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Giant sculpture arriving early for Auburn exhibit

AUBURN – A 25-foot-tall bronze sculpture of a dancing couple will arrive nearly 3 weeks ahead of 12 life-size statues for this summer’s public art display, “Sculptures on the Square 2010: Encore!” in Auburn. The Auburn Arts Commission Inc. is presenting the exhibit June 15 through September 15 in downtown Auburn. The exhibit is free to the public and available for viewing at any time.

American sculptor Seward Johnson’s “Turn of the Century,” featuring figures from a Renoir painting, will be installed in a vacant lot at Seventh and Jackson streets in Auburn, beginning May 17. The monumental sculpture depicts the couple in realistic detail but in outsized proportion, down to the folds in their period clothing. The massive work was slated to arrive in June with the other works in the exhibit.

Two craftsmen will assemble and paint the sculpture’s four parts, a process expected to take up to three days. The City of Auburn is preparing the site and providing heavy equipment to lift the pieces into place. The arts commission will host a reception for him at its Sculpture Welcome Center, with details to be announced.

The remaining 12 life-sized statues in the exhibit are expected to arrive about June 10. The collection includes depictions of the famous farm couple from the painting, “American Gothic,” and the sailor kissing a nurse from a Life Magazine photograph, as well as people doing everyday activities such as painting, reading or playing guitar. The walking tour route will encompass the picturesque courthouse square and the historic Eckhart Public Library, 603 S. Jackson St., which is celebrating its centennial year.

The exhibit, the second public-art display for the all-volunteer arts commission, is made possible by generous individual, corporate and foundation donors. No tax dollars were used for the exhibit. A 2007 exhibit of 20 different life-size bronze works by Johnson attracted thousands of visitors from the tri-state area and beyond.

The non-profit Auburn Arts Commission Inc. is an all-volunteer organization whose mission is to promote the arts in DeKalb County.

May 5, 2010