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TWO DOLLARS

Channelside's drive

BY KEN SALGAT
STAFF WRITER

TAMPA — When Tampa developer Michael McGuinness breaks ground on two 30-story

towers in the Channel District Jan. 17, he'll have more than \$100 million in signed contracts in the bank. McGuinness said he's inspired to get the 257-unit Towers of Channelside project in the works

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SPECIAL REPORT | 17

Law firms turn to graphic design for artistic courtroom impact

BY CARL CRONAN
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

TAMPA — Graphics have become as integral to courtroom presentations as testimony, with poster-sized charts and photos possibly having as much impact on jury decisions as the actual exhibits presented by attorneys.

That visualization of evidence, whether intended to prove a point or appeal to emotion, has increased the importance of graphic artists, some of whom are able to find work either freelancing for law firms or going to work full time for large legal powerhouses.

"It's a very emerging field," said Lisa Anderson, chair of the graphic design department at the International Academy of Design & Technology in Tampa. She said growth projections for courtroom graphics are as much as 450 percent over the next three years.

IADT claims to be the only school in North America offering a specific course on courtroom graphics, and just one of three worldwide. Anderson created the course in 2000 and began teaching it two years later.

Previously law firms relied on advertising graphic artists to create their presentations, but now the art form has become more specialized, Anderson said. Courtroom graphics can range from 3-D computer models and detailed aerial photographs, to close-up forensic images like those sometimes seen on "CSI."

Graphics are most often used to support testimony by expert witnesses who can explain to a judge and jury what is being shown, said Becky Bierley, a 2004 graduate of IADT who received a bachelor's degree in digital art and technology.

Although she now works for Ideal Image, a laser hair removal firm in Tampa, Bierley took Anderson's course and completed a courtroom graphics project showing before-and-after images of a planned historical building restoration project.



COURTESY OF INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY OF DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY
Becky Bierley, left, a 2004 graduate of IADT, reviews graphic prints with Lisa Anderson, chair of the graphic design department at the academy.

"You can show changes to a building where you can't actually affect the building," she said, noting that such changes have to be demonstrated as not diminishing the structure's historic significance.

Although few of the 150 graphic arts majors at IADT express a specific interest in creating graphics specifically for court use, Anderson said they are all required to complete the course as part of the school's curriculum. "It's

'It's a very emerging field.'

Lisa Anderson
Chair of graphic design
department
International Academy
of Design & Technology

such a powerful form that we feel students need to have it," she said.

Only three graduates from IADT have actually gone on to work for law firms, while others have found work with companies that specialize in courtroom graphics, said Anderson, who had 22 years prior experience producing graphics for aerospace and engineering firms.

"The need will arise (for law firms) to have someone on staff as opposed to outsourcing," she said, noting that Florida's ongoing land sales and development boom could create a greater need for graphic artists as real estate deals spawn potential civil court cases.

However, not all graphic artists are qualified to enter the courtroom. Those hired by companies such as Trial Consulting Services LLC, based in Tampa, need more specific legal knowledge than being able to produce graphics that are acceptable to the average publisher.

Michael Boucher, TCS executive director, said the type of training provided at IADT is a big help to students who are interested in creating graphics specifically for courts.

"Having that applied science allows us to bring a graduate into a company that is farther along in the process," Boucher said. Those artists must be concerned with what can make their graphics effective or admissible in court, he said.

Boucher, who serves as an adviser to IADT's courtroom graphics program, said law firms conduct extensive research and interviews before outsourcing graphics to artists, and most often judge their work in previous cases.

Aside from the expensive cost of producing courtroom graphics, which can range from \$75 to \$300 an hour, lawyers want to make certain what they are buying will be admitted by the judge presiding over a case, he said.

"I equate it to the Super Bowl — you get one chance and everybody's watching," he said.

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Looking Ahead

If you thought 2004 was an intriguing ride in Bay area business — with rapid residential sprawl, hurricane rebuilding and hostile takeovers of global sports franchises — a look ahead at 2005 shows there will be plenty of great business stories to tell. Can commercial real estate continue the momentum it saw in the second half of '04? Will the intense push for residential land further squeeze the industrial sector? Will demand eat the supply of planned condos for Channelside and downtown St. Pete? There are good signs.

Muellner

Naples to find rich people, and that's got to help us in the Bay area," Gorlick said.

We wonder if the Port of Tampa can stabilize its management, whether the Tampa Museum of Art financing plan can come together, what small banks will be snapped up, where the next mega IPO will come from in technology, and if there's real progress in regional business development. Is it really a "Bay area," or is that just happy talk?

The TBBJ annual look ahead at what's shaping up in Bay area business begins on **Page 6**.



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