

More Than Just Art in the Park

Music, beer garden to complement craft offerings

BY PAUL ALBANI-BURGIO

When Olivia Lowe took over as the lead organizer for Art in the Park last year, she knew she wanted to find ways to diversify the crowd at the event, which has been taking place for over 50 years. So this year's she bringing in a main stage where she hopes higher-profile acts than the event has attracted in the past will drive new interest.

"Loveland and Northern Colorado are growing by leaps and bounds, and so it makes sense for big events like this to start to try to appeal to a wider demographic," she said. "We have a younger group of people in their 30s and 40s moving here and having kids and not everyone wants to go from vendor to vendor looking at art but having a stage with wellknown bands and a beer garden with beer from Crow Hop Brewery is definitely an attraction for people."

Among the bigger acts slated to perform on that main stage are Georgia country singer John King and Colorado indie folk band Herestofightin' — which Lowe describes as a "pretty big deal." Denver blues and rock band The Duke Street Kings and Cowboys Dead, which interprets rock and country hits with a Grateful Dead twist. Adding to the entertainment offerings will be Greeley painter Armando Silva, who will be doing live "performance paintings" at Art in the Park.

But while Lowe is making strides to producing a more multifaceted event, the focus of AITP remains firmly on the art with over 200 artisans slated to show their handmade arts and crafts during the two-day event. Those artists produce everything from pottery to jewelry to metalwork items to furniture to other one-of-a-kind creations.

Organizers have also brought a renewed attention to AITP's food offerings this year. Lowe said this year's food court area will consist of "10 unique options serving a wide variety of unique—and sustainable— food." Such treats as homemade root beer and artisan popsicles will also be available.

"We've also moved the food court area so the food, music and beer are together so that's handy," Lowe said.

AITP is put on by the Thompson Valley Art League and acts as the primary annual fundraiser for the league and its Lincoln Gallery. To allow easier access to the festival, five parking areas are being set up around town from which shuttle buses will provide transportation to the festival grounds in North Lake Park.



Above: Artist Erin Leeper's paintings are displayed during Art in the Park in North Lake Park in 2017.



Right: Mackenzie Collins, 4, hands a letter art piece to Becky Mackin, right, as they and Lori Leckner, left, set up Leckner's Plan B Designs Co booth at the 2017 Art in the Park in Loveland.