



ARTS COUNCIL OF GREATER LANSING

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NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Get Ready to Walk! Arts Council Announces 517artwalk App! *Folk Festival Provides Perfecting Testing Ground*

The Arts Council has been very busy of late preparing for the pilot launch of its new smartphone app, 517artwalk, which will highlight area public art and galleries. The launch will take place on Aug. 8, 2014 and coincide with the kick-off of the Great Lakes Folk Festival. The app will be heavily marketed to Folk Festival guests, allowing the Arts Council to take advantage of the tourism and heavy foot traffic in East Lansing.

Back in June, the council announced that we received a \$7,500 grant through the Capital Region Community Foundation to help with the 517artwalk project. In addition to their funding support, we are also partnering with Michigan State University, City of East Lansing, the Greater Lansing Michigan Convention and Visitors Bureau, City Pulse and the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs to create a comprehensive listing of all the public art and galleries in the tri-county.

The City of East Lansing has been a key player in the launch efforts, and their partnership and commitment to the arts is essential to the overall success. "Public art is a critical component of our downtown's vitality," says City of East Lansing Mayor Nathan Triplett. "The 517artwalk partnership is not only a great way for us to utilize an innovative new technology to expose our residents and visitors to public art, but it is also a superb example of regional collaboration."

East Lansing assisted the Arts Council in gathering photos and information for all of the art pieces and galleries. "After a great deal of preparation, we are now ready for phase one of the project—testing the app's ability in locating the 15 East Lansing locations, including public art pieces, galleries and the Eli and Edythe Broad Museum," says Executive Director, Deborah E. Mikula.

"The Great Lakes Folk Festival will be the perfect testing ground for the artwalk because it brings so many people into town who are interested not only in the festival but also in exploring East Lansing," says Mikula. "It is our belief that the app will appeal to festival goers who share an interest in app technology and the arts, coupled with an adventurous spirit."

The app uses beacon technology by GeLo Inc. of Grand Rapids, Mich. Small beacons, or tags, will be placed near public art works and galleries in East Lansing. Users can then download the app, which includes a map of the walk area, and when they approach a piece of art, a photo of the piece with a description will pop up on their phone.

A key component for the walks to be effective is to include galleries and art works that are in close proximity of one another. While the app will eventually offer a comprehensive list of all works and galleries, the walks themselves will include only those that are within walking distance of one another, making it easy for users to visit all of the locations on the map.

The pilot is the first step in the project, which currently has funding through 2015. The Arts Council's ultimate goal is for the app to highlight a variety of walks within the Greater Lansing tri-county area, e.g. E. Lansing, MSU, Old Town, LCC, Grand Ledge, etc., featuring all of the galleries and public art pieces that live within walking paths or areas in our local townships and cities.

The app is available for free and can be downloaded at Google Play and at the App Store. Simply go to the venue of your choice from your mobile phone and search 517artwalk to get your app. Make sure to tweet your finds! #517artwalk

Founded in 1965, the Arts Council of Greater Lansing is a non-profit organization whose mission is to lead, advocate for and advance arts and culture in the capital region. For more information, visit www.lansingarts.org.

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Tweets:

E. Lansing has a plethora of art to discover! Take the @artscouncilgl #517artwalk. Download the app! Learn more: <http://ow.ly/A1OGN>

#517artwalk guides you to art and galleries in @cityEL @broadmuseum @greaterlansing @artscouncilgl #publicart

Seeking Andromeda? The @artscouncilgl #517artwalk app will take you to her! <http://ow.ly/A1OGN> #publicart @cityofEL

Looking for Laura? The @artscouncilgl #517artwalk app will take you to her! <http://ow.ly/A1OGN> #publicart @cityofEL

Grooving for the Grove Gallery? The @artscouncilgl #517artwalk app will help you get your Grove on! <http://ow.ly/A1OGN> @cityofEL