

Welcome again to Stowell eNews.

Experience means that we are usually able to anticipate just about everything and respond accordingly. In fact, we do not often get stretched out of our comfort-zone. So it was a bit of a surprise, and a challenge, to find ourselves simultaneously working on two ground-breaking projects earlier this year.

3T Imaging, a consortium headed by Drs. Richard Kim and Stephen Goldin, hired us to design and build their brand new Morton Grove clinic to house, amongst other diagnostic equipment, the latest and greatest 3T MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) system while Bridgeview Bancorp Inc. brought us in to build-out their Uptown branch street-level facility using some unique materials and a new design concept.

The challenges made their successful completion all the more satisfying. More importantly, both have proven to be very pleasant professional spaces that work well for the practitioners and their patients and customers.

We salute the entrepreneurial and innovative spirit of our clients and thank them for the opportunity to participate.

Sam W. Stowell

President

Our Latest Projects

Bridgeview Bank, on Display in Uptown



Times change and so have banks. What a change. Today's banks are accessible, friendly, personal and 24 hours. With branches, mini-branches and ATMs, they are almost as ubiquitous as Starbucks and with the same zeal to please. Bridgeview Bancorp Inc., with its community spirit, is a leader in this trend.

Selecting Macondo Corp. as their architectural firm to add this street level facility to their Uptown branch was an easy choice for Suellen Long (Uptown President) and Peter Haleas (Bridgeview Chairman). "They understood that we wanted to revitalize the streetscape, and they came up with a very imaginative and dynamic concept," explained Suellen.

According to Kavitha Marudadu, the lead architect on the project, they started off the process with a theme.



- “Knowing what our client wanted, we came up with an egalitarian approach, melding together the internal elements of teller stations, personal bankers and waiting lounge and integrating them with the ATM lobby and Starbucks. Yes, Starbucks. Saving a trip outside in winter is one more reason for banking with Bridgeview.”

“That gave us a number of design elements but reaching outside demanded imagination and innovation. That is a quality that our principal, Rodrigo del Canto, inspires in us. What could we do that would be dynamic, functional and creative? We call what we did “Architecture of Display”.

Pass by Bridgeview Bank’s Uptown branch of an evening and you will see what Kavitha is referring to. The opening to the 24 hour ATM lobby has been filled with a 16 feet wide by 8 feet high sliding glass wall and the space has been transformed into an entertainment gallery. An attractive marketing infomercial plays. Look again and you will notice interspersed images of the public walking by outside. Instant fame. There is another not so subliminal message for those with suspect motives. For the rest of us, the message is security.



Of course, all this creativity did not happen without, sometimes, painful attention to detail. "Our client was demanding and our project manager (Michael Kilpatrick) was demanding and that left Stowell in the middle to deal with suppliers and contractors who wanted compromises. Thanks to Elmer Littlefield (Stowell's project manager) there were no compromises," Kavitha recollected with a relieved smile.

The insistence on the narrow gauge flooring, full-ceiling height glass projection panels, custom pre-cut LightBlocks® and back-lit signage are visible evidence of that philosophy. The uncluttered space that resulted from major re-routing of existing pipes and ducts is another contributing factor.

As for that beautiful flooring (Yellow Southern Pine) that looks soft to the touch? In fact it is only 3/8" thick but its surface is engineered acrylic and it is glued to concrete, a process that took many extra hours and painstaking care in installation. The result is a surface totally free of twisting, bowing and warping, and tough as nails.

The signage on the glass panel? An optical illusion. In fact, the panel is acrylic (to reduce the weight) and it is mounted in a track so that it can be slid into the walls on either side to allow maintenance of the signs, the transformers and the LED lighting that is all mounted on a back wall.

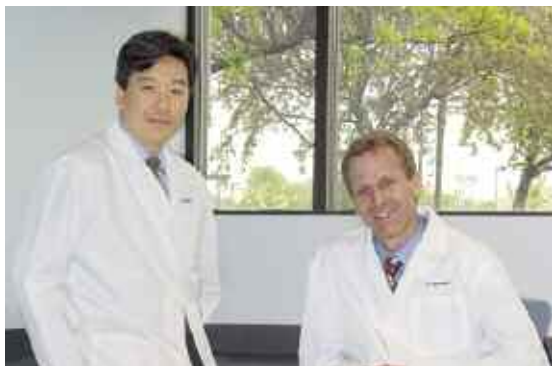
Kavitha credits Dan Pike, Stowell's on-site foreman, with working with her and the signage contractor to get this just right. Similar care went to finding a way to level the ATM lobby sliding door floor that was out by two inches in eight feet (yes, it is an old building). "It is so well feathered out even I cannot see the difference."

So how did the multi-pronged challenge work out? Is the new customer service area friendly and attractive? Does it integrate well with the main building entrance and stairs to the second floor banking area? Is it a vital addition to the Broadway and Lawrence intersection? Is this a bank that has good taste? You be the judge. ●





Siemens Magnetom Trio™ 3T MRI System



- **3T, What's the fuss?**

We are quickly becoming blasé about advances in medical technology thanks to news magazines and TV shows. Each advance is just a prelude to the next. Still, many would argue that the delivery of 3 Tesla MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) technology is a truly major breakthrough in healthcare. Dr. Richard Kim and Dr. Steven Goldin, owners of 3T Imaging of Morton Grove, would agree.

Prior to the 3T, many of the benefits of MRI, its lack of invasiveness, its non-radiographic nature, its usefulness without contrasts and its proven safety over the years for patients and clinicians, were off-set by some of its limitations. MRIs were the procedure of choice for musculoskeletal system imaging but not much more.

With 3T that will change. The most obvious benefit is that the 3T creates images with greater definition and does it much faster. That speed and clarity, when combined with the clinic's specialization in imaging (they also perform CT scans, X-Rays and Ultrasounds), makes for a hassle free environment, a pleasant alternative to the stress often associated with hospital based procedures.

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Siemens Somatom Sensation 16 CT scanner

At 3T, in their Waukegan Road location (the old Abt building), patients are able to park, enter the ground floor facility, undergo the procedure and be on their way in minimal time.

That is today. When Stowell was managing the construction process a few months back, it was not always obvious how it was going to come together. Coordinating all the complex elements of an imaging process is always a challenge but the 3T magnet added a new dimension.

As can be seen from the photos, this is a very large and heavy piece of equipment that required extra everything. The engineering demands were very stringent for all the elements: radio-frequency (RF) shielding, power protection, cooling and absolute avoidance of ferrous material, a potential hazard with such a powerful magnet. The extra challenge was to complete as much construction as possible in order to close the magnet room up and activate all systems (including cryogen venting) within a couple of days while still leaving access to bring in the magnet.

Meanwhile, as Design-Builder, Stowell was under the gun to meet the high quality standard set for every aspect of the space, be it control rooms, patient rooms, reception area or imaging rooms.

“We demanded a setting that was as functionally effective and efficient as our high level of imaging technology and attractive at the same time”, is how Dr. Goldin puts it.

Despite all the challenges, thanks to persistence (and perspiration), the project was brought to a successful conclusion based on the most important measure of all, a satisfied client. ●