

Mount Laurel, NJ Doesn't Allow Billboards — But Does Embrace Integrated Communication

Township Partners with Catalyst Experiential to build an EMS Facility and Two Monument Displays



Mount Laurel, Oct 24, 2019 (Issuewire.com) - Mount Laurel is famous in certain corners for being anti-billboard. In 2013, the municipality successfully defended their ban on billboards from a company that was challenging their zoning laws in order to install several billboards on Route 295. Fast-forward to current day, and the township has unanimously approved construction by [Catalyst Experiential](#) of a green-tech [EMS facility](#) with a visual display integrated into the façade, as well as the Mount Laurel “Wings”--two monument displays that will transform lots that have been vacant for over ten years. Construction will begin before the end of the year, with the project completed by mid-2020.

Integrated communication will put Mt. Laurel at an advantage as it will be able to quickly and efficiently convey important messaging to their residents. The displays will be used by the township for community notices and alerts, and will also feature advertising. The township has embraced the convergence of community and communication, which is a growing need as traditional forms of communication become less relevant.

Mayor Kurt Folcher is quick to point out that the new facility and monuments are anything but billboards, “Mount Laurel didn’t like billboards, and we still don’t. But we are pro-communication. When Catalyst proposed that it would work with us to develop a state-of-the-art facility, we saw the integration of a high-quality display as an element that contributes to the forward-thinking modern architecture while also enabling a multifunctional structure.”

Catalyst Experiential is the latest company founded by [Thaddeus Bartkowski](#), and focuses on a new form of public-private partnership. They enter communities that have aspirations to improve life for residents, such as a dog park, a pedestrian bridge, a community landmark, or an EMS station. In the case of the EMS facility they bought the land, will construct the building, and then maintain the property at no cost to taxpayers. Advertising on displays integrated into each installation funds the project.

The Mount Laurel “Wings” will welcome people to the community with two striking landmarks as well as over 4,000 plantings of species native to the area.

In the case of the Mount Laurel EMS, Catalyst sat down with the EMS leadership, and asked what features are most requested by first responders. They took that wish list, and included every item in the EMS design. The facility will be 7,860 square feet with four 45’ long bays with garage doors on both sides of the building that allow for rapid response drive-through access. There are two separate dormitories, 2 laundry rooms, a training room, solar panels on the roof, and electric car charging stations, among other features. The training room can be used for voting on election day, fulfilling a township need for more polling locations.

Most importantly, of course, it is centrally located so that responders can quickly reach more people quickly. The parcel that was chosen was also an abandoned lot, so the community also benefits by transforming an eyesore into an architecturally significant and useful green-tech structure.

According to Amanda Toton, who led the project for Catalyst, “As a lifelong New Jersey resident, I’m excited by this successful collaboration to bring to life these exciting projects that will benefit the community for years to come.”

Mount Laurel EMS Chief Joseph Stringfellow is looking forward to the new facility. “We wanted a new EMS facility that was centrally located to improve response times throughout the township. We’re getting quite a bit more.” Deputy Chief John Hamilton agreed, “This is something I never thought I’d see in my lifetime. My favorite part? We can use the displays to advertise for volunteers. The displays will help us reach new volunteers, and the forward-thinking facilities will help us retain them.”



Media Contact

Catalyst Experiential

donna@grimmandgrove.com

2158064594

Source : Catalyst Experiential

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