



By Allen Zeyher
Managing Editor

Innovation pays off

Judges select the pick of the crop
at the ATSSA Convention and Traffic Expo

Judges of the ATSSA Innovation Awards had a tough job ranking the many innovative products this year.

"There were so many good things out there. I could not have predicted the outcome," Bob Felt told *ROADS & BRIDGES*. Felt is the safety outreach specialist at the Michigan Department of Transportation.

Felt and two other judges visited the booth of each of the vendors with a product in the competition. They had three prime questions in mind: Does the product address a known safety problem? Is the product cost effective? And what potential does the product have for saving lives?

To answer the three prime questions and find out how innovative the products really were, Felt asked the vendors to explain how their product differed from a product that is already on the market.

"I asked leading questions to try to get them to tell me more about it," he said.

"They didn't know I was judging," Randy Damron, special events coordinator for the West Virginia DOT, told *ROADS & BRIDGES*. "They were just answering questions as if I were a consumer of the product. Each of them had a story to tell, and they were all rather convincing."

Felt, Damron and Jon Jackels of the Minnesota DOT were the three judges chosen by the American Traffic Safety Services Association (ATSSA). They gave the judges a list of the vendors and the products in the Innovation Awards competition, told them to rate the products on the three prime questions on a scale of 1 to 5 and gave them six hours on the Traffic Expo floor.

"After we had completed the judging, we went into a room and had some great dialogue, compared notes," said Felt.

"The ones that were chosen, all three of us had given high marks to," added Damron.

What follows is a brief description of each of the products featured in the New Product Showcase.

First place: Impact Recovery Systems

Impact Recovery Systems Inc., San Antonio, Texas, won first place for its Omniped/Solestrian Centerline Pedestrian Sign. The in-street pedestrian crosswalk sign adds to pedestrian safety by being four-sided. Along with the usual two sides showing stop or yield signs to vehicular traffic, Impact Recovery Systems added two narrow sides containing pedestrian messages, such as Look Both Ways or Walk Bicycles. The sign stands 47 in. tall. The vehicle-facing panels measure 10 x 24 in. and use 3M high-intensity retroreflective sheeting. The signs are equipped with an "anti-twist" feature that prevents them from being twisted sideways.

Impact Recovery Systems' pedestrian sign addresses the problem of pedestrian injury and death. Six thousand pedestrians are killed every year and another 90,000 are injured, according to Impact Recovery Systems' brochure. **Circle 920**

Second place: Telegra Inc.

The LED Variable Speed Matrix from Telegra Inc., Orlando, Fla., took second place. The displays work in several configurations with multiple power options and durable construction for reliability. The display features advanced optics, a graffiti-resistant sign face, bright, energy-efficient message displays and full-matrix, true-type font capability. **Circle 921**

Third place: Versilis Inc.

Third place went to the SwiftGate Automated Lane Closure System from Versilis Inc., Laval, Quebec. SwiftGate is a remotely controlled lane-closure system. The system consists of a series of pivoting gates or signs, solar panels and control boxes. It can be activated with a radio unit, a cell phone or a web-based application. When activated, the gates swivel into place in as little as five minutes, blocking traffic more effectively than regular delineation markers such as barrels or cones. **Circle 922**



First place: Impact Recovery Systems Inc., Omniped/Solestrian Centerline Pedestrian Sign.

Screw-in base

The DP 200 Spinner Screw-In Base for the new DP 200 channelizer post, from Pexco/Davidson Traffic Control Products, allows workers to quickly install or remove channelizer posts by screwing them into or out of a metal anchor embedded in the roadway. **Circle 923**



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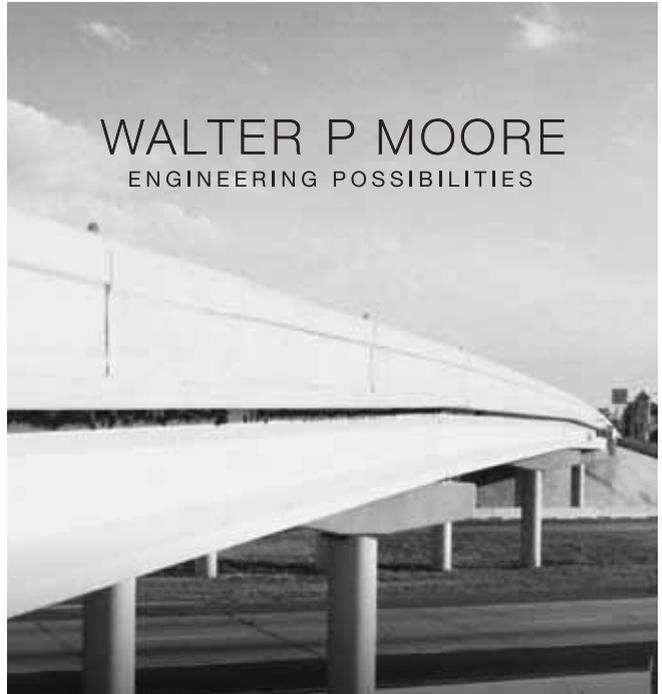
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