

Mural Celebration
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YOU'RE WATCHING DURANGO TV NEWS, I'M WENDY GRAHAM SETTLE.

IT'S HARD TO MISS THE 200-FOOT-LONG MURAL THAT STRETCHES ALONG THE BACK WALL OF THE KROEGER BUILDING IN TOWN PLAZA.

IT'S CALLED, SIMPLY, THE TOWN PLAZA MURAL.

AND NOW, YOU'LL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO MEET THE ARTISTS AND VOLUNTEERS WHO CREATED DURANGO'S LARGEST MURAL AT A CELEBRATION SCHEDULED FOR 5 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17TH, BY THE PLAZA.

THE MURAL IS A PROJECT OF LOCAL FIRSTS' CREATIVE ARTS INITIATIVE THAT CONNECTS LOCAL FIRST BUSINESSES WITH ARTISTS TO SUPPORT BUSINESS GROWTH, PROVIDE LIVING WAGES TO LOCAL ARTISTS, BEAUTIFY THE AREA, AND GROW A THRIVING ARTISAN NETWORK IN LA PLATA COUNTY.

THE PROJECT WAS SUPPORTED BY A 5,000-DOLLAR CREATIVE GRANT FROM THE CITY OF DURANGO ALONG WITH SPONSORSHIPS FROM A NUMBER OF BUSINESSES. AND LEAD ARTISTS, MATTHEW FRENCH-HOLT, HAYLEY KIRKMAN, AND LEXIS LOEB, IDENTIFIED THE KROEGER BUILDING AS THE CANVAS FOR THE GIANT MURAL BECAUSE OF ITS LOCATION NEXT TO THE DURANGO AND SILVERTON TRAIN TRACKS WHERE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF VISITORS PASS EACH YEAR.

“A LOT OF PEOPLE WOULD ARGUE THAT IT NEEDED A LITTLE SPRUCING AND IT WAS A PERFECT PARTNERSHIP WITH A HARDWARE STORE THAT SOLD PAINT. AND WE WERE REALLY EXCITED TO BRING THIS TO AN AREA THAT WAS OTHERWISE OVERLOOKED BY PASSENGERS ON THE TRAIN AND PEOPLE WALKING PAST 11TH STREET, OR 10TH STREET.

YEAH SO, WE WE THOUGHT IT WAS A GREAT AVENUE AND ALLEY TO DISPLAY SUCH A LARGE PIECE. WE JUST WANTED TO DO SOMETHING A LITTLE DIFFERENT THAN WHAT'S BEEN DONE IN HISTORIC DOWNTOWN DURANGO WE WANTED IT TO BE COLORFUL.” (Hayley Kirkman)

THE ARTISTS CAME UP WITH THE CONCEPT OF REPRESENTING THE LA PLATA COUNTY LIFESTYLE AFTER HOLDING A NUMBER OF COMMUNITY MEETINGS TO GENERATE IDEAS.

“ALL THE PLANTS AND ANIMALS ARE ACTUALLY NATIVE, YOU KNOW, HERE TO THE REGION, SO WE CAME UP WITH A LOT OF DIFFERENT IDEAS FOR THAT. IT WAS A LOT OF FUN.” (Matthew French-Holt)

THE ANIMAS RIVER AND THE DURANGO AND SILVERTON NARROW GAUGE TRAIN

TRACKS UNIFY THE MURAL'S SCENES. RAFTERS, FISHERMEN, SKIERS, DOG-WALKING HIKERS, AND OTHERS ARE DEPICTED AS SOUTHWESTERN INDIAN PICTOGRAPHS.

AN IMAGE OF THE SOUTHERN UTE BEAR DANCE WAS CREATED BY NAVAJO ARTIST PAIGE BELINTE THE MURAL ALSO HAS AN INTERACTIVE COMPONENT.

SO WE WANTED TO CREATE THESE ASPEN'S WITH THE IDEA THAT PEOPLE COULD COME AND TAKE PICTURES IN FRONT OF THEM.

HENCE, THE HEART DGO AND THEY HAVE BEEN REALLY POPULAR. WE'VE SEEN A LOT OF PEOPLE TAKING PICTURES IN FRONT OF IT SENIOR PORTRAITS.

DURANGO ARTIST LEXIS LOEB SAYS SHE HOPES THE MURAL WILL NOT ONLY ENTERTAIN TRAIN RIDERS AS THEY PASS BY, BUT ALSO WILL INSPIRE DURANGO RESIDENTS TO APPRECIATE WHY THEY LIVE IN THE AREA.

“I THOUGHT IT WAS AN AWESOME OPPORTUNITY TO JUST LIKE EXPRESS MY APPRECIATION FOR WHAT I FIND IMPORTANT IN DURANGO, AND I THINK THAT LIKE WHEN IT COMES DOWN TO IT WHAT ALL OF US ARE HERE FOR IS LIKE THE NATURAL FLORA AND FAUNA THAT MAKE THIS PLACE SO UNIQUE. AND I THINK WE JUST OWE HOMMAGE TO THEM FOR ALL BEING HERE AND LIKE LIVING THE LIFE WE LIVE SO.

IT'S JUST BEEN A LOT OF FUN TO WORK WITH THE COMMUNITY AND AND LIKE REALLY UNDERSTAND THE PLANTS AND ANIMALS THAT DO ARE HERE AND I DIDN'T EVEN REALIZE IT UNTIL THIS PROJECT.” (Lexis Loeb)

IF YOU'D LIKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE MURAL OR THE CELEBRATION EVENT, VISIT THE LOCAL FIRST WEBSITE AT LOCAL-FIRST.ORG.

THANKS FOR WATCHING THIS EDITION OF DURANGO TV NEWS. IF YOU LIKED THIS STORY, YOU CAN WATCH AGAIN ON OUR WEBSITE AT DURANGOTV.COM, WHERE YOU ALSO CAN FIND AN ARCHIVE OF ALL OUR PAST STORIES AND SIGN UP FOR OUR DAILY NEWSLETTER. IN THE MEANTIME, YOU CAN CATCH US ON DURANGO CABLE TV CHANNEL 15.

I'M WENDY GRAHAM SETTLE FOR DURANGO TV NEWS.