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The logo for the Design Center Forum 2008. The words "DESIGN" and "CENTER" are stacked vertically in a large, bold, purple sans-serif font. Below them, the words "Forum 2008" are written in a smaller, bold, green sans-serif font. The entire logo is enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

The Design Center Forum 2008 Announces 1st Annual DECA Awards Honoring Design Excellence in Centers & Ambassadors

Experts to honor industry excellence from Builder and
Independent design centers from across the country.

- **Award ceremony to be held at the OMNI San Diego Palm Terrace**
 - **Thursday, August 21, 2008 5:30 pm**
 - **Maria Muto-Porter added to panel of judges**

SAN DIEGO, April 7, 2008 – Artisan Design Group, producers of the DESIGN CENTER FORUM 2008, announced today that it will present national design center excellence awards at its 6th Annual Forum August 20-22, 2008 at the OMNI San Diego Hotel. Based on criteria set by, and judged by, a panel of industry experts, bronze, silver and gold awards will be given in each display merchandising category; and there will be a “Design Center of the Year” and “Design Center Manager of the Year” for both the Builder Design Center and Independent Design Center categories. The awards will be presented on Thursday, August 21st, 2008 at 5:30 pm at a special reception at the OMNI San Diego Palm Terrace.

The DESIGN CENTER FORUM is focused on providing the premiere venue for industry innovation and strategies for increased success and profitability. In addition to the standard criteria of attractiveness and user friendliness, judges for the DECA Display Excellence Awards will also be looking at how the merchandising displays impact the customer education process, both in time and effectiveness, as well as the overall sales results. Relevant features extend beyond the appearance of the display, and include how the consumer interacts with the display and how it is used in the overall sales process. The awards for Design Center of the Year will recognize the customer-centric experience the center provides, and the Design Center Manager of the Year Award will look for excellence in combining team motivation and development with optimizing sales performance.

“Given the rapid changes the housing market has undergone in the past three years, there has been huge surge in the entrepreneurial spirit to innovate and diversify in the design center industry” observes Jaimi Julian Thompson, President of Artisan Design Group. ”Design Centers have taken on a more important role than ever in creating an emotional connection between the buyer and their new home. Simultaneously, the buyers’ value-calculus when it comes to investing in upgrades has become more discerning than ever, so we are continuously striving to help them visualize the impact and benefits of getting what they want the first time. This awards contest will enable us to compare and contrast those at the leading edge, and provide our attendees with an arsenal of success strategies.”

Thompson also announced that Maria Muto-Porter, Editor of the popular Builder Design Center Magazine, has been added to the panel of judges. “We are so excited to be able to honor the talented professionals in our industry and recognize their great contributions to the home buying process” stated Muto-Porter. “This additional platform will enhance the design center community across the nation.”

To enter the DECA Awards contest, simply visit www.ArtisanDesignGroup.net, and click on the relevant link on the home page. Winners need not be present to win, but as these conferences sell out months in advance, those who are interested in attending should register immediately. The early enrollment discount is available until April 15, 2008. Register at www.ArtisanDesignGroup.net.

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About the DESIGN CENTER FORUM 2008

The DESIGN CENTER FORUM, held annually in San Diego, is the premiere conference for the new home design center industry executives, managers, and consultants. Begun by Artisan Design Group in 2003, the Conference offers the unique format of limited attendance and numerous breakout groups so that, in addition to industry experts, the attendees can share “best practices” in a professional and non-competitive environment. Beginning in 2008, the FORUM will also serve as the host for the annual DECA Awards honoring design excellence in centers and ambassadors. Artisan Design Group also manages the DESIGN CENTER NETWORK (DCN), a professional membership association for design center colleagues and affiliates across the nation.

For more information visit www.ArtisanDesignGroup.net
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