

Giant Van Gogh painting drawing more attention

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News
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The 24-by-32-foot replica of a Vincent Van Gogh sunflower painting by Canadian artist Cameron Cross has been getting noticed. People pull off Interstate 70 to look at the giant painting and to take photos of the 80-foot easel near the intersection of Cherry Ave. and Business U.S. 24.

The painting was erected 10 years ago through a special project at a total cost of \$150,000. The Sunflower USA non-profit corporation received an attraction grant from the State of Kansas to help with the project.

This is one of three large Van Gogh sunflower paintings in the world. It is the only one in the United States. One is in Altoona, Canada, and another in Emerald City, Australia.

The Van Gogh has been featured in national magazines, on a state list of top 8 sites in Kansas, on a special show on the Smoky Hills Public Television and has brought many people to town to see the unique piece of giant art.

The painting is across the street from Pioneer Park on Cherry Ave., which was finished several years ago. Some landscaping and brick sidewalks and a viewing area has been

created around the base of the painting by the Goodland Rotary club. Several years ago the Goodland Rotary erected a floodlight in front of the painting to allow it to be lighted at night as part of their Rotary Centennial Project. The light makes the painting stand out and makes it very visible from I-70.

The City of Goodland and the Resource Development committee from Shine On Sherman County is working to add trees to the landscaping around the Van Gogh painting. The land around the painting belongs to the City of Goodland, and the city commissioners have agreed the area needs to be spruced up.

In the fall 10 large Blue Spruce and Austrian Pine trees were transplanted to the park area, and plans are to add more threes this year.

This year for the annual Arbor Day and Tree City USA celebration Black Hills Energy donated three Linden trees to be planted on the east side of the park area. Goodland Central Elementary fourth graders walked over for the special event and helped pack a special time capsule for the tree planting.

The Shine On Sherman County Resource Development Committee and Beautification Committee are trying to raise money for more trees, to add an information kiosk and to maintain the painting. The funds are being raised through a special fund at the Sherman County Community Foundation.



Area kids were invited to a tree-planting ceremony around the Van Gogh painting. Three Linden trees were planted for the 2011 Arbor Day celebration.

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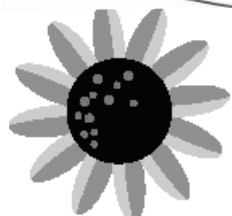


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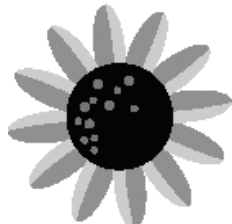


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