Superlatives

by Ricia Sturgeon-Hendrick

The highest degree of comparison is considered a superlative, and this issue shines with overachievement in elevators and escalators. Every year, we seek the best and brightest projects in the industry to be judged and highlighted in the January issue. We think it is a good way to start a new year by awarding the excellence of the previous year. Our Project of the Year Awards are extremely important to us, and we work hard to get a number of competitive entries in every field. This year’s winners are (by category):

♦ Elevators, New Construction — Otis Elevator Korea for Lotte World Tower in Seoul. This project involved the installation of the world’s longest and fastest double-deck elevator with a sky shuttle running 496 m to an observation deck. Machine placement was a unique challenge.

♦ Elevators, Modernization — Southeastern Elevator Consulting for City Centre Elevator Modernization in Tallahassee, Florida. The original had two separate duplex dispatch systems. After winning the bid, thyssenkrupp developed special software that incorporated two hydraulic and two traction elevators into one dispatch system.

♦ Escalators, New Construction — thyssenkrupp Elevator for the Bilbao Athletic Museum in Bilbao, Spain. The bright-red escalator was color coordinated for the museum and installed in a tunnel entrance to mimic the tunnel players use to go from the locker room to the playing field.

♦ Escalators, Modernization — KONE for Tower City Rapid Station in Cleveland. The transportation center’s aging escalators carried more than 30,000 a day (and, some days, many more). Keeping the trusses, KONE did a complete upgrade with a very demanding schedule.

♦ Moving Walks — thyssenkrupp Elevator for the Port of Melilla in Melilla, Spain. Three moving walks with demanding technical specifications were called for, as they are located over the sea in a highly corrosive environment.

♦ Inclined Elevators — Suzhou Rhine Lift Manufacture for Taipa Houses-Museum Pedestrian System in Macao, China. The inclined elevator solved a problem of access along the slope from Mount Tai Tam Observatory to Ka Lok Bailey Road, where the Taipa Houses are located.

♦ Platform Lifts and Stairway Chairifts — A+ Elevators & Lifts for the Aerospace Center for Education in Clearfield, Utah. The lift, called “T Minus 10, 9, 8…” is a rocket-shaped lift that will take students to the second-level classroom in a C-130 aircraft.

♦ Private-Residence Elevators — Savaria for Downtown Row House in Chicago. This elegant clear elevator integrates seamlessly with a narrow row home featuring much architectural glass.

♦ Special-Purpose Lifts — Alapont Group for the City of Arts and Sciences in Valencia, Spain. Used to transport museum goods and maintenance tools, the lift disappears underground when not in use and has a roof strong enough for cars to pass over it.

Another superlative was 2017’s Interlift in Germany. It was the biggest ever, with 574 participating companies and more than 21,000 visitors. The growth in “live” expos has been amazing over the last 15-20 years. Heiko Konicke, managing director of event organizer AFAG Messen und Ausstellungen GmbH, spoke of the immense value of so many companies, associations and media gathering in one place. He said, “We are here, offline, for four days... [with] the clear advantages of personal communication...”

Finally, an article called No More Ropes To Break by Martina Belmonte of the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat traces the history of high-rise buildings and how elevators have affected change in them. It is a fascinating look into our industry from the outside. She notes that new proposed architectural designs that include ropeless elevators and interconnected buildings as part of the transportation plan give us a view to the future and a theoretical superlative. Belmonte says, “The elevator is the ‘backbone’ of the tall building, and a change to the overarching principles of the elevator itself will mean altering the ‘genetic DNA’ of tall buildings.…” Can’t wait to see that!