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Giant New Sculpture Celebrates the Spirit of Cycling

Mammoth Bas-Relief is Crowning Touch on QBP Distribution Center

BLOOMINGTON, MN – Apr. 5, 2007 – QBP, a leading distributor of bicycles, parts and accessories, announced the completion of a 255-foot-long metal sculpture celebrating the sport and recreation of bicycling. The bas-relief, which wraps around two massive walls of the QBP distribution center, depicts a lone cyclist pedaling along a trail winding from city to countryside. Crafted from more than 4,300 pounds of hammered metal sheets and assembled with thousands of rivets, some sections of the piece—like the metallic pine forest—span nearly 42 feet high, reaching well above the rooftop.

“We wanted the sculpture to reflect our passion for bikes and love of the environment,” said Steve Flagg, president of QBP. “It also needed to complement and connect to the natural beauty of our surroundings. The finished work more than exceeds our expectations. It is already enriching the lives of our employees and everyone visiting our company and nearby nature preserve.”

The sculpture is the crowning touch for the company’s new distribution center, serving as a symbol for its commitment to bike advocacy, community and environmental causes. The 135,000 square-foot building, which sits on the southern edge of Hyland Lake Preserve, was designed according to the principles of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED). Established by the U.S. Green Building Council, LEED sets rigorous standards for developing high-performance, environmentally sustainable buildings. The complex includes a 40 kW solar power array and was recently awarded Gold level certification by LEED.

Originally conceived as an image for a five-inch note card by QBP graphic designer Andy Wood, the design grew to immense proportions, stretching across the vast windowless face of the distribution center. For Wood, the project presented a unique opportunity to make a statement about cycling on a grand scale.

“I realized the design had to be very simple and iconic to get at the essence of the biking experience,” Wood said. He wanted the sculpture to evoke the freedom and solitude so many find in bike riding. “It’s about getting out of your life for a while, breathing fresh air and being alone with your thoughts. It’s about rejuvenation.”

Flagg commissioned Gene Olson, an area artist specializing in large-scale sculptures, to realize the concept in three dimensions. He used numerous techniques to imbue the inert

metal with living organic qualities, including mechanical and manual hammering, and a variety of chemical washes to create different shades and colors.

“We thought about how the light would catch the varying surfaces of the sculpture,” Olson stated. “We placed most of the buildings in the cityscape at different angles so shadows play on them, creating distinct tonal values.”

Working up to 16 hours a day for more than four months, Olson and his team hammered, cut and shaped flat metal sheets into deciduous trees, a pine forest and a mini Minneapolis skyline. The metallic cyclist at the center of the piece stands more than eight feet high.

“This piece is intended to make people smile,” Olson said. “It makes entering the parking lot an enjoyable experience. It engages employees and visitors here, reminding them about the values of this company. And it suggests something exciting about the contents of the big box.”

About QBP

Based in Bloomington, MN, QBP is a leading distributor to the cycling industry. QBP offers domestic and international retailers a wide array of products and services including a 1,500-page catalog, a robust online ordering system, a renowned custom wheel service, a specialty bike-building program and more. QBP continues to be an active cycling advocate for the industry. For more information, please contact Jo Wright, director of marketing at 952-941-9391, or visit: www.QBP.com.

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