

Frosty the Snowman visits Gallup

Written by By Molly Ann Howell Sun Correspondent
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Window art, scavenger hunt tell the classic wintertime story

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If you've been downtown recently, you may have noticed the festive window art decorating local businesses' windows. As part of the Coal Avenue Commons construction mitigation effort, GallupARTS partnered with a family of local artists to create the series of window paintings.

The window art runs along Coal Avenue between First and Third Streets.

GallupARTS Executive Director Rose Eason spoke to the *Sun* about collaborating with the family to come up with the "Frosty the Snowman Visits Gallup" theme.

The family worked together to incorporate localized themes into the classic story in an effort to "make downtown even more of a holiday destination," Eason said.

According to a GallupARTS press release, one example of how Gallup is integrated into the story is when the song says Frosty runs "all around the Square," he will be pictured at Courthouse Square, with the historic McKinley County Courthouse in the background. Then when he "leads [the children] through the streets of town" he'll be shown "getting his kicks on Route 66."

"We have a lot of fun together," Artist Delicate Brown stated in the press release. "Window painting is more tradition than work in our eyes."

Delicate is part of the family that painted the window art. In an interview with the *Sun* she said that her dad was the original artist, but now the whole family helps with painting. She said her family freehanded the paintings of the song's characters, which she added was the most fun part of the job.

The Brown family moved to Gallup from Phoenix in 1988, when Delicate was a teenager. Her father began painting when he was in his 20s, and he brought that passion to Gallup.

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Prior to the family's partnership this year with GallupARTS, Delicate's family would go door to door and ask the business owners if they would like their windows painted.

"You have to do a lot of footwork, not a lot of businesses will give you a call. You have to kind of go in and ask them, and sometimes they like to see pictures of the work," Delicate explained. "I think that's the hard part about the job, is getting to do the job."

SEE THE STORY UNFOLD

The scavenger hunt begins at the ART123 Gallery, where visitors can gaze at the multitude of artwork on display.

From there, visitors head west along the southside sidewalk of Coal Avenue to continue the story. At Third Street, they cross over to the northside of Coal Avenue and loop back—see the action unfold as they then walk two blocks east to First Street. Then, players make another U-turn, crossing back to the southside and heading back toward Second Street. The story concludes when they return to the ART123 Gallery.

Along with the festive holiday window art, GallupARTS and the Brown family also incorporated a scavenger hunt element into the experience. Hidden pictures were inserted into each painting of the window.

Alithea Olson and her family participated in the scavenger hunt on Dec. 19. Her young boys, Charlie, 7, and James 5, were excited to see what scene was up next each time they approached another painting.

"We really enjoy getting out and about in downtown Gallup, and we're big fans of the ART 123 Gallery and local Gallup artists. So it was just a fun way for us to explore downtown Gallup as a family and check out the window displays," Olson said.

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Olson said the scavenger hunt didn't take her family long to play, lasting about 20 minutes. She specifically mentioned the special tidbits that localized the Frosty the Snowman story to Gallup.

"I really liked the green chile nose on Frosty the Snowman, and also the way they changed the lyrics to the song to be specific to the Gallup area," Olson said.

Scavenger hunt guides will be available for pickup at ART123 Gallery during regular business hours (Tuesdays - Saturdays from 12 pm to 6 pm).

Scavenger-hunters who find all seven hidden pictures and return their guides to ART123 will be entered to win a handmade holiday ornament giveaway.

The Frosty the Snowman window art will be featured around town until Dec. 31. That is the last day to participate in the scavenger hunt.

By Molly Ann Howell
Sun Correspondent