

# Signage Matters



News from the Visual Communications Community of the California Sign Association

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APRIL  
2011

## Long Beach to Host 2011 CSA Convention

Hotel Maya in Long Beach has been selected as the host hotel for the 2011 CSA Convention and 52nd CSA Annual Meeting. The boutique-like hotel sits down the road from the Queen Mary and across the bay from the convention center and financial district. Dates for the annual event are September 15-17, 2011.

"We wanted a location close to as many members and prospective members as possible," Convention Committee Co-Chair Karen Nowacki (Structural Technology Consultants, Inc. – San Diego) stated upon announcing the selected location and hotel. "It was important for us to find a venue that contracted with a CSA member for their signage and The Hotel Maya fit the bill," Nowacki added. "We will be the only convention meeting at the property so we will have the full attention of the service personnel."

"Now that we have our location and our hotel, our next step is to nail down our line-up of top-notch speakers and presenters," Co-chair Jim Cross (Best Signs – Palm Springs) said. "Our goal is to significantly increase the number of people participating in the CSA Convention," Cross added. "The Committee feels the best way to accomplish this is by having speakers and presentations that cover a vast array of topics relative to the signage industry. We're really hoping to draw lots of prospective members so we can give them a taste of just who CSA is and what we do."

"This year's Convention Committee is doing a fantastic job," CSA President Mark Gastineau (Arrow Signs – Oakland) stated. "I understand our Opening Reception Friday night will be at KDB in The Pike," Gastineau went on to say. "This should be lots of fun since CSA will be renting the entire ten-lane alley inside KDB for those who want to try their hand at bowling. Those who don't want to bowl can sit on the sidelines and heckle those who do, or they can test their skill at the numerous video and arcade games throughout the facility."

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## 2010-11 Executive Committee

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Arrow Sign Company, Oakland

### 1st Vice President

**Teresa M. Young**

Sign Biz, Inc., Dana Point

### 2nd Vice President

**Kevin Farrell**

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Oceanside

**Ed Wasserman**

Daktronics, Inc., Calabasas

**Keith Wills**

Western Sign Company,  
Diamond Springs

# CSA Convention

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“These venues provide us with some great sponsorship opportunities for our vendor members,” CSA Executive Director Brad Walker noted. “I especially like the five huge video screens that are at the end of every two lanes of the bowling alley. We should really be able to give our sponsors some great visibility—especially during the Opening Reception.”



More information about the convention will be forthcoming. Sleeping room rates are \$149 for Garden View and \$189 for the Deluxe King Ocean View rooms. “I strongly encourage anyone planning to attend to make their room reservations early,” Walker went on say. “The California State Bar is meeting in Long Beach that same week and I anticipate attendees to that citywide convention gobbling up all available rooms once our room block expires in August.” Reservations can be made by calling 562-481-3904 between 7:00 am and 4:00 pm. Make sure to request the group rate for CSA using the group code “CA Sign Association” or “CSA.”



## california sign association calendar



### ISA International Sign Expo 2011

April 27-30

### CSA Executive Committee Meeting

Thursday, April 28

### CSA Board of Directors Meeting

Friday, April 29

### May Membership Dinner Meetings

#### “Member Benefits Nights”

Tuesday, May 17 - Fresno

Thursday, May 19 - Rancho Cordova

Tuesday, May 24 - San Diego

Wednesday, May 25 - Pomona

Thursday, May 26 - Los Angeles

Tuesday, May 31 - Fremont

### Nor-Cal Membership Dinner Meeting

Thursday, June 23

### So-Cal Membership Dinner Meeting

Tuesday, June 28

### CSA Executive Committee Meeting

Wednesday, July 13

### CSA Board Of Directors Meeting

Thursday, July 14

### CSA 9th Annual Deep-Sea Fishing Trip

Saturday, August 6

### 2011 CSA Annual Convention

September 15-17

### CSA Executive Committee Meeting

Thursday, September 15

### CSA Board of Directors Meeting

Friday, September 16

# State Roundup: Cities and Counties

By Jeff Aran, Esq., CSA Legal Counsel

**Los Angeles**—The regulatory party continues. Our Sign Code Administration Program (SCAP) is still under consideration, but the LA Department of Building & Safety has had numerous challenges in developing implementation strategies, including funding. At their request, CSA developed several “white papers” on a number of topics and met in March with various key municipal stakeholders toward resolving their concerns. The *LA Business Journal* wrote a very positive article on our efforts and the broad coalition support.

In March, the LA Planning Department unearthed a new draft of the sign code. Unlike two years ago, this version is more user-friendly and retains most of the key elements of the city’s existing code. There are still several disconcerting sections, but CSA is collaborating with our coalition partners and planning staff to resolve those issues. Overall, planning staff listened to our concerns, making most of the changes requested after the



initial draconian draft introduced two years ago. The revised code is slated for review by the city’s PLUM Committee this spring.

CSA’s proposed Standardized Engineering program is underway and wending its way through the LADBS quagmire as well. Upon approval,

the program will significantly benefit sign companies and streamline the permit processing for many LA signs.

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## 2010-11 Committee Chairs

### Activities

*Teresa Young, Chair*

### Communications

*Teresa Young, Chair*

*Diane Arnold, Vice Chair*

### Convention

*Karen Nowacki, Chair*

*Jim Cross, Vice Chair*

### Education

*Mike Avery*

### Fishing Trip

*Gary Quiel*

### Govt. Affairs

*Mark Gastineau, Chair*

*Ed Wasserman, Vice Chair*

### LA Sign Ordinance TF

*Gus Navarro*

### Member Benefits

*Kevin Farrell*

### Membership

*Skip Moore*

### Professionalism

*Mark Haist*

### Strategic Planning

*Jeff Tanielian*

### Technical

*Roy Flahive, Chair*

*Gary Quiel, Vice Chair*

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# CHERISH IS THE WORD

# Once Upon A Sign

## Pursuit of a Grand Dame!

By Teresa M. Young, Sign Biz, Inc., Dana Point

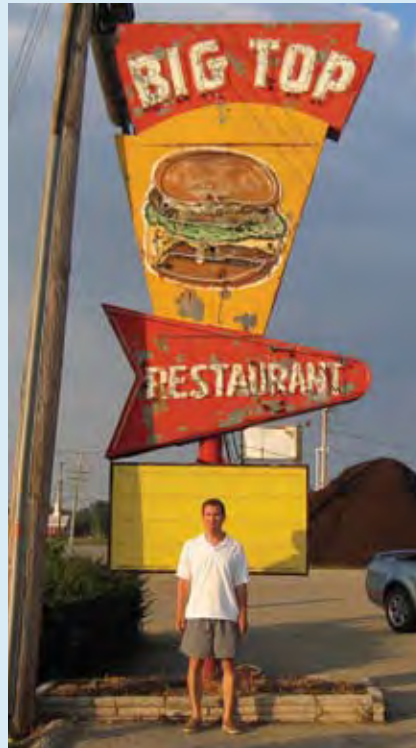
*This is a regular feature of the Signhugger Blog, syndicated to Signage Matters with the permission of Tod Swormstedt, Founder of the American Sign Museum.*

It's as true in the sign industry as it is anywhere else: a project is either easy from moment-one, or it is difficult all the way through to completion. It's as though some things are meant to be, and others are meant to be only if you work really, really hard.

Such is the case with items acquired by the American Sign Museum. Tod Swormstedt, the founder and Trustee of the Board which guides the museum, can spend countless hours tracking down the owner of an abandoned sign, only to discover the object of his desire is now scarred by random battering, and ravaged by time.

In other instances, a-beauty-of-a-sign can virtually knock on his door. Like many things in life, that which is out of reach can drive us harder to attain it. As in any endeavor that has passion behind it, the line between caring and obsessing can be a thin one.

How does Tod find his next object to acquire? Well, contrary to romantic belief, Tod does not drive around the country looking for signs. The museum is saving up for a new building, so that sort of largess with money is not in Tod's job description.



Tod will purchase signs, sometimes on eBay, sometimes from private parties. In other cases, they are donated. And in still other cases, he has to wrestle fate to stake his claim. Take the Big Top Restaurant sign—an experience he is not likely to cherish...

“One thing I have figured out, though: the more I “chase” a sign, the less likely the case for a positive outcome,” Tod says.

The “Big Top” saga can be traced back to at least six years ago when Tod first began receiving phone calls and e-mails about this “cool sign” the museum needed to get. Indeed, at that time, the sign was cool—ripe for acquisition, seeing how the business was closed down and the building boarded up.

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# Once Upon a Sign - continued

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The 1950 decade began with Harry Truman in office, Milton Berle was Mr. Television, the Weavers

were singing “Good Night Irene,” and moviegoers were watching “Sunset Boulevard.” The 50s were marked by a feeling of optimism, prosperity, and material comfort. Television came of age, the first McDonald’s opened and Elvis was the undisputed King. And a burger was 40 cents...

The Big Top Restaurant looked like a vintage Norman Rockwell picture of the 50s.

The restaurant finally closed around 2005, and the property has been for sale since then. Originally displayed in Mason, Ohio about a half-hour from the museum, the sign stood unattended after the closing of the restaurant.

Over the next six years, Tod made 40 to 50 phone calls, starting with the City of Mason, and then on to the realtor who had first listed the property. In every case, a helpful contact would assure Tod the owner of the sign would be informed of the museum’s interest. But despite these

many queries and contacts, no return call ever came.

The Hawaiian’s have a word, “pu lama” which means both “torch” and “to care for, treasure, cherish, save.” By this time, Tod was still remembering the sign as she had appeared six years earlier, and was determined to ‘pu lama’ this sign.

## He conquers who endures.

### -Persius

Late last year, the property was re-listed under another realtor, and it was this agent who finally made it possible to talk to the owner in person. Voila! The sign was now within reach!

In 2005, the paint on the sheet metal was still in relatively good shape. The museum’s policy is to avoid re-painting signs, so this was an important criterion for acquiring a sign. Six years later, there was barely any paint left, and what was worse is that there was a huge “crease” in the bottom cabinet of the three-tier sign—most likely caused by a

truck backing into the hapless icon. Not only was the sheet metal caved in, but the entire structural integrity of the sign was now compromised. This was more than cosmetic—the one-time marvel of a sign may now be past saving. The museum has some contemplating to do,



debating the merits of bringing Big Top back to life.

From a bygone era, now a faded memory, the Big Top just may be history, like Rockwell’s America and the 40-cent hamburger.

Stay tuned for the story of Suder’s Art Shop next issue—where the spirit of ‘pu lama’ pays off for everyone!

*Tod Swormstedt is the founder of the American Sign Museum in Cincinnati, OH. He is the former editor and publisher of Signs of the Times magazine. His brother, Wade, currently edits the century-old publication.*

“Spring is nature’s way of saying, “Let’s party!””

Robin Williams

# MAY IS MEMBER BENEFITS MONTH!

Over the last few months, CSA has added a number of new member benefit programs and has others on the drawing board. All are designed to save members and/or their employees time and/or money.

In May, rather than the traditional two membership dinner meetings held each month (one in Southern California and one in Northern California), CSA will be holding an unprecedented SIX (6) membership meetings throughout the state! The focus of all six meetings will be on the benefits of membership in CSA.

Volunteers, consultants, staff and vendors will be on hand at each meeting to provide information about the numerous new and continuing CSA member benefits. Jeff Aran, CSA's Director of Government Affairs and Legal Counsel will be at all six talking about how CSA's government affairs program benefits the members and the industry. Aran, considered by most to be California's pre-eminent sign attorney, will also talk about the FREE legal advice CSA members receive as a member benefit. Michael Glauser from CSA's new insurance partner,

Jenkins Insurance Group, will be on hand at each meeting to talk about CSA's comprehensive new insurance program and its benefits to members and employees. Glauser will also talk about the CSA Discount Card program that allows CSA member company employees to enjoy deep discounts on things like prescription drugs, hotels, golf, Lifelock (identity theft protection) and roadside assistance. CSA Executive Director Brad Walker and others from the CSA staff will explain CSA's Toolbox Safety program, CSA's new sign industry Job Board, how CSA is working with the CSLB to rid California of unlicensed sign contractors, and the exciting new member benefit programs and projects on the drawing board. Representatives of CSA's leadership will be on hand at each to talk about CSA meetings, including dinner meetings and the annual convention, as well as CSA's numerous communications benefit programs.

"These are going to be fun, informative meetings," Walker stated when announcing the planning of the meetings. "I see these meetings as dual purpose—

one, many of our current members are not aware of the addition of some of these programs so we are

using this opportunity to tell them about the programs and how they and their employees can use them. Secondly, these meetings are going to be a phenomenal opportunity to showcase CSA and what it has to offer prospective members," Walker added. "We are hoping to have lots of members, employees and prospective members at all six venues."

The Member Benefits Night tour kicks off on May 17th at the Piccadilly Inn (Shaw Ave.) in Fresno. Two nights later, the presenters will be at the Shepherder in Sacramento. The following week, the tour continues in San Diego (May 24th at the Holiday Inn, San Diego - Mission Valley), Pomona (May 25th at the Pomona Valley Mining Company) and Los Angeles (May 26th at the The Proud Bird). The final presentation will take place on May 31st at the Saki's Spin-A-Yarn in Fremont.

Cost for each meeting will remain \$35 per person unless a member brings a prospective member, in which case both eat free!

More information to follow in separate email notifications, but make sure to get at least one of these meetings on your calendar today!



# Strong Gains In Retail, Signage Demand

## Retail Growth Led by Automobile Dealers

From First Research [www.firstresearch.com](http://www.firstresearch.com)

### INDUSTRY INDICATORS

US corporate profits, an indicator of corporate demand for signage, jumped 26.4 percent in the third quarter of 2010 compared to the same period in 2009.

Total US retail sales, a potential measure of signage demand, increased 8.2 percent in the first two months of 2011 compared to the same period in 2010.

### QUARTERLY INDUSTRY UPDATE

#### Study Touts Benefits of Outdoor Advertising—

Every dollar spent on out-of-home advertising translates to an average of \$2.80 in product sales, according to a recent study. The report, results of which were released by the Outdoor Advertising Association of America (OAAA) in March 2011, concluded that out-of-home advertising has a higher return on investment than television and print advertising. Used in conjunction with other advertising media, out-of-home advertisements also increase campaign retention rates. Among the benefits of outdoor advertising cited by the OAAA

is the medium's ability to reach consumers closer to the point of sale.

#### Signs Point to Retail Improvement—

US retail sales, a key demand indicator for sign manufacturers, continued to rebound in early 2011. Sales during February rose 1 percent compared to the month prior, marking the eighth consecutive monthly gain. Such sales growth allows retailers to expand their marketing budgets and operations, creating new business for sign makers. Automobile dealers led the improvement seen in February, with sales rising 2.3 percent month-over-month and 23.7 percent compared to the same month in 2010. Overall, February 2011 retail sales increased 8.9 percent year-over-year.



## State Roundup - continued

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**Westminster**—The Westminster Redevelopment Agency recently authorized a \$670,000+ contract for installation of an electronic message center by the local auto dealers association. Unfortunately, the proposed contract was with an unlicensed contractor. When the news became public, several CSA members objected and CSA legal counsel wrote a letter objecting on behalf of the industry. The CSLB is investigating and the *Orange County Register* published a story, quoting CSA's concerns.

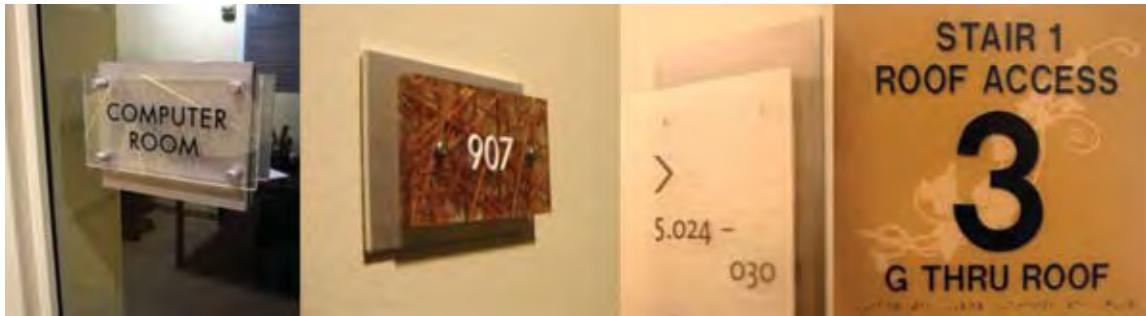


**Solvang**—Solvang's City Council voted unanimously to approve a new committee to evaluate proposed changes to the rules governing signage posted outside businesses. One speaker in the Danish-themed town said those who backed the existing rules were "preaching a gospel that if it was good enough under Christian IV it's just as good under Frederick VI. This is how we lived our lives in Denmark for several hundred years. We need some basic changes in the sign ordinance."

## New Member Spotlight

# WOLFPACK SIGN GROUP JOINS CSA

By New Member Ryan Meyer, Wolfpack Sign Group



Wolfpack Sign Group is a full service architectural sign company specializing in high-end ADA, code and amenity sign design, fabrication and installation.

The original company was purchased by current owners Peter and Carolyn Wolf in 1995 and quickly shed its mom and pop roots to become a well-known sign fabricator in San Diego County. We made our name change in 2000 to support our sales and marketing efforts in the building industry. We have since completed thousands of Multi Family/Multi Unit Housing signage projects and have gathered a wealth of industry knowledge.

We currently hold both California and Nevada state contractor licenses and belong to the appropriate labor unions, allowing us to perform our own installations statewide and further insure our well-designed signs look great on the wall. Over the years we have become experts in the understanding of federal, state, and local building/fire codes which regulate interior signs.

Many large sign companies focus their efforts on electrical signs associated with national accounts and need a partner to assist with custom fabricated ADA interior signs, and we are precisely that type of sign company. I'll be honest; we joined CSA in order to increase our network of partners, expand our expertise in this industry, and to join a network of proven sign manufacturing companies.



# Fun & Excitement Abound at CSA Booth

“We Know We’re Different” is the theme for the California Sign Association (CSA) booth (#4829) at the 2011 ISA Sign Expo starting in Las Vegas on April 27. All visitors to the booth will be given a snazzy CSA logoed, micro-fiber mini-bag for holding glasses, sunglasses or other valuables. Inside each bag will be a pair of sunglasses with the slogan “CSA - We Know We’re Different” on one of the arms along with some sample packets of Carmex to use when your lips get chapped from too much California sun!



If you are already a CSA member, be prepared for someone to slap a “CSA Member” ribbon on the bottom of your badge holder when you visit the booth. This way,



you can show all of the other exhibitors and attendees you are a proud CSA member. If you are not already a CSA member, stop by and get information about the association representing

YOUR industry in California. We will be offering a great money-saving “show special” relative to your CSA dues, but you have to stop by the booth to learn about it. We will have membership information for non-members to review and we are confident that once they learn what CSA is doing for them and what the show special entails, they will join on the spot!

As part of CSA’s fundraising efforts for the Western States Sign Council (WSSC), Board members and staff will be selling raffle tickets at the CSA booth as well. For every five-hundred tickets sold, we will be raffling off one brand new 32 gig iPad 2. Your odds of winning

are actually much better than one-in-500 since every time we cross a 500 ticket sold increment, we add another iPad to be raffled. Tickets are \$10 each or three (3) for \$20. Proceeds from the raffle and the other WSSC fundraising activities (golf tournament and program advertising) are distributed amongst the four state associations that comprise WSSC (Arizona, California, Nevada, Utah) with CSA getting nearly half of the money raised.

This money goes towards assisting the associations to protect the sign industry from unnecessary and unwarranted government intrusion. Make sure when you stop by, you purchase your raffle tickets.

Outside the CSA booth, attendees will enjoy miles of aisles where the who’s who of the sign industry manufacturers and service suppliers will be displaying their wares. Shopping for your business will never be so simple! When away from the exhibit hall floor, ISA has some tremendous educational opportunities for attendees to enjoy. This is the time of year when the sign world comes together.

To get registered, go to the ISA Sign Expo website at [www.signexpo.org](http://www.signexpo.org). Once on the website, you will have lots of options including how to register to attend, how to sign-up to exhibit, what the bevy of educational opportunities include, and much more including hotel lodging information.

**See  
you  
in  
Vegas!**



# At the Capital

By Jeff Aran, Esq., CSA Legal Counsel



**Regulatory Tsunami**—California is lost in a flood of regulatory waters, according to a recent poll. No surprise there: 84 percent of California business owners wouldn't locate a new business in this state, show the preliminary results from an ongoing survey released in April by a coalition of businesses at a website focused on California's economic recovery. The main lesson of the survey



is that too much regulation is bad for job creation. Nothing new to CSA members!

**Legislation**—As of the end of March, no new significant signage legislation has been introduced. Legislators continue to be pre-occupied with ongoing budget challenges.

## A few bills of note:

**AB 49**—Establishes the State Office of Permit Assistance to assist local agencies streamline the permit process. Authorizes the OPA to call a conference of parties to resolve questions or mediate disputes arising from a development/construction permit application. Requires the OPA to develop guidelines and, if funded, provide grant money for expedited permitting.

**SB 454**—Measure would have given the Energy Commission authority to prosecute those who fail to comply with California's energy efficiency standards. Amended to redirect enforcement authority to CSLB and to focus efforts on unlicensed contractors and those who are purposefully avoiding the permitting process and Title 24.

**AB 994**—Retains "on-premise" sign designation for signs that might be deemed "off-premise" upon dissolution of a redevelopment zone.

## Signs of a Successful

**Downtown**, a program created by CSA, will be presented at the League of California Cities Annual Conference in San Francisco, September 22-23. Panelists include San Jose Planning Director Joe Horwedel, City of Sonoma Councilwoman (and business owner) Joanne Sanders, and CSA Legal Counsel and Government Affairs Director Jeff Aran. CSA is proud to be one of 35 seminars accepted by the League out of the 148 submittals.

## REGULATORY

**CHP**—It's not often CSA interacts with CHP, but in March Jeff Aran and CSA president Mark Gastineau met with senior CHP legislative leadership to discuss interpretation of vehicle length issues. A CSA member was ticketed for hauling signs on a flatbed/trailer combo that exceeded maximum

allowable lengths. The member was stopped in Redding on the way to a job in Oregon. CHP insisted the rig be disassembled and towed to the Oregon border, where it was reassembled and taken to the job—with the same truck-tractor. After meeting with the CHP, it was agreed the regulation was correctly applied under current law (although seemingly unfair—the assembly would be legal in other states and there are California exemptions for longer boat, pipe and auto trailers).

**CEC**—CSA's Technical Committee continues its work with the Energy Commission toward streamlining regulations. In March, CEC started a round of workshops for the next regulatory cycle (effective January, 2014). Mostly technical correction and clarifications to the certification forms are underway.



# MARCH DINNER MEETINGS

## Oohs and Ahs Filled the Room...



The CSA March Dinner Meetings were described by some in attendance as “the best CSA meeting ever.” CSA Board member Jim Cross (Best Signs – Palm Springs) and Microdesk’s technical experts on Sketch-up, David Banyard and John Barkwell, enthralled crowds both north and south with the easy-to-use functionality of Google SketchUp.

Jim showed us many examples of designs he had rendered in SketchUp and then took us through the process of creating a 3-D image of a design sketched by hand on paper. (Insert oohs and ahs here!) The presentations were informative, enlightening and sprinkled with humor. If you were not able to attend, you missed a good one!

*Photos courtesy of Kozell Boren  
(Signtronix, Inc. – Torrance)*



**Lots more in store for the  
CSA May Member meetings!  
See page 6 for information,  
dates and locations!**

## Legal Quips

IHOP v. IHOP . . . A trademark battle finding the pancake house in a flap with the International House of Prayer, which IHOP the restaurant claims commandeered its logo and marketing without consent, is set to be resolved out of court. In the world of trademarks, the issue usually is whether the similar use confuses or deceives the consumer. So, unless they're selling pancakes at church on a regular basis, don't see much of a problem here.



# Advertise With CSA

**Our full-color newsletter is an unbeatable opportunity to reach your target market of sign industry professionals**

*Signage Matters* is our full-color newsletter delivered to our membership every 45 days. *Signage Matters* is a vital communications tool that reports on the relevant day-to-day activities of the association, educational articles, seminar announcements, and local and state government reports that are essential for the industry.

Our publications are referenced by more than 3000 professionals representing all levels of management involved in the on-premise sign industry. Our decision-makers include owners and managers of companies that specialize in the design, manufacture and the installation of on-premise signs. Call Lynda Walls at 916-932-0021 to learn about rates and schedules!

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State Roundup

May Is Member Benefits Month

Meet CSA at the ISA Expo

CSA Dinner Meetings

## **www.calsign.org: A GREAT RESOURCE!**

The CSA website is a great resource that can help you stay informed and in touch with what's going on in our industry.

Find local sign ordinances, state regulations, government affairs, industry events, CSA calendar of events, CSA publications archives, a member's only section and more!



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