

Highwood Installs Bold New Banners Designed by Street Level Studio

North Shore marketing agency's intricate design scheme highlights multiple ways to "Experience Highwood"

July 1, 2019, Highwood, IL – At 4 a.m. on July 1, while the rest of the North Shore slept, Highwood work crews began climbing on ladders to install the city's bold new street light banners. Created by local marketing agency Street Level Studio (SLS), the new banners are designed and arranged to draw attention to the wide variety of ways to "Experience Highwood" and all it has to offer.

Installation of the 171 new light pole banners was timed to coincide with Highwood's Fourth of July celebration. After spending several weeks refining concepts with the Highwood Chamber of Commerce and Highwood City Council Appearance Review Committee, Street Level Studio's owner Tanya Fretheim presented the final design plan at the Council meeting on June 4 and received unanimous approval.

"Everyone on the Council was thrilled to have a design professional like Street Level Studio working with us on the banner project," says Scott Coren, Highwood City Manager. "We began with an extensive public input process, and Street Level was able to accommodate the variety of creative ideas and bring them to life in their banner concept. Plus, having their professional expertise right from the start gave us confidence we were not only following design best practices but also well positioned to handle the thematic sequencing, continuity, and logistics needed to realize the vision and bring a more dynamic look to our downtown."

Once the design was approved, SLS faced the challenge of executing and managing the intricate project in a very compressed timeframe.

"Street Level Studio didn't just design the new banners," Fretheim says. "We also developed a detailed production and installation plan that, of necessity, rivaled the precision of a military maneuver. Rather than the typical one-and-done approach used by most municipalities, we made sure identical banners do not repeat on all 103 light poles lining Highwood's downtown. Instead, our design approach really mixes it up to create more buzz and rally community spirit."

Using a complex coded mapping system and working directly with the printer, Graphic Arts Services, SLS produced alternating red and orange vinyl banners representing 10 unique categories that reflect the city's character, services, businesses, and celebrations. Then senior designer Chris Gach and creative director Grogg paired banners in each category with a series of striking black-and-white photographs provided by Street Level Studio, the Highwood Chamber of Commerce, Celebrate Highwood, the Highwood Historical Society, and Illinois Railway Museum.

"We couldn't be happier with the results," says Carolyn Cerf, executive director of the Highwood Chamber of Commerce. "Street Level Studio went above and beyond and turned the light pole banner project into something extraordinary. Our goal was to showcase all the things that make Highwood unique and special. And, after much behind-the-scenes logistics and creative problem-solving, they absolutely captured Highwood in a way that feels effortless as well as exciting."

Highwood invites everyone to take a drive through the city this summer, check out the new banners, and judge for themselves.

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