

And the Winners Are...

I had the pleasure of being one of three judges for ACI-NA's Excellence in Airport Concessions Awards, whose winners were announced on April 5, at the Business of Airports conference in Orlando. As usual, airports and concessions operators sent in strong proposals.

The winner of the big award — the Overall Richard A. Greisbach Award of Excellence — went to Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport Terminal A. The judges were impressed with the breadth and depth of its food/beverage, retail and service offerings. While we could only choose one winner, we were also impressed with Boise Airport and wanted to

recognize them for standing out in a sea of larger competitors.

I won't go through all the winners, but will offer some highlights. Under Best New Consumer Concept, Pittsburgh International Airport won with its Gold Key Services Parking. The judges liked that they put a different spin on an existing product and branded

it. And the concept of close-in, reserved parking offers a real convenience for the airport's best customers.

The 7-Eleven at Los Angeles International Airport won hands down for the Best New News & Gift Concept. The judges all agreed that this is a hard category because there's only so many ways to brand news and gifts that are different. But we liked that this 7-Eleven is a great convenience for travelers and employees alike. And who doesn't want a Slurpee in the airport?

For the best Best Retail Program, we gave nods to Dallas/Fort Worth for large, Vancouver International for medium and Boise for small airports. The judges felt that all three offered travelers a sense of place, along with a great mix of stores.

The Best Food & Beverage Program had three winners: Boise Airport under the small category, Indianapolis International for medium and Portland International for large. The judges liked how Boise had a great selection of eateries despite its size, while Indianapolis offered a nice balance of local and national food



Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport won the Richard A. Greisbach Award of Excellence due to its numerous options for travelers. Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport

NON-AERONAUTICAL REVENUE



The 1897 Market at Charlotte Douglas International Airport won for Best New Food/Beverage. HMSHost

brands. And we all loved Portland's rotation of local food trucks in the airport, allowing travelers to get a true taste of the city. We were also impressed with how the airport pushed to get this program in place.

We had a large number of entries for the Best Innovative Consumer Experience/Practice, and the one we liked the best was the "Channel Your Inner Chef" contest at Chicago O'Hare. We noted people's fascination with cooking contests thanks to the Food Network and airport visitors got to see one live. No one had ever done this before and we thought it was innovative.

Airports have really stepped up their games when it comes to full-service restaurants and 1897 Market at Charlotte Douglas International Airport won for Best New Food/Beverage in this category. We thought it was a great use of a large space in a great location. We also liked the pairing of a sit-down restaurant with a grab-and-go/retail market space.

The winner for the Best New Food/Beverage Concept Quick Serve was an easy choice: Modmarket at Denver International Airport. The video used as part of the presentation gave a clear description of the concept, which offers tasty, nutritious food at a good price point.

And for the Best New Retail Concept, we chose Minneapolis-St. Paul's PGA MSP Golf Shop. The judges felt that the shop, in a spacious area on the mezzanine level of Terminal 1-Lindbergh, offered a nice mix of a golf experience, food and shopping. It was separate from the travel masses and there was plenty to do even for those who don't like golf.

The judges offered some tips for next year's submissions. Airports were advised to follow the application directions. We liked presentations that included short videos and positive social media comments. If you submit the same concept for different categories, don't submit the exact same presentation. We wanted to see more entries from smaller airports, along with those from Canada. Our final comment: "If you can't sell the concept, why should we buy it?"

The 7-Eleven at Los Angeles International Airport won for the Best New News & Gift Concept. 7-Eleven



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