



News Release

Ketchum's StreetArt Project Unveiled *City's Commemorative Coin Project Takes On New Life*

KETCHUM, Idaho (October 31, 2013) – Seattle public art consultant, Jack Mackie, was the inspiration that newly hired public works director and city engineer Robyn Mattison needed to come up with the City's latest public art endeavor. Mackie was invited to Ketchum in May 2013 by the Ketchum Arts Commission to present creative ideas regarding art in public places. These ideas often involve usually mundane City infrastructure and utilize creative process to reveal interesting and provocative projects that are compelling to both residents and guests in the Wood River Valley's creative hub of Ketchum.

Mattison glanced up at the images hanging on the wall of the City Council Chamber during Mackie's presentation to City staff and conjured up her own creative public art idea.

Nearly three years ago, Ketchum city administrator Gary Marks introduced a project to commemorate the City of Ketchum's 50th anniversary of incorporation as an Idaho municipality on October 16, 2011. Marks assembled the Ketchum 50th Anniversary Celebration Committee and, along with the Ketchum Community Development Corporation, commissioned a 50th Anniversary Commemorative Coin Program. Coin designs were developed by individual artists and designs were selected by a blind jury process. Artist names were excluded during the jury process. Ketchum Arts Commission Chair, Claudia McCain, represented the KAC as a jury member.

Then, more recently, Mattison came up with the notion that the coin designs would make interesting manhole covers. Not knowing the history of the coin project, Mattison pitched her idea to Marks and Mayor Randy Hall. The idea was enthusiastically received by both Marks and Hall and Mattison, along with director of parks and recreation, Jen Smith, was directed to work with the Ketchum Arts Commission to bring the proposal to fruition. The KAC recommended beginning the process with two of the six reverse-side designs which will be unveiled at the November 4, 2013 Ketchum City Council meeting. The remaining four designs will go through their own manufacturing process soon.

The project was coined "StreetArt" by the creative team of City staff and volunteer commission members.

"In researching the potential project, we discovered that producing artistic manhole covers is in fact a very old and still a very popular idea worldwide," says director of parks and recreation, Jen Smith. "They actually date back to ancient Greek and Roman times when

moving materials away from or to inhabited areas for human benefit was first thought up. Our ancestors were sharp enough to introduce creativity into everyday life. Why *not* make them attractive?”

“This is yet another project to add to Ketchum’s long list of those that exhibit the City’s resilient nature,” said Mayor Randy Hall. “Here we had a stalled public art project because of the economic recession and all it took was a few of our sharpest and most creative staff and community members to tweak the project back to life in a different way. I think it’s another fantastic indication that Ketchum is on its way out of troubled times,” Hall concluded.

Artists who submitted designs for the commemorative coin contest and were selected by a jury included Denise DeCoster, Ralph Harris, Adam Marks, Noah Bowen, and Gary Marks. Marks removed himself from judging the designs because of his capacity as a submitting artist for the coin project. The program was based on a similar endeavor that Marks led in Whitefish, Montana whereby the commemorative coins were sold to community members as a fundraiser. While sponsors for the Ketchum project did not materialize, the coin project produced the seven designs (one common reverse [tails] design and six different heads designs) which were printed, framed and hung in the Council Chamber.

The project will be paid for out of the City’s general fund. City staff members are researching the possibilities of re-purposing the replaced manhole covers for either cash or credit from a foundry or metal artist.

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About the Ketchum Arts Commission

The KAC was created by the City of Ketchum in 2009 with the objective of integrating arts and culture into the community's life. Among its initiatives are Cover Art, the wrapping of utility boxes in downtown Ketchum; Art on Fourth; and the development of policies and plans for public art in the community. The KAC is a division of the Ketchum Parks & Recreation Department and receives support from the Ketchum Community Development Corporation (KCDC). The Commission consists of local volunteers who are active in and passionate about the arts.

About the City of Ketchum

The City of Ketchum is located in the Wood River Valley in south central Idaho. Founded in 1880 during the mining boom, Ketchum is now regarded as one of the most popular destinations for winter and summer visitors due to its world-class skiing, mountain biking, fishing, hiking, restaurants, art galleries and shopping. The City of Ketchum hosts the famous annual Wagon Days Parade, held on Labor Day weekend, and numerous other year-round attractions. Ketchum is home to more than 10,000 full- and part-time residents. For more information about the City of Ketchum, visit www.ketchumidaho.org.

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