

# ArtPrize trip aims to inspire new ideas

## City sponsors bus ride to Grand Rapids art exhibit

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David Vogel hangs up a picture the wind knocked off his entry 'artist in a box' during ArtPrize at Coit Creative Arts Academy in Grand Rapids. Vogel is from Prescott Valley, Ariz. The entry is outside the school. / CORY MORSE/THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS/AP

By Holly Setter  
| Times Herald

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On Thursday morning, about 50 people will board a charter bus and ride across the state to check out Grand Rapids' ArtPrize for free, thanks to the Community Foundation of St. Clair County and the city of Port Huron.

"The idea was mine," said Port Huron City Manager Bruce Brown. "I have been a fan of Art Prize, a Grand Rapids event, since its first year four years ago. I have been trying to get people to appreciate outdoor public art as an economic development asset here."

ArtPrize is an annual art competition in Grand Rapids: This year, 1,517 entries are on display at 161 venues across the city. People can come and see as much as they can and vote for their favorite pieces during the three-and-a-half week event, with the eventual winner getting a \$200,000 prize.

Artists also are eligible for a \$100,000 juried grand prize. Smaller awards are available for both the public vote and juried competitions

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Mark Augustyn explores an area of Alois Kronschlaeger's 'Habitat' during ArtPrize at SITE:LAB in Grand Rapids. Augustyn was with his wife, Julie. Kronschlaeger is from Brooklyn, N.Y. / CORY MORSE/THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS/AP



Mavis Smith, left, and her daughter, Cindy Mitchell, look at Pamela Weston's 'Always in Your Heart' during ArtPrize at the City Art Gallery in Grand Rapids. Smith is from Grand Rapids and Mitchell is from Otsego. Weston is from Grandville. / COREY MORSE/THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS/AP

as well, bringing the total prize money to \$560,000.

The group will depart from the Community Foundation at 8 a.m. to get to Grand Rapids. Group members will spend time in both downtown Grand Rapids and the Fred Meijer Gardens before coming back.

LeRoy Stevens, of Stevens Architects in downtown Port Huron, will make the trip.

"I'm very excited about it," he said. "Part of it is the fun of seeing ArtPrize and the Meijer Gardens, but another is you would hope that we could do something like this here. I mean, they're working on the Riverwalk that goes along the St. Clair River — wouldn't it be great to have some kind of art show along there? It would be beautiful."

Randy Maiers, president of the Community Foundation of St. Clair County, said while he hopes the trip will inspire residents to find ways to incorporate art into the community, he doesn't expect to see a version of ArtPrize in Port Huron.

"I know we couldn't get anywhere close to that financial level," he said. "But what we can do is take what we're doing here to another level."

Maiers noted the Community Foundation partnered with the city to install several pieces of public artwork in downtown Port Huron a few years ago and he hopes this will "keep that momentum going."

He said the cost of the trip, which he estimated at less than \$1,000, is being split by the city and the Community Foundation.

Brown said he hopes the excursion gets people excited and inspired to help find ways to bring art downtown.

"I'm more focused on outdoor public art," he said. "It adds to the quality of life and makes downtown more interesting. There are a large number of people who travel from community to community to see what art is available and we need to take the next step to decide what is in store for Port Huron."

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