

# **Innovative designs recognized Hudspeth Corporation to be honored by city for two of its buildings**

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Lew Hudspeth thinks it will probably never happen again. The co-owner of Hudspeth Corporation is referring to the company having constructed two of the three buildings getting Meritorious Awards this year from the Yuba City Planning Commission.

The two buildings are El Zarape restaurant on Stafford Way, which is being honored for best renovation, and Percy Avenue Barber Shop for best design.

Not bad for a construction company whose owners only three years ago decided to shift their attention toward commercial projects.

According to Hudspeth, his father and brother Gary founded Hudspeth Corporation 22 years ago, but the company mainly built residential homes in the Yuba-Sutter area. When he joined the company three years ago, it began to focus its energy on commercial projects.

"Commercial work is a clean process," said Hudspeth. "Homeowners usually want something, then they change their minds. But business owners usually know what they want, so the process is faster."

Brian Lopez, owner of Percy Avenue Barber Shop, knew he wanted to modernize the structure that had stood on Percy Avenue since 1948. When he bought the shop several years ago from its previous owner, it was run down and a fire hazard.

"In the beginning, we wanted to keep some of the original structure," explained Hudspeth, "but when we got to doing it, it didn't make any sense, so we tore it down and started over."

Construction took two months to complete. The shop reopened in June 2002. Today, the 1,400-square-foot, \$200,000 building is three times the size of the old one and now boasts a slick, sports-themed interior reminiscent of a trendy hair salon - far from the no-frills barber shop it once was.

"I figure that if we were going to do it, we were going to do it right," said Lopez. "I was looking for something long term, and I wanted an eye-catcher."

It apparently caught the eyes of the Planning Commission, which chose to recognize the building among some 15 others in Yuba City.

"It's a nice looking building in an area we're trying to revamp," said Denis Cook, Yuba City's director of Community Development.

Renovation of El Zarape restaurant was a bit more complicated and took about six months to complete. The former Feather River State Bank building had to be entirely stripped, with the interior expanded to accommodate two restrooms and a kitchen, said Hudspeth. For owners David and Ana Gonzales, this was their "dream restaurant."

"We just wanted a real Mexican restaurant, one that's first class. But we also wanted something different from anyone else," said Ana Gonzales.

The idea was to turn the generic two-story office building into something rustic and unique without tearing down the building, said Hudspeth.

"Just to prove it was a bank, here's the vault," Hudspeth said, pointing to the bar's wine cellar.

"We had to spice it up a bit so it didn't just look like a vault," added interior designer Lori Rogers of Design Revelations in Yuba City.

Other touches such as the colonnade in the dining area, outdoor patio with handicap ramp, expanded parking lot, downstairs banquet room and other landscaping details, added to the cost of the renovations, which amounted to more than \$1.2 million. The 6,500-square-foot property is now ready for further expansion.

"Before December, I want a big kitchen," said Ana Gonzales.

The Planning Commission will present Meritorious Awards to the property owners of Percy Avenue Barber Shop, El Zarape and Feather River Cardiovascular Institute on April 23.

The Planning Commission has been presenting these awards since 1985 to encourage quality development.

"We try to offer a carrot as much as we can to say thanks to property owners for investing in the community," said Cook.

Of the recognition, Hudspeth said: "We're all excited about being a part of the projects because it's all local people that did it. It helps the neighborhood; it helps the business. It's phenomenal what could happen down the road."