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Telluride Receives Honorable Mention Art Award From Governor

by Karen James
10.02.08 - 02:25 pm
TOWN BRIEFS

TELLURIDE – Telluride Council for the Arts and Humanities Executive Director Renee Marr on Tuesday presented Telluride Town Council with the first ever Governor’s Arts Award Honorable Mention.

The award, a drawing in black of a cowboy on a horse by Denver-based artist Duke Beardsley, was presented to Mayor Stu Fraser and Marr last Friday when they traveled to Loveland to accept the award from Gov. Bill Ritter.

Fraser recounted the governor’s remarks, “Oh God, not Telluride again Stu,” said Ritter, jokingly referring to Superintendent Mary Rubadeau and math teacher Seth Berg, who were named 2008 Colorado Superintendent and Teacher of the Year, respectively. “What’s going on here?”

While Loveland, population 61,000 according to 2006 U.S. Census estimates, won the award proper, the committee was so impressed with Telluride’s commitment to the arts, that it created a separate award to recognize its dedication to the arts through programs that enhance the vitality of the community, reach a variety of people and are well-integrated into the community.

Marr said it had been suggested that Telluride reapply for the award next year because it has “one heck of a chance” of winning it.

The award is on display at the Stronghouse Studios and Gallery.

Council Endorses School Funding Amendment

Council unanimously resolved to endorse Amendment 59, known as the Savings Account for Education initiative, at its meeting on Tuesday.

The amendment would reconcile conflicting mandates between the Taxpayer’s Bill of Rights passed in 1992 and Amendment 23 passed in 2000.

Amendment 23 requires that the state increase K-12 spending by preset formulas, even if it means that funding for other programs must be cut to do so, while TABOR insists that any surplus of revenue, including that generated without tax increases, be rebated to the taxpayers.

“A lot of this has to do with the interaction of TABOR and Gallagher,” said Superintendent Mary Rubadeau in reference to the controversial Gallagher Amendment that taxes commercial properties at a rate three times higher than that of residential units.

“I see this as an opportunity to really solve that problem at least in terms of education.”

As explained by The Denver Post, Amendment 59 would eliminate the Amendment 23 spending mandates after 2010, while at the same time allowing the state to retain revenue generated without tax increases.

Colorado ranks second to last in the nation for school funding, although it is “middle of the road” academically, according to Rubadeau.

According to Town Attorney Kevin Geiger, the resolution is largely symbolic and carries no real authority.

Bids In for Proposed Preschool

The Gold Run Committee received Requests for Proposals from 14 firms located as far away as Aspen, Grand Junction and Montrose that are bidding to design a preschool that is proposed for the Gold Run Affordable Housing Project. The project, for which the installation of infrastructure including utilities has begun, is located at the east end of town across the street from Wilkin Court and the Lone Tree Cemetery.

The Committee will narrow the field down to as many as five teams and plans to conduct interviews next week.

The overall project will add between 15 and 19 single-family homes to the inventory of affordable housing, of which one will be replaced with a preschool, if approved.

“This is the best response I think we’ve received in a long time,” said Mayor Stu Fraser.

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