

Main street to close today for art walk

Street:

COMMUNITY

Artists to collaborate on storm drain murals during event

By Breanna Mitchell

For The Transcript

Tonight's Second Friday Art Walk is going to be different.

Main Street will be closed for the first time in art walk history, and the event will feature a large public art project with a unique medium — five storm drain inlets that have been transformed into murals to educate Norman residents about stormwater pollution.

The project, titled Artful Inlets, was suggested by city council member Kate Bierman last fall. Local artists, Derrick Adams, Jazmin Crawford, Laura Nelson, Ginna Dowling and Rachel Stout will continue their work tonight before a live art walk audience.

"The main message is for everyone to do what they can to help keep our drinking water clean," Norman Arts Council Executive Director Erinn Gavaghan said. "The cleaner it goes in, the cleaner it goes out."

City of Norman Stormwater Program Manager Carrie Evenson said when trash, lawn fertilizers and pesticides enter Norman's storm drains, they pollute creeks and streams that feed into Lake Thunderbird, which provides 70 percent of Norman's drinking water.

"When people walk by Main Street, they can see the art and see the inlet and hopefully it triggers a response to say, 'OK, I need to not throw that

See **STREET** Page A2

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From **Page A1** cigarette butt on the ground or blow my grass clippings onto the street," Evenson said.

Crawford's "Do Something," Stout's "Cumulonimbliss" and Adams' "Every Drop Counts" aim to bring that message home in an artful way.

"It's not hard to do the right thing," Crawford said. "You don't have to pollute the Earth and make everything that was born beautiful ugly."

Main Street will be closed from 2 to roughly 9 p.m. today between Webster and Porter avenues. The project was part of the inspiration to close the street, but the street closure could serve as a test run for future closures during art walk.

“We’ve had a lot of businesses that participate in art walk asking for a street closure,” Gavaghan said. “It’s a big process to close the street and so we worked with the city to give it a try.”

Gavaghan said she thinks the street closure will give vendors more space to spread out and give art walk a festival atmosphere that will draw more people.

“Some of the problems that we’ve had in the past with setting up on the sidewalk is it clogs up pedestrian traffic, but that’s not the case when there’s a street closure, because people can walk anywhere,” Gavaghan said.

An additional celebration tour of the Artful Inlets murals is set for 10 a.m. Wednesday beginning in front of Moxie Shop, 319 E. Main St.

Local artist Derrick Adams works on a mural Thursday as part of the Artful Inlets project on Main Street. Five artists will continue their mural work at today’s Second Friday Art Walk, which will also see the closure of downtown Main Street from 2 to 9 p.m.

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