

Grants Basket Array a reality

Functional art unveiled, call to artists issued

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GRANTS — The first-ever Native Basket Array, a culturally-oriented, outdoor public art project, was unveiled Friday at the Chamber of Commerce and New Mexico Mining Museum.

Two in a series of large communication satellite dishes have been wrapped in a special material to resemble a Western Apache basket featuring a star design, and a replica of a Chacoan basket created between 1200-1300 A.D., found by a group of Boy Scouts visiting El Malpais in the 1980s.

The project, which will be installed at sites in Grants and Milan, is a collaboration between Connect 66 Internet, the Cibola Arts Council, the Village

of Milan, the city of Grants, and Grants-Cibola County Chamber of Commerce.

Roadside attraction

John Badal, CEO of Sacred Wind Enterprises Inc., parent company of Connect 66 Internet, said the art project goes well beyond even the arts community.

"This speaks to the culture of Grants and Cibola County itself, and I think it promotes the arts. We're hoping to promote tourism with this Native Basket Array project, and we think it will even help improve the quality of life in attracting different businesses — culturally-oriented businesses, arts oriented

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Kathy Helms/Independent
John Badal, CEO of Sacred Wind Enterprises Inc., addresses a small crowd gathered Friday morning outside the New Mexico Mining Museum for the unveiling of the Native Basket Array. Behind him is a replica of the Western Apache basket, star design.

Hyatt: MCHS charter void; untrue, says council head

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Basket Array

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businesses.”

Badal said he didn't know where the Native Basket Array project was going to go. "It could take wings and go in several different directions; and with public support like yours, it could just blossom," he told the group gathered for the unveiling.

Robert Gallegos, executive director of Cibola Arts Council, provided some background on how the project was started.

Gallegos said that he and Randy Collins, president of the Arts Council board of directors, were invited to have dinner with John and Adrianna Badal in early December.

"John was discussing an art project involving the repurposing of satellite dishes to create images of Native American baskets which would be used to attract tourists along our stretch of Route 66 in Grants and Milan," Gallegos said. The project grew from there, with Sacred Wind committing to purchasing a number of satellite dishes and having them



Kathy Helms/Independent

A replica of a Chacoan basket, found by Boy Scouts visiting El Malpais in the 1980s, is now part of a Native Basket Array in downtown Grants.

wrapped, at a cost of \$3,000 each.

"It's not often that one can collaborate with individuals who possess a rare combination of vision, creativity and generosity," Gallegos said.

Inspiring creativity

Gallegos also announced a call to New Mexico artists for original paintings of the interior of round tray baskets incorporating traditional designs emblematic of a New Mexico tribe or pueblo. Winning artists will have their art featured as part of the installation and will be awarded a \$1,000 price.

"Sacred Wind has decided to ease the burden on artists by asking for original paintings on structures of their choice - canvas, Masonite, wood, etcetera - no less than 12 by 12 inches and no more than 24 by 24 inches," Gallegos said.

After receiving the paintings, the Native Basket Array committee will choose from the work of those artists who will be selected to paint images on the satellite dishes, he added.

Gallegos thanked the city of Grants for allowing the basket display, in particular, Mayor Martin "Modey" Hicks and City Manager Laura Jaramillo, "for seeing the possibilities of the project," and the Cibola Arts Council Board of Directors for its willingness to support it.

"The only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision," Gallegos said, quoting Helen Keller.

Tammy Legler, executive director of the Chamber of Commerce, said the array is an example of pulling together to capitalize on the strength of the community to be more attractive and make Grants the adventure destination in northwest New Mexico.

"Who knows what other kind of creativity this will inspire for our community, like attracting more tourists and artists to our area and maybe even more overnight stays in our community," Legler said.

Artists submissions for the Native Basket Array are due by 5 p.m. June 29 and must be delivered to Gallegos at the Double Six Gallery, 1001 W. Santa Fe Ave. All artists will be notified of the committee's decision by 5 p.m. July 13.

Information: Cibola Arts Council/Double Six Gallery, 505-287-7311



The Departmentary school in

Laguna

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In 2016, Laguna was the first to cor phase. Atencio said 3,000-page report project. The pueblo construction funding in cessful. They subm No Child Left Beh construction proces they were selected be replaced.

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The current scho

Hard work an

Atencio is proud. ments

\$10 million

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Budget and Finance Committee Chairman Delegate Seth Damon said the \$10 million contribution

nience store, gas station, and truck service station near the Interstate 40 exit to the gaming facility.

Legislative staff reported that the funding

by I-40 traffic and patrons at Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort and despite obstacles, pushed forward. We will now see a grand travel center."