

NOBLESVILLE

Initiatives bring new life to city's arts scene

By Annalisa Rodriguez
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When Beth Forst opens her studio filled with impressionistic oil paintings in mid-November, she's counting on becoming part of a vibrant and growing arts scene.

At least three other studios have opened in recent months in the area.

"This whole little project of revitalizing the arts community is really powerful," Forst said. "There's a lot of things going on, and there's a nice arts community that's growing here where I am."

Community leaders, city officials and area artists say there is an emergence of the arts — be it visual, musical or theatrical — taking place in Noblesville with recent initiatives that focus on the arts and a growing collaboration among community organizations.

The Nickel Plate Arts campus — which promotes arts experiences in Fishers, Noblesville, Cicero, Atlanta, Arcadia and Tipton — is located in downtown Noblesville and celebrated its first year in September. The group has played an important role in revitalizing the arts scene and attracting artists to the area.

"It's been really slow until Nickel Plate came in, and then all of a sudden it seems like just in the past year more people are mobbing into downtown Noblesville," said Joanie Drizin, the artist behind Girly Steel, a maker of metal art for the home and garden.

Last year, the city received a grant from the Indiana Arts Commission that provided a consultant who worked with the city on what it wanted to do with the arts and how to support

UPCOMING EVENTS

» **"Women in Motorsport"** art show runs through Oct. 27 at Noblesville City Hall.

» **"Milagros y Muertos"** exhibit on display through Nov. 2 at Nickel Plate Arts.

» **12-week drawing class** with studio artists Bruce Neckar and John Reynolds beginning Monday, Nickel Plate Arts. Cost: \$72 including supplies. To register: Call (317) 452-3690 or email info@nickelplatearts.org.

» **"And More Critters"** exhibit, Hamilton County Artists' Association Birdie Gallery, through Oct. 25. Gallery hours: Thursday-Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

MAP AVAILABLE

To see a map of art spaces in Noblesville, go to www.cityofnoblesville.org and click on "Recreation Maps" at the bottom of the page. The map includes addresses and contact information for shops, studios and galleries.

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BETH FORST, artist

them.

Out of that initiative is the newly formed arts council, which held its first meeting in early September. The 13-member council is still drafting a mission statement, but officials say it will serve an educational function and connect the public with the arts.

Noblesville officials hope for



Gabriel Lehman, who opened his studio in Noblesville a few months ago, displays a commissioned portrait he created. He said Noblesville's arts scene offers something different from nearby towns he considered.

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the historic downtown to be designated as an Indiana Statewide Cultural District. There are five such areas in the state, one of them being the Arts & Design District in Carmel.

"It's a legitimate recognition that the community recognizes the arts and values arts to the lifestyle of that community," said Alaina Shonkwiler, economic development specialist.

Community leaders and city officials hope that art is something ingrained into Noblesville's culture.

"We are hoping that in just a few years' time," said Nickel Plate director Ailithir McGill, "people will just be naturally seeking out arts experiences."

★ Call Star reporter Annalisa Rodriguez at (317) 444-6126. Follow her on Twitter: @AnnalisaRodrig1.



Beth Forst has begun work in her new Noblesville studio, which is set to open next month. "This whole little project of revitalizing the arts community is really powerful," she said.