

OUR VIEW

ARTS WILL BE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The arts as a community asset are growing in the Mankato region, and the effort deserves support because arts as part of community development will lead to economic development.

People have to like living and working here to sustain and increase community growth. The arts can play a big role in that attractiveness.

Several efforts are already underway.

CityArts is a new kind of art show that will feature 15 to 20 sculptures in downtown Mankato, along Hickory and Second streets as well as along Belgrade Avenue in North Mankato. The event is modeled somewhat after a similar effort in Sioux Falls, S.D., known as SculptureWalk, where in the end the best piece of public art is voted on and is then purchased from the artist. There is \$10,000 set aside for the purpose of purchasing the art in the Mankato event.

The City Center Partnership — a business group — is sponsoring and helping fund the CityArts event. The Andreas Foundation also has pledged \$10,000 for each of the next five years.

Twin Rivers Center for the Arts, the local arts nonprofit umbrella organization, is also supporting the sculpture event as well as a new Arts by The River art fair scheduled for June 11-12 at Riverfront Park.

That is expected to draw dozens of artists through a juried exhibit process. Artists must be approved by a panel before they are allowed to display. That helps keep the quality of the art at a high level.

At the Arts by the River event, the Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota will provide activities for children.

The arts events will likely draw spectators from around the region and are a good example of the arts community and business community working together for the betterment of the Mankato region.

Part of the credit goes also to the Envision 2020 process that involved some 500 citizens in coming up with ways to improve the attractiveness and draw of the area.

We're well on our way to doing that with these two events. We expect more will grow from those as the word gets out the Mankato cares about and nurtures the arts.

Why it matters

Mankato is developing arts in ways that can be good for tourism, and these efforts are worth supporting.