

Business

Area architects honored for excellent design

Jackson-based firms and studios received 13 of the 20 AIA Wyoming Design awards this year.

By Jasmine Hall

Jackson architects swept the AIA Wyoming Design and Honor Awards this year. Out of the 20 awards presented to firms and studios for excellence in design, planning and construction of projects, 13 were presented to those based in Jackson.

All four of the architecture firms and studios were recognized at the awards ceremony held at the end of September in Casper. These awards are only presented every three years to AIA Wyoming Architect members registered and licensed in Wyoming, and based on standards such as sustainability and a strong sense of place, or the exceptional achievements to the built environment over the years. “There is an interesting and diverse group of architects in the state,” said Wyoming native and CLB Architects partner Eric Logan. “I think there’s a kind of center of gravity in Jackson, most likely because of the clientele that this place draws. That has enabled a spawn of a lot of talented firms in Jackson, and we’re proud to be a part of that community.”

Logan’s firm was founded 30 years ago in Jackson and was one of the top award winners in the program this year. He said it was amazing to see the effect architects can have on the way people live and feel, creating experiences through the design of buildings and places.

CLB Architects received six awards spanning their public or civic work and residential projects, including for a public art piece called FILTER located in New York City’s Times Square. “It’s a big honor for us to have such



DAVID AGNELLO / COURTESY PHOTO

Ward Blake Architects won a design award for education with its plan for the Teton County School District administration building.

a wide variety of projects recognized, from all our design disciplines such as residential architecture, installation art, interior design and commercial work,” Logan said. “It’s really a combination of effort and dedication from all of our teams firm-wide, and we feel very fortunate to have such a talented group of professionals in our firm able to work collaboratively.”

The second-highest number of awards for both design and honor went to Dynia Architects, predominantly for commercial and residential

work. The firm was recognized with the significant honor of the 25-year award for Frame House, which founder and design director Stephen Dynia said he believed was the important award out of this year’s program.

He founded Dynia Architects in 1994, and the project was for his first client who gave him full confidence to do a modern house in the valley in the 1990s. He said few were doing modern buildings nearly three decades ago, and his firm was the one to introduce it to Jackson.

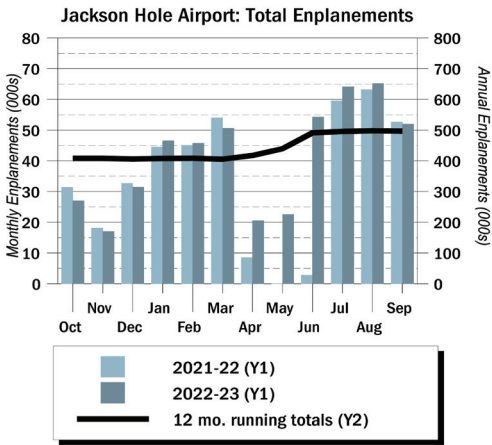
Dynia also recognized Lisa Carranza, a former architect with the firm, who had a hand in the project 25 years ago.

“I consider this the most timeless project I’ve ever done,” he said. “It has characteristics that are so universal and eternal in that they’re almost a reference to ancient architecture and structure, as well as the ability of modern architecture to connect with the landscape.

“But that attests to the firm having
See **ARCHITECTS** on 7C

MARKET WATCH

By Jonathan Schechter



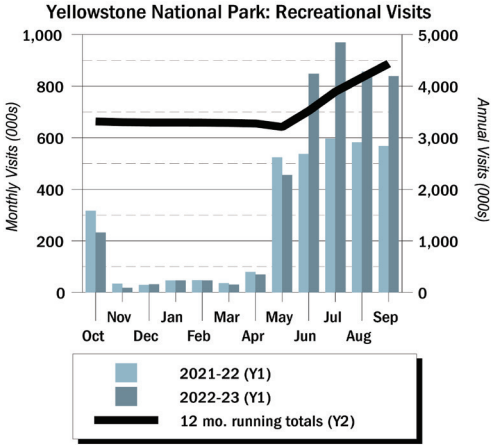
In September, enplanements at Jackson Hole Airport totaled 51,936, 1% fewer than the number of passengers who enplaned a commercial airline flight in September 2022. During the fiscal year ending September 2023, enplanements totaled 496,904, a 21% increase over the previous 12 months. (Note: The previous year’s figure spans the months of April to September 2022. During part of that time the airport was closed for runway replacement.)

Source: Jackson Hole Airport



The September recreational visitation count for Grand Teton National Park totaled 602,607, 34% more than the total for September 2022. This was the fifth consecutive month of double-digit visitation growth, but the September total still is more similar to those of the mid-2010s than any more recent year. During the fiscal year ending in September 2023, 3,336,513 people paid a recreational visit to Grand Teton, 15% more than visited during the preceding 12 months. As the graph suggests, last spring/summer Grand Teton’s visitation declined in concert with the airport’s closure and Yellowstone’s floods. Over the last half-year or so, it has flattened out and begun to grow again.

Source: Grand Teton National Park



The September visitation count for Yellowstone National Park totaled 838,458, 48% more than visited in September 2022. This was Yellowstone’s second-highest-ever September visitation count, trailing only the COVID year of 2021 (and barely surpassing 2020’s figure). During the fiscal year ending in September 2023, 4,438,547 people paid a recreational visit to Yellowstone, 31% more than during the previous year. Much of the previous year’s decline was due to the last summer’s flooding: Between January and June 2022, Yellowstone’s visitation was up 13%; between July and December that year, it was down 39%.

Source: Yellowstone National Park

ARCHITECTS

Continued from 6C

had a mission from our initial arrival, or my founding and development of the firm.”

When it came to the three other awards, he said Karen Parent and Bob White were key players. “It’s a kind of reaffirmation that the work has value beyond the mundane,” he said.

Baxter Design Studio is a newer firm in the valley that submitted two residential homes for consideration for the first time and walked away with two awards. Both projects can be found in Jackson.

Principal architect Chris Baxter said he was grateful to be recognized alongside many other great projects, and he was excited for the level of architecture happening in Jackson. “That excitement pushes us to want to do more and be better,” he said.

The philosophies and values that drive award-winning work are creating never-before-seen solutions tailored to their clients, he said. A lot of architecture is based on in-depth, pre-design exercises, but Baxter said his firm is trying to find the most unique possibilities for the project.

“The house is for the client, and it’s not necessarily a vision that we see before we learn about the client. It’s not anything that is preconceived from our end,” Baxter said. “And then it’s just about rigor in detailing.”

The fourth firm recognized in Jackson was Ward Blake Architects. For its design of the Teton County School District administration building, it received the education design award.

Principal Mitch Blake said it’s always nice to be recognized for a project and receive an award, but this one meant a lot because of the challenges the designers overcame. He said they took on significant sustainability measures to make it work, and they found a solution to the state reducing their budget by \$600,000.

Little details such as adding natural gas furnaces that reduced the electrical load on the project and using daylight boxes around the windows to help control the glare and bring in more natural light were points of pride.

“We feel strongly about taking our cues from the land, from the site and being careful to respect the properties — and to restore it if we need to, but protect it if we don’t,” Blake said. “And in this case, you know we were careful to use a small footprint.”

Other architects across the state were honored for their work over the years, including the Stateline No. 7 Architects based in Casper, which won the Emerging Professional Friendly Firm Award and Silver Medal Award. The Sheridan-based Arete Design Group won the honor award of Emerging Professional Friendly Firm.

To learn more about the awards, visit AIA-Wyoming.Org/Page/10.

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COURTESY PHOTO

One of the honor awards presented by AIA Wyoming was the 25-Year award. Dynia Architects received it for its 1999 Frame House in Jackson, which represented the start of a modern architecture movement in the valley.



GABE BORDER

The Jackson-based firm Baxter Design Studios submitted two entries for residential design awards and walked away with both following the ceremony at the end of September.

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