

The arts are alive in Reno

By Stephanie Sparks

At the opening of the River Walk, residents and visitors will experience just one of the exciting variety of arts events promoted this year as part of the Reno Midsummer ArtsFest.

At the River Walk opening there will be workshops for kids, dance performances, live musical concerts and public artworks on display.

The ArtsFest is a campaign to collectively promote all the wonderful cultural activities in the area. It is the first project of Reno's newly formed arts commission, C.I.T.Y. 2000.

Last fall, the Reno City Council established the C.I.T.Y. 2000 Arts Commission, a nine-member board of selected experts from both the public and private sectors representing the arts, cultural groups and academia. The Arts Commission serves as the official advisor to the City of Reno on matters related to the cultural life of the community.

The mission of the C.I.T.Y. 2000 Arts Commission is to secure, enhance, advocate, and publicly fund excellence in the arts.

The Commission has four main goals:

- To create an environment that encourages excellence by area artists and cultural organizations.

- To strengthen the awareness and involvement of all citizens in the community's cultural life, both its heritage and contemporary expressions.

- To establish the priorities necessary to achieve these goals in concert with representatives from the public and private sectors.

- To recommend to the Council expenditures from a public fund which is established for the cultural arts.

The Arts Commission has proposed an annual budget of \$100,000 in public funds allocated by the City of Reno to the arts will impact the community at large. Monies will be used to acquire portable art panels for store fronts of downtown Reno, and installation and maintenance of large public artworks.

An important example of the acquisition of public artworks is visible at the new River Walk.

The City of Reno conducted a national competition in search for an artist to create permanent public artwork for the site. The artist selected was John Battenberg of San Francisco. Battenberg's national and international exhibition record is impressive and his professional achievements are equally numerous. His sculptures are a tribute to the wildlife of the Southwest.

"These commissioned sculptures will be seen by residents and visitors for many years to come and are evidence of the City of Reno's commitment to



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the cultural development and enrichment of our community," said Kathie Bartlett, Chairman of the C.I.T.Y. 2000 Arts Commission.

The downtown Arts District includes the Nevada Museum of Art's E.L. Weigand Museum, Sierra Arts Center, the Pioneer Center for the Performing Arts, the William F. Harrah Foundation National Automobile Museum, Nevada State Council on the Arts, an assortment of cafes, restaurants, small galleries, the River Walk, and an amphitheater soon to be constructed at Wingfield Park on the south bank of the river.

To identify and promote the Arts District, banners and two permanent public artworks as signs will be acquired by regional design competitions and will be strategically located.

In addition, an on-going downtown mural project, in collaboration with the University Art Department's graduating students, will be created next spring.

The Arts Commission has formed its Grants Committee to proceed sorely needed public grant funding to support local artists and arts organizations in its effort to encourage the development and proliferation of community based arts.

To market the arts in our area and promote individual talent, the Arts Commission will produce a brochure and a public service advertising campaign with the slogan "Go to town! The Arts are alive in Reno!" Plans also are under way to present another Reno Midsummer ArtsFest next year.

This summer Reno visitors and residents already have enjoyed the Nevada Opera's summer hit "Mame" starring Toni Tenille and the Reno Philharmonic's ever popular "Concert Under the Arch."

Some of the upcoming arts events this summer include Northern Nevada Bluegrass Association's traditional music festival at Bowers Mansion in West Washoe Valley, and Radio City Sparks Festival of the Arts (including the International Dance Festival at the Victorian Amphitheater on B Street in Sparks).

For more information about Reno art events this summer, call the Sierra Arts Foundation at 329-1324.