

Continued from Front



Fine art

Fine artist, and former Central City resident **Todd Williams** kicked-off his state wide painting project on Saturday in his hometown. Williams is going to paint at least one landmark in each of Nebraska's 93 counties. He has completed the paintings for Merrick County and showcases the C.C. elevator and the Wright Morris home, in the Venture Center.

(R-N photos by Josh Salmon)

C.C. native Williams kicks-off painting Nebraska project in his hometown

BY JOSH SALMON
Republican-Nonpareil Reporter

A local artist with a national reputation kicked off his statewide Nebraska project Saturday night in Central City.

Former Central City resident Todd Williams officially started his Nebraska painting project by debuting two paintings from his home county at a reception held at the Venture Center. Several people from Merrick County,

and neighboring counties gathered for dinner and to hear Williams speak of the project.

The project, entitled, "Painting the Legacy of Nebraska," is an idea created by the former Central City High School graduate who plans to complete a painting of a landmark in each of the state's 93 counties.

Williams says the idea came to him when he was doing a similar project abroad. "I thought back to the

European travels I have made. I did a similar project while there and figured I should do the same kind of thing for my home state."

Williams was in Vienna, France and Prague, in the Czech Republic, during 2005 and in Italy in 2007, where he completed a total of nearly 100 paintings during his stay. So, to him, completing a project involving the 93

counties in Nebraska doesn't seem so daunting.

"When I first started speaking to people in some of our local counties about the project they jokingly asked if I knew how many counties were in Nebraska," says Williams, "Yeah I know, and that is what makes this project so unique."

Williams, who has been an artist for Hallmark and Dayspring greeting card companies, says the idea of the project is to help reawaken interest in the arts in Nebraska. "My heart's desire for this project is for the appreciation and love for art to be shared throughout the great state of Nebraska," he says.

Each county will be asked to provide a sponsoring agency or individual to coordinate the project and collect the donations to acquire the selected county painting. Upon completion the paintings will then go on tour through the entire state, including stops at area museums. Once the paintings are complete there will be a gala at a major museum or gallery in Nebraska, then each county's painting will be displayed at a predetermined location in each county.

Williams says he knows that each county might not have the funds available for the project but if an individual wants to donate the money they would get first choice of the paintings when the project is complete. "After the traveling exhibition is complete those individual parties would then take ownership of the artwork selected," he says. Paintings already completed in the series include Merrick County and Hamilton County.

Williams, who currently lives in Arkansas, says completion of the project depends on the funding and his travel schedule, but he estimates it should be finished in three or four years.

See "Painting", Page 3

Continued from Front



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