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GM Hires Traverse City Firm to Develop Global Signage Standards

Traverse City, MI — General Motors Corporation's Worldwide Facilities Group has hired Corbin, a Traverse City-based environmental graphic design firm, to develop worldwide standards for the global automaker's exterior signage and wayfinding.

The project, known as the Exterior Signage Initiative for Corporate Facilities and Sites, involves designing and developing a system of wayfinding guidelines and exterior signage that can be used for any GM facility worldwide other than dealerships. The world's largest manufacturer of cars and trucks, GM employs 355,000 people worldwide and has manufacturing operations in more than 30 countries.

The standards will be accessible via a Web-based Signage Standards Toolkit designed by Corbin. From specifications for a single building sign to an entire facility signage program, GM employees and consultants will have a wealth of information at their fingertips: the Web-based toolkit will help architects and facility managers design, locate, specify and bid the fabrication and installation of new signs. The goals of the program are these: providing a simplified process for acquiring signage and wayfinding systems, reducing costs, increasing safety and security and consistently reflecting GM's revamped corporate image.

"Our challenge" says Mark VanderKlipp, Senior Officer at Corbin, "is not only to address the needs of various groups within GM regarding signage and wayfinding, but also to develop an intuitive tool to make these standards accessible. People won't use the system if they don't understand how it works; as with wayfinding design, we have to approach the tool design from the perspective of a first-time visitor."

Debra Davis, R.A., a Senior Project Architect with GM's Worldwide Facilities Group, said Corbin was selected from a list of ten wayfinding and signage consultants based on the design firm's initial insights into the signage challenges that face GM, and the firm's suggested approach to meeting those challenges.

"Signage for GM sites and buildings should direct and inform GM personnel, partners, and visitors in a clear and effective manner," Davis said. "The Exterior Signage Initiative must reflect our corporate global business objectives while delivering a common process and consistent approach to leveraging costs and time."

Working closely with representatives of GM departments including Global Branding, Corporate & Brand Identity, Legal, Logistics, Media Archive, Safety, and Security, Corbin has recently completed the process of building a business case for the Exterior Signage Initiative project as a whole. Once approved, detailed sign

design and specification will begin, culminating in a process to review potential suppliers and help manage the implementation of the program throughout the corporation. The toolkit is scheduled to launch in the summer of 2003.

Since its foundation in 1976, Corbin has completed hundreds of projects for governmental, corporate, educational and health care clients across the country. The firm's expanding scope of project types includes signage and wayfinding, interactive systems and Web sites, identity systems and print communications – all based on the philosophy that "access equals success." A partial list of Corbin's wayfinding clients includes the cities of Los Angeles, Milwaukee and Indianapolis, Herman Miller in Zeeland, Michigan, Recreational Equipment Inc. (REI) in Seattle, Penn State University, and University Health Network in Toronto. Additional information about the firm can be found online at www.corbindesign.com.

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