

Grand Avenue bridge art approved

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By Kris Todd, Daily Reporter Staff

Spencer Park Board members drove to Sutherland Thursday night and liked what they saw.

The board, along with City Manager Bob Fagen, met with commissioned glass artists Mark, Jeanne and Seth Bogenrief in their Sutherland-based studios to preview the Art Deco glass pieces scheduled to adorn the Grand Avenue bridge in Spencer.

Seth Bogenrief described the process he, his parents, fellow artisan Jim Berberich and other designers have undergone to date with the project. Bogenrief also acknowledged this is his first time working with dichroic glass -- which was developed by the aerospace industry for NASA and is used on satellites -- on a "major project."

"I've done a few other sample projects with it, but this is my first big attempt," he admitted.

For the project they're embarking upon, Bogenrief explained the glass needs to be heated to 1,400 degrees Fahrenheit for a 17 1/2-hour cycle.

"Each piece that goes into the bridge has that same firing cycle," Bogenrief said. "Since I only have one kiln, it's been about trying to manage time and get as much done as humanly possible and keep that kiln running."



In the meantime, as the Grand Avenue bridge infrastructure nears completion, it will eventually host a monument on each of its corners. The four columns will each feature three octagons, for a total of 12 glass pieces on the bridge's ends. These designs will represent the areas of parks and recreation, commerce, education and agriculture. A blue Art Deco design will extend between the octagon pieces and neon lighting by fellow artist Louis "Tony" Curiel, of Spencer, has been approved to backlight the vertical monuments.

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