

The 2010 InfoComm/LSA Staged Events Awards

By: Benjamin Le Hay

Lighting&Sound America magazine and InfoComm International once again hosted the InfoComm/LSA Staged Events Awards, held on June 9 at the 2010 InfoComm Show in Las Vegas. The awards, which honor exceptional, innovative, and creative staged events taking place in 2009, followed the twelfth annual Rental & Staging Forum, sponsored by Renkus-Heinz, VER, and LSA. The forum featured a keynote by Bill Voegeli, president of Association Insights, on the state of the meeting industry. Subsequent to Voegeli's address, *Lighting&Sound America's* editor-in-chief, David Barbour, moderated a panel of leading producers and meeting planners composed of Sheila Stack, Jerry Bagger, Debi Kinney, and Tom Kann. Once the Staged Events Award winners had collected their crystal prizes, guests took part in a cocktail reception co-sponsored by *Lighting&Sound America* and InfoComm International.

And the winners are:

Best Overall Staging for a Corporate or Association Event — Technology Budget \$50,000 — \$199,999

This year, the honor went to Riverview Systems Group, for the Columbia F10 project for Columbia Sportswear. Riverview was charged with working with the company's marketing to ensure a cross-platform look that was consis-

tent with the feel of the conference, and to engage the audience with the executive speakers. Riverview constructed and installed an original set design that resulted in a near-14,000-sq.-ft. temporary structure. Riverview used Barco FLM-HD18 DLP projectors, a Barco Encore System package, two Barco i8 LED walls, to deliver images to two curved WinVision 1875 LED walls. Audio was delivered by Meyer Sound M'elodie loudspeakers and 650-HP subs, along with a Meyer Galileo loudspeaker management system. Sixteen channels of Shure UHF-R wireless mics were also used. Lighting for the Columbia F10 project was handled by two full-size grandMA consoles, and included a combination of Philips Vari-Lite, Philips Color Kinetics, and ETC fixtures, with truss from Tomcat. Two Ultratec fog machines provided special effects.

All lighting, video, audio, and scenery was provided by Riverview Systems Group, except for hoists, rigging hardware, and engineering provided by Stage Rigging, Inc., and stage decks, carpet, and skirting provided by R.A. Reed. The WinVision walls were provided by VER.

One judge commented, "The layering of screens was a creative implementation of projection technology, and to do this all in a temporary structure in the time allotted was impressive."

Honorable mention in this category went to LIVE Technologies, for the Women of Achievement event for the YWCA of Columbus, Ohio. For this project, LIVE worked to



The Miller-Coors Distributor Conference, produced by Freeman.

transform the event, held at the Greater Columbus Convention Center, into a multi-media experience using Dataton's WATCHOUT display software. Video was projected onto six custom screens, outlining the stage area. Custom graphics and visual components enhanced the experience; video projection equipment delivered image magnification and video playback for the live audience.

Best Overall Staging for a Corporate or Association Event — Technology Budget over \$200,000

Freeman received this award for the second year in row, this time for its staging of the Miller-Coors Distributor Conference Business Session, held in Las Vegas. Freeman covered the entire upstage wall of the room, using a circular platform backed by a serpentine video projection screen (measuring 25' high and 174' long). Five Barco Encore video processors executed seamless edge-blending and data doubling, when necessary, to achieve 7560 x 1080 imagery. "To the best of our knowledge," the company reported, "at the time, this was the most complex non-planar three-dimensional screen projection ever successfully attempted in a corporate environment."

Freeman implemented a Dataton Watchout system, with redundant back-up for the still and motion background projections. Ten Barco FLM-HD18 projectors were converged in side-by-side pairs and edge-blended to create the 175'-wide images. Blue Line Studios supplied the screen, surround, and masking as well as the stage for the event.

"This was one of the most impressive uses of video warping I have ever seen—beautiful projection on a very effective multi-curve screen. I can just imagine how many planning meetings and technology tests this took before staging!" exclaimed one judge. Another said the event "was a perfectly executed example of technology enhancing (not overpowering) the client's message."

DuoCom collected an honorable mention in this category for the 20th World Diabetes Congress, held at the Palais des Congrès de Montréal, an event which was featured in the April 2010 issue of *LSA* (pages 28-29). DuoCom was charged with transitioning a massive hall from a corporate symposium into an entertainment show designed for live music, video, and speeches that incorporated numerous large screens over three stages—all in less than three hours. A trio of Analog Way Di-Ventix II mixer seamless switchers helped to control the imagery.

Best Use of A/V Technology for a Trade Show Booth for a Corporate Client

The winner was BlueWater Technologies, which took the crystal for its work on the GM booth at the 2009 North American International Auto Show in Detroit. GM requested that BlueWater create and stage an impressive, technology-driven exhibit that would highlight the automaker's brands, with a spotlight focus on the new Cadillac Converj concept car and the Chevrolet Volt. The BlueWater team integrated multiple 16 x 9 Barco iLite 6mm LED walls, with Barco DX700 processing. A Dataton Watchout media server and Medialon show control system ran the video and projection. Thirteen product spokespeople were networked through a Shure UHF-R system; audio was delivered by over 100 loudspeakers sourced by a Yamaha PM5D-RH console. At the Converj display, BlueWater used a 16 x 9 NX4 Barco LED wall and 100 Barco NX6 LED tiles with a Doremi V1HD playback system. The Volt exhibit included a 16 x 9 NX4 LED wall, layered with Plexiglas for visual impact, and 225 Barco MiTRIX LED tiles, used for media-integrated multiple vertical panels that stepped down to horizontal to form a platform for the Volt chassis. An integrated computer playback system was processed by a Vista Spyder unit.

One judge said of the project, "What impressed me



Riverview Systems Group's Columbia F10 Project, for Columbia Sportswear.

photo left: Courtesy of Riverview Systems Group. Photo right: Courtesy of Freeman



The GM booth at the North American International Auto Show, produced by BlueWater Technologies.

most about this event was the complex and seamless integration of the LED displays into the exhibit; the results were fabulous.”

Most Innovative Use of A/V Technology for an Outdoor Event

BlueWater Technologies picked up a second award, in this category, for its Meijer “He Rides” campaign. For this

unique project, BlueWater was challenged by the newly established digital media group of Meijer, the grocery store chain, to design a revolutionary advertising scheme during the 2009 Halloween season. “He Rides” involved the image of a headless horseman that would be projected onto buildings around the city of Chicago—a concept called “beamvertising.” BlueWater, alongside its IT provider, Springthrough, outfitted a Meijer van with an on-



The Meijer “He Rides” campaign, produced by BlueWater Technologies.



The American Library Association’s Annual Conference, for which Freeman took an award.

board computer, a GPS system, a 12,000-ANSI-lumen projector with pan and tilt control, and a generator. BlueWater engineered the system so that, when the van was moving in traffic between one and five miles per hour, the GPS directed the computer to project the horse walking. When traffic sped up, the horse advanced to a trot, and, when the van reached full throttle, the horse sped to a gallop. When the van came to a complete stop, the GPS commanded the computer to project the horse rearing, along with the Meijer branding, onto the adjacent building. A chase vehicle with an HD camera captured all the action.

One judge admitted, “This was probably my favorite entry of all. A/V folks rarely get to be media guerillas, much less do something this cool. The reactions of the people on the street who witnessed this event were priceless. What a great marriage between marketing and technology!” The project created quite a buzz in media outlets in over 50 countries and went viral, reaching an estimated eight million people. Thanks to the collaborative efforts of BlueWater, “He Rides” saw Meijer become the first company in the United States to use an entire city’s streetscape as its canvas.

On Projeco’s work on its Coca-Cola cluster wall project snagged the company an honorable mention this year. On Projeco designed and installed a 158’ x 62’ LED wall, composed of 13,536, energy-efficient, full-color LED clusters, onto the Coca-Cola headquarters in Rio de Janeiro. The clusters had a dot pitch of 10” and thus did not block natural light into the building, yet produced crystal-clear imagery from up to 1.5 miles away. The display was the largest of architectural proportions ever installed in Brazil.

Best Overall Staging for a Corporate Industrial Entertainment Event

For a third year in a row, Freeman received this award for the American Library Association Annual Conference. For the project, Freeman lined the back of the stage with multiple layers of black velour drape, resulting in a neutral palette that absorbed any bleeding light from the flown fixtures. A lighting truss, with hundreds of conventional and moving units, was flown overhead, adding additional dimensions and layers. Fixtures included Philips Vari*Lite VL3500 Spots, Martin MAC 2000 Performances, Chroma-Q Color Blocks and Color Splits, ETC Source Fours, and Sensor dimming, controlled by a Jands Vista T2 console.

Freeman’s team designed almost two dozen different “themes,” using lighting instruments and gobos, and conveying each speaker’s subject matter with appropriate mood and ambiance. “It is difficult for a lighting submission to grab attention when it’s up against so many great total staging projects with video. But lighting is one area that can own a show if it is done properly, and this event exemplifies the power of light over the audience,” remarked one judge.

The InfoComm/LSA Staged Events Awards judges were David Barbour; Tom Stimson, MBA, CTS, president of The Stimson Group; Janne Mummert, director of business development, VER/Video Equipment Rentals; Jack Kelly, owner and designer of Eye Dialogue; Tobin Neis, director of marketing for Barbizon Lighting; and Bob Leon, president of Colortone Staging & Rentals. In summarizing, one participant said, “This year was the best (and most difficult) year yet as a Staged Event Awards judge. We had more entries than ever and all very high-quality shows.”

All photos left: Courtesy of BlueWater Technologies. Photo right: Courtesy of Freeman