

**2012 MOCK FIRMS**  
**NATIONAL SKYSCRAPER CHALLENGE**  
**HIGH SCHOOL PROJECT PARAMETERS**

“VERSATILITY”

**THEME FOR 2012**

Already more than a decade into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, changes in technology are occurring so rapidly that one can feel like they are standing in a rushing stream of information and innovation. Yet, within the fields of architecture, construction and engineering, current economic conditions have down-scaled projects around the globe. However, in spite of the adverse financial climate which continues to hang like a gray cloud overhead, positive developments have come about in the design/build industry out of our need for better discipline in design.

Purposeful research and greater public awareness have brought an intense focus on sustainability, adaptability and “versatility.” Versatility is defined as *having varied uses or serving many functions or capable of or adapted for turning easily from one to another of various tasks, fields of endeavor, etc.* Tall buildings, for one, are being re-imagined as vertical communities with multi-use spaces and functions able to serve evolving needs and changing desires throughout its lifetime. With this in mind, “Versatility” was chosen as the theme for the 2012 Mock Firms National Skyscraper Competition.

**2012 DESIGN OBJECTIVE**

To organize a “mock” design/build firm for the purposes of conceiving, coordinating, constructing and commercializing a mixed-use tall building to be located in the city of Detroit, Michigan.

**THE VENUE FOR FINAL PRESENTATIONS**

Chicago, Illinois will be the site of the 2012 Mock Firms Competition final presentations. The tentative location for this event is the Congress Hotel and Plaza Convention Center on beautiful and historic Michigan Avenue.

**TARGET SITE**

**Detroit, Michigan** has been renowned as the world's traditional automotive center. It has been referred to by two familiar nicknames, the Motor City and Motown. In 2010, the city had a population of 713,777 and ranked as the 18th most populous city in the United States. At its peak in 1950, the city was the fifth-largest in the U.S.A., but has since seen a major shift in its

population to the suburbs. Between 2000 and 2010, the city's population declined by 25%. Among major American cities during the decade, only New Orleans experienced a greater decrease by percentage. Consolidation during the 1950s, especially in the automobile sector, increased competition for jobs. The gasoline crises of 1973 and 1979 impacted the U.S. auto industry as small cars from foreign makers made inroads [on Detroit's market dominance and further eroded its job base. An extensive freeway system constructed in the 1950s and 1960s had facilitated commuting. [This development along with] the Twelfth Street riot in 1967, as well as court-ordered busing accelerated white flight from the city. Commensurate with the shift of population and jobs to its suburbs, the city's tax base eroded. Consequently, social ills such as Heroin and crack cocaine use afflicted the city. In the years following, Detroit's population fell from a peak of roughly 1.8 million in 1950 to less than half that number today.

Renaissance has been a perennial buzzword among city leaders, reinforced by the construction of the Renaissance Center in the late 1970s. This complex of skyscrapers, designed as a city within a city, together with other developments, slowed and eventually began to reverse the trend of businesses leaving Downtown Detroit by the late 1990s. In the 1990s, the city began to receive a revival with much of it centered in the Downtown, Midtown, and New Center areas. One Detroit Center (1993) arose on the city skyline. In the ensuing years, three casinos opened in Detroit: MGM Grand Detroit, MotorCity Casino, and Greektown Casino which debuted as resorts in 2007–08. New downtown stadiums were constructed for the Detroit Tigers and Detroit Lions in 2000 and 2002, respectively; this put the Lions' home stadium in the city proper for the first time since 1974. The city also saw the historic Book Cadillac Hotel and the Fort Shelby Hotel reopen for the first time in over 20 years. The city hosted the 2005 MLB All-Star Game, 2006 Super Bowl XL, 2006 World Series, WrestleMania 23 in 2007 and the NCAA Final Four in April 2009 all of which prompted many improvements to the downtown area.

The city's riverfront is the focus of much development following the example of Windsor, Ontario which began its waterfront parkland conversion in the 1990s; in 2007, the first portions of the River Walk were laid, including miles of parks and fountains. This new urban development in Detroit is a mainstay in the city's plan to enhance its economy through tourism. Along the river, developers are constructing upscale condominiums such as Watermark Detroit.

## **2012 JURY MEMBERS**

TBA

## **JURY EVALUATIONS**

Projects will be judged upon the following criteria which can be used as a guide in overall preparations (Each will be based on a scale of 10 points being the highest score per category)

- Media Presentation (video, cards, signage, brochures, business cards)
- Company Organization (participants, roles, delegation)
- Building Architecture (design aesthetic as reflected in the model and CAD drawings)
- Programmatic Structure (build-ability, functionality, sustainability, contextual & economical)
- Presentation Pitch (delivery, professionalism, participation, Q & A readiness)

### **HONORS AND AWARDS**

- Top Design Firm
- Top Marketing Firm
- Top Firm Organization
- Top Construction Firm
- Top Engineering Firm
- Top State Firm\*
- Top Overall Mock Firm

*\*Contingent upon multiple entries from a state or school*

### **PRIZE DESIGNATION**

Finally, participants strive for excellence in the hopes of being designated the Top Mock Firm of the Year taking home a minimum \$500 prize. Equivalent winning designations include but may not be limited to the following:

### **CHANGES FOR 2012!**

- Firms can take advantage of an additional partner (a possible total of 5 student participants)
- Preliminary sketches will NOT be required for registration, but are to be included in materials submitted for final presentations.

### **REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS**

Entrants to the 2012 competition must submit according to stated deadlines the following:

- ✓ Completed registration form
- ✓ Registration fee
- ✓ Written project proposal

### **PROJECT PROPOSAL**

A 1 - 3 page typed proposal is to be submitted by each firm registering for the 2012 competition. The paper should first consist of a brief introduction to the firm. Additionally, this proposal should discuss the design project: its location, architectural direction and distinctiveness. Paper should be titled, dated, identified by firm and school. Pictures are welcome but optional.

### **DESIGN REQUIREMENTS**

- Site selection must be within Detroit's downtown area
- The program must be a mixed-use building
- No more than (2) two building structures are permitted
- There are no height restrictions for this building
- Architectural styling can be contemporary or post-modern
- A spire or antenna must top off the building
- Parking must be designed to exist above ground, yet not subtract from the building aesthetic
- Retail space should be included on a portion of the building's main floor or ground level
- Design should be targeted to achieve a minimum LEED Gold rating

### **PROJECT REQUIREMENTS**

The basic required submissions for the competition are as follows:

- **Sketch(es)** of preliminary design ideas
- An **organizational chart or description** outlining the hierarchy and functions of all contributing members of your team
- **Promotional materials** i.e. brochures, business cards, etc for your firm & building project
- **Media Publication** i.e. social & news announcing your participation in this event
- A **video presentation** introducing your firm (all partners), location, and about your project
- **CAD presentations** showing plans, perspectives & sections of your building
- A **scaled physical model** of the building and its surrounding environs.

### **Preliminary Sketches**

Preliminary design attempts and idea in the form of sketches should be brought\sent to final presentations. These sketches are preferred as freehand pencil drawings, but they are not required to be executed in that manner.

### **Firm Hierarchy**

To assist us in assessing the success of your firm's organization we are asking for a chart or graphic diagramming its structure. A photo of each partner and "associate" identified by name

and title or area of responsibility is required. Presenting this information within a binder is preferable but it can be charted on a larger board or paper if desired.

### **Promotional Materials**

A number of graphic presentation materials to effectively market your firm to the jurors. These would include brochures, business cards (with an original logo) for your firm and building project. Signage measuring no larger than 12" x 16" is required to identify your firm and/or school. Additional promotional materials can be made and utilized at each firm's discretion.

### **Media Publication**

Although a school or class may have multiple mock firms, marketing credit will be given to all that school or programs' entries if they choose to seek singular publication for all the firms together. If each firm chooses to pursue opportunities independent of the others, credit will be assessed accordingly.

Student-firms which are able to achieve success in any of the following areas will be awarded points toward the Top Marketing Firm and overall Top Mock Firm designations. A determinate amount of credit will be given for each and every incident of publication which a firm achieves. For example if there is a mention in 3 different newspapers or blogs, all 3 inclusions will be credited.

- School and/or district newspaper, newsletter, website or blog
- Local/community newspaper: print or online
- Largest metropolitan/city newspaper within your region
- Local radio media outlet
- Local television media outlet

### **Video Presentation**

A promotional video is to be made introducing your firm and your project to whatever degree you choose. Of course non-attending firms should use this medium to introduce their design more fully than those planning to be present for final presentations. This video should identify each firm's principals, the locale (city, state, region, etc), organizational structure, philosophy, and project. Running time should fall between 2 – 3 minutes for attendee and 4 – 5 minutes for non-attendees. Videos are required to be posted on You Tube and must have 2012 Mock Firms and Skyscraper Competition on somewhere in the title credits. A link with the title info should be emailed to [info@mockfirms.org](mailto:info@mockfirms.org) upon posting. Key words such as mock firms, skyscraper, challenge, student competition, 2012 and Chicago will help us and others more easily locate your

video. Presentations will be judged on content, creativity, and clarity (visually and audibly). Previous video submissions are available on our You Tube page and on the internet in general for review.

### **CAD Presentations**

Attending competitors should exhibit as much detailed work as possible for their design project. This is best accomplished through constructing a series of CAD representations of their work. Ideal views to consider are elevations, plans, sections and perspective illustrations. Firms will have the use of one 3' x 6' table (possibly 8') to display models, marketing materials and drawings. Many participants have begun to utilize the collegiate method of project boards. If you choose to go with that method, please note you are limited to 2 (two) boards. These boards can be any size. Drawing displays do not have to be an either/or decision. Firms can use both blueprints and boards if desired. If you have other non-drawing related items to display, they will not be restricted by the 2-board limit. However, keep in mind that display space and easels are limited.

### **Scaled Model**

Primary building models should be placed in context with other minimalist structures in proximity to promote scale and distinctiveness. We understand the difficulty of shipping models, but if possible, having one present would be of great benefit to a firm. Yet, having one in Chicago is not an absolute requirement. These models however, once judged will not be shipped back to the senders. Additionally, if not picked up after presentations, they will be disposed of by the hotel.

### **DUE DATES**

**Early Registration Deadline** - Aug 12, 2011 thru Sept 16, 2011

**Regular Registration Deadline** - Sept 17, 2011 thru Jan 6, 2012

**Late Registration Deadline** - Jan 7, 2012 thru Mar 3, 2012

**Project Proposal** - Due upon registration

**Video Presentations** - April 14, 2012

**Project Deadline for Non-attendees** - April 20, 2012

**Media Publication Inclusions** - April 6, 2012

**Project Presentation** - Friday, May 4, 2012

For more information on the competition, log on to [www.mockfirms.org](http://www.mockfirms.org) or find the link at [www.aias.org](http://www.aias.org). Email, text or phone inquiries to [info@mockfirms.org](mailto:info@mockfirms.org) and 773 410 1314