

Sculpture tour wins accolades

By Tim Krohn

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ST. PAUL — Mankato's first CityArt Walking Sculpture Tour is getting a "Best of Minnesota" accolade Saturday at the State Fair.

"We're really thrilled with the award and recognition and with the great public response we've received (about the Sculpture Tour)," said Tami Paulsen, co-chair of the CityArt committee.

The State Fair event — Minnesota Community Pride Showcase — aims to support individuals and groups statewide to help solve community problems.

It is sponsored by the fair, MinnPost.com and InCommons, which is a statewide initiative to connect people face-to-face and online to share resources to solve community problems (InCommons.org).

Judges selected the top 30 entries from the 67 submitted to showcase at the fair. On Saturday the winning entries will be displayed at Carousel Park (in front of the Grandstand), with entertainment and events from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. A 12:30 p.m.

awards ceremony will take place on the Carousel Park stage.

In a letter submitted to the Community Pride Showcase judges, Mankato leaders said the art tour is helping to revive the cities' downtowns, part of a City Center Renaissance Plan drafted in 2007.

The Mankato tour features 25 sculptures throughout downtown Mankato along Hickory and Second streets, and along Belgrade Avenue

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Pat Christman

"White Buffalo Calf Woman," by Lee Leuning and Sherri Treeby, is one of the sculptures on the Mankato ArtWalk Sculpture Tour.

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in North Mankato.

The sculpture tour in Mankato will feature new sculptures each year.

Paulsen, and Shannon Robinson, executive director of Twin Rivers Council for the Arts, are already working on next year's Sculpture Tour.

"We have a goal to grow it by at least eight sculptures," Paulsen said.

They are also putting out a call to get local artists more involved.

Currently, Mankato works with other cities with sculpture tours, including Sioux Falls and Eau Claire, Wis., to call for sculpture submissions from across the country. The cities narrow the list of potential sculptures and then each city has a jury to pick pieces they want to include.

Paulsen said they will have local artists submit sculptures for the Mankato tour so they can be included in the local jury process.

Robinson and Paulsen said that if the tour continues to grow, it could be extended to other areas of the city center, including Old Town or South Front.

But, they said, there need to be enough sculptures so they don't get spread out too far.

"There needs to be a high concentration of artwork in an area so the walkers have a good experience," Paulsen said.

At the end of each year's display period, individuals and businesses have the opportunity to purchase any of the sculptures and make them a permanent part of the community. The tour also includes awards for "Best in Show" and a "People's Choice" sculpture, which allows the public to vote for their favorite one to be purchased and permanently displayed in the city.