aptus
(adj., suitable, appropriate, fitting in...)

FIRM OF THE YEAR AWARD

AIA NEVADA
Distinguished Service Awards
2017
October 25, 2017

Randy Lavigne, Hon. AIA, Executive Director
AIA Nevada
401 S. Fourth Street, Suite 175,
Las Vegas, Nevada 89101

AIA Nevada Architecture Firm of the Year Award
Re: Aptus

Dear Randy:

For service to the profession of architecture and to the community at large, I am pleased to nominate Aptus for the 2017 AIA Nevada Architecture Firm of the Year Award.

As architects and members of the AIA, we at Aptus value the culture of the firm. Several key elements make up this culture:
- Valuing professional growth and development;
- Working on different types, locations and scales of projects;
- Producing thoughtful solutions that are about the client and users of the space;
- Giving back to your community in a consistent and meaningful way
- And spending the day in a fun, upbeat workplace atmosphere;

Aptus is about balancing these elements.

This is why, after fourteen years of continuous improvement, our firm still maintains this cultural essence, which the American Institute of Architects values in a Firm of the Year candidate.

This culture of care, quality, and attention grounds us and keeps us humble, but also inspires us to do great things through design for the benefit of all.

Our culture makes a difference.

For the continued commitment to making a difference in the community through architecture and culture, I hereby nominate Aptus for the 2017 AIA Nevada Architecture Firm of the Year Award.

Sincerely,

Kristen G. Goodell, AIA
Just as architecture makes a difference, culture makes a difference.

From its beginning, Aptus set out to develop and maintain a practice that balances work and life requirements while insisting on a passionate exploration for each project’s natural solution. Aptus is a firm that does not specialize but seeks out and embraces projects of differing building types and scales. Maintaining this balance ensures that the staff continuously learns, grows, and faces challenges; all of which keep them fresh and fulfilled.

A conversation with anyone at Aptus about their firm inevitably centers on the firm’s culture. This culture of curiosity, compassion, and quality forms the backbone of Aptus, a firm recognized for a high-quality body of work, a creative and fun-loving staff, and committed engagement in the Las Vegas community.

Aptus is a compelling model for how core values can move a firm not just to commercial growth and success but toward being active in its community and making connections with people through architecture across the valley and region.

Aptus embodies a culture that cares about designing thoughtful spaces and places; about contributing to our community and profession; about each other.

CARE in design for every project, regardless of scale or fee.

Aptus is a firm that focuses on a diverse portfolio of public and private architecture that directly affects the lifestyle, work, people, and built environment of Las Vegas. In 2009, Aptus designed the Green Valley High School Music Building as a pro bono project; later, the project won a design excellence award from AIA. Then, in 2015, the firm committed its level of care to Desert Sage School, another pro bono project recognized by an AIA design award. When a firm’s ‘freebies’ are award-worthy, it speaks volumes about the care they put toward their work.

Through working in a variety of scales and types, Aptus aims to keep their design skills fresh, to cross-fertilize ideas from one sphere of influence to another.

In the service of caring about design, Aptus holds these tenets as core beliefs:

- **Listen to the client;**
- **Design what is appropriate;**
- **Find the natural solution for every project;**
- **Be rigorous about staying open to all influences, all ideas.**

The Aptus portfolio doesn’t reflect a defined style, rather a consistency in care and quality. It features a wide variety of building types, aesthetics and places. The common thread is invisible, hidden in a design process that emphasizes research and precedent, diving deep into what end users will experience, and examining the ecological and the social impact of each project. In practice, it means imagining how scary it is for a child to go to the doctor and creating an environment so whimsical and curious, they forget about their fear. It often involves extra interviews, a longer design process, additional site visits, one (more!) question to the client.
When staff were asked, “What embodies the culture of our firm?” nearly everyone responded with the same word: CARE

**CARE for community.**
As a single firm in three locations (Las Vegas, Chicago, and Long Beach), Aptus creates and sustains a presence in several communities at once. In Las Vegas, Aptus donated over 4,000 hours in the last decade to 10 significant pro bono projects that have a direct effect on our community. The firm also devotes time to giving back to the profession through activities outside the office such as participating in design juries, serving on AIA Nevada boards and committees, and volunteering for high school mentoring programs.

In addition, the firm donates time and resources to charities outside the profession, such as donating meals at Thanksgiving through Catholic Charities, volunteering in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, and serving on the board at the Community Hospital Long Beach.

To further engage the community, **Aptus hosts an ‘open house’ series** every six months. Its emphasis is on bringing together a wide variety of people from many different professions. A recent event showcased the work of a local artist and harvest-to-table food. Some guests know architecture; many do not. The events offer a light-hearted and easy way to connect people personally across the divides of profession, culture and experience.

**CARE for one another . . . and (please) have some fun!**
Aptus maintains this culture of caring by hiring and retaining staff who care about each other and are dedicated to providing remarkable service. We treasure and prioritize communication, focus and desire, (not ego) so that ideas are the heart of the project. As a result, client’s spaces and our community are the winners.

Mentorship is another way we embody care. Several years ago an intern volunteered at the weekly staff meeting to spearhead a pro bono project under consideration. The firm turned that experience into a mentorship that resulted in winning a design award and the intern becoming a valued staff member who is now pursuing a graduate degree in architecture. Aptus stresses the importance of professional development, both through subsidizing licensure and AIA membership, as well as elevating vital team members to leadership positions as when Kristen Goodell, AIA was recently elevated to principal.

Finally, **the fun stuff!** We run together, we start our weekly all-staff meetings out with groan-worthy jokes (it’s because we don’t know any good jokes). M&Ms are a staple at our conference table. An example of how our casual, fun-loving culture is a quote by one of our clients: “Whenever I walk through your door, my heart rate goes down.” To us, that means we’re prioritizing the right things: getting to the right solution, sharing our open table where all ideas are heard, and bringing others along in the fun while it happens.

Aptus keeps it interesting by pursuing a variety of projects, engaging the community, and all the while keeping the whimsical and the fun in the workplace.

**That's why Aptus does what it does**
This is the culture that we strive for at Aptus and why it matters to our community. This balance of being a responsible professional while having fun and still create thoughtful architecture embodies the values that the American Institute of Architect espouses and rewards.

**CARE for design.  CARE for the community.  CARE for each other.**
At Aptus, we count as achievements more than just the awards we’ve won. We also count the help for institutions that we have provided in a pro bono fashion, services to the profession in the form of mentorships and committees, and giving back to the neediest.

Yes, we have won awards in the past and are happy to list them. But we are also proud of those other achievements, because they reflect our values and culture as a firm. This culture of caring for quality design, for each other as colleagues and architects, and for the community at large makes a difference through all of these venues.

2012
- Offsite Offices for the Cosmopolitan [Award of Citation], AIA Nevada
- Tonopah Convention Center
- USDA Rural Development Recognition

2011
- Offsite Offices for the Cosmopolitan [Impact Award], NAIOP
- ACI Pediatrics
  - [Honor Award], AIA Las Vegas
- Birago Housing Project in Ghana, Africa
  - [Award of Merit], AIA Unbuilt Las Vegas

2009
- Huntridge Revitalization
  - [Honor Award], AIA Unbuilt Las Vegas
- Desert Sage School
  - [Award of Citation], AIA Unbuilt Las Vegas
- Solterra Lofts
  - [Honor Award], AIA Unbuilt Las Vegas
- Green Valley High School Music Room Addition
  - [Award of Merit], AIA Nevada
- Aptus Website
  - Best in Show Interactive, AIGA Las Vegas
- American Graphic Design Award, Graphic Design USA
Pro-Bono Work

Over the last 10 years, **Aptus has donated more than 4,000 hours** from all staff levels to providing professional services for pro bono projects. Coming from a variety of acquaintances, associates and connections, Aptus treats these endeavors as real projects, enabling them to provide those entities with professional expertise that brings real value to their organizations and priorities, by assisting them in bringing their projects to fruition. These projects include:

- **Green Valley High School Music Building Award of Merit, AIA Nevada**
- **Desert Sage School Master Plan Award of Citation, AIA Unbuilt Las Vegas**
- **UNLV Beam Recital Hall Pipe Organ**
- **Teacher Housing Master Plan**
- **Heaven Can Wait Tenant Improvement**
- **First Street Art Promenade Master Plan**
- **Evergreen Aviation & Space Museum**
- **Green Valley High School Theater Pit**
- **Potosi Pines Retreat Center Dining Hall**

Community Service Efforts

Aptus has also contributed to the profession directly by actively participating in architectural community activities. These activities serve to advance the discipline in general by encouraging including students to become architects, teaching and critiquing architecture students, and supporting the activities of the AIA. These include:

- Providing structured mentorships to high school students
- Teaching architecture students at UNLV
- Serving on Design Juries
- Serving on AIA boards and committees

Charity Efforts

Beyond professional related activities, Aptus has given back to the community at large through volunteering and donations to worthy causes, such as:

Volunteering during the rebuilding of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, Annual donations of Thanksgiving meals to various charities in the area, creating and donating Easter baskets to less fortunate kids, donating book bags and supplies to young students in need, CANstruction, volunteering to Kids Draw Architecture...
Aptus’ passion for not only great architecture, but for the people that surround us every day is evident as soon as you walk in the door. Aptus has built the sort of culture that makes everyone want to come to work, want to chip in however they can, and want to be friends with everyone even outside of work hours.

Aptus continuously encourages staff and their families to get together outside of work and sponsors annual retreats, weekly lunches, and various activities unrelated to work. Whether it is a ski trip, pumpkin carving, axe throwing, cooking breakfast for the office, going for a run, or just having dinner / drinks after work - there is no reason you can’t have fun with your friends at work!

**CARE for each other**

We run competitively together.

We have ‘cereal socials’ together.

We competitively carve pumpkins together.

We bottle our own wine together.

We vacation together. We celebrate achievements together. A surprise mariachi band helps ease the stress of major deadlines! We dine together.

**MISCELLANEOUS**
For Aptus, caring for the community goes past donating your time or money to charitable organizations. While we also take pride in our charitable giving and involvement, we see a responsibility to help the surrounding community (individuals and businesses alike) with our own resources, connections, and good will.

Aptus hosts regular open house events that bring together local businesses, artists, and entrepreneurs that exposes them, their connections, and our connections to something they may not have otherwise experienced!

We also participate in charitable events like donating trunk loads of food to those in need during thanksgiving, donating book bags to less fortunate children, preparing Easter baskets for kids, help kids learn about architecture, attend various fun charity events, and even host a company retreat in New Orleans in an effort to aid those in need after Hurricane Katrina.
Because this 35,000 sf facility has nine different departments that all need to work together at varying levels of interaction, the owner desired a space that encouraged collaboration, was flexible, and was not a stereotypical open office environment.
Through a series of workshops, Aptus and the Cosmopolitan team identified precedence (good and bad), program elements, goals, needs, functional adjacencies, imagery, etc.

Each workshop had a specific focus and helped us guide the owner group through the process step-by-step.

The first workshop focused on adjacency studies and inspirational/precedence studies. Through the use of bubble diagramming, pieces of the program were physically created with paper and laid out on a table for the owner group to work with. Aptus then took these adjacencies and translated them into organizational diagrams within the confines of the shell building. Once an organizational scheme was selected, a floor plan was then created and refined over several more workshops.

One of the key elements the owner desired was the centralization of the call center, or what is referred to as Resort Services. Instead of banishing the noisy call center off to a remote location, we have located them in the heart of the facility. This allows the people working in the call center to feel included and for people working in other departments to see the goings on in the call center.

To foster this type of interaction, the owner recognized early that they needed to provide various ways for their employees to work. Common spaces like Business Hubs, Meeting Rooms, and Think Tanks provide alternate places for people to meet, collaborate, and work rather than be limited to their desk or a private office.

off-site offices for the Cosmopolitan [cont’d]
This 22,000 sf building is critical to ensure the continuing success of the Green Valley High School music department - and therefore, was designed to provide ideal acoustic qualities, collaborative spaces, and a deeper connection to their surrounding elements.
Introduction

When you hear the words “Green Valley”, you can’t help but imagine a luscious escape surrounded by a harsh, sometimes unforgiving environment. This idea of the calming oasis is the inspiration for the design of the Green Valley Music Building. Two large, faceted desert buildings envelop a soothing communal space within, providing an “oasis in the desert”. Students leave the sweltering desert climate behind as they enter the campus through this new tranquil gateway.

Designing the Music Building required thoughtful consideration and creative planning. The Green Valley Music Building is an architectural composition of three faceted formations gathered as an ensemble to form the new Music Campus. The unique shape of each form is a reflection of natural desert valley materials and is designed to craft the ideal acoustic quality specific to each performance space. Within the captured space between the three forms, young musicians unite in a collaboration of ideas, theory and music. Green Valley High School students also experience ascending views through the skylight ceiling, connecting them to the larger desert-like forms and the overhead canopy designed to optimize natural light based on the orientation of the sun.

The building is designed as a gathering of three elements into one cohesive and creative environment for students to practice, mingle, and create music. Two elements are acoustically separate enclosures housing the band and orchestra rooms. The third is serpentine-like collection of large and medium practice rooms which weaves under the canopy and through the columns evoking the spirit of an oasis in the desert valley.

With a new exterior gathering space for student and bus drop off, the new 22,000 square foot facility effectively ties together the entire campus, completing the master plan as the new face of Green Valley High School.

The design for the new music building combines create a functional, unique, and inspiring learning environment.
Tactile, walkable, pedestrian friendly mixed use experience.
Metreon [cont’d]

Building Community

Metreon is a mixed-use development near West Flamingo Road and I-215. The project consists of four retail structures that accommodate a variety of shopping and dining venues, two of which have business office suites above and two residential mid-rises showcasing loft-style condominiums. Each mid-rise is made up of live-work units, 2-story lofts, and a penthouse which overlook the Las Vegas skyline and Red Rock Canyon.

Nestled in between the retail and mixed-use buildings are two mid-rise condominium buildings. Three live-work units are located in each building. They are two-story units with the work component located on the ground floor to engage the retail experience. Three two-story loft units are located above the live-work units. Lastly, a penthouse unit is located on the top floor of each building. Amenities include large private balconies at each unit, private parking garages, secured building access, contemporary aesthetic, professional kitchens, and a nearby athletic club.

Looking to nature...

Natural materials like wood, metal, plaster, and concrete are utilized throughout the development to create a warm atmosphere conducive to pedestrian activity. All retail spaces are located on the ground floors of each building to add life and activity to the street front. Each building is designed to be unique, yet fitting within the overall aesthetic to add to the urban experience.
Focused on reducing the anxiety associated with a visit to the doctor, this 2,800 sf tenant improvement is all about discovery, nature and interaction for children of all ages.
**Discovery & Exploration**

The waiting room encourages interaction and exploration points throughout the space. Children can discover hidden treasures hidden among native stones in the gabion wall or search for dinosaur bones encased in the pre-cast concrete reception desk. They can explore the seven continents through small dioramas enclosed within the wall or hide from giant bugs invading from the ceiling. Younger ones can develop eye-hand coordination at the integrated play wall, or simply try on funny faces and hats imposed on the glass dividing the well- and sick-waiting rooms.

**Stops along the way...**

Moving from the waiting room to their next destination, the children have a whole new set of discoveries along the way. They first step foot onto a trail of ‘puddles’ staggered across the linoleum floor, allowing them to hop to their next destination. The reclaimed wood wall and ceiling treatment at the scale alcove gives a feel of nestling into an old barn, while exposing fun textures and materials to look at while being weighed.

Turning down the hall toward the exam room, children are greeted by expressive faces of babies from around the world depicted in oversized wall photos. Upon closer look, children can find an animal x-ray box, hiding animals, or footprints set in a sand textured wall base to interact with along the way.

Each exam room is provided with a unique identity, designated by animals native to our desert region at each entrance. Animal tracks and photos of each species mark the entrance, providing visual and tactile way finding elements with which the children can associate.
Focused on capturing Ghana's essence and culture while providing affordable and sustainable living.
Focused on capturing Ghana’s essence and culture while providing affordable and sustainable living.

Culture & Sustainable Design...

Birago housing development is a response to the growing need for affordable housing near coastal Africa’s capital city of Accra. The issue of constructability had to be taken into consideration. Traditional Ghanaian construction methods and materials include concrete block, stucco, wood and light steel construction. Regional labor and building methods will help keep construction costs at a minimum.

Careful attention was given to the study of traditional Ghanaian living behaviors; specifically the notion of naturally ventilated open living spaces. As a result, Birago housing affords its users the ability to control the permeability of the windward and leeward exterior walls by incorporating jaloused windows, louvered transoms, and overhead door systems. Temperatures in this region vary slightly throughout the year and range from 70 - 90 F. so it was important to orient the units in such a way as to best harness the prevailing southwestern winds.

This region also receives abundant rainfall averaging around 31 in/yr. Rainwater will be diverted by inward sloping butterfly roofs and retained in water cisterns to be dispersed later throughout the dry season for irrigation.
Just as a woven basket provides strength, and beauty, this too is our goal — to provide the Avante community a vertical woven urban fabric, thus strengthening it and providing an aesthetic charm.
Avante Lofts [cont’d]

Design Concept

Avante lofts is a place for collaboration, integration, and innovation. Our state-of-the-art comforts and incredible amenities encourage people to live, collaborate, and enjoy a variety of activities, with the goal of creating a strong, friendly, and diverse community.

Our architecture is designed specifically to embody the concept of integration and collaboration. It begins with the exterior façade of the building, providing a weaving-like pattern that visually appeals to the feeling of community and togetherness. The varying size, color, and orientation of the bands wrapping the building elegantly queue the mind into understanding the diversity Avante Lofts provides.

Ideology

As you venture into the building, we continue the same color palette that embraces sandstone, red rocks, and bright yellow and violet within the interior highlighting color accents that cater to the ambiance of the surrounding desert landscape, and honor the beauty of the desert resembling such places as Red Rock.

Avante Lofts, from inside out, embodies the beauty of the desert and of our community.
This 9,500 sf corporate office is all about creating a memorable Class A environment with rich materials and clean, modern lines within this space.
Flexibility

The secondary portion of the office space is located in a separate suite reserved for file and document storage, additional offices and conference room for future growth needs, and a staff lounge area with full kitchen. Having additional space allowed the focus in the main office area to be one of cleanliness and organization, ultimately making it a more enjoyable and focused environment in which to work.

Stops along the way...

A main feature of the lobby includes the Teakwood Sandstone walls. With their velvety finish and solid feel, they provide and contrasting point of termination for the floor to ceiling glass walls and doors. A modern white marble with subtle hints of warm beige was selected for the client lines of the reception desk, and built-in console table.

In contrast, stained walnut wood provides warmth at the angled ceiling over the reception desk, clouds over the conference room tables, and a subtle backdrop for office signage.

Four conference rooms of varying size and capacity are all located off the main lobby area, providing clients and lawyers with a comfortable space for meetings or depositions. Two distinct seating areas and a private telephone room offer clients and employees a place to take a phone call without disturbing others.

These spaces provide spectacular, uninterrupted views of the Las Vegas Strip to the east, and serve a visual termination to the entry sequence.
Focused on creating an urban market destination for locals and visitors in Downtown Las Vegas
Starting with broad concepts, the Architect approached the design from a high level understanding of the cultural significance of a market. Starting with hand sketches and then transitioning to BIM (Building Information Modeling), the design transformed from gesture to final iteration over the course of several months. The Architect was also responsible for the kitchen equipment layout, working closely with the Client and Operator.

The main goal of the design was to take advantage of the existing space and the exposed bowstring truss roof structure to create an airy, urban loft feel. The exposed structure would allow for new skylights to be placed at key points and act as nodes within the space to guide shoppers. The use of wood and steel compliment the existing masonry walls and polished concrete floor. All other materials were introduced to work with this existing palette.

Discovery & Exploration

The structural steel intended to support the damaged bowstring trusses was also introduced as a way to create clear spans while removing several of the older, existing steel columns. Newer columns were concealed within the partial wall dividing the retail and restaurant seating area, while allowing visual access from one side to the other. While this maintained the separation between patrons and shoppers, it also created an opportunity to showcase the application of simple materials. The same sensitivity was applied at the main service counter, where smooth surfaces, clean lines, and warm colors contribute to a palatable experience.
Focused on providing improved learning facilities, this 21,500 sf gymnasium and music classrooms starts this change.
Discovery & Exploration

The waiting room encourages interaction and exploration points throughout the space. Children can discover hidden treasures hidden among native stones in the gabion wall or search for dinosaur bones encased in the pre-cast concrete reception desk. They can explore the seven continents through small dioramas enclosed within the wall or hide from giant bugs invading from the ceiling. Younger ones can develop eye-hand coordination at the integrated play wall, or simply try on funny faces and hats imposed on the glass dividing the well- and sick-waiting rooms.

Change...

Working with the Principal and Sandy Valley staff, Aptus created a new gym with the feel of a fieldhouse, tying into the more rural context of the site. The new building will feature regulation size basketball and volleyball courts, half-size basketball courts, fitness rooms and classrooms, and a large music room.

Part of the phase I scope of work also includes reworking the existing baseball diamond and fields to work with the new gym and outdoor gathering spaces for holding pep rallies and other school functions.
The school caters to families concerned with “embracing nature as an extension of the classroom...”

- LEED Gold certification or better
- A 30% potable water use reduction in comparison with typical Clark County schools
- A 50% energy use reduction in comparison with typical Clark County schools
- Divert 100% of all construction waste from the landfill
- Recycle 90% of the waste produced by the school
- A 20% overall recycled content of all building materials
Curiosity & Learning

Desert Sage School is a preschool through 4th grade academy dedicated to providing a unique, affordable, and “green” learning environment for children ages six weeks through ten years old in the Las Vegas Valley. The school provides students with an eco-friendly curriculum to assist them in becoming interdependent learners by motivating natural curiosities and engaging them in intellectual pursuits transferable to the real world. Desert Sage School will be recognized as the most progressive preschool/lower school in the Valley. They offer children in the Las Vegas Valley, and eventually the southwestern U.S., an exceptional learning experience that benefits the community as a whole.

Fostering positive development by providing opportunities for choice and responsibility.

Indoor / Outdoor Spaces

The architecture of the Desert Sage School is designed to be an extension of its natural environment that engages students in learning, rather than being a passive participant in the process. As a result, both the outdoor spaces and classroom spaces become extensions of one another creating opportunities for the children to explore, invent, experiment, investigate, and evaluate their actions.

The placement of the buildings and their interstitial learning environments, creates a series of interpretive diversions throughout the campus and makes movement through the site a series of small journeys. The result of this approach is the creation of a campus, rather than a building, organized along a series of public and group spaces that the classrooms can look upon.
October 20, 2017

Ms. Randy Lavigne, Hon. AIA
AIA Las Vegas / Nevada
401 South 4th Street Suite 175
Las Vegas, Nevada 89101

Project Name
AIA Nevada Architecture Firm of the Year Award

It is my pleasure to submit a letter on behalf of APTUS, and their nomination for AIA Nevada Architecture Firm of the Year. During my 12 years as Director of Planning and Design at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, I have been fortunate to work with APTUS on a multitude of projects, with many outstanding individuals from this fine firm.

Without question, APTUS has consistently performed exceptional work no matter the project size, complexity, budget or schedule. Their attention to design at all scales, technical expertise, resourcefulness and level of service on such projects as the Paradise Campus and Grant Hall Master Plans, Robotics Lab Remodel, Particle Accelerator Building Adaptive Reuse, Emerging Diseases Laboratory, Nursing School Remodel, Cooperative Extension Building Improvements, and Science Lab Modulars are perfect examples of how APTUS was able to create remarkable environments out of complex remodels with limited resources. Their documents are always thorough and accurate so that we can be confident of positive results when the projects are advertised for bid. In a design world where this might seem mundane, for my staff it exemplifies the quality of service we have come to know and expect from APTUS. From project inception to completion, everyone on the APTUS team displays the same high level of professionalism.

For me, it is clear that this positive attitude starts at the top and is reflected in the spirit and character of the Principal, R. Brandon Sprague, AIA. His strong interpersonal skills make everyone feel comfortable, staff and users alike, and he stays involved in every project phase from design through construction to ensure quality results.

It is with great pleasure that I offer my support for the nomination or APTUS for the AIA Nevada Architecture Firm of the Year Award. They represent a high level or excellence that is a benefit to the architecture community and our fine city.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert J. Dincecco
Director of Planning and Design
Planning and Construction
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
4505 S. Maryland Parkway
Las Vegas, NV 89154-1027
Ms. Randy Levigne, Hon. AIA
AIA Las Vegas / Nevada
401 South 4th Street, Suite 175
Las Vegas, Nevada 89101

RE: AIA Nevada Distinguished Service Award – Firm of the Year Award Recommendation

Ms. Levigne,

APTUS Architecture, under the leadership of Brandon Sprague and Kristen Goodell, is an extraordinary design firm. I am excited to write a recommendation in support of awarding the firm the AIA Nevada Distinguished Service Award for 2017.

In over 48 years of real estate development across five states I have worked with a number of excellent architectural firms. Aptus is exceptional. I have worked with Aptus for almost 12 years. They bring together an incredible set of talents; they are thorough, thoughtful and imaginative in their design while always being mindful of the time and economic constraints a developer is subject to.

Aptus is uniquely able to present fresh ideas while confidently and supportively dealing with the ideas and notions of a self-anointed, self-important developer such as myself. Indeed they are the young Bridget Bardot of architectural firms, having that devastating combination of innocence and availability.

Clearly Aptus is the appropriate choice for this honor.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Barney L. Liberman
October 23, 2017

Ms. Randy Levigne, Hon. AIA
AIA Las Vegas / Nevada
401 South 4th Street, Suite 175
Las Vegas, Nevada 89101

Dear Ms. Levigne,

We have had the pleasure of working with Brandon Sprague and Aptus for the past 7 years. Aptus has developed a look for a new concept which was developed by our group Lobster, ME. Aptus has taken over a project at Miracle Mile, in which a large national design firm could not develop a façade that would be approved for our Jamba Juice retail store located at Shops at Miracle Mile. Aptus not only developed a store front that was approved by the mall design group but this store front is featured by Jamba Juice corporate in a multitude of internal and external communications. Aptus never hesitates to go over and above their contracted responsibilities. Aptus Group has made themselves available to meet with local public entities and is able to navigate the permit process on our behalf in multiple states and jurisdictions. Aptus has grown to be a trusted resource for our franchised brands group. We endorse their work and the individuals within the Aptus highly and without reservation.

Sincerely Yours,

[Signature]

Philip Patent
President and COO
Las Vegas Coffee Investors, LLC
FC Juice Partners, LLC
October 15, 2017

Mr. Dan Heun

APTUS
1200 South 4th Street, Suite 206
Las Vegas, NV 89104

Re: Letter of Recommendation in support of APTUS’ nomination for AIA Firm of the Year

Dear Dan:

It is a special honor to provide this Letter of Recommendation to support APTUS in its bid for AIA Firm of the Year!

I have been working with APTUS and on APTUS projects for over 7 Years now, first as part of a large, international and multi-disciplinary engineering firm and for the past 4 years with my own Structural Engineering practice.

APTUS, as their name applies, always places great emphasis in finding appropriate and fitting design solutions for their wide variety of clients by working very closely with each client and paying attention to their functional needs and unique circumstances.

Everybody on the APTUS team pays very close attention to care and detail. The firm does not just consist of a great pool of talented architects, but also good people that are active in their community and always have the overall well-being of their clients and consultants in mind.

The wide variety of projects APTUS is working on and the sustainable growth the company has experienced during the past several years is a testament for the excellent design work APTUS is providing.

As one of APTUS consultants, I would also like to highlight the ethical and respectful treatment we are receiving from Brandon Sprague and his team. Brandon is extremely fair to his consultants and truly treats them as part of a team.

I strongly support APTUS Nomination for the 2017 AIA Nevada Architecture Firm of the Year!

Sincerely,

Kordt Engineering Group

Stephan Kordt, SE, PE
President
October 18, 2017

Ms. Randy Lavigne, Hon AIA
AIA Las Vegas / Nevada
401 South 4th Street, Suite 175
Las Vegas, NV 89101

Dear Randy,

I have known and enjoyed working with Brandon Sprague and Aptus for approximately 20 years of my 40 year career. My relationship with Brandon has been primarily as subconsultant providing MPE systems engineering design of commercial development.

Occasionally, Brandon has asked me to provide professional advice on business related matters. From those experiences, I know how much he cares about architectural design, the business of architecture and commitment to elevating the profession of architecture.

With offices in Las Vegas, Seal Beach and Chicago, Brandon is one of the most connected business executives I know.

Brandon and his Aptus team are extremely creative, strategic and exhibit values based on selfless service to their clients. I have seen the Aptus team make quite a favorable impression on their clients, building lasting relationships.

Brandon is committed to the development of young professionals in order to pay it forward for the next generation of architectural leaders. Aptus is served by a principal that embraces sustainability and constructability of building designs. Infusing these design elements into the emerging young professionals he works with is personal goal of Brandon's.

I am available to discuss this letter of reference further or answer any questions you may have in consideration of Aptus being the AIA Nevada Architecture firm of the year.

Respectfully submitted,

[Signature]

David Melroy, P.E.
President
DM/slB