

## **BH&L Group Declares Mission to Make US Pavilion at Shanghai Expo 2010 a Reality**

02 November 2008

**A Santa Monica group including legendary world's fair designer Barry Howard is pushing hard to create a meaningful US presence at the Shanghai world's fair.**



For those who have not been following this saga, Shanghai is set to host the next international exposition (world's fair) in 2010 and the US is in danger of not being there. [Shanghai Expo 2010](#) looks likely to be an important and successful mega-event and a further statement (following on the Beijing Olympics) of China's emergence as a major economic and cultural force.

World's fairs typically have participation from scores of countries in the form of pavilions and national exhibits. It is a display of international goodwill and also a powerful platform for boosting trade. Shanghai's event is no exception but as of yet – with the event closing in – the US has no solid plans to participate.



There's a Catch-22 situation in play: Federal legislation passed a few years ago in fact prevents the US from taking even a nickel of its budget to fund a world's fair pavilion. A private group can step in on behalf of the US but to do so officially it needs the endorsement

of the State department and needs to raise many millions of dollars to fund the enterprise. The one is hard to get without the other.

US participation in world expos has been on a downward slide since the 1990s. The US pavilion at Seville Expo 92 was a cobbled together affair including two geodesic domes, a display of the Bill of Rights, a Peter Max painting, a plywood house and a Budweiser stand. The US pavilion at Aichi Expo 2005 was much better, with a multimedia show about Benjamin Franklin – but it happened only because Toyota stepped in to fund it. The US record as an expo host has also deteriorated, with the most recent examples being Knoxville 82 and New Orleans 84 and no apparent plans to get back into the hosting game.



All the same, more than one qualified group boldly applied to undertake the task of creating a US pavilion for Shanghai 2010. The BH&L Group, which includes seasoned world's fair exhibit designer [Barry Howard](#), seemed to be getting very close to receiving the needed Federal endorsement. However, the Department of State ultimately turned to a different group, headed by [Nick Winslow](#), an experienced hand in large-scale project development, issuing a [letter of intent](#) in April 08. Sadly, Winslow's group [recently announced](#) that it has left the field. BH&L in turn has re-entered it and sent out a declaration and call for support by email yesterday, which Urso Chappell of [Expo Museum](#) shared with us.

The email, from [Bob Jacobson](#), Communications Director of the BH&L Group, reads in part:

*"We're back in the game. The US National Pavilion at the Shanghai 2010 World Expo is once more in play. We're prepared to pick up the ball and run with it. While others may be deterred by the volatile economy, we remember that the 1939 World's Fair, the greatest Expo of all so far, was a rousing success during the Great Depression. We believe that the Shanghainese will host a great Expo. We further believe that the US National Pavilion as we conceive it will be a fitting showcase for the innovative "New America" that is taking shape even as I write. We've contacted the major Presidential campaigns and to the Congress, explaining why and the US must have a great National Pavilion in Shanghai and how it can do so at a fraction of the cost estimated by the Bush State Dept. Whoever wins next Tuesday, we expect more*

*competent State and Commerce Depts. to work with next year.*



*"But there is very little time to make things happen. While other nations have been working on this for two or three years, we have only one year left. We need to begin working with the President-elect and his team immediately. And we need your help. If we don't succeed, it's likely that there won't be a US Pavilion in Shanghai in 2010. The American people deserve a US Pavilion that demonstrates our people's spirit and resolve. The whole world will be watching and hoping for nothing less. BH&L co-founder Barry Howard's plan for the US National Pavilion is elegant, simple, and state-of-the-art without breaking the bank. It will be a great showcase for America's society, culture, and commerce. Further, it will feature terrific technology that will enable us to have a powerful global presence to complement our lovely building.*



*"If you are a potential sponsor, we invite your offers of tangible support for our effort. The sooner we can make our nut in terms of pledges of cash and in-kind contributions, the sooner we can formalize the BH&L Group and create the US Pavilion. Every other nation in the world will be at the Shanghai 2010 World Expo. The United States, the world leader, needs to be there too. Please work with us to make this happen."*

**The BH&L Group is based in Santa Monica, California USA and may be contacted by [E-mail](#) or by telephone at 520-762-7267.**

Images: (from top)

1. Aragon Pavilion, Zaragoza Expo 2008. The US did not participate. Photo: Urso Chappell.
2. 1982 Knoxville world's fair.
3. Toyota funded the US pavilion at Aichi Expo 2005. Photo: Gordon Linden
4. The Pacific Science Center, a legacy of Seattle 62.
5. Barry Howard.

Posted by Judith Rubin at [7:58 AM](#) [0 comments](#)  [Links to this post](#)

Labels: [barry howard](#), [bhl group](#), [nick winslow](#), [shanghai 2010](#), [world's fair](#)

## **Chances for US Presence at Shanghai Expo are Bleak**

27 October 2008

I received the following email from Nick Winslow and Ellen Eliasoph today. Nick's team was the best hope for a US Pavilion to be realized at Shanghai Expo 2010 - they had been authorized by the US government to undertake the project, which included raising the \$100 million required to fund the pavilion, in addition to planning, designing and building. (Federal legislation dictates that the US government can't spend a dime on world's fair participation.) This is an embarrassment and an international-relations blunder for the United States.

Nick writes:

"As all of you know, our effort to create and execute a world class USA Pavilion for Shanghai Expo 2010 was, from the outset, hampered by a shortage of both time and money. Both have now run out and we are shutting down the enterprise, effective immediately. We thank all of you for your interest in supporting this effort. It was a stimulating run made enjoyable and hopeful by your enthusiasm and support.

We continue to believe that the current policy regarding US participation in world expos is misguided and that US presence is important to both diplomatic and commercial relations. We will urge that the process be fixed in anticipation of the Milan Expo in 2015."

**Source:** <http://judithrubin.blogspot.com>