

Valley architect garners top award

By **Brian Wargo**
Staff Writer

As a child, Michael Del Gatto said he played with LEGOs for hours.

Like many others, he also made forts and sheet tents in the house. He even had liked to sneak onto construction sites. Little did he know that would be the infancy of his career.

"I did not realize at such an early age that this was going to be my career, but as I look back, these experiences were my introduction into the (construction) environment," Del Gatto said.

The 34-year architect with Carpenter Sellers Associates was recently given the young architect award by the Western mountain region of the American Institute of Architects. The award recognizes those early in their career who have shown exceptional leadership in design, education and service to the profession.



Del Gatto

The award is another honor for Del Gatto, who in 2006 was named the young architect winner of the state chapter of institute.

Del Gatto's portfolio includes Sedona Restaurant at Interstate 215 and Flamingo Road and Andre Agassi College Preparatory Academy.

"It is hard to pick one project that I am most proud of," Del Gatto said. "The Agassi project was great to work on because of what his foundation does for the community."

Del Gatto has been with Carpenter Sellers since 2000. He received a bachelor's degree in 1996 and master's degree in 1999, both in architecture from UNLV.

Del Gatto's career started the summer before his senior year in high school when he went through the Yellow Pages to look for architecture firms close to home. He started that summer as a runner at DCC Architects, making \$4.75 an hour, a pay cut from his job as a cook at Metro Pizza.

During his career, he has served as principal architect on the Nevada State College academic and student services building in Henderson. His work for Agassi Academy netted him honors from the American Institute of Architects Nevada and Southwest Contractor.

"Making an idea become a reality — taking a blank sheet of paper into a building you can walk through is a lot of fun," Del Gatto said.

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