PRESS RELEASE

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Houston Still Makes Things

Houston's thriving manufacturing and
fabrication sectors a bright spot in sluggish U.S. economy

Houston, Texas (11 January 2011) Houston was recently ranked number one in the nation for industrial jobs. A new issue of *Cite: The Architecture + Design Review of Houston* looks in-depth at the city's thriving manufacturing base and asks how its full potential can be realized. During this time of high unemployment and trade imbalances, when Americans fear the nation has lost its grit, Houston has held its ground.

"Houston's entrepreneurial scene isn't as pretty or well-heeled as Silicon Valley," says Raj Mankad, editor of *Cite*. "The industry is hidden in plain sight. Once you open your eyes, you see warehouses in every corner of the city." The lead article of the Cite issue looks inside the warehouses scattered across this sprawling city.

Jerry Frederick, the founder and CEO of Camcraft 3D, located his business behind a drab strip center. Inside, however, are three state-of-the-art CNC routers—computer-driven drills that carve wood into intricate forms. For one client, Frederick reproduced the 2,500-year-old carvings of Persepolis. This high-tech fabricator's background is typical of Houston's diverse population. Frederick grew up speaking Cajun in backcountry Louisiana. He worked as a machinist in the oil and gas industry, and picked up computer programming on his own. His company's first big job was to make 200 doors for the home of Michael Dell, of Dell Computers, which Frederick completed out of his garage.

Houston's port, petrochemical industry, NASA, and the Texas Medical Center have created a demand for large- and small-scale manufacturing.

Keith Jennings is the CEO of Crow Corporation, which is profiled in the special issue of *Cite*. On any given day, his routers, laser cutters, and stamping machines will turn out fuel connectors for Cryogenics trucks, dies for rubber-molding equipment, components for electrical utilities, surgical devices, aircraft seatbelt parts, and panels for public art sculptures.

In a roundtable discussion, Jennings explains, "In Houston, we have a wealth of opportunity for people whether they are college graduates or not. I know a lot of people who are good at what they do, so they go get a loan and some equipment. Several years later they are busy, covered up with work."

Christof Spieler, an engineer and lecturer at Rice University, says that Houston's designers could digitally tap into the city's manufacturing strength to create sustainable buildings. Houston is well-positioned to help lead the nation into a blue-collar, high-tech, and sustainable future.

Cite 84 will be released February 1, 2011. An advanced PDF of the current issue is currently available for the press. Individual issues of *Cite* can be purchased by calling

Rice Design Alliance at 713.348.4876, or you can subscribe to *Cite* by going to citemag.org.

ABOUT RICE DESIGN ALLIANCE

The Rice Design Alliance is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of architecture, urban design, and the built environment in the Houston region through educational programs, active programs to initiate physical improvements, and the publication of *Cite: The Architecture + Design Review of Houston* and OffCite.org. Membership is open to the public. More information is available at www.ricedesignalliance.org or by calling 713-348-4876.