

The Return of the Split Flap: Oat Foundry's Quest to Revive 30th Street Station's Iconic Sound

Known for Split Flap boards, Oat Foundry aims to revive the nostalgic 'click' at Philly's 30th Street Station, blending analog charm with modern innovation.

PHILADELPHIA, PA, UNITED STATES, January 23, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A decade into their journey, Oat Foundry, a Philadelphia-based company, has celebrated many successes reviving the nostalgia of Split Flap boards in modern spaces – but they have their sights set on a big win: bringing a working Split Flap back to 30th Street Station. Founded in 2013 by Drexel University alums including CEO Mark Kuhn, the company has transformed from a senior thesis project to a multimillion-dollar international signage and technology business, specializing in these iconic displays. Inspired by the local landmark at 30th Street Station, Oat Foundry has reinvented Split Flap boards for contemporary use, mixing the charm of the past with modern technology – and is now ready to bring them back into transit halls.



While the Oat Foundry boards share a resemblance with the iconic Solari board of 30th Street Station, Kuhn insists they're vastly different beneath the retro facade.

Both locally and globally, these boards have infiltrated some cool spots – Philadelphians can find them installed at Stephen Starr's Pod in University City or Pass & Stow at the Phillies Stadium; or abroad in locations like Samsung's retail and event space near King's Cross in London, and The Irish Exit in The Moynihan Train Hall in New York City. The Split Flap click-clack symphony resonated for decades in major transit halls and airport terminals, but they have slowly been replaced by the mundane: digital and LED screens. Many believe it is time for the [Split Flap's return to the historic William H. Gray III 30th Street Station](#), powered by Oat Foundry's flagship product.

The Oat Foundry Split Flap boards, while visually very similar to the iconic Solari board at 30th Street Station, feature significant technological advancements. The original Solari board, now retired to a transit museum, used outdated computers for displaying transit information and did not comply with modern ADA requirements for public information displays – also, it no longer works.

As part of a \$550 million renovation, [Amtrak plans to bring the original Split Flap board back](#) to 30th Street Station. However, it will serve as a non-functioning decorative piece without its characteristic sound, a decision that has disappointed many travelers who consider the sound an integral part of the station's ambiance.



Split Flap at Moynihan Train Hall – The Irish Exit bar has changed the atmosphere in one of the highest foot traffic train stations in the world.

“

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Mark Kuhn, Oat Foundry CEO

In contrast, Oat Foundry's Split Flap boards sound incredible and work relentlessly well - an Oat Foundry Split Flap in their Philadelphia headquarters has surpassed 37 million rotations. Oat Foundry boards are equipped with contemporary electronics and made with modern manufacturing techniques. They can display real-time transit data through their custom API. Additionally, the software focuses on usability and security, designed with a user-friendly interface and accessible via a secure network device. Importantly, Oat Foundry's boards use ADA-compliant fonts while retaining the nostalgic sound that many associate with the traditional Split Flap boards.

“We are ready to build one for 30th St.,” declares CEO Mark Kuhn, with unwavering enthusiasm. [As construction kicks off at 30th St](#), Kuhn says, “We're ready to work with the Plenary Infrastructure Philadelphia team - Gilbane Building Company and Skidmore, Owings & Merrill - to incorporate a working Oat Foundry Split Flap into the renovation”. Kuhn continues, “...this would be a win for Drexel, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and ultimately all travelers”.

In a world saturated with screens, the Oat Foundry team champions the simplicity of Split Flap

boards. They're not TVs; they're analog storytellers in this digital age. The subtle, nostalgic sound grabs attention - it makes people look up, engaged, at the next alert, without a blaring, disruptive sound effect. When a Split Flap starts rotating, they're entranced in the motion, until it lands on that next update or message.

Recently, Oat Foundry marked a significant milestone in proving their technology works in a major station by installing two of their signature Split Flap boards at The Irish Exit, a bar in Amtrak's Moynihan Train Hall. This installation is notable for Oat Foundry

as it is the first to feature real-time Long Island Rail Road (LIRR), Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), and other Amtrak transit data, showcasing a unique blend of innovation and tradition. Moynihan Train Hall travelers, which sees over 650,000 daily, have embraced these boards with enthusiasm, highlighted by positive social media reactions. The nostalgic appeal of these boards resonates deeply with commuters, recalling memories of a bygone era of travel.

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