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Brighton area to get another sculpture show

By Jim Totten
DAILY PRESS & ARGUS

Downtown Brighton leaped into the spotlight and garnered lots of attention with its outdoor art exhibit, the Brighton Biennial, but waiting in the wings with its own public art display is the new shopping mall in Green Oak Township.

John Sauve, who assembled the pieces for the Biennial, is being paid by the mall's developers to gather 17 sculptures that will be displayed atop large boulders at Green Oak Village Place at Lee Road and U.S. 23, which will hold its grand opening Oct. 27.



Sauve, a Genoa Township resident and artist, said he was approached by the mall's landscape architect about the project, and he's been working on it for about a year. Sauve said the show will likely be dedicated in spring 2007. He's excited because the artwork and landscape are being planned together to create a natural atmosphere.

"It's just a great project, integrating the artwork ... I couldn't say no," Sauve said.

The fact that the mall is copying some of the downtown's efforts to attract people doesn't bother Rick Starnes, chairman of the Principal Shopping District and co-owner of The Vitamin Company Store.

"It's ironic that they're trying to be more like the downtown," Starnes said.

"Imitation is the best form of flattery," he added.

He recalled how the mall's Web site showed hanging flower baskets, which the Downtown Development Authority installed throughout downtown Brighton this summer.



"You can't blame them for living off our success," Starnes said.

If the artwork attracts more people to the mall, Starnes said, that's great. He said he hopes some of the shoppers coming to the mall — which will be Livingston County's largest shopping center, with 550,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space — will visit the downtown as well.

However, Starnes said he thinks the mall will draw more people away from places such as Twelve Oaks Mall in Novi and Briarwood in Ann Arbor than it will from downtown Brighton.



Developer Bill Clark, one of the developers of the mall and CEO of Quadrants Inc., said the artwork is one of the amenities intended to attract people to the mall. He said the others are the extensive landscaping, walkways, an outdoor fireplace and numerous outdoor area featuring benches.

At a recent invitation-only luncheon, Clark said the mall wants to work with the downtown merchants, not against them.

"Our interest is in working with the local merchant community so we can have the synergy to work off each other," Clark said. He said the goal is making the greater Brighton area a great shopping destination.

Sauve said the developers are planning to promote the mall's outdoor art display, and he said there would be some mention of the Brighton Biennial's display in those marketing efforts.

He said people are going to "know about both shows."

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Originally published October 19, 2006

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