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Golden girl

4:11 PM 9/17/2009 by Todd Longwell, AP

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Creating the Emmy statuette is an exercise in precision

The life of an Emmy statuette begins far from the lights and cameras of Hollywood in a non-descript building in a residential industrial neighborhood in a Northwest Chicago.

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"Passing by, you wouldn't have a clue," says Noreen Prohaska, account executive for the building's tenant R.S. Owens, manufacturers of the Emmys and numerous other prestigious awards, including the Oscars. "But it's an 82,000-square-foot factory and we employ about 170 workers."

Each Emmy statuette takes about 15 man hours to complete, and all the work is done by hand. Production typically commences in late June.

Using a single steel mold, workers cast the statuette's winged female figure one at a time with molten zinc alloy,

heated to 960 degrees. After the figure is dried, it's checked for imperfections, deburred, and polished to a mirror finish.

A sphere crafted from copper strips is soldered to the figure's hands, then four layers of metal plating are applied -- copper, nickel, silver and 24-carat gold -- followed by a heavy lacquer, which gives it a shiny finish that requires no polishing.

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center band and a domed top cast; it is finished with the same material as the figure.

About 150 of the completed statuettes are packed into black presentation boxes, with form-fitting foam rubber lined in black satin, and transported by train and/or truck to the Nokia Theatre in Los Angeles.

At noon on the day of the Primetime Emmys, TV Academy office and facilities manager Brijido Ruelas has the statuettes retrieved from storage, removed from their boxes, wiped down with a cloth and placed on a table backstage, where they will be picked up by the winners that evening. Any left over after the ceremonies are placed in storage at the TV Academy in North Hollywood for use at the next year's awards.

About a month later, the winners are mailed a personalized band engraved with their name, show and category.

"There's a sticker on the bottom of the trophy that has instructions on how to put on the band," Ruelas says. "It's pretty simple."



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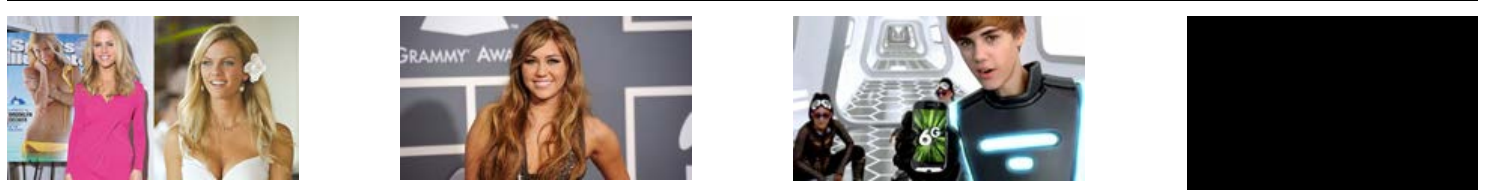
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