection of masonry materials... CMU's, cast stone, and glass block ... as well as their design development and detailing. They also create a strong context for the wrap-around balcony of metal and wood thus creating an overall, harmonious esthetic composition.

St. Bernard Safety Center Merit Award - Public Service Masonry Design
Architect: MSA Architects
Masonry Contractor: Weisbrod Masonry
Masonry Supplier: Division 4, Inc.

The jury’s first impression was that this is not only a public safety facility but also an example of civic architecture in which a community could take great pride. The skillful articulation of the form and material detailing of each of the major functional elements provides for a building that is sympathetic in scale to its context.

The horizontal composition of forms and materials is skillfully juxtaposed by the vertical statement of the iconic tower that is informed references to hose towers of historic firehouses and other civic buildings. The prudent use of a limited pallet of masonry materials is references to hose
towers of historic firehouses and other civic buildings.

The prudent use of a limited pallet of masonry materials is evident in the design of the elevations that incorporate a base of rusticated stone with brick walls above that skillfully incorporate stone lintels at the window heads and in a horizontal band at the roof / parapet line as well as a darker brick color at blind insets that continue the rhythm of the windows.

The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County St. Bernard Branch Merit Award – Public Service, Education Masonry Design
Architect: Champlin Architecture
Mason Contractor: Weisbrod Masonry
Masonry Supplier: Division 4, Inc.

The jury truly appreciated the design of this branch library that demonstrated the ability of a small building to make an important civic statement on a prominent corner, yet be in scale with its urban context.

This is accomplished through: its siting that allows it to “rub elbows” with both sidewalks; vertical articulation of the corner element especially through the clerestory and cantilevered cornice; and, the clear statement of the pilaster-modulated, masonry material clad bays that rap the corner and carry down both street facades.

Austin Landing Retail Building Merit Award – Retail Masonry Design
Architect: MODA4 Design
Masonry Contractor: Jacob Masonry Contractors
Masonry Manufacturer: Reading Rock

The naturally-lit, interior reading, stack and circulation areas are also informed by this ordered discipline to design.

Delta Flats Merit Award – Multifamily Masonry Design
Architect: CR architecture + design
Masonry Manufacturer: Reading Rock

The jury recognized this project as much for its excellent use of masonry in the site and landscape architecture development of the shopping center as for its use in the buildings. Taken in its totality, they obviously create a retail environment that shoppers have come to expect in today’s culture. Skillful design and use of concrete masonry pavers and stone for landscape elements are complimented by the same care in the choice of bollards, lighting elements, benches, and trash receptacles.

All greatly to the same material pallet being used to give each store its own identity ... so critical in today’s emphasis on branding.

The jury was quick to note that this project demonstrates represents the critical partnership that must exist between the architect, masonry contractor and skilled masons to successfully execute a project like this in which the masonry materials play a critical role in relating the buildings to a steeply sloped site.
They commended the design of the multifamily, residential units that is informed by traditional apartment blocks for the use of split-faced CMU’s at the ground floor and a change in the color of the brick on the third floor to effectively reduce the visual scale of the facades.

However, it is definitely the integration of the impressive stone walls that speak to the ability of masonry to achieve a strong statement of durability and permanence while staying within the constraints of affordability inherent in residential construction.

Cincinnati Streetcar Maintenance Facility Merit Award – Public Service Masonry Design
Architect: DNK
Masonry Contractor: Ollier Masonry, Inc.
Masonry Supplier: Division 4, Inc.

The jury couldn’t help but comment as soon as they finished viewing the photos the first time that this is an excellent example of when a client, architect, and the masonry industry elevates what could have been a “ho-hum, pre-engineered building” to a meritorious piece of architecture.

In the long run, this benefits the taxpayers of Cincinnati and patrons of its streetcar system in that it speaks to the emphasis placed on the investment in the quality of every component of the system … including the maintenance facility.

As they studied the building further, the skill of the designer became evident on each facade in terms of the composition of stone & brick masonry, metal wall, window and cornice systems.

They also lauded the use of masonry for the security walls enclosing outdoor yards and urbanscape elements as well as in the industrial-like, work areas in the interior.

VP3 Corryville & Short Vine Parking Garage Merit Award – Multifamily Masonry Design
Architect: M+A Architects
Masonry Manufacturer: Reading Rock, Inc.

The jury enjoyed this project’s successful recreation of the historic “row house” housing typology found in the Cincinnati metropolitan region. From an urban design standpoint, they lauded the close relationship of building and sidewalk with historic stoops and the masonry and ornamental iron detailing on walls used in the landscape.

They also commended on the articulated massing; recessed multi-story bays with arched brick lintel at their tops; and inset balconies with ornamental railings. Lastly, they felt the structured parking was well handled … especially the entrances which created the base for the housing above.
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Congratulations to all winners. All projects honored at the 2015 TMI Excellence in Masonry Awards Program that meet the OMA Call for Entries rules are automatically submitted to the OMA Excellence in Masonry Design Competition for 2017.