



Contact: Laura Telander Graf
651.698.4006
ltg@mcfarlandcahill.com

NARI OF MINNESOTA EARNS AWARD OF EXCELLENCE FROM MIDWEST SOCIETY OF ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVES

***Minnesota Chapter of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry
Honored for its Program That Recognizes Contractors***

MINNEAPOLIS (May 31, 2007) – The Minnesota Chapter of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI) recently received an Award of Excellence from the Midwest Society of Association Executives (MSAE). The award recognizes outstanding achievement in innovation in association management.

NARI of Minnesota was recognized for its Contractor of the Year (COTY) Awards, which honor outstanding remodeling projects by local contractors. Submissions are judged on functionality, aesthetics, problem solving, craftsmanship, innovation, degree of difficulty and entry presentation.

“We are thrilled to be recognized for our work by the Midwest Society of Association Executives,” said Bjorn Freudenthal, president of NARI of Minnesota and general manager of College City Remodeling, Inc. “We are proud of the COTYs because it illustrates the best of the best when it comes to contractors in our area.”

The Minnesota Chapter of NARI is the only trade association in Minnesota dedicated solely to the remodeling industry. NARI is a nonprofit organization that offers a rigorous certification process

that teaches and tests skills as well as ethical business practices. Consumers have free access to NARI's certified list of contractors as well as educational resources.

"There is a wealth of talented contractors in Minnesota and our COTY awards have enabled us to recognize that amazing talent," said Sandra Meyer, executive director for the Minnesota Chapter of NARI.

The award was presented at the MSAE Expo on May 22.

About NARI of Minnesota

NARI of Minnesota is a Chapter of The National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI), the only trade association dedicated solely to the remodeling industry. With more than 7,000 member companies nationwide, the Association is "*The Voice of the Remodeling Industry*"™. For membership and chapter information, or for more on the COTY Awards, visit the NARI MN website at www.narimn.org or contact the headquarters at 612-332-NARI.

According to the National Association of Home Builders, Americans will spend nearly \$233 billion on home remodeling in 2007. NARI is a professional association whose members voluntarily subscribe to a strict code of ethics. Consumers may wish to search www.narimn.org to find a qualified professional who is a member of NARI or contact the headquarters at 612-332-NARI for a copy of the consumer directory, "*Remodeling Today*."

###

MSAE 2007 Awards of Excellence

National Association of the Remodeling Industry, Minnesota Chapter

Proposed Award Category: Awards of Association Excellence, Category B-2; Membership

Submitted: March 14, 2007 by Sandra Meyer, Executive Director



1. General Information:

a. Describe your Association

The Minnesota Chapter of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI) is a professional trade association composed of 340 member companies serving the remodeling industry. Categories of membership include Remodeling Contractors, Specialty Contractors, Suppliers/Manufacturers and Professional Services. NARI gives its members the advantage of affiliation with a proven remodeling authority, with opportunities for networking and education, and gives homeowners the convenience of knowing where to begin their search for an appropriate remodeling partner.

NARI members voluntarily subscribe to conduct business in conformity with a Code of Ethics. They pledge to observe the highest standards of integrity, frankness and responsibility in dealing with the public.

The Minnesota Chapter is one of 57 chapters in the nation and holds a retention rate of approximately 85%. Employing two staff members, the organization is volunteer-driven, staffing over two dozen task groups and committees with member support.

NARI partners with organizations to provide the greatest benefit and service to members. Examples of current and past partners include: Minnesota Community and Technical College, Greenspring Media, the BBB, Rebuilding Together, JLC LIVE, Hanley Wood, Summit Academy, Habitat for Humanity, Green Institute, and the Builders Association of the Twin Cities. NARI National affinity programs and discounts are also available to the local membership.

b. Your Association's mission

The NARI of MN mission is to develop and sustain programs that expand and unite the remodeling industry, and that ensure its continued growth and security.

Our vision is to become the primary remodeling resource for homeowners and professional members alike by providing information, education, and mentorship to the community at large.

This supports the NARI National core purpose: To advance and promote the remodeling industry's professionalism, product and vital public purpose. The National Goal: All remodelers will want to be part of NARI and customers will insist on contracting with our members.

2. Provide a short summary of the project.

The Contractor of the Year (COTY) Awards were established to foster a sense of pride and accomplishment among members and to increase public awareness of industry professionals.

The Contractor of the Year Awards are granted to Remodeling Contractors based on how their submitted project enhanced the existing structure functionally and aesthetically, used superior craftsmanship and innovative uses of materials and construction methods, managed to overcome design obstacles and, most of all, delivered a project that met the client's expressed objectives.

The COTY competition is also our annual gala event, and provides a rich opportunity for those in the industry to showcase the exceptional design and craftsmanship that NARI of Minnesota members are known to provide. The COTY event includes a banquet and an awards ceremony, and is a tremendous benefit to our membership as it affords networking and recognition of the achievements in the industry. This is widely considered to be the premier event of the year in the remodeling field, and was attended by over 400 of the industry's elite in Minnesota. The 2006 event was emceed by WCCO 4's Frank Vascellaro.

Contractors from Minnesota vie for COTY awards on an annual basis. All projects submitted for judging were an improvement or an addition to an existing structure. An impartial panel of nine judges who are experts within the industry selected winners based on each entrant's "before and after" photography and project description. Judging was based on problem solving, functionality, aesthetics, craftsmanship, innovation, degree of difficulty and entry presentation.

The COTY Awards also offers our members and our Association an opportunity for public relations in an industry often under close scrutiny. This positive presence with media outlets builds a stronger relationship with consumers and homeowners. All NARI of Minnesota award recipients are recognized in multiple regional and local publications.

3. Discuss the project's goals (including the target audience), how those goals were developed, and the action plan for achieving them.

The COTY program functions as both a service to our membership – and secondarily to the consumer and media bodies – as well as a powerful networking opportunity. The objectives within the COTY program are to promote a standard of the highest quality work our members can produce, followed by a strong interest in our membership to showcase that craftsmanship by participating in the competition.

Our goals developed as a need emerged to demonstrate industry professionalism both within peer groups and current / prospective clients. We sought an avenue to promote and display excellence in an often-challenged industry. In 2006 the local Better Business Bureau reported six of the ten most frequent consumer inquires involved businesses in the remodeling industry. Our aim is to advance the industry and we believe winning a COTY award demonstrates superiority in the marketplace and generates positive publicity.

It is also meaningful to encourage the whole of our diverse membership to consider entering applicable projects. This suggests a well-balanced approach and equitable platform of member opportunities in our services. In addition, it illustrates the breadth our membership available to the consumer.

To these ends, we restructured our competition to include several new categories including Best Newcomer Award, Universal Design and Sustainable Award. We also tightened entry guidelines, widened the timeline for participation, allowed the competition information to be available online, increased our media budget and revamped our communication processes to better inform our members of the competition. We also secured a new and enhanced venue to allow for our anticipated growth.

As a result of these changes, we recorded a 53% increase in submitted entries from the previous year and a 26% increase in attendees to the gala, including media presence. In 2006, we were pleased to announce 35% of our entrants were eligible for the Newcomer award.

4. Describe the roles played by staff, volunteers, interns, contractors, vendors or others completing this project.

The COTY committee requires a year-long planning approach and is dependant upon the efforts of twenty-two volunteers, a large chair, and the two staff members of the association. Various roles exist, including the following:

- monitoring and revising the competition guidelines
- maintaining the judging process and securing the judges
- managing and preparing the entry binders
- planning and hosting an information session for entrants
- entry binder sales and tracking
- review and organization of submitted entries
- tabulation and disbursement of competition results
- managing and promoting external public relations during and post-event
- formulation and execution of internal communication strategy

- recruiting over \$20,000 in sponsorship funding from our vendor members
- all banquet and decoration planning and logistics
- slide show preparation and demonstration featuring over 500 slides and on-going sponsor commercialization
- design and production of invitations, awards, programs, signage
- secure master of ceremonies and coordinate script
- preparation and maintenance of the event budget in relation to the organizational budget

The energy and leadership that surrounds the event in recent years has made it possible to secure the large number of volunteers needed. The dedication and fervor involved in this event is often audibly remarked upon.

5. Describe the project budget, along with actual financial results, if applicable.

Due to the nature and magnitude of the COTY event, the COTY budget affects three of the four program areas of our association: Outreach, Networking and Internal. The COTY budget reflects each of these areas according to activity performed. In other words, it identifies our expenditures and revenues for publicity, for the evening of the banquet itself and for the competition portion, respectively.

Our association's annual budget was just under \$400,000. Of this, the 2006 COTY budget had projected \$44,050 in total income and \$27,200 in total expense, providing a net income of \$16,850. Actual financial results reveal \$58,205 in total income and \$37,839 in total expense, providing an actual net income of \$20,366.

Explanations for the shift in budget are accounted for by the large increase in sponsors, attendees and entrants. These increases naturally affect both the revenue and the expense of the project.

This source of non-dues revenue is very important to our organization, helping to diversify our stream of funding. The actual net income was very pleasing to the association; in essence it had literally doubled from the previous year.

6. Describe how this project demonstrates excellence.

Companies – from one-person shops to the largest remodeling firms – have reported that winning this award is a major factor in enhancing their image within the industry and with prospective customers, and is a major morale booster for their employees.

COTY demonstrates a pursuit of excellence both in the completed physical projects and in the very spirit of advancing the industry for all parties involved. The competition recognizes outstanding remodeling work in a spotlight industry. It also congratulates winners through a body of their peers and colleagues. This helps the cohesion and solidarity of our members, and supports our mission: to develop and sustain programs that expand and unite the remodeling industry, and that ensure its continued growth and security.

COTY also connects consumers to appropriate remodeling partners and suggests current and relevant information they may find important when finalizing their home improvement projects; examples of this include the specific guidelines involved in our Sustainable and Universal categories.

Lastly, members choosing to participate often delve further into the regional and national awards system within the national organization. This highlights, exposes and honors their companies on a platform they may never otherwise experience.

Please visit www.narimn.org to view a sample of the outstanding projects entered into the COTY competition.