



Businesses work for free on ArtPrize Contractors donate tens of thousands for projects

Tony Tagliavia | Thursday, 17 Sep 2009

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (WOOD) - Standing beneath the 20-foot tall table and chairs now perched atop a pedestrian bridge over the Grand River, the man who organized the ArtPrize entry said the feeling was "fantastic."

"Because we've gone through 100 different hurdles to get here and it all came together without any problems," Stephen Fry told 24 Hour News 8.

Among the hurdles: in the midst of the worst economy in decades, Fry convinced contractors to donate about half the work that went into producing Sarah Grant's piece, dubbed "The Furniture City Sets the Table for the World of Art."

Given the philanthropic culture in Grand Rapids, he said "it wasn't really hard to do that."

Pioneer Construction had four to six employees working on the project for about three weeks. Six workers were on hand Wednesday for the entry's installation. The company estimates it donated \$30,000 worth of work.

"We're not looking for an immediate return on a dollar-for-dollar basis, but we see it as a great opportunity to help with a project that's exciting and will bring energy and excitement to the city of Grand Rapids," said Chris Beckering, director of business development and sales for Pioneer.

His firm is not the only one; other firms donating work for the project, according to Fry, included Circuit Electric, Classic Engineering, Koster/DeVries Painting, Sign Source, Standard Lumber & Supply, Steel Supply & Engineering and Gelock Heavy Motors. Gelock employees operated the cranes that hoisted the piece into place.

Immediately to the north along the river stands artist David Lubbers' "The Grand Dance," another piece put together with donated work. It was assembled at Couturier Iron Craft, an architectural metal manufacturer in the Comstock Park area.

"It was all kind of custom -- trial and error, a little bit of research and development," Tim Couturier told 24 Hour News 8. "It was interesting."

Ten workers at the firm put in an estimated 300 to 350 hours of work, donated by the company.

"We are a little bit slow in the plant right now," Couturier said. "It was a good opportunity just to do something for the community. We were just tickled pink when they came in and had something like this. We've always been interested in artwork."

And like its neighboring piece, "The Grand Dance" was the result of work donated by multiple companies, including Architectural Openings & Access, Advance Caster & Wheel Company, Dennen Steel, Magnum Powder Coating, Owen-Ames-Kimball Co., West Michigan Lighting, Williams and Works.

"There were nine or 10 of us [who] came together and pulled this thing off," Couturier said. "And I hope everybody enjoys it."