

ART

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Last month, 13 artists completed seven murals in Sand City over a five-day span. A mural festival, meanwhile, is in the works.

Seven murals = lots of spray paint

Just as artist **Marie-Claire Gorham** has recently done in downtown Carmel, a team of 13 mural artists completed seven murals in Sand City last month.

Sand City's city manager **Aaron Blair** came up with the idea of the mural project not long after he was hired last November. "I was asked, 'What can we do to further artists in Sand City?'" Blair told *The Pine Cone*.

It turns out Blair has a background in working with artists doing large murals.

"I shared that with the local art community," he recalled. "I said, 'We can pull this off.'"

To guide the project from start to finish, Sand City hired a Denver-based company that specializes in murals, So-Gnar Creative. The consultant put together a team of 13 paid artists, which included six locals: **Bryan Gage** of Pacific Grove, **Kenton Hoppas** of Monterey, **Hanif Panni** and **Frank Signs** of Sand City, and **Jessica Carmen** and **Augie Escobedo** of Gonzalez.

Once all the planning and preparation were done, the artists got busy Sept. 30. While at least one artist applied house paint with a brush, most used spray cans of paint. All the work was done by Oct. 5, and came in slightly under its budget of \$65,000. In sharp contrast to Gorham's work in Carmel, which recalls California's early 20th century muralists, the Sand City murals embrace an artistic style that has more in common with contemporary street and graffiti artists.

Murals boost business

Blair said the mural will complement Sand City's business district and help publicize its biggest yearly event.

"Murals increase magnetism to a location, boost business and social media tagging for business locations, and cause bumps in most annual business revenues," he explained. "The goal is to raise the level of awareness for our annual West End Celebration, continue to support our creatives, and attract new businesses that will bring more people to our existing creative businesses. At the end of the day, the goal is to continue to improve our city, and provide smart investments in our city to support our resident and businesses."

The city manager said more public art is on the horizon. The city now has 25 pieces on display and is contemplating an annual mural festival.

"I believe in investing in all public art, not just murals," he added. "We are simply starting the process with murals, but definitely want to add in other mediums."

The owners of three businesses in Sand City, **Terry** and **Theresa Ream** are thrilled to see murals on the side of a warehouse they own.

"When Sand City approached us with the opportunity to donate one of the walls of our buildings in the cause of beautifying the city, we jumped at the chance," Terry

Ream added. "We ended up giving them three walls on the exterior of our warehouse. The murals that the artists created are amazing and inspiring. We couldn't be more pleased with how the artwork turned out."

CALENDAR

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