

“Worst garage door company” article wins national gold medal

D+AS editor receives prestigious ASBPE award

The cover story of the fall 2015 issue of Door + Access Systems, “GDS: The worst garage door company in the nation,” recently earned national honors for both the article and Tom Wadsworth, the magazine’s editor.



Wadsworth

Roy Harris, ASBPE

Winning the gold

The article won the gold medal in a national competition for investigative/impact feature stories in business-to-business magazines, while the editor received the prestigious Stephen Barr Award from the American Society of Business Publication Editors (ASBPE). Both honors were announced on July 21 at the 38th Annual National Azbee Awards banquet in St. Petersburg, Fla. The article also won the gold medal in the Regional Azbee Awards competition in Cleveland on June 24.

In the national competition, the silver medal went to Automotive News, based in Detroit, and the bronze went to The American Lawyer magazine, based in New York City. American Lawyer also won ASBPE’s coveted 2016 Magazine of the Year award.

The 8,300-word “Worst garage door company” article spurred several television and newspaper reports around the nation, and it prompted national warnings issued by the Better Business Bureau about deceptive company tactics. The article also played a role in prompting DASMA and IDA to form the Task Force on Industry Reputation (see story on page 68).



The Stephen Barr Award

The Stephen Barr Award is considered the “crown jewel” of all Azbee awards. It honors “individual writing across all feature categories and especially work that shows inventiveness, insight, balance, depth of investigation, and impact on readers.” The jurors for the award included a veteran reporter for the Wall Street Journal, a professor from Boston University’s

renowned journalism department, and the former editor-in-chief of Inc. Magazine.

One of the jurors for the Stephen Barr Award said the D+AS article was a “standout piece of work in a field of winners.” All 2016 gold medalists for feature articles are considered candidates for the Stephen Barr Award.

That juror called Wadsworth’s article “deeply reported and clearly written ... a powerful piece of accountability journalism.” He added, “I was impressed with the author’s ability to get strong on-the-record quotes and to quantify the extent of the company’s abuses,” reporting from “several angles and locations, including the customer perspective.”

Another award juror said Wadsworth “did an admirable job of knitting together first-hand reporting and secondary material into a compelling story about how GDS has managed to bilk thousands of consumers and at the same time elude justice.” The juror added, “It’s a highly unusual look at a corrupt business model, not just another scam.”

In addition to juror comments, Dave Lieber, the investigative reporter for the Dallas Morning News, was quoted at the award presentation. He said that the article was “the most outstanding piece of journalism in an industry magazine I have ever seen.”

“I was completely surprised and stunned to receive the award,” said Wadsworth. “It’s an additional bonus if it brings a greater spotlight on those who are tarnishing the reputation of our industry.” ■