



- Special to the Daily

Governor honors Breckenridge for art

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The Town of Breckenridge received an honorable mention for the Governor's Arts Award at a ceremony at the Denver Art Museum March 1 as part of Creative Industries Day. The annual award recognizes a Colorado town or city for efforts to enhance a community and economy through the arts.

"The arts weave the fabric of a community together, building cultural bridges and showing us new ways of thinking and seeing," said Gov. John Hickenlooper. "The arts are also a key strategy to grow jobs and revitalize Colorado's economy."

As part of the award, Hickenlooper gave Breckenridge Mayor John Warner an original painting of a Breckenridge scene, created by Colorado artist Jim Beckner.

"We are honored to receive this award and look forward to displaying the painting in a prominent location for the community to enjoy," Warner said.

Normally, just one city wins the award, which in this case, would have been Fort Collins, as it earned the top honor this year. However, the panel convened by Colorado Creative Industries, which is a division of the Office of Economic Development, recognized Breckenridge because of its growing Arts District, including the renovation of the Fuqua Livery Stable, the Tin Shop Guest Artist program, the transformation to the Riverwalk Center, the Public Art Program and the International Snow Sculpture Championships.

"This prestigious award ... shows that Breckenridge is establishing itself as an arts destination by providing authentic experiences for visitors and residents alike," said Jenn Cram, Arts District coordinator. "The town believes that the outlay of funds and resources into the arts and culture is a sound investment for our economic future. We hope this award creates an environment to cultivate even greater collaborations for art and culture in our community."

Cram added that the town encourages the private sector to continue to invest in Breckenridge's cultural assets, noting that last year, people who created Friends of the Arts District helped keep the Tin Shop Guest Artist program alive.

"We will continue to investigate sustainable programming so we can keep the offerings affordable and look for grants to continue to fund the capital/infrastructure projects in the Arts District," Cram said.

Alamosa, Black Hawk, Brighton, Crested Butte, Delta, Fort Morgan, Lafayette, Lone Tree, Mancos, Montrose, Ouray, Parker and Salida also submitted nominations for the Governor's Arts Award.

The panel cited Fort Collin's detailed cultural plan, including the city's commitment to public art and efforts to develop young artists and creative entrepreneurs, as the reason for winning. The panel also admired Beet Street, saying it is "an interesting new public/private model for a local arts council, and one that other towns and cities might emulate," said Elaine Mariner, director of Colorado Creative Industries.