

THE HOW-TO MAGAZINE

JANUARY 2023 | SIGNSHOP.COM



SIGN BUILDER
ILLUSTRATED

WELL DONE

WALL GRAPHICS

BREDWELL™

CUSTOM MEALS FOR WORTHY DOGS



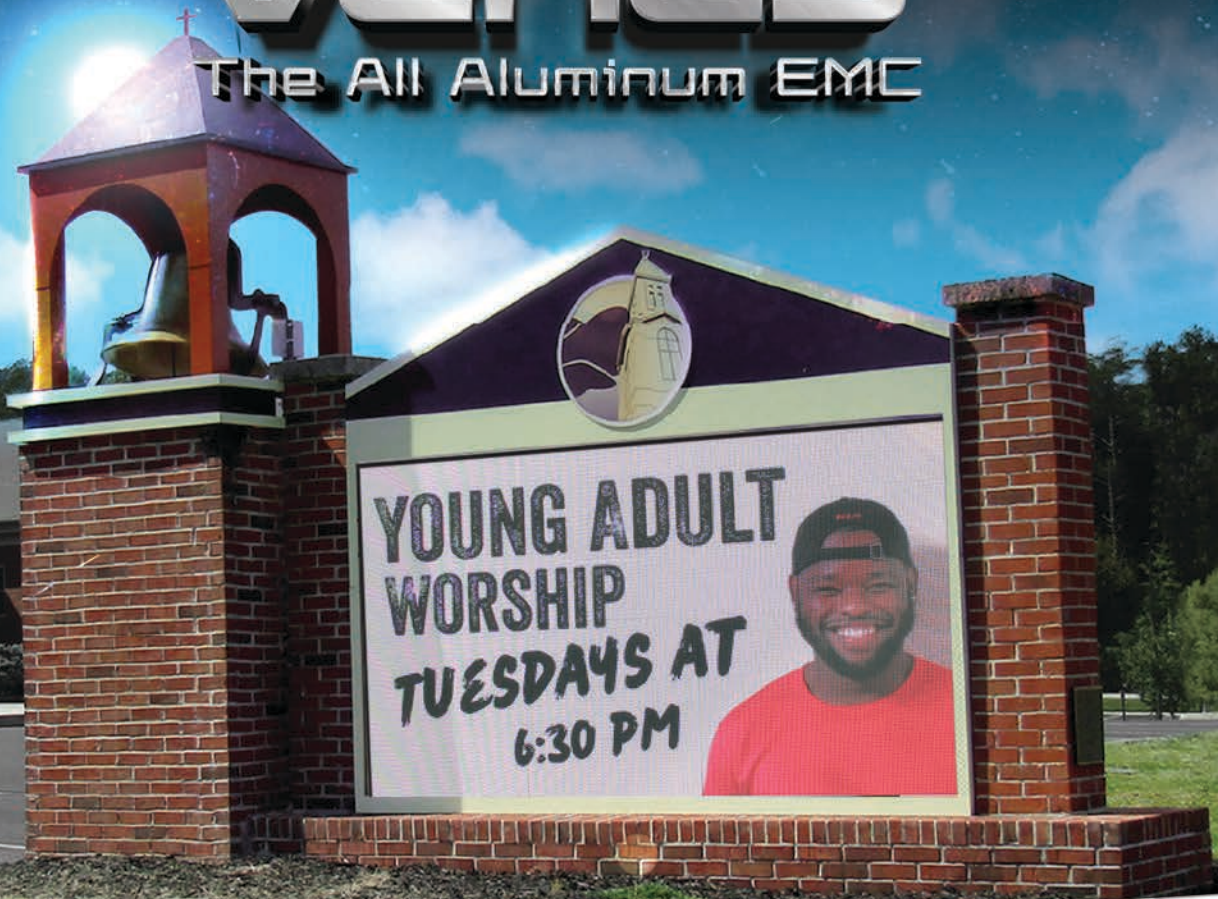
ON-PREMISE SIGNAGE:
INTERACTIVE LETTER SET

REBRANDING:
BALLY'S CASINO SIGNS



VENUS

The All Aluminum EMC



All Aluminum Design

100k times more heat efficient than traditional EMCs

No Assembly Needed

Arrives in your shop ready to hang

Only Three Components

Simply the module, hub, and controller



Learn More or Get a Quote!

877.767.9949
thinksign.com/venus



Lifetime 4G

**Edit, Schedule, & Sync
on Desktop or Phone**



23

HOW-TO COLUMNS

11 PROJECT MANAGEMENT PILLARS

By Joe Arenella

Mistakes cost more than just money.

14 PUTTING PLANS INTO ACTION

By A.J. Titus

Building a 2023 business plan for your sign company.

DEPARTMENTS

4 EDITOR'S COLUMN

As technology progresses at an even more faster pace, Editor **Jeff Wooten** finds, ready or not, artificial intelligence art is here.

6 IN THE INDUSTRY

Drumroll please as we announce the 2022 WSA Annual Coolness Competition and Watchfire LED Sign Awards winners, and a brand implementation firm acquires Comet Signs of Texas.

10 SIGN SHOW

The newest products and services from sign manufacturers.

27 SBI MARKETPLACE

Advertisements and announcements from the sign trade.

28 SBI OPERATIONS

Chris Biscuiti profiles the three keys for success found at one not-your-average small business.

Cover Photo: Graphic Image corporation.



FEATURES

16 WELL DONE

By Alex Marcheschi

Graphic Image Corporation makes dogfood restaurant's branding bite.

20 THERE'S NO "I" IN SIGN MAKING

By Jeff Wooten

Humble Sign Company builds a unique, interactive letter set.

23 ALWAYS BET ON SIGNS

By Vanessa Thill

YESCO rebrands signage for several Bally's casino locations.

25 ON THE OUTLOOK

By David Hickey

Regulations and enforcements on the horizon.

6





January 2023, Vol. 37, No. 330

Sign Builder Illustrated (ISSN 0895-0555) print, (ISSN 2161-0709) digital
is published by Simmons-Boardman Publishing Corporation

Subscriptions: 402-346-4740

EXECUTIVE OFFICES

President and Chairman

Arthur J. McGinnis, Jr.

Group Publisher

Gary Lynch

1809 Capitol Avenue, Omaha, NE 68102

Office: 212-620-7247; Cell 646-637-5206

EDITORIAL

Editor

Jeff Wooten

323 Clifton Street, Suite #7, Greenville, NC 27858

212-620-7244

jwooten@sbpub.com

Managing Editor

Alex Marcheschi

513-490-6227

amarcheschi@sbpub.com

Contributing Writers

Joe Arenella, Chris Biscuiti, David Hickey, Vanessa Thill

ART

Art Director

Nicole D'Antona

Graphic Designer

Hillary Coleman

PRODUCTION

Corporate Production Director

Mary Conyers

CIRCULATION

Circulation Director

Jo Ann Binz

joann@qcs1989.com

ADVERTISING SALES

Sales Manager

David Harkey

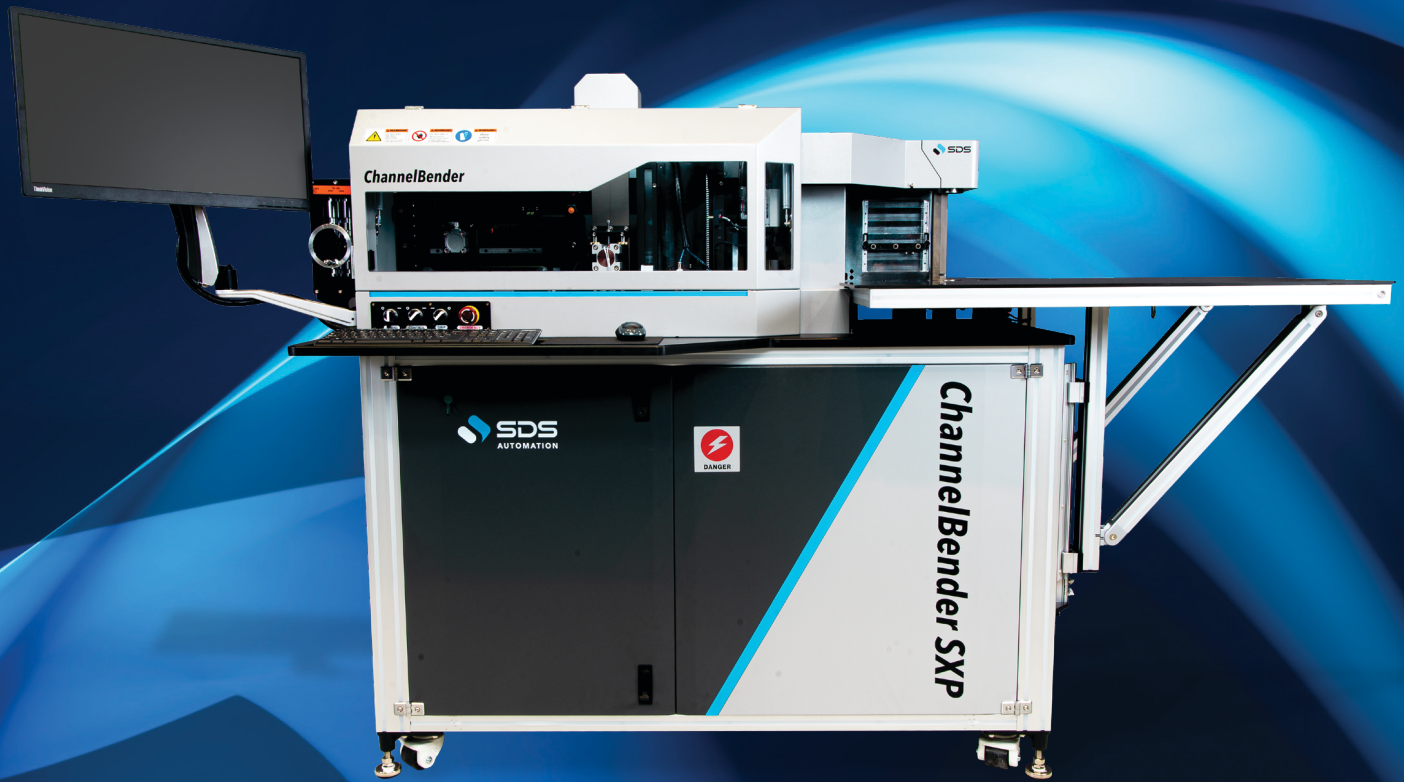
212-620-7223

dharkey@sbpub.com

Sign Builder Illustrated is published monthly. All rights reserved. Nothing herein may be reproduced in whole or in part without written permission of the publisher. To purchase PDF files of cover and layouts or hard copy reprints, please call Gary Lynch at 212-620-7247 or e-mail glynch@sbpub.com.

SBI®





ChannelBender® Series

Automated Channel Letter Solutions



- **Game-changing accuracy**
- **Increased productivity**
- **Lifetime technical support**
- **Financing terms available**
- **The equipment of choice for nearly every major sign manufacturer in America**

sign.sdsautomation.com
303-710-8727



EDITOR'S COLUMN

BY JEFF WOOTEN



D3s1gn3rs W4nt3d

A.I. art is quite the rage these days—literally.

A recent uptick in angry online choruses from the artistic community has led to an increased awareness over the promise or threat, depending on your viewpoint, of Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) programs producing artwork on its own, thanks to user text-to-image commands. Overnight it feels as if A.I. generator apps and terminology like Lensa, LAION, Midjourney, Dall-E, DreamUp, and Stable Diffusion have moved from the vocabulary of cutting-edge beta testers and into everyday mom-and-pop conversation.

What started out as a simple app that turned user profile pictures into A.I.-generated portraits has erupted into dire warnings about these types of programs stealing from human artists to produce these pieces and call them their own.

Venture into these discussions and you'll frequently hear or read "copyright laws," "fair use," and "soulless machines" (a bit ironic, in my opinion, when these communications happen online).

The clearest deduction that can be made at this time is that Internet reality may just be too darn quick and changing in order to come up with the necessary laws and regulations to govern what is legal and what is not.

This controversy and this technology are both in their infancy.

At the moment, we're not exactly up to where Skynet, W.O.P.R., and Ex Machina are churning out stunning masterpieces using their pallets made from binary

numbers and digital paints. Instead we may be a decade or two away from such A.I. artistes setting up along the Information Superhighway and selling "their" genius artworks.

Artistic theft is a serious moral issue that needs to be publicized and dealt with, but part of me also wonders if some of this virtual gnashing stems from white collars and creative types coming face-to-face with automation—which, for years, felt like a more-blue-collar issue.

I'm interested to see how this eventually affects the sign industry. Many shops are already using similar-type programs as tools to help develop or modify design ideas. But you're also dealing with savvy shops making increased efforts to bring onboard designers straight out of school and onto their production floors.

Are some shop owners already interested in possibly solving their hiring issues by bringing A.I. onboard their staff? Or will some shops have to worry about Bots in addition to their competition down the street from snatching their design ideas and customers?

In 2023, as mentioned, we're in A.I. baby steps. But down the road, how ready are you to address that eventual giant leap? ●

JEFF WOOTEN

Editor, jwooten@sbspub.com

AGENDA

Note: All events listed below are subject to change. Please check show sites for the most up-to-date information.

MARCH 2023

MARCH 2-4:

The Mid-South Sign Association's Idea Exchange 2023, featuring educational seminars and tours, will be hosted by Munn Enterprises in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. (midsouthsign.org)

APRIL 2023

APRIL 12-14:

ISA International Sign Expo 2023, featuring everything you need to be successful in the sign, graphics, print, and visual communications industry, is scheduled to take place in Las Vegas, Nevada. Pre-conference events will occur April 11. (signexpo.org)

MAY 2023

MAY 21-25:

LightFair, North America's largest architectural and commercial lighting tradeshow and conference, will happen at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center in New York City. The organization announced that this show will be transitioning to a biennial schedule after this event. (lightfair.com/new-york-2023)

AUGUST 2023

AUGUST 24-26:

2023 SEGDC Conference Experience Washington DC promises four inspirational days of interactive workshops, tours, networking opportunities, case studies, and programming from renowned speakers celebrating the evolution and challenges of fifty years of experiential design. (segd.org)

Photo: Shutterstock.com/Ozz Design.

Profit More From Yard Signs

Save 20% on 4mm Coroplast
Signs.*



Standard &
custom sizes



Fast turnarounds
& shipping



Instant online
quotes

Get a quote now at www.sinalite.com

*When you order a quantity of 5 or more. For a limited time only.



WSA ANNUAL COOLNESS COMPETITION WINNERS

Denver, Colorado— World Sign Associates (WSA), a premier trade organization for electrical sign manufacturers and suppliers through North America, announced the winners of their 2022 WSA Coolness Sign Design Competition at the association's seventy-fifth Annual Meeting held September 29 to October 1 in San Antonio, Texas. WSA sign company members and endorsed vendors voted on the most innovative electrical signs produced during the past twelve months.

Founded in 1947, WSA offers an executive forum for education, fellowship, support, and the exchange of ideas. Members represent some of the industry's top talent. They craft custom signs as well as signs for regional and national clients, either by working independently or by combining the strengths of over

150 sign manufacturers and suppliers throughout North America.

This year's winning entries are in four categories: Freestanding Sign – Greater than 100 Square Feet; Freestanding Sign – Less than 100 Square Feet; Wall Sign; and Potpourri. A Best in Show recipient is awarded amongst the four winners.

Best in Show/Potpourri: Las Vegas Arches (YESCO – Salt Lake City)

The Las Vegas Gateway Arches span over 80 feet in height and stretch 140 feet across Las Vegas Boulevard. They have four footings that are each four feet wide and twenty feet deep.

The city emblem is 20-by-40 feet, weighs 7,300 pounds, and contains 900 LED lamps.

The entire display draws over 61,000 watts of power.

The lighting system within the display includes over 13,000 RGB LED “pucks” that are individually programmable. The sign contains over 170 IP addresses.

Freestanding Sign – Greater than 100 Square Feet: Brighton Crossings (DaVinci Sign Systems)

Brighton Crossings signage features a fully branded sign system comprised of multiple angular-shaped stone monument signs and acrylic-capped illuminated lanterns for Brighton Crossings residential development in Brighton, Colorado. Also 3/4-inch acrylic covers the LED lantern illumination source.

The sizeable monument signage has faux-bronze aluminum and push-



through acrylic lettering.

Freestanding Sign – Less than 100 Square Feet: National Jewish Hospital Donor Structure (BSC Signs & Art-House Design)

This unique and beautifully designed sign stands over eight tall and features hundreds of generous donor names of people who have contributed and supported the hospital's tremendous efforts.

This project was quite the accomplishment. With less than six weeks to design, prototype, procure, and execute to meet the client's timeline, National Jewish Hospital knew it was something only BSC could accomplish to meet their date.

This project features several hundred man and machine hours, thousands of carefully drilled and tapped screws,

precision fabrication and assembly, a clean and cool champagne-colored polyurethane finish, a triple-layer lens system that creates a unique lighting experience, and a WiFi-controlled lighting system.

Wall Sign: Farmer State (Nagle Signs)

This 28-by-40-foot logo is mounted on a screen wall build-out structure with custom flex-face FSB letters featuring internal LED lighting.

The tractor logo and circle are internally illuminated, custom-fabricated aluminum cabinets with polycarbonate faces covered with green translucent vinyl.

The 2-by-56-foot accent stripe cabinet was installed below the ID sign, consisting of three flex-faced cabinet sections in yellow, light green, and dark green internally illuminated with LEDs. ●

WATCHFIRE LED SIGN AWARDS

DANVILLE, ILLINOIS— AJ Sign Company of Burnt Hills, New York is the Grand Prize winner of the 2022 Watchfire LED Sign Awards. Watchfire recognized the company for their contributions to the sign industry with their outdoor sign for Chas G. Burch Supply Co., in Schenectady, New York.

In its eighth year, the Watchfire LED Sign Awards recognize Watchfire dealer partners who best showcase the capabilities of outdoor digital advertising. Founded in 2014, the annual awards recognize on-premise signs that display excellence in design, legibility of digital messages, and advertising effectiveness.

The winning sign at Chas G. Burch Supply Co., is an imposing 17-foot-tall, double-face monument sign set on a stone base featuring a 4-by-8-foot 8mm LED Watchfire display. The sign has increased visibility for the business on a busy road and allows the company to display seasonal sales and showcase products available from the kitchen and bath supplier.

"This has been another impressive year for the awards program, with more than 150 entries and 14 Gold Level winners," said David Warns, Watchfire's vice president of On Premise Sales. ●





IN THE INDUSTRY



STRATUS ACQUIRES COMET SIGNS

CLEVELAND, OHIO— With designs on accelerating its growth in the southwest and western United States, Stratus, a leading facilities services and brand implementation services firm acquired Comet Signs, based in San Antonio, Texas. The combined organization now consists of over 1,100 employees throughout the United States, while Stratus is able to leverage Comet's substantial presence in key Texas areas.

Comet's expanded production capabilities and self-perform installation fleet will begin to serve Stratus' roster of blue-chip, nationwide brands in the region and will help the company grow its overall business. Terms of the transaction were not disclosed. The Comet acquisition represents Stratus's third major acquisition since late 2019.

"Our teams immediately melded with each other—we have a shared value system and strong beliefs in nurturing customer relationships and growth over time," noted Stratus CEO Tim Eippert. "Comet's reputation is stellar, and they've been careful and purposeful about growth, including hiring practices and employee satisfaction and retention."

Founded in 1958, Comet Signs, has expanded over time through organic growth and a series of mergers and acquisitions and has become known as a leading exterior branding resource in the region. The company occupies a 180,000-square-foot state-of-the-art production facility at its San Antonio headquarters, with an additional 70,000-plus-square-feet of operations in Austin, Dallas, Houston, and Tyler, Texas.

"When [Tim] and I were getting to know each other, I could immediately picture myself and my team working side-by-side with Stratus," said Pete Sitterle, CEO of Comet Signs. "At Comet, we have grown by taking very good care of our customers. [Tim] and Stratus share that approach—the customer is always at the center of their minds."

"We look forward to our customers taking advantage of everything Stratus has to offer and personally servicing Stratus's customers all across Texas."

Headquartered in Mentor, Ohio, Stratus has operations centers in Illinois, Ohio, Florida and New Jersey, as well as production facilities in Illinois and South Carolina. Stratus is a portfolio company of Vestar Capital Partners. ●

NEW WOMEN IN PRINT ALLIANCE DIRECTOR

FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA— Lisbeth Lyons Black has been named director of the Women in Print Alliance. An advisory group of PRINTING United Alliance, the Women in Print Alliance was established to attract, connect, empower, and advocate for women in the print community. In the coming months, Lyons Black will help oversee the expanded resources, programs, and services that will be offered to this community to support and more closely engage women in all business levels.

Lyons Black is a proven advocate with over twenty years of experience representing the voice of businesses and women's issues in the nation's capital. Her work leading legislative, political, and grassroots initiatives in the halls of Congress, the maze of Federal agencies, and at the White House have resulted in numerous wins for the print and packaging, small business, mailing, advertising, media, and manufacturing industries.

"I've witnessed the printing industry come a long way in terms of diversity and inclusion over the fifteen-plus years that I've advocated for print, particularly with the influx of women company owners and executives—many of whom have long sought an organization dedicated to addressing their specific interests and challenges," says Lyons Black. "However there's no denying that a gender gap still exists. That's where Women in Print Alliance comes in, and I'm excited about the opportunity to advance this community within the industry." ●



GREAT LOOKING **SIGNS.** EASY TO WORK **WITH.** AMAZING **RESULTS.**



Watchfire is dedicated to delivering the highest quality digital displays to meet the needs of the sign industry.

Whatever the application, Watchfire designs and manufactures digital signage products with reliable performance backed by an outstanding support team. Our commitment to lead times you can count on, easy installation and world-class content management software make adding digital a smart move.

Talk to your local Watchfire representative for a demonstration or a quote. To learn more, visit watchfiresigns.com or call 800-637-2645.





SIGN SHOW



PROMOTIONAL SIGNAGE

Orbus Honored as a SAGE A-rated Supplier

Professional Products Association International (PPAI) technology partner SAGE recently announced its 2023 rating award winners (suppliers and decorators who earn A+ or A ratings) and classified Orbus Exhibit & Display Group®, a North American wholesale supplier and manufacturer of display, exhibit, graphic, and event solutions, as an A-rated supplier. SAGE bases these distinctions on the results of distributor ratings throughout the year. In essence, they represent the top suppliers, as decided by the industry's distributors. Out of the 4,000-plus suppliers and decorators listed in SAGE, 1,100 received an A+ or A rating. These ratings help distributors make informed decisions about prospective suppliers. This is Orbus's second year receiving an A-rating and its fifth consecutive year being a high-rated supplier. orbus.com



VINYL/FILMS

Roland DGA Adds New Gloss Calendered Vinyl PRO to its Media Family

Gloss Calendered Vinyl PRO (ESM-GC PRO) from

Roland DGA is a premium 3-mil calendered vinyl with gray removable adhesive supplied on an air-release liner. ESM-GC PRO is an extremely durable media intended for indoor and outdoor applications for up to five years and is perfect for creating stickers and decals, fleet vehicle wrap markings, P-O-P displays, outdoor signage, and more. Users seeking even greater durability can use ESM-GC PRO in combination with Roland DGA's protective GuardLam™ line of overlamine films. In addition to producing attention-grabbing, long-lasting graphics, this media's air-release liner allows for easy, trouble-free installation. Another ESM-GC PRO advantage is its clean removing adhesive, which will not leave a residue within a year of application. ESM-GC PRO is available in 20-inch-by-50-foot, 30-inch-by-150-foot, and 54-inch-by-150-foot rolls and is compatible with Roland DGA's eco-solvent or UV printers as well as the company's TrueVIS, EJ, Eco-Sol MAX, and ECO-UV inks. rolanddga.com



WALL GRAPHICS

Heavy is the Liner that Hangs the Walls

Mactac® Graphics & Signage Solutions has altered its high-performance permanent wallNOODLE® multi-print wall mural media with a new, heavier liner. Designed for long-lasting wall graphics, point-of-purchase displays, tiled murals, posters, decals, stickers, and barrier and signage projects where an easy-to-handle, simple-to-apply product is needed, permanent wallNOODLE (PN628) is a 6.0-mil matte white, semi-rigid vinyl with a permanent acrylic adhesive. The product's new 90# stay flat polyethylene-coated kraft liner offers graphics distributors, printers, and installers even more stability and ease of product handling, aiding with printing and installation processes. The change in liner construction also ensures customers more consistent and uninterrupted product availability. Permanent wallNOODLE is the permanent version of the original removable wallNOODLE. It offers great print performance and is compatible with UV screen, UV gel, UV inkjet, latex, solvent, eco-solvent, and UV offset print methods. Customers can order PN628 in 54-inch-by-100-foot rolls or custom sheet sizes. With the new liner, this material can also be sheeted for additional printing options. mactac.com/graphics



Project Management Pillars

Mistakes cost more than just money!

Mistakes happen. The unfortunate reality is that learning the hard way what *not* to do is part of the growing process for a sign company. And sometimes, those mistakes cost more than just money.

I once made a rookie mistake while installing a large channel letter sign on a skyscraper in Austin, Texas. I let down my entire team, and it cost thousands of dollars to fix.

But the worst part was that I lost my client's trust, and it took a very long time to win it back.

The job was complicated. It took months to obtain permit approvals. In addition to getting structural engineer drawings for fabrication and installation specifications, we had to engage a civic

engineer to ensure the old city street would not collapse from the weight of the cranes needed for installation.

After getting thermal imaging of the roof deck to ensure that we wouldn't drill into any support cables, we hired a roofing company to cut back and seal the roof membrane.

Before the day of installation, we had to set up road barricades for lane closure, hire police to direct traffic, remove low power lines for the cranes to safely pass, and so on.

A week before the install, though, while drilling holes for mounting plates, we ended up hitting a support cable in the concrete roof deck. Thankfully it didn't snap, but we have to move the mounting supports over a few inches before bolting them into the roof deck safely.

Everything seemed ready to rock and roll!

By six in the morning on install day, the roads were blocked, police were directing traffic, and the cranes had arrived on site, along with a certified hoister to attach the sign to crane straps (it's a thing). There were orange-vested installers everywhere, and the client had hired a film crew to capture the moment. Every detail was perfect. Lights, camera, action!

The sign was lifted foot by foot fifteen-plus stories up. However when the sign reached the top—the mounting plates didn't line up with it.

My mistake: I didn't redo the survey for a new mounting pattern after we shifted the roof deck supports a week earlier. Because of the wind load re-



HOW TO

WORKFLOW | BY JOE ARENELLA



NEW HABITS ARE HARD TO IMPLEMENT,
BUT IN THE LONG RUN,
YOU SHOP WILL BE MORE PROFITABLE.
THEY WILL ALSO HAVE A POSITIVE
IMPACT ON YOUR TEAM'S MORALE.

quirements, the sign mounts couldn't be adjusted in the field without new structural engineering drawings being resubmitted, so everyone was sent home. It was an awful feeling!

All of this could've been avoided if I had obtained a new survey and passed that information on to the project manager and fabrication team.

Now you may not find yourself installing signs on skyscrapers, but the point is that, whether your shop does large electric signs, wraps, banners, or

t-shirts, mistakes bring everyone down. And most of them are preventable.

Here are three critical Project Management Pillars to help you avoid them:

Investigation (A Simple Survey)

All projects should start with information gathering. What are your client's goals for the project?

Interview your client and ask them all the questions that need to be asked.

Once you know what they want, the investigative process can begin.

Research the city code for signage requirements. What are the architectural or engineering requirements? And in the case of a retail tenant, what does landlord criteria allow?

Armed with all of this information, you can then proceed to a physical survey.

What is needed to coordinate a thorough site survey for reach and access? What are the electrical and mounting requirements for the sign? What are the wall colors, the appropriate sizes, and what is the best placement for readability, etc?

Clear Communication

After collecting the details, you will need to have a system to communicate those details to everyone to ensure that nothing falls through the cracks, especially if you are managing multiple large sign projects at the same time.

A good system tracks every stage of production—tasks that can be assigned



to individual team members along with critical milestone completion dates leading up to the final delivery date of the project.

Another important part of communication is to have a place to organize and share all the important project files and notes, a system that is accessible to everyone on the team. Nothing kills a project faster than lost project files.

However even the best tools are ineffective without clear communication.

Regular production meetings to review all jobs in progress are a must. My shop had two production meetings per week—a main weekly meeting and a “stand up meeting.”

Every Monday after lunch, in our main weekly meeting, we would go over the details of every open job and discuss what had to be done to move the project forward. We met again on Thursday morning for the “stand up”

meeting. The focus for this meeting was to address any items blocking jobs from moving to the next stage of production.

I’ve talked to shops that meet daily and to some that meet just once per week. Whatever works best for your schedule and shop’s workload is fine, as long as you make a commitment to communicate.

Execution (Project Planning)

Preventing mistakes requires an investment in training and a solid system for managing and executing projects successfully. Find a good system to run your shop, and take the time to learn and implement it.

New habits are hard to implement, but in the long run, your shop will be more profitable. They will also have a positive impact on your team’s morale.

It’s not easy to make changes to processes, but everyone will end up work-

ing with less stress when structure is in place to execute projects consistently.

And your customers will be happier too! ●

.....
Joe is the co-founder of SignTracker, and loves helping sign shops get organized. He can be reached via email at joe@sign-tracker.com.





HOW TO

BUSINESS PLANS | BY A.J. TITUS

Implementation

Strategy

Putting Plans into Action

Building a 2023 business plan for your sign company.

Running a business without a business plan is like taking a trip without a map. You may know where you want to go, but you could run into a lot of dead ends and detours that slow you down and keep you from reaching your intended destination.

And with all that uncertainty and re-routing, you could run out of gas half-way through.

A business plan is your best tool for creating a clear vision of where you want your company to go and then establishing markers to measure your progress. It's both the "where" and the "how" of your journey.

The connection between planning and business growth is a proven one.

Researchers at the University of Or-

egon found companies that create business plans grow 30 percent faster than those that do not.

The *Journal of Small Business Management* reports that 71 percent of fast-growing companies have business plans. And according to the *Harvard Business Review*, start-ups with formal plans are 16 percent more likely to succeed.

Planning to Win

Again and again, we've found that planning comes down to just two simple questions: (1.) Why do I exist; and (2.) How am I going to achieve my goals?

Here's the fuel that feeds your plan:

Monitor your goals regularly. You should have short-term goals and track them regularly: daily, weekly, monthly,

and quarterly. The quarterly review is also the time when you should do a full review of all your goals and your business plan.

Define your market and your competition. Where do you stand in the marketplace? Do some research on the state of the sign industry and see how you and your nearest competition measure up. Collect and analyze what you learn and make the lessons part of your business plan. What will you offer your customers that's better than the competition's version?

Establish your differentiators. Figure out what sets you apart from the competition. What do you do better than anyone else in your market? You can answer some

WHERE DO YOU STAND IN THE MARKETPLACE? DO SOME RESEARCH ON THE STATE OF THE SIGN INDUSTRY AND SEE HOW YOU AND YOUR COMPETITION MEASURE UP. COLLECT AND ANALYZE WHAT YOU LEARN.

of this yourself, but you'll get better answers from customers and employees. Survey them anonymously and invite them to leave an online review. Then, as you create your 2023 plan, focus on these differentiators in what you'll offer.

Anticipate trends and challenges

Planning time is perfect for looking around and seeing what's new or on the horizon for the coming year. For example, we see a big trend in mobile businesses; think outside the storefront and develop products and services for companies that are (literally) on the move.

At the same time, avoid these common mistakes:

Thinking too far ahead. One criterion for an achievable goal is that it has a planned completion date. It should be far enough away to give you time to complete it but not so far off that you neglect it until the last minute. Focus on one to three years. Five to ten years is too long.

Setting unrealistic goals. Set high goals but make them achievable. They should stretch your limits just enough to challenge you but not be so ambitious that you can't reach them. Planning to earn the same revenue each year is like gliding over a bump in the road; doubling or tripling the numbers is like trying to climb Mount Everest.

Being too rigid or unwilling to change. It's OK to adjust or even completely replace your goals as circumstances change. That's one of

the big lessons of the pandemic, isn't it? Don't be too quick to give up; but when you've tried everything, and success still eludes you, it may be time to reorient yourself.

Winning the Plan

Share your plan with your whole team so they can be part of making it work. Refer to it daily, weekly, monthly, and quarterly and make sure your staff does as well. Posting it on the wall above your desk or another prominent place will help you stay aware of it.

As the new year begins, take some time to evaluate your business and envision the progress you want to make in 2023.

And before you say you don't have time to plan, let me ask: Do you have time to fail? ●

A.J. Titus is president of United Franchise Group™ (UFG), a global leader for entrepreneurs, and the Signarama sign and graphics franchise. He spearheads the worldwide development of all UFG-affiliated brands and supports policies promoting Signarama franchise owners' expansion and profitability.



TRADE ONLY YARD SIGNS AND PRINTED RIGID SUBSTRATES

DIGITAL AND SCREEN PRINTING CAPABILITIES

COROPLAST • FOAMBOARD • STYRENE • PVC • & MORE

Yard Signs

24" X 18"

\$175

CUSTOM PRINTED

CORRUGATED PLASTIC 4MM

Qty.100 - 1 COLOR 1 SIDED

Yard Signs

24" X 18"

\$275

CUSTOM PRINTED

CORRUGATED PLASTIC 4MM

Qty.100 - FULL COLOR 1 SIDED



888-377-2665

YardSignsResellers.com

VINYL BANNER SIGN PRINTING

AS LOW AS **89¢** PER SQ. FT.
min banner size 200 sq ft

16' Seamless

Vinyl Banner, Mesh, Backlit, Fabric, Canvas, 72" wide posters, 98" wide card stock, 80" wide backlit film

UV Printing

3M certified UV Inks for a 5 year outdoor fading warranty.

RF Welding

The most professional banner weld in the industry. Laser guided precision. Guaranteed durability.

FREE SHIPPING

On orders over \$150 Same day, next day available

12'x24' **\$152⁹³** | 14'x48' **\$356⁸³**
Billboard Banner DELIVERED | Billboard Banner DELIVERED



Looking for that special image to print? NO problem...

FREE HIGH QUALITY IMAGE LIBRARY
OVER 27 MILLION STOCK IMAGES

Echod Graphics Inc
433 Park Avenue
Brooklyn NY 11205



Use COUPON code: SignBuilder to get 10% off

EchodGraphics.com • 855-594-7446



WALL GRAPHICS

BY ALEX MARCHESCHI

Wall mural.

BREDWELL

CUSTOM MEALS FOR WORTHY DO

FRESH
made to
ORDER

www.
bredwell
.com

BREDWELL

WELL DONE



Graphic Image Corporation in Orland Park, Illinois makes dogfood restaurant's branding bite.

Wall graphics are always a great way to take a brick-and-mortar space to the next level without breaking the bank. A business owner simply needs (relatively) blank walls, a vision, and someone who knows what to do. That's where the sign shops come in.

In this case, Bredwell, a custom meal restaurant for dogs (yes, you read that correctly—think Chipotle, but for your K-9) knew that their specialty business had to offer engaging and attractive graphics for their customers. It's the nature of their business, and you can have a lot of fun with dogs in designs, after all.

Graphic Image Corporation in Orland Park, Illinois was called upon to install the graphics in Bredwell's storefront in the neighboring town of Barrington. The shop was involved very early in Bredwell's development; in fact, the site survey was done while the physical storefront was still under construction.

"There were lots of obstacles in the way for taking proper measurements on their walls, which wasn't ideal, but easy enough to navigate around. Well when it came to the subway tile graphic wall (*see photo on page 18*), the two shelving units were not yet installed when I was onsite taking measurements," says Graphic Image Corp. Vice President Frank Markasovic. "This mural was to be installed between the not-yet-existent shelves, installed flush to each edge and flush to the top and bottom of the wall.

"Without the shelves physically

being there, I had to measure what I thought were the exact spots. I even checked it with the customer. I based the mural measurements off of those dimensions, and we produced the graphics for installation."

Markasovic continues, "Once we got onsite, the storefront build-out was complete, and the shelving units were finally installed—only about 9.5 inches further apart than anticipated and measured. Of course! We all had a little laugh about the predicament, but in the end, we finished installing the other murals and came back a day later with properly sized graphics for this area.

"Our client was happy not to be delayed for opening, and we were really happy with how everything turned out."

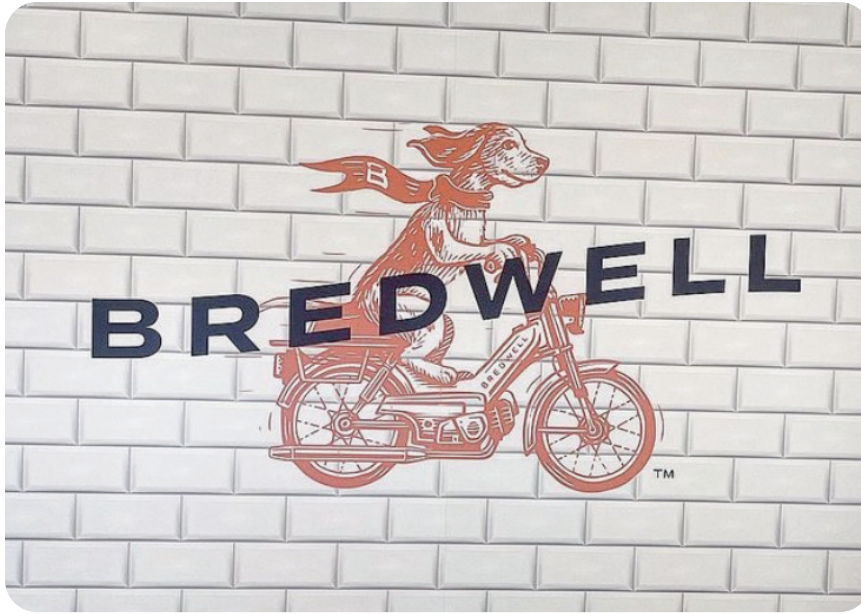
The project used about 200 square feet of vinyl, and the graphics were printed using an HP Latex 800W printer onto 3M Scotchcal Graphic Film Series IJ40C vinyl with 3M Scotchcal Overlaminate 8510 applied for the finish.

For installation of these wall murals, Graphic Image Corporation used a pretty standard, non-fancy setup. "We always hang our panels with the help from a laser level to ensure perfect leveling of the graphics. We usually always cut down our panels with our CNC cutter," says Markocovic. "We just used our tape measurers, squeegees, knives, a blowtorch for post-heating, and ladders to access the tops of the walls."

Bredwell prides itself on serving freshly made meals for dogs with the highest quality ingredients. Because of this, their interior had to match

**OUR CLIENT WAS HAPPY
NOT TO BE DELAYED
FOR OPENING, AND WE
WERE HAPPY WITH HOW
EVERYTHING TURNED OUT.**

All Photos: Graphic Image Corporation.



The Bredwell logo installation that required the team to go back to the drawing board after the first site survey led to confusion.

the top-notch vibes the business aims to achieve.

The graphics were printed to match exact color specifications, and the in-

stallation was ready on time. What more can a customer ask for?

This type of installation serves as a great reminder to market your sign shop's wall graphic installation services to local businesses and restaurants.

As stated earlier, in terms of renovations, it's a relatively cheap and easy way to substantially change the aura of an indoor space. Also the customers will appreciate that the business has invested in creating a more immersive and enjoyable experience.

Using wall graphics, a small business can create a business history timeline for a blank wall, highlight a mission statement, or simply feature encapsulating designs (as Bredwell did with their graphic of the bustling, barking street outside their shop).

Take the time to put some marketing materials about your graphic installation capabilities together before the new year and make a note to push the services in 2023. ●

Bring **BIG SIGNS** to Life!

with the perfect large format laser



24/7-365
US & CA Based
Tech Support



Removable Base
for Large Object
Engraving



High Detailed
Engraving



Speedy,
Precise Cuts



3-Year Machine
Warranty



Minimal
Cleanup

Unbox your potential with no size or weight limitations!
Visit **APLazer.com** or call **800-585-8617**

AP LAZER®
LEADING THE WAY



Graphics Transform Stairwell

Large format printing business Premier Graphics of Richmond, British Columbia recently used Drytac Polar Premium Air self-adhesive vinyl combined with Interlam Pro Emerytex laminate purchased from ND Graphics to produce a series of colorful interior graphics to brighten up a stairwell at the nearby twenty-six-story 601 West Hastings commercial tower.

Their work here transformed the look of the stairwell and brought a fresh feel to the otherwise-dull stairwell that people use to travel up and down the tower every day.

Each floor of the stairwell features a printed image of a different scene from the local outdoor area, along with a famous, inspirational quote.

The graphics covered an area more than 1,600 square feet. Premier Graphics printed all the images on its HP R1000 Plus Latex printer.

Premier Graphics applied the vinyl and laminate to the surfaces that were a mixture of drywall and concrete.

"The client absolutely loved it," said Premier Graphics General Manager Taylor Sellinger. "Not only did the project meet all technical

requirements, but also both the client and the tenants of the building loved that the graphics beautified a typically dark and dreary part of the building."



A division of World Industrial Equipment Inc
"Designer & Manufacturer of Lift Equipment"



With Over 45 years of experience Stamm Manufacturing's Heavy Duty Aerial Lifts, have been meeting all your tough Aerial lifts needs. A wide variety of optional features gives Stamm Aerial lifts the ability to customize your aerial equipment needs to your specific requirements. Resolve your aerial lift needs today and put Stamm's muscle to work!!



Stamm ATR-45N with 3' x 5' Aluminum Platform, 1,000 lbs Material Handler Mounted on a 19,500 GVWR Isuzu. Powered by the VanAir PowerFlex unit



ATR-45 2 man platform boom – Custom built to your specifications. We have trucks and booms in stock. *Call for details.*



ATR-45N with 3' x 5' Aluminum Platform 1,000 lbs Material Handler. The ATR is offered in a 41, 45, 52, and 58 and all can be built on a Non-CDL truck

Financing Available 4850 Orange Avenue • Fort Pierce, FL 34947 • (772) 461-6056 Main Plant • 1-800-226-5056 in Florida
(772) 464-2716 fax • www.stamm-mfg.com • Email: teddy@stamm-mfg.com



FABRICATION

BY JEFF WOOTEN

Humble Sign Company
builds a unique,
interactive letter set.



THERE'S NO "I" IN SIGN MAKING

The H-E-B supermarket chain is super-popular throughout Texas as well as in portions of north-east Mexico. There are currently more than 340 of these stores located throughout the state, and this past September, a new flagship location opened its doors to the public in Frisco, Texas (believe it or not, the first one in the Dallas-Fort Worth area).

These stores are all about the experience, and the new Frisco establishment is no different.

Inside is a state-of-the-art layout featuring not only a wide range of grocery items but also a pharmacy, a café, a

bakery, a lauded barbeque restaurant, and a full home décor department.

And the H-E-B experience is not just limited to the interior.

Next door to the store is a two-acre outdoor greenspace that hosts a mosaic tile bench covered with artwork from local artists as well as oversized metal food-related sculptures.

In this area, you'll also find a centerpiece set of individual five-foot-three-inch-tall aluminum cabinet letters spelling out the "FRISCO" name—well almost. A unique aspect of these letters is that the letter "I" is missing from its middle. This allows guests the opportunity to

stand-in as the letter "I" for photo ops.

The letters are various widths—ranging from 2-feet-6.25-inches minimum to 2-feet-11-inches maximum.

Humble Sign Company, a full-service sign company based out of Humble, Texas produced and installed this fun set of oversized letters based off a design provided by H-E-B officials.

The shop's creative, quality work on plenty large projects in the area had attracted the attention of H-E-B management headquartered in San Antonio. "They were aware of our reputation for quality and timely delivery," says Taylor Cordova, marketing coord-

All Photos: Humble Sign Company



dinator at Humble Sign Company.

The sign shop began the project by developing structural engineering drawings based off the provided designs.

The two-week build process involved a CNC router to cut the faces and a roller for the sides.

Initially H-E-B officials requested slats resembling nearby railroad tracks to be featured on all sides of all the letters. They wanted these faux tracks to be seen by onlookers no matter their viewing angle. This caused a pause early on for further consultation. “We ended up applying a two-tone paint job that resembled slats,” says Cordova.

The letters were painted in various colors using a satin finish. The fronts were painted with PANTONE® 485 C red, while the sides feature various PMS hues of oranges, yellows, greens, and blues. Humble Sign Company added an application of a clear, high-performance finish resistant to graffiti, chlorine, and salt water exposure to all the letters.

H-E-B officials wanted the letter set to look like they were flat on the ground, however they did not want visible fasteners used to accomplish this. To solve this challenge, Humble Sign Company created a sleeve system that allowed them to slide the letters down an oversized

bolt they had mounted to the ground.

The letters were secured to the ground via two-inch steel tubes and six strategically placed 6.5-inch-by-10-inch, 1-inch-thick steel plates. The “F” uses an eighteen-inch-tall steel tube, as does the left-hand side of the “R.” Meanwhile the right-hand side of the “R” as well as the mid-sections of the “S,” “C,” and “O” use eight-inch-tall steel tubes to sturdily help with placement.

Humble Sign Company installed the letters, as well as bonding and grounding them, in accordance with the requirements of the National Electrical Code and other applicable local codes.



The new letter set promotes customer interactivity at the H-E-B Frisco, Texas location.

“The most important tools we used during the install were our crane trucks and concrete anchors,” explains Cordova.

One question you may have: So just why did H-E-B officials want to leave the “I” out of the FRISCO letters at this new store? The answer—interactivity!

“H-E-B is great at creating an experience out of something as mundane as grocery shopping, and this interactive piece adds to that experience,” explains Cordova. “On the flipside, leaving the ‘I’ out is brilliant marketing because many guests upload photos of themselves posing as the ‘I’ online, which adds buzz and excitement to the store.”

H-E-B and its Frisco customers are thrilled with the letters Humble Sign Company provided here. “We love seeing people enjoy our signage and posting their photos online!” says Cordova. “Usually after we install a sign, we may get a five-star review or see one picture of it online. But with something of this magnitude, there are new pictures daily!” ●

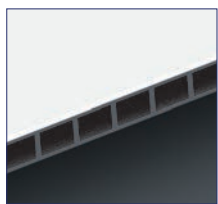
EXCELLENCE TO THE CORE

The industry’s premier selection of aluminum composite panels with corrugated cores—perfect for your next digitally printed sign project.



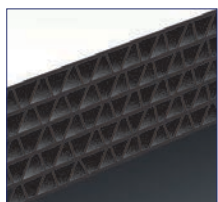
Alupalite® Standard

Strong and durable with a high-density core, available in custom colors and sizes!



Alupalite® Economy

NEW! An economical version of Alupalite Standard, redesigned from Econolite!



Alupalite® Ultra

The only panels available in 15mm and 25mm thicknesses for maximum rigidity and flatness!



LAMINATORS

Composite Panel Solutions

800.523.2347 | LaminatorsInc.com

BRANDING



BY VANESSA THILL

Bally's in Shreveport, Louisiana.

ALWAYS
**BET ON
SIGNS**





Rebranded signage at the Bally's in Quad Cities, Illinois.



YESCO rebrands signage for several Bally's casino locations.

YESCO, the 102-year-old Salt Lake City, Utah-based company known for creating, repairing, and maintaining internationally recognizable signs, recently designed, fabricated, and installed new rebranded signage for eight new Bally's casino locations across the United States.

Updated locations include Lincoln Twin River, Rhode Island; Tiverton, Rhode Island; Shreveport, Louisiana; Evansville, Indiana; Quad Cities, Illinois; Lake Tahoe, Nevada; Black Hawk, Colorado; and Kansas City, Missouri.

This monumental project entailed removing all the old signs that were displaying each property's previous name and then installing the brand-new, rebranded Bally's signage.

YESCO Las Vegas fabricated the signs for all the locations.

The sign company began production on this project back in October 2021, and it took them approximately 22,600 man-hours to complete the project.

A total of twenty-four Bally's brand identification signs (ranging in size from one-foot tall all the way up to fifteen feet tall) were installed across the eight properties. These signs included thirteen freestanding monuments and pylon signs and eleven electronic LED displays, including both 10mm and 6mm pixel resolutions.

YESCO also built and installed forty-eight wayfinding directional signs, as well as sixty-one ancillary interior, marketing, and parking signs.

"As a globally recognizable brand, it was an honor to install signage on eight new Bally's properties across the country," said Mitch Olorenshaw, account executive at YESCO. "We are thrilled with the results and know the signage will play a pivotal role in the company's rebranding efforts."

Bally's Corporation currently owns and manages fifteen casinos across ten states and a horse racetrack in Colorado and has access to OSB licenses in eighteen states.

Upon completing the construction of a temporary casino facility in Chicago and a land-based casino near the Nittany Mall in State College, Pennsylvania, Bally's will own and manage seventeen casinos across eleven states. ●



ON THE OUTLOOK

Regulations and enforcements on the horizon.

While the 2022 Congressional elections weren't the "red wave" that many pundits had been predicting, they did result in some changes that will have implications for our industry.

The U.S. Senate remains in Democrat hands—but still just barely. Sixty votes are still needed for most bills to proceed in the Senate. For the first time since January 2018, the U.S. House of Representatives will be under Republican control—albeit by a very narrow margin.

The end result is that there will be gridlock on Capitol Hill for the foreseeable future.

For example, it is likely that House Republicans will offer bills to open up energy production at home, but such efforts probably will not find support in the Senate. Meanwhile any proposals to increase taxes will face a dead end in the House of Representatives.

Speaking of taxes, many Republicans ran on the promise to repeal the provision requiring 87,000 new IRS agents

included in the *Inflation Reduction Act*. However partisan gridlock will also likely make that effort go nowhere.

In order to accomplish his priorities, President Biden will have to work on enacting bipartisan legislation, like he did with the 2021 infrastructure law. One

**THE END RESULT IS
THAT THERE WILL BE
GRIDLOCK ON
CAPITOL HILL FOR THE
FORSEEABLE FUTURE.**

such opportunity could be an initiative in the Senate that would streamline the permitting approval process for energy projects. This effort is being led in the Senate by Sen. Joe Manchin (D-WV) and could

also appeal to the GOP House of Representatives.

But if legislative gridlock is too much to overcome, Biden will focus on getting things done through federal regulations.

When Biden was vice president and Democrats lost control of the House in 2010 and the Senate in 2014, his administration turned to executive and federal regulatory actions that did not need Congressional approval. It would not be surprising if Biden pursued the same model for the next couple of years to advance his administration's agenda.

Labor issues, like the pending federal rule on joint employment and other subjects in front of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), will be highly anticipated by the business community. In our industry, joint employment might impact hiring of subcontractors or franchisee/franchisor agreements. The joint employer rule impacts employers who together determine terms and conditions of employment for an employee.

Meanwhile OSHA's final rule on



tracking workplace injuries and illnesses should be out very soon. We are also expecting increased enforcement by OSHA in the workplace, including for their crane safety requirement certification.

For most small businesses though, the most pressing issues continue to be inflation, supply chain challenges, and the tight labor market. The Federal Reserve may continue to raise interest rates in 2023, making things more expensive as a way to bring down inflation but leading to whispers of a recession in 2023.

Whatever the new session of Congress brings, ISA will be there to represent the interests of the sign and graphics industry. ISA's involvement in Washington, D.C., consists of participating in coalitions with like-minded trade associations and organizations, so that we can pool our resources and members together and be more effective in making a positive difference and help prepare your business for any changes ahead.

And of course, the next federal elec-



tions are just under two years away! ●

David Hickey is vice-president of Govern-

ment Affairs at the International Sign Association. He can be reached at **David.Hickey@signs.org**.



SERVING THE SIGN INDUSTRY SINCE 1984

SINCE 1984, WE HAVE BEEN SHOWING CUSTOMERS HOW TO **INCREASE THEIR PROFITS.**

STUDWELDING IS THE FASTEST AND EASIEST METHOD TO ATTACH A MECHANICAL FASTENER **WITHOUT** THE NEED TO DRILL AND TAP OR THRU BOLT.

WE ALSO SUPPLY LARGE SIGN MOUNTING BRACKETS AS WELL AS SPECIALLY DESIGNED MOUNTING BRACKETS TO QUICKLY ATTACH CHANNEL LETTERS TO A MULTITUDE OF SUBSTRATES.

CALL US TODAY AND LET US SHOW YOU TOO!!!

**** NATIONWIDE RENTAL FLEET & SERVICE LOANERS AVAILABLE ****

* CD WELD STUDS * ACCESSORIES * MOUNTING CLIPS *
* REVERSE CHANNEL LETTER MOUNTING CLIPS *

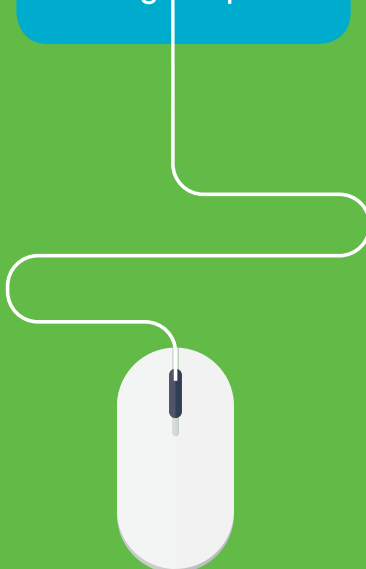
HOUSTON
16552 AIR CENTER BLVD
HOUSTON, TX 77032
1-800-929-0296

WWW.STUDWELD.COM

EMAIL:
SALES@STUDWELD.COM

IRVING
3645 CONFLANS
IRVING, TX 75061
1-877-929-6707

VISIT
www.signshop.com



[fb.com/SBIMag](https://www.facebook.com/SBIMag) [@SBIMag](https://twitter.com/SBIMag)

[in](https://www.linkedin.com/company/sign-builder-illustrated) Sign Builder Illustrated

COMPANY	URL	PAGE
AP Lazer	www.aplazer.com	18
Clarke Systems	www.clarkesystems.com	13
Echod Graphics	www.echodgraphics.com	15
Laminators Inc.	www.laminatorsinc.com	22
SDS Automation	www.sdsautomation.com	3
Signs365.com	www.signs365.com	C4
SinaLite	www.sinalite.com	5
Southern Stud Weld	www.studweld.com	26
Stamm Mfg.	www.stamm-mfg.com	19
ThinkSign	www.thinksign.com	C2
WatchFire Signs	www.watchfiresigns.com	9
YardSignsReseller.com	www.yardsignsresellers.com	14
COMPANIES IN SIGN SHOW		
Mactac	www.mactac.com	10
Orbus Exhibit & Display Group	www.orbus.com	10
Roland DGA	www.rolanddga.com	10

3 EASY STEPS



1. Go to our website at, signshop.com



2. Click on our ProductPortal box on the website



3. Request info about advertisers & products

Graphics. Dimensional. Lighting. Digital. Installation. Operations.

WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED

Sign Builder Illustrated's newsletters keep you up-to-date with timely news, industry trends and "how-to" articles on every aspect of the sign industry.

SUBSCRIBE TO SBI NEWSLETTERS:
www.signshop.com/newsletters



**SIGN BUILDER
ILLUSTRATED**

[illegible]

Three keys to this shop's long-time success.

When someone asks if you can 'print this,' the answer always has to be, 'Yes!'



Interested in digital signage but don't know where to start?

We've got you covered.

Subscribe to SBI's Dynamic Digital Newsletter for tips, strategies, and how-to guides on getting started in this booming market.

SBI Dynamic Digital is a "how-to" guide to digital signage, including:

- A close look at new products and services providing digital signage solutions.
- Case studies of sign shops successfully selling and installing digital signs, including which products and services were used.
- Insights from digital signage experts on what you can do to capitalize on this fast-growing market segment.
- Advice on how to fully leverage your existing assets and expertise to retain and attract clients seeking digital signage solutions.

Subscribe Now: www.signshop.com/dynamic-digital/

