

FINANCE & COMMERCE

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by Brian Johnson

Peter Bruce, the metro area's unofficial guru of architectural models and renderings, is bringing his latest collection of miniature buildings back to downtown Minneapolis this week with an exhibit on the skyway level of City Center.

The free exhibit, "Building Community: A Look at the New Minneapolis Area," features models and visuals of local buildings under construction or development. Fifteen displays are planned.

Featured projects include a proposed Twins stadium, the new Guthrie Theater, the downtown library, and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) facilities.

Other planned exhibits will depict an affordable housing development from St. Paul-based Common Bond Community, neighborhood libraries under renovation, buildings in the Hennepin County Theater District, and possibly some streetscape improvements.

"I have an interesting focus that I didn't expect to develop, and it's community buildings, public buildings," said Bruce, who has presented four previous architectural model exhibits in the Twin Cities. "We think that we can show people some things that have just been decided in the last week or two, so that might be exciting."

Bruce, CEO of the Community Enhancement Organization, does pedestrian studies in the Minneapolis and St. Paul skyways and other commercial centers. He was inspired to do the exhibits back in 1997 when some architectural models in downtown Minneapolis caught his attention.

"They were such eye-catching visual pieces that I thought the public should see them," he said.

Bruce started "knocking on doors and doing some networking." Designers were receptive to the idea, he said, because the models don't often get a lot of public exposure.

Past exhibits have focused heavily on commercial and office buildings, including a proposed Block E design. But "you just don't see new commercial buildings coming up now," so this year's exhibit leans toward community buildings, Bruce said.

The models and renderings will be on display weekdays, starting this Friday through next Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. There are two exceptions to the schedule: On opening day, the exhibit starts at 11 a.m. and on closing day it ends at 2 p.m.

Exhibit sponsors are Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development, the Minneapolis chapter of the American Institute of Architects, Landform Urban Design, Brookfield Properties/City Center, the Minnesota Real Estate Journal, Albersman & Armstrong Planners, DJR Architects, HGA Architects and Engineers, KKE Architects, ESG Architects, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, and Maxfield Research Consultants.

KKE Architects wins preservation awards

KKE Architects has been recognized for its adaptive-reuse designs of two St. Paul buildings - a 118-year-old historic home on Dayton Avenue and the long-vacant Strauss Building in the Lowertown Historic District.

The home, at 649 Dayton Ave., was remade into an office and care facility for the Center for Victims of Torture's St. Paul Healing Center. The Strauss Building, at Sibley and East 5th streets, is being reused as commercial space and apartments.

Both projects received Preservation Awards at a May 3 Heritage Preservation Commission event in St. Paul. The St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission and the St. Paul chapter of the American Institute of Architects selected the award winners.

The St. Paul Healing Center, built with help from 60 volunteers, includes offices, a medical chart room, physical exam and therapy rooms, and three group/family therapy rooms. KKE provided reduced fee and pro bono services for the project.

The \$7 million Straus project, completed last December for Sherman Associates, is adding 10,000 square feet of commercial space and 49 moderate-income apartments to the Lowertown area.

The building, which had been vacant for 10 years, was restored to its original exterior appearance.

Streetcar line to be rebuilt

The Hennepin County Board of Commissioners has approved an agreement to reconstruct the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line near Lake Harriet in Minneapolis.

Rails and track materials from the historic line will be replaced as part of the \$583,000 project, which will receive \$466,400 in federal funds and \$116,000 from the Minnesota Transportation Museum.

Hennepin County isn't responsible for any of the project costs. But the county's Housing Community Works and Transit Department will review and approve designs, bid documents, engineering services and construction as part of the agreement.

Hay Dobbs completes interior design work

Hay Dobbs, a Minneapolis-based provider of architectural, design and planning services, has completed space planning and interior design work at a 19,408-square-foot office facility at 800 Washington Ave. N.

Benefits outsourcing company Benesyst will maintain office space for 29 employees at the site, which includes room for expansion.

Hay Dobbs has wrapped up a similar project for Osteologics, a medical supply company, at 5900 Minnetonka Corporate Center in Minnetonka. The project included space planning and interior design work.

Ludwig promoted at Opus

Opus Northwest Management, part of the Opus group of design and construction companies, has promoted longtime employee Lorin Ludwig to a new position - director of Technical Services.

Ludwig's new duties include inspecting all properties purchased by another Opus affiliate, Opus Properties. Previously, as director of operations, Ludwig managed building engineers, provided troubleshooting, and worked with Opus A&E and Opus Northwest Construction to solve difficult design and construction problems.

Opus Northwest Management is part of the Opus Group of Companies, a Minnetonka-based design, construction and development firm. The company specializes in office, industrial, retail and multifamily facilities.