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# ssi SIGNATURE SIGN

## OVER 50 YEARS IN BUSINESS?

## NOW THAT'S A GREAT SIGN!

By Kathy Hunt

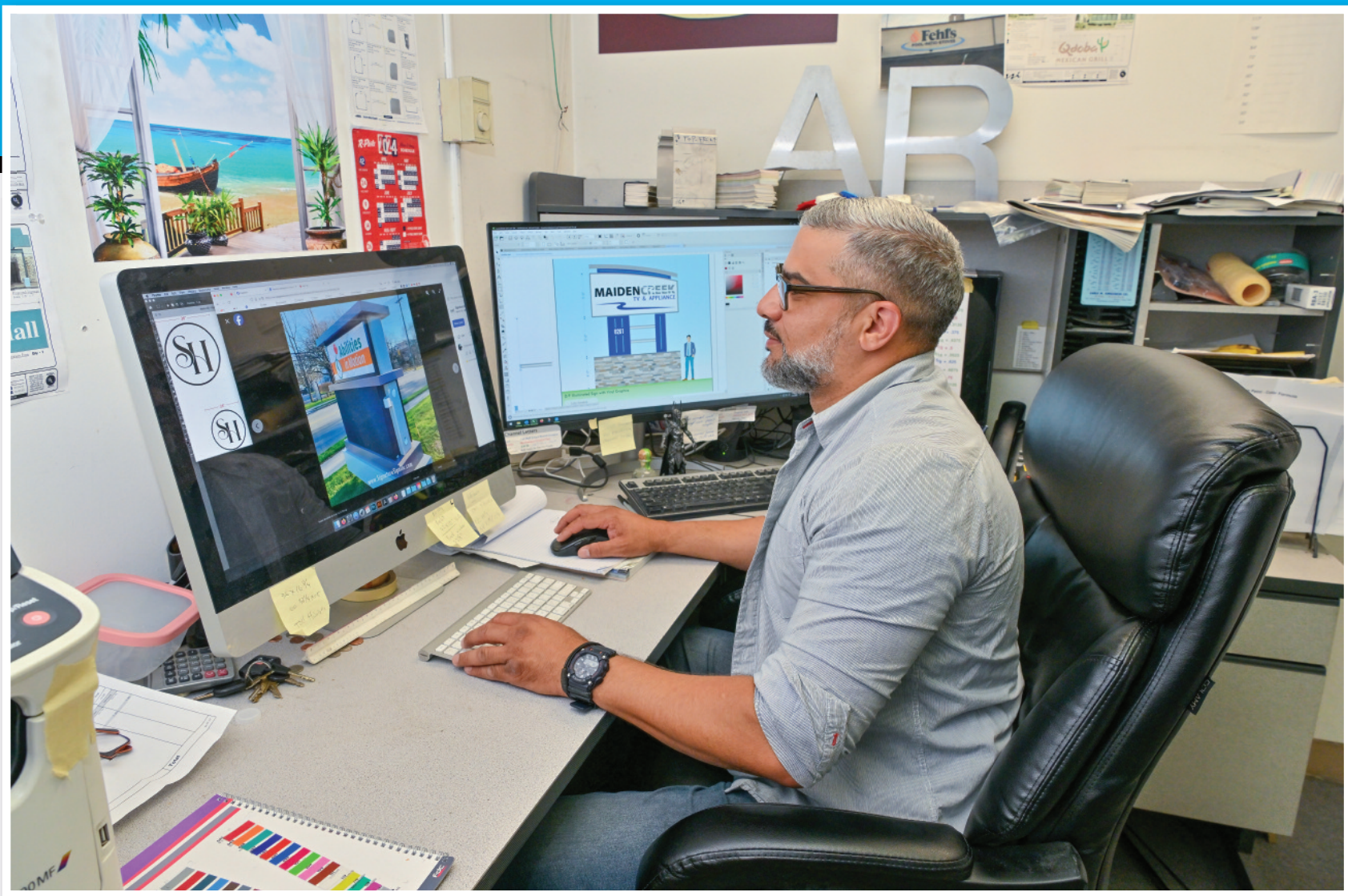
Perhaps you've driven past a store and noticed that it has a gaudy or ugly sign with clashing colors, unevenly spaced letters, or, worse yet, a misspelled word. Although most business owners understand the importance of good signage, not everyone ends up with one. Why is an attractive sign important for a business? A sign performs a simple but essential job: Anyone who drives, rides, or walks by a well-crafted sign is reminded what that business offers and when its services or products can be obtained. A clear, appealing sign makes an impression on the public, promotes a business's brand, and serves as enduring, low-cost way to advertise.

Creating an effective sign involves more than scrawling your business's name in a storefront window or on a sandwich board. Fonts, logos, lighting, colors, and materials as well as dimensions, placement, and visibility all factor into a sign's memorability and success. Using a skilled and seasoned sign designer and manufacturer is key. That's where Signature Sign Inc. of Reading can help. In business for over 50 years, and with such national clients as Burger King, Dave & Busters, IHOP, and Texas Roadhouse and local and regional clients such as Reading Area Community College and Weiss Markets, Signature Sign possesses the experience and expertise to design, install, and service a plethora of signs.



**DENNY BOYER**

PHOTOS BY STYLISH IMAGES



## All signs pointed to ...

Denny Boyer's history with signs dates back to high school, where he made his first commercial sign in woodshop. Comprised of six varnished letters, roughly three inches thick, it was installed by the front door of the Exeter Restaurant. Around the same time as this early success, Boyer's mechanical drawing teacher secretly submitted some of the student's drawings to the Delaware Valley Industrial Arts Fair. Boyer won first place there as well as at the Berks County Industrial Arts Fair, which was held at Albright College in Reading.

Boyer, who is the founder of Signature Sign Inc., said, "While I was standing at Albright College, looking at my drawings, a voice behind me said, 'Your drawings all work together. It's a complete set.' It turned out to be the chief draftsman at Gilbert Associates. He asked if I had any plans after high school and, if not, would I want to be a structural draftsman at Gilbert Associates. In 1964, I graduated high school on a Friday and started work at Gilbert Associates on Monday," he said.



In 1971, Boyer received a fateful phone call from his mother, who was at the Reading Fair — someone at the fair had a magnetic sign machine, a rarity during a time when most business owners' buildings and vehicles featured old fashioned, hand-lettered signs. Still interested in making signs, Boyer ended up buying the machine and placing it in the tenant house of his parents' "farmette." This would be his temporary

workspace until he moved his sign-making operations to a two-car garage in the Shillington area.

Machine installed and mastered, Boyer began visiting gas stations, lawn mower repair shops, and other small businesses, talking to the owners about his signs.

"I did this from 7 to 9 AM and then, I'd go to my day job," Boyer said. "After I was done at work, I would go to my parents,

make the signs, and deliver them the next morning. I'd also do hand-lettering," he said. "I was selling \$250 worth of signs each week for a few hours of work, and I wondered what I could do if I worked the whole week at signs. So, after a bit of deliberation and soul searching, I quit my job and worked by myself for six months before I ended up with too much work to do on my own. So, I hired Frankie May, who is also a professional bowler, to do hand-lettering and help me install."

Today, Signature Sign has eight employees, consisting of Boyer, an administrative assistant, a salesperson, a graphic designer, two fabricators, and two service installers. The business supports customers in Eastern Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and parts of Virginia. It is headquartered at 926 New Holland Road in Reading, in a 14,000-square-foot building that Boyer bought in 1986. The site is a stark contrast to the company's humble beginnings. It's also evidence of how resourceful and committed Boyer is to crafting quality, eye-catching products for his clients, traits that guarantee both new and repeat customers.

*(Continued on page 8)*

## COVER STORY

(Continued from page 7)

### The markings of a good sign

When considering the design of any sign, Boyer thinks about “eye appeal,” what will look visually enticing to the customer as well as to the public. He thinks about colors, including background and gradient colors, and fonts. Light-colored fonts perform well on dark backgrounds while dark-colored fonts work best on light backgrounds. Contrasting colors make a sign stand out and also are more readable.

The sign’s shape, architectural features, and reveals are equally important. Architectural features go above or below the sign and can include LED accents that will make the sign pop at night. Constructed from aluminum and formed into curves, bars, stripes, and other shapes, these add-on pieces draw additional attention to the business.

“It doesn’t make any sense to me to make a blah sign that doesn’t do anything for the customer,” Boyer said. He added that, if Signature Sign has the opportunity to design something from scratch, the staff makes sure that the resulting sign possesses eye appeal. “It’s not going to be the typical, old sign that you see out there.”

Where the sign will be displayed is another consideration. Signature Sign works with townships to ensure that the sign’s design will complement township regulations. “If there’s any doubt, we will call the township to get the square footage that’s allowed on the property and get the waivers and permits. We also



PHOTOS BY STYLISH IMAGES

attend planning and board meetings and do everything from A, B, C, down to Z to make sure that everything is done right for the township or municipality that the sign will be in,” he said.

As a custom sign manufacturer, Signature Sign is UL-certified. The Underwriter Laboratories (UL) certification indicates that a service or product meets local and federal safety and environmental regulations, and that the manufacturer follows quality and safety standards.

Signature Sign is also a member of and supplier in Pennsylvania’s “COSTARS,” the Commonwealth’s cooperative purchasing program. According to the Pennsylvania government’s website, COSTAR businesses respond to bidding

opportunities on the COSTARS or PA eMarketplace website. A supplier that successfully responds to a contract solicitation may be awarded a contract.

### What to expect when working with Signature Sign

The first step in working with Signature Sign is to schedule a consultation either by phone at 610.775.0851 or email at [info@signaturesigninc.com](mailto:info@signaturesigninc.com). Customers can also stop by the business and speak to staff in person. If it’s more convenient for the customer, Boyer and the Signature Sign salesperson will travel to the customer’s site to discuss a sign project.

Whether a business owner has an existing logo or needs help coming up with one, Signature Sign’s graphic designer will work to create an image that suits the business’s intentions while enhancing its physical location. No business should have a sign that either detracts from or negatively attracts people to it.

“At the end of 2023, beginning of 2024, Brandywine Area High School sent me a drawing from another sign company and asked me to quote the job,” Boyer said. “I took one look at the drawing and called them to say that I appreciated the opportunity I was given to quote the job, but that I wasn’t going to quote it. When they asked why, I said, ‘I don’t like it and neither would you. This sign gives you

nothing that you’re looking for. Let me design a sign for free, and we’ll see where we go from there,” he said.

Boyer sat down with his graphic designer and, together, they designed a new sign. He then showed the sign to the high school officials. “And the sign’s up now and they love it to death,” he said.

In addition to eye appeal, elements such as structural design, wind load factors, and material durability are factored into the sign’s design. Just as you don’t want a sign that’s an eyesore, you don’t want a one that could fall over or off and injure passersby. Likewise, you want to be certain that what has been designed can be safely and legally installed.

Once a site survey has taken place, the Signature Sign team will submit a proposal that includes plot plans, building elevations, and photos of the site as it presently appears and images of how it will look once the sign has been installed. Scaled, detailed drawings will also be provided.

Signature Sign carries out the permitting process from start to finish. If variances are required, a staff member will research, prepare for, and attend the hearing. As Signature Sign’s website states: “From estimate, to permitting, to variance (if required), and site coordination, Signature Sign covers every aspect of the project. Excavation of foundations, cooperation with other site contractors, proper placement of foundations, handling of actual sign installation, to





final electrical connection, the national sign forwarding company has only one contact to deal with. These are the reasons Signature Sign is repeatedly called upon to handle both routine and time-sensitive installations of national account signage."

## Over a half-century of knowledge

Having been active in the sign business for over 53 years, Boyer has accumulated a tremendous amount of insight and know-how about what does and doesn't work with signage.

"Since I started, there have been so many technical changes, from fluorescent and neon to LEDs," he said. "You very rarely see neon or hand-lettered signs anymore. And we have had ups and downs with the economy. One thing has stayed the same — I'm interested in satisfying the customer and telling the customer what they need to hear, not what they want to hear. Because they don't buy signs very often, customers may not know much about signs. I'm not going to pull the wool

over their eyes. They need to be educated about signs, and I'm going to be honest with them," he said.

He stated that, after all these years, there are few situations or problems that he hasn't witnessed or can't solve. "There are no problems. There are only solutions," he said. "For every problem, there is always a solution. When guys

have problems in the field, they'll call me. I'll ask them questions, get information, and give them answers about how to solve the problem. The people who work for me respect my knowledge in the business."

Boyer not only has the expertise but also owns the commercial equipment to carry out service and installation calls.

The business has two service trucks that go up 40 feet, one that goes up 58 feet and another that extends 82 feet. If a service person needs to disconnect and take down a sign, Boyer has access to a crane and a lift. From putting up and taking down signs to changing LED lights and replacing power supplies, Signature Sign does it all.



**Signature Sign Inc.**

For additional information about Signature Sign Inc., or to schedule an estimate or service appointment, call 610.775.0851 or email [info@signaturesigninc.com](mailto:info@signaturesigninc.com), and visit <https://signaturesigninc.com/>