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**CONTACT:** [media@fsram.org](mailto:media@fsram.org)  
**T 479-784-2787**  
**F 479-784-9071**  
[fsram.org](http://fsram.org)

## **FORT SMITH REGIONAL ART MUSEUM RECEIVES THE 2014 AIA GULF STATES REGION MERIT AWARD**



**Fort Smith, AR - (July 30, 2014)** - On June 27, 2014, the Fort Smith Regional Art Museum received the **2014 American Institute of Architects (AIA) Gulf States Region Merit Award** at the Gulf States Regional Reception and Honor Awards during the 2014 AIA National Convention in Chicago. The AIA Gulf States Region Honor Awards Program awards high quality architecture in the region and the design achievements of the architects. The AIA has been the leading professional membership association for licensed architects, emerging professionals, and allied partners since 1857. This Honors program identifies built works of distinction designed by AIA members in the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee. These awards also bring greater public recognition to our Gulf States Region's outstanding architects and their remarkable projects.

Arkansas received five of the ten Gulf States Honor Awards. Each project considered for the awards was judged according to its own merit, how well it solved the problem addressed, and sustainability. David Powell, AIA - Tennessee was the Program Chair for the 2014 Honor Awards. The judges were comprised of a jury of architects whose work and reputations have been established at a national level of the profession including

Chair, Steve McDowell, founding Principal and Director of Design at BNIM; Jamie Kolker, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Campus Planning and Director of Capital Projects in Facilities Planning & Management at Washington University; and Laura Pastine, Project Architect at BNIM.

Other 2014 merit winners included Eco Modern Flats in Fayetteville, the Northwest Arkansas Free Health Center, and the Fayetteville Montessori Elementary School. The 2013 AIA Gulf States Honor Award recipients included projects such as the Rosa F. Keller Library & Community Center in New Orleans; Oak Ridge House in Jackson, Mississippi; and Village de Jardin in New Orleans.

Earlier this year RAM won the prestigious *2013 Preservation through Rehabilitation Award* from the Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas, as well as the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID) *Gold Award*. The architects of the newly renovated museum, Polk, Stanley Wilcox, are known for their work such as the William J. Clinton Presidential Library, Heifer International World Headquarters, and the Arkansas Studies Institute (ASI) of Little Rock.

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#### **ABOUT THE FORT SMITH REGIONAL ART MUSEUM**

RAM originated in 1948 under the Arkansas Association of University Women. In 1951 the Associated Artists of Fort Smith evolved and began exhibiting art and holding classes in various locations throughout Fort Smith. In 1960 an old Victorian home was purchased, and in 1968 the Fort Smith Art Center was incorporated. The Art Center offered a valuable service for local and regional artists by offering valuable space for its artists for five decades.

The January 2013 opening of the museum located at 1601 Rogers Avenue in the heart of Fort Smith marks a major turning point for this organization. The new Fort Smith Regional Art Museum offers greatly expanded programming and exhibitions. Arvest Bank made the expansion possible by donating the 16,000 square foot building to RAM in January 2009, following a \$211 million dollar buyout of Superior Federal Bank in 2003.

In addition to ongoing exhibitions the museum offers classes for children and adults, lectures, opening receptions, galas, and artist-led workshops. The museum offers facility rentals and a specialty gift shop featuring one-of-a-kind items created by local and regional artists.

The new state-of-the-art Museum meets national standards and presents an exciting opportunity for cultural growth in the region. RAM is climate-controlled and fully equipped to facilitate nationally and internally recognized traveling exhibitions.

#### **FORT SMITH REGIONAL ART MUSEUM**

1601 Rogers Avenue, Fort Smith, AR 72901

#### **HOURS OF OPERATION**

Tuesday - Saturday 11AM-6PM

Sundays - 1-5PM

T (479) 784-2787

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info@fsram.org  
fsram.org

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