

Craig museum kicks off traveling exhibit today



Michelle Balleck

Ronna Lee Sharpe, left, and Jan Gerber, assistant director for the Museum of Northwest Colorado, situate a display Wednesday morning at the museum. Sharpe, of Grand Junction, is the curator for the Harvest of Heritage exhibit, on display now at the museum. A reception opening the exhibit is scheduled for 4 to 6 p.m. today. [Enlarge photo](#)

By [Andy Bockelman](#)

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Wild West artifacts such as ranching equipment and cowboy apparel are plentiful in the Museum of Northwest Colorado. For three weeks, the collection will get a little bigger.

The museum unveils the Harvest of Heritage exhibit today, complete with a reception from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Harvest of Heritage is a traveling display of agriculturally themed artworks that has been featured at museums in Fort Garland and Burlington. The exhibit will remain in Craig until Nov. 22, before moving on to Cortez.

Included in Harvest of Heritage are displays introducing patrons to the blacksmith works, woodcarvings, Mexican hangings and other such works by Colorado artists.

Jan Gerber, assistant director of the museum, said Harvest of Heritage melded well with the museum's motif.

"It's the perfect fit for what we already have, with all the contemporary exhibits we have here," Gerber said.

Ronna Lee Sharpe, of Grand Junction, is the curator for the exhibit, which is sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Colorado Creative Industries. She also serves as the "folklorist" for Grand Junction's Museum of Western Colorado.

Sharpe said she enjoys all the displays, but her favorite rests in the middle of the museum's first floor — a handmade leather saddle.

"I think it's my favorite just because so many people worked on it," she said.

The names of dozens of artisans adorn the saddle. Sharpe said she hopes to bring some of the displayed artists to Craig.

"We may do something later on in the month and have the artists here to greet people," she said.

Among the displays of artists from Denver, Greeley and Walsenburg is the work of Craig craftsman Wayne Wymore.

Wymore's expertise is in making ranching equipment like hobbles, quirts and romals out of leather and rawhide.

Wymore, a retired rancher, said he has been working with leather for 70 years.

"I learned how to braid when I was 9, and I'm 79 now," he said. "I've been doing this forever. It's just something that interests me."

Wymore said his motivation for continuing to work with the materials is to preserve the history of the region.

"It's an old art that people used to do because they had to," he said. "They couldn't buy any of the things that they made."

Wymore has not yet gotten a chance to see the Harvest of Heritage exhibit, though he's looking forward to it.

"It's something everyone should see," he said. "It deserves a little attention because it's part of our history."

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