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IC, libraries team up for BOOK MARKS project

STEPHANIE WISE • IOWA CITY PRESS-CITIZEN • DECEMBER 1, 2010

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Iowa City UNESCO City of Literature and three area libraries are teaming up for the first countywide public art project that celebrates reading, writing and art.



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The project, called BOOK MARKS – Book Art in Johnson County, features more than 50 larger-than-life book statues that will be on public display throughout the county from June through October 2011. Area businesses will sponsor the statues, which will be designed by local artists chosen for their winning concepts.

Proceeds from the project will benefit the City of Literature, Iowa City Public Library, Coralville Public Library and North Liberty Community Library.

Jeanette Pilak, executive director of City of Literature USA, is thrilled about the partnership.

"This is an exciting new project," she said. "This public art partnership will attract visitors and support the libraries and City of Literature," she said.

The idea for BOOK MARKS first came from ICPL director Susan Craig.

"I believe this community is as heartfelt about reading and literature as it is about football," she said.

Her vision was based on the success of "Herky on Parade" in 2004.

Craig, Pilak and other staff members of area libraries worked together to develop the concept for the literary public art project. Enlisting the help of designer Sara Slee Brown, who designed the statue prototypes, and Benson & Hepker Design, who conceived the brochure design, the project became a reality.

Area businesses, including the University of Iowa Community Credit Union, MidWestOne Bank, the Moen Group, M.C. Ginsberg Objects of Art and the cities of North Liberty and Coralville, as well as the Iowa City and Coralville libraries, have already agreed to sponsor or purchase a statue. Sponsorship levels are \$1,500, \$3,000 and \$6,000, the latter meaning the sponsor has purchased the 5-by-3-foot statue and can place it at a location of their choice.

The libraries and City of Literature will continue to seek sponsors in the coming months, and statues that are not purchased will be auctioned at the end of October.

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