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NEXT VENTURE

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A \$100M Problem

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What happens when a first-generation retailer can't entice his eldest son to run the family business? Like Vito Corleone in *The Godfather*, he makes him an offer he can't refuse. *By R. J. King* **PLUS:** The Hard Sell: How D.O.C. finally consummated the deal.

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Trip the Light Fantastic

From the Wembley Stadium District in London to Greenfield Village in Dearborn, Ron Harwood is a leader in the creation of immersion experiences. **BY R.J. KING**

An international lighting designer, Ron Harwood often uses metro Detroit as a test lab for enhancing consumer encounters around the world, whether at luxury shopping malls, entertainment venues, public squares, or college campuses.

But his latest innovation may revolutionize the lighting industry.

"We're taking the simple light pole and making it a tour de force in sound, video, security, and energy," says Harwood, founder and president of Illuminating Concepts in Farmington Hills.

The effort, called Intellistreets, started a decade ago with the lighting commission for Greenfield Village in Dearborn. The first step involved fitting new light poles with integrated speakers, to enhance concerts and other activities at the historical attraction.

In time, more features were added — including wireless communications to boost security efforts, along with monitors for controlling a light's color and brightness.

Since then, Harwood and his more than 40 employees have developed additional Intellistreets offerings, including a Skype camera, digital banners (with LED screens),

metered plugs for future electric vehicles, an interface device for monitoring public parking, and sensors that track heat, water, and explosives.

"We can raise the level of lighting as a pedestrian approaches one of our light poles, or if they're running from someone or something, it can alert security," Harwood says. "We can do facial recognition, an Amber Alert, crowd control, or direct traffic."

So far, the company has been selling Intellistreets as an à la carte package. Clients include London's Wembley Stadium District, Branson Landing in Missouri, and Heron City Can Drago in Barcelona.

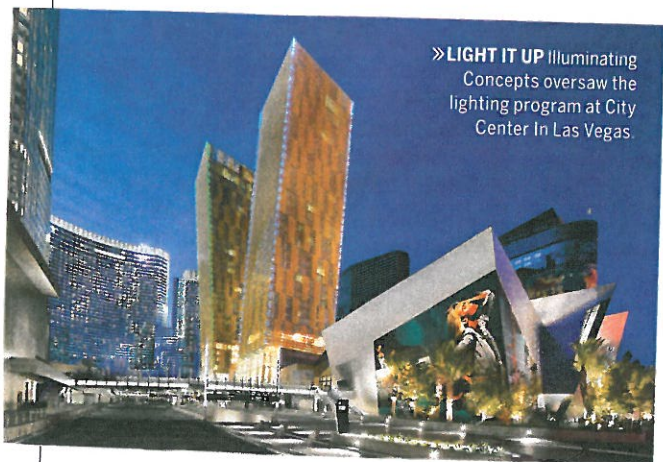
Intellistreets is the latest innovation for Illuminating Concepts, which has designed hundreds of theatrical, entertainment, and retail lighting projects around the world since 1981. Harwood got his start as an electric contracting engineer in 1970, before switching to specialized lighting.

"I remember my early years, when I went to the House of Denmark and got a table I could eat on," he says. "When I flipped it, I had my drafting table." Since then, Harwood and his team have taken on lighting projects for Disney, The Nasdaq, Godiva,

NBC, Warner Bros., and the emerging City Center in Las Vegas.

In addition to designing engaging and safe environments, Harwood says a sophisticated lighting program can boost the bottom line. "For us, creating a memorable lighting environment goes hand in hand with energy conservation. Clients today, no matter what the field, want to see a payback." **db**

» **LIGHT IT UP** Illuminating Concepts oversaw the lighting program at City Center in Las Vegas.



PDA Q&A

» THE E-INTERVIEW



STEVEN CHESTER
Of Counsel, Foley
& Lardner, Detroit

DB: Where are you?

SC: I'm in Milwaukee, attending a conference hosted by The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative. Essentially it's all the mayors of the cities and towns near the Great Lakes, who share the common mission of preserving our water quality.

DB: How important is the preservation of the Great Lakes as it relates to future demand for fresh water?

SC: When you consider 20 percent of the world's fresh water supply is in the Great Lakes, while 90 percent of the fresh water is in North America, it's incredibly important. With many other areas of the nation and the world facing drought, preserving water quality is paramount. It also has a profound impact on tourism, recreation, and fishing.

DB: What are the challenges in Michigan as our manufacturing sector downsizes and diversifies?

SC: I give Gov. (Jennifer) Granholm credit, as she led the way in diversifying our economy as it relates to renewable and alternative energy efforts. Providing cash credits for companies to relocate here has spurred job creation. As for old industrial sites, the cleanup money has run out. It was a very successful program for 20 years. The issue needs to be re-examined.

DB: What impact will the pending climate legislation have on Michigan?

SC: We're importing large quantities of coal and natural gas. That's a significant amount of money that leaves the state. Consequently, if we can wean ourselves from coal and put a price on carbon, it will cut our use of CO2 and boost our use of alternative energy sources like wind and biomass. Ultimately, that's a healthy thing for our economy.

DB: What were your high points in your role as director of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (2003-2010)?

SC: Despite the budget challenges, we saw ballast water legislation passed, which greatly limited the incursion of invasive species in our Great Lakes. We moved forward on requiring companies to reduce their use of mercury, and we were able to continue with brownfield remediation. **db** — R.J. King