

Branson Landing Gets LIFTOFF

By Scott Brady

According to the Branson Daily News, since opening day Branson Landing has received more than 1.5 million visits, and revenue for the first two months of operation have exceeded expectations. Branson City Finance Director Deanna Schlegel stated, "Through July, their sales figures were \$18.5 million." Branson Landing developer Rick Huffman declared that the property was bringing in more than \$460 per square foot.

On May 26, 2006 a new era in the history of Branson, Missouri, was finally realized after almost a decade of planning, public meetings and several setbacks. The Branson Landing is as much a tribute to human determination as it is a world-class experience – a \$420 million, mixed-use development with entertainment, retail, dining, lodging, permanent residences and businesses on acres of the city's Taneycomo lakefront.

Since grade school, I have been a part of the community and watched Branson grow from a sleepy vacation village for fishermen with Silver Dollar City as its sole attraction, to a major tourist destination of the American Midwest.

I hand-painted signs for resorts and motels in my high school years, and eventually formed my company, SharpSigns Inc. During the 1990s, Branson began to grow steadily with the influx of live entertainment, major resort companies and three major outlet malls, and our percentage of local business also grew. We were invited to work with HCW, LLC – the corporate face of three businessmen with strong local ties: Richard E.

Huffman, Sam M. Catanese and Marc L. Williams – to manufacture themed signage and elements for the exciting new project that would be Branson Landing. McBride Company of Miami was chosen to design and theme the project. It was decided to divide Branson's Landing into seven themed districts: the Station, Wharf, Downtown, Town Square, Uptown, Neighborhood and the Country.

The Station district is anchored by the Belk Department Store and is the main trolley pickup for the north parking area. The Wharf includes a nautical kids' play area provided by Joe's Crab Shack and is the entrance from the four-level parking garage. The Town Square is the centerpiece of the project with a \$7 million dollar water-and fire-show and an amphitheater for live entertainment. Bass Pro Shop's White River outpost provides the anchor for the Country district with boat displays and the trolley pickup for the south parking area. Opening soon in the Country district will be a floating restaurant, the White River Fish Camp.

The Landing is one of the largest public-private projects in the history of Missouri with its lakefront entertainment, more than 90 retailers, 20 restaurants, a half-mile boardwalk, extravagant fountain (with hourly show) and more. Over the next several months a convention center and high-rise Hilton Hotel will add more excitement. With the opening of the Landing and over a billion dollars of additional construction underway, Branson is not only a Midwest destination, but also of national and international interest. For me and for my employees, it has been a special honor to help with the world-class growth that is happening in our own backyard.



Above: A neon Branson Landing sign by SharpSigns

Below: The Branson Landing Fountain Show during the day. Photo courtesy of SwiftShots.



Scott Brady's company, SharpSigns (www.sharpsigns.com) based in Forsyth, MO, has been producing high-quality creative signage for a quarter century.