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Design firm, advertising agency win award

By Ferdie De Vega
DEMOCRAT STAFF
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The international Webby Awards has named Tallahassee-based design studio Taproot Creative, in partnership with transplant, a local advertising agency, as an Official Honoree for its work on a Web site for SOL Sotheby's International Realty.

The International Academy of Digital Arts and Sciences, which includes "leading Web experts, business figures, luminaries and creative celebrities," recently presented the 11th annual Webby Awards, according to the organization.

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Taproot and transplant's project was one of more than 8,000 entries from around the U.S. and the world. Less than 15 percent of those teams and sites were selected as Official Honorees "that demonstrated a standard of excellence."

"To be honest, we were beside ourselves" when they heard they were honored, said Sean Doughtie, president and CEO of Taproot

Creative.

Doughtie said before he founded the company nearly two years ago, his mentors told him he had to leave Tallahassee for a bigger city to start his own design studio. "I said, 'No. This is where my family is.'

"One of the things I'm trying to prove is Tallahassee can offer the creative services (just like) the bigger metropolitan areas," he said.

"It's nice to put Tallahassee in the mix," said Michael Calienes, president and creative director of transplant, which previously had worked with SOL Sotheby's International Realty, the franchise for Fort Lauderdale and Miami, on some print materials.

Taproot had a contract to do several marketing pieces for SOL Sotheby's International Realty, said Calienes, who decided to contact Doughtie to redesign the company's Web site. "I heard a lot of good things about him."

In fact, Taproot Creative, transplant and a third local company had once shared a building.

"The main focus ... was building an online real-estate tool" for SOL Sotheby's International Realty, Doughtie said.

"Taproot certainly did most of the work," said Calienes, who served as client liaison for the project. "I was making sure everything was on brand and on strategy."

For more information about the Webby Awards, visit www.webbyawards.com.

Contact reporter Ferdie De Vega at (850) 599-2321 or fmdevega@tallahassee.com.

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