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September 4, 2015
 For Immediate Release

New Exhibit Frames to Debut at World Stamp Show-NY 2016

Have you ever thought about reinventing the wheel? That's the type of challenge Vince King of Denton, Texas undertook when he and World Stamp Show-NY 2016 President Wade Saadi started discussing the exhibition's need for exhibit frames. The results will be seen by everyone attending the show next May 28-June 4 at the Javits Center in New York City.

At first thought it sounded like a simple proposal: Design, engineer, produce, assemble and ship roughly 2,000 double-faced frames to hold up to 16 pages of philatelic material. These types of smaller custom projects are familiar to King, an engineer by profession and owner of Entech Design, Inc. He's also President of the Texas Postal History Society, a gold medal winning exhibitor of Texas postal history and member of the National Postal Museum Council of Philatelists.

The standard type of exhibit frame used throughout North America is commonly called an "A" frame, designed around 1985 and used for the 1986 Ameripex international exhibition in Chicago. Basically it's a double-sided four foot high by three foot wide top-hinged panel on legs. After much deliberation on differing design concepts, Vince's team came to the conclusion that the "wheel," that basic "A" design, was still optimal for a variety of reasons.

The plan then shifted to reconsider the materials making up each unit. Current "A" frames are constructed of an aluminum frame with an inside backer of Masonite faced with cardboard and white poster board with clear plastic strips to hold the pages. The frame's viewing window consists of clear 1/8 inch acrylic. The legs are also aluminum. Each assembly weights around 45 pounds. Major concerns with the status-quo included their excessive weight, difficulty of assembly, and lack of portability, not to mention the labor-intensive process needed to fabricate them to begin with. Over 160,000 pop rivets would be needed to hold the frames together, 80 per frame, and all done by hand.

An alternative base material needed to be found--and was--by using polystyrene, a polymer plastic. A dye could be added to make it any desired color, in this case a silver grey. When heated to over 212 degrees F (100 degrees C), the clear, glass-like material liquefies and can easily be fabricated into almost any shape. It turns rigid when cooled and is very strong but lightweight. Parts can easily be bonded permanently using an acrylic "super glue." A flexible plastic hinge allows the two sides to join at the top.

As for the inner part, a white polystyrene panel replaces the heavy Masonite. Clear acrylic is again used as the face sheets, but at half the thickness as before. Six specially designed security screws on the face of each panel allow for easy access to the inside panel to load and unload exhibit pages. Anodized aluminum poles would again be used as legs.

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Each resulting two-sided frame unit has a combined weight of around 24 pounds, compared to the original "A" weight of 45 pounds, for a savings of an estimated 40,000 pounds (20 tons!) for the entire 2,000 frames.

An initial prototype block of the frames was trialed at TEXPEX in February. They proved to be both strong and easy to assemble, but the problem was getting them apart at the close of the show. The interlocking mechanics of the legs to the frame assembly needed to be reworked. A new design was developed and is now finalized. One was displayed during APS StampShow in Grand Rapids August 20-23 at the WSS-NY 2016 booth.

The frames are 100% American made in two locations in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, ensuring strict quality control and at or below-budget results. Production is ongoing through December. They are being stored, palletized and shipped to New York City from King's Denton facility at two frame units per box with the legs boxed separately. All frames will be available for sale at the conclusion of WSS-NY 2016 next June. Pricing and order details will be made known closer to show time.

World Stamp Show-NY 2016 takes place Saturday, May 28 through Saturday, June 4 over the Memorial Day holiday at the Javits Center in New York City. Admission is free all 8 days. Learn more on the exhibition's web site at <http://www.ny2016.org>.

Frame on display at StampShow 2015



Courtesy APS

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