

Artist hopes to start sunflower painting in October

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Daily News

While the Van Gogh sunflower project has been delayed by official red tape, Canadian artist Cameron Cross said Thursday the project is definitely not stalled.

"The project is not at a standstill," Cross told about 60 people at a Goodland Rotary meeting Thursday noon at the Northwest Kansas Technical School student union.

"I want to thank everyone who has been helping prepare the sheets of plywood, and get all the details together for the work permit," Cross said. "The details have all been sent to Washington, and we hope to have the work visa within a month."

Once the permit is in hand, Cross estimates it will take about 30 to 40 days for him to complete the painting, and it would be erected shortly after. He said that while he is completing the painting, workers will be creating a 24-foot-by-32-foot frame to hold the sections.

Cross said the 12 Van Gogh sunflower paintings continue to increase in popularity around the world. The originals were done by Vincent Van Gogh in Holland in 1888 to 1889.

"He felt sunflowers were the symbol of life and hope," Cross said. "He was surrounded by fields of sunflowers and would go out and cut a grouping for each different painting."

The first of the 12 paintings will be the model for the one in Goodland Cross said. The replica is to be erected on property to be leased from the city in the new Cherry Street area between 19th Street and Business U.S. 24, the old wye junction.

Two paintings have been erected, the first in Altoona, Manitoba, and the second in Emerald, Australia. Others are to be erected in Japan, Holland, South Africa and Argentina, all places with connections to Van Gogh or sunflowers.

Volunteers have prepared the special plywood sections by coating them with fiberglass and a special gel coat. The 24 sections of 4-by-8-foot plywood will be assembled into four sections 24 feet wide for Cross to paint on.

To do the actual painting, Cross said, he will use an acrylic urethane enamel which is specially formulated for outdoor use. He said he uses different size brushes and long-handled rollers to do the painting.

"I do a few brush strokes and then have to step back about 30 feet so I can see if they are going to show up," he said. "We want this to be seen from I-70 so people will stop to get a closer look."

While Cross is painting, the frame and easel will be created. Once the frame and the painting are completed,



Media attention is nothing new for Canadian artist Cameron Cross, who talked Thursday to Julie Kennedy of Oberlin's KSNK-TV. He had made a presentation to the Rotary Club and members of the USA Sunflower Association about the Van Gogh sunflower project.

Photo by Tom Betz / The Goodland Daily News

the four sections of the painting will be screwed onto the frame with over 500 special screws, Cross said.

Cross then will come back and fill the seams with fiberglass and touch up the painting so they do not show.

The completed painting and frame will be hauled to the site, where it will be attached to the 80-foot easel before it is erected. Cross said the easel will have a base set three feet into the ground for the legs to be attached to by large bolts.

The winds on the plains of Canada are similar to those of western Kansas, he said, and the engineers have designed the easel to withstand the heavy winds.

Darrin Neufeld, head of the USA Sunflower Association and an engineer for Evans, Bierly and Hutchinson, said the easel should withstand winds up to 100 miles per hour.

"I won't say it will withstand everything, but unless the wind is sustained at 100 mile per hour for several hours, with higher gusts, the painting should stand," he said.

The painting is expected to draw a lot of people into Goodland, both highway travelers, and many who will come to the area just to see the painting. Cross said both locations where the paintings have gone up have reported large increases in tourists. The paintings have drawn both national and international

media attention to the cities.

Cross said in June, the Olympic torch stopped in Emerald and a ceremony was held at the base of the Van Gogh painting which received national coverage.

Each site will be creating merchandise to sell, and once all the painting are up there is a possibility of creating a

joint opportunity for all seven sites.

Cross said one of the next to be built will be in Klerksdorp, South Africa, where he made a presentation four months ago. In the next few months, he expects to make a presentation in Japan, and to move closer to selecting a site in Argentina, the world's largest producer of sunflowers.

Dairy Queen will relocate

By Janet Craft

The Goodland Daily News

Goodland's Dairy Queen will be moving out near I-70 later this year and owner Danny Whalen said the new store will still be "family oriented and child friendly."

"That's my first goal," he said.

Whalen and his wife, Richelle, are putting up a new building just north of Motel 6 on K-27, which should be done sometime in October. Woofter Construction of Colby, the general contractor, began work on it about the middle of August. Goodland subcontractors who will work on it include Kruse Construction, Marty's Electric and McClure Plumbing and Heating.

Whalen said International Dairy Queen in Minneapolis wanted him to expand his business, but that wasn't feasible at the present location at 17th

and Main. It would cost him about the same amount to expand there, as it would to build a new place.

He said in order to increase the speed of service and to offer more products, he needed a different setup. He would like to make layer cakes, which have an inch and a half of chocolate cake in the center and vanilla ice cream around that. To do that, he would need another freezer display case and he just doesn't have room.

Another new feature he hopes to add in the future are "snap shot" cakes. They're working on the process, where a photo is scanned on a computer and the image is transferred to a rolled, edible wafer sheet. The "edible image" is then placed on the top of a cake.

He will offer tours, too. In the past, he has given them to Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and grade school students from