

BWBR Receives 2015 AIA Minnesota Firm Award



The American Institute of Architects

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MINNEAPOLIS –AIA Minnesota recognizes **BWBR** with the **2015 AIA Minnesota Firm Award**. Given biennially, this prestigious award recognizes firms that have contributed to the advancement of the profession in the areas of technology, service, and design.

Celebrating 93 years this year, BWBR remains in the city where it had its start – in downtown Saint Paul. Headquartered in the Lawson Commons Building, the firm today boasts locations in both the Twin Cities and Madison, Wis., emblematic of the way it has grown and the business it does serving institutional and commercial clients throughout the Upper Midwest and Plains States regions.



*“This is an award that recognizes more than what you are doing at the moment. It represents what you have done as a firm for years,” said **Pete Smith, AIA**, BWBR President and CEO. “Even as our seventh generation of leadership makes its mark on the 93-year-old firm, we are who we are today because of the foundation laid by those before us. This award recognizes their hard work too. They gave us a strong legacy, and with this award we will honor that legacy by building a strong future and making this firm sustainable for the next generation of designers.”*

Tim Dufault, AIA, AIA Minnesota President and selection committee member, noted, *“For more than 90 years, BWBR has worked to create strong communities through the design of important civic, cultural, medical, and business facilities. They are a testament to the value that architects bring to our clients every day. They embody the principles of AIA Minnesota’s Firm Award through their consistent commitment to high quality design, building strong communities, and improving the skills of young architects through practical application. AIA Minnesota is proud to recognize the outstanding accomplishments of this long-standing member of the Upper Midwest design community.”*

The Firm Award Selection Committee, comprised of AIA Minnesota board members and leadership, agreed that BWBR met or exceeded all three criteria for selection:

- BWBR was an early adopter of building information modeling software and developed a users group to help design professionals learn and adapt the new technology;
- The firm has worked consistently in and outside of the industry to elevate the profession through such efforts such as Unauthorized Design charettes in Saint

Paul, connecting community members to design professionals by examining undeveloped or underdeveloped land in the city, and undertaking pro bono work to help small nonprofit organizations serve clients better; and

- In recent years, the firm has been recognized for its business, training, and design practice, from the International Interior Design Association, to PSMJ as one of the best managed firms in the nation, to the American Institute of Architects who named BWBR as one of only 24 firms nationally to receive the 2014-2017 IDP Firm Award for its intern development program.

Additionally, BWBR launched a regional program in the 1990s called “The BWBR Prize” as a commitment to both the profession and students and as a way to prepare future professionals for careers beyond the classroom. It provides students in the third year of undergraduate studies the chance to compete for a financial prize by demonstrating not only their work, but also their presentation skills and personalities in front of an expert jury. Prizes are awarded to students from North Dakota State University, Iowa State University, and University of Wisconsin-Stout.

Going back to the founders of the firm, BWBR has always viewed design as a tool to enhance what organizations do and lift up the communities that they serve. It’s a focus that has attracted staff who are mission-driven and gravitate to serving mission-driven clients such as nonprofits, education institutions, churches, health care providers, public agencies, and innovative companies.

“BWBR’s work is complex and tends to be a little anonymous from a design standpoint,” Smith said. “However, it’s work that is extremely rewarding too.”



Photo: Brandon Stengel
Mayo Clinic Dan Abraham Healthy
Living Center Expansion
Rochester, Minn.

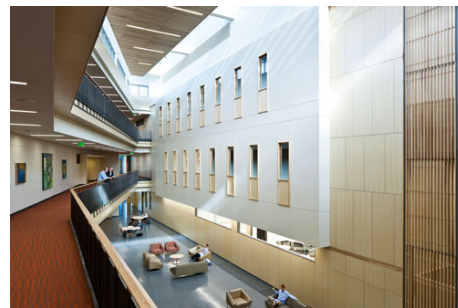


Photo: Don Wong Photography
Beck Academic Hall
Gustavus Adolphus College
St Peter, Minn.

BWBR’s current work includes the University of Minnesota Athletes’ Village, Anytime Fitness headquarters, the new science center at Carroll University (Waukesha, Wis.), new research and development facility at 3M, a mental health unit addition at Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services (Grand Rapids, Mich.), and ongoing work for University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics.

BWBR will be honored at the AIA Minnesota Awards Celebration on December 4, 2015, at The Minnesota History Center, St. Paul. Learn more about the Firm Award at <http://www.aia-mn.org/get-involved/aia-minnesota-awards/firm-award/>

The American Institute of Architects Minnesota, founded in 1892, is dedicated to strengthening our communities, improving our built environment and providing exceptional design. For more information on the organization and Minnesota architectural firms, reference our Web site at <http://www.aia-mn.org>. Pick up a copy of Architecture Minnesota, the award-winning architectural magazine of the Midwest.