

Artspace Eyes Loveland

by Maryjo Morgan

Is Loveland the right place for an artist Mecca? Let's check:

Vibrant population of artists? **check**

Merchants, investors and visionaries? **check**

Buildings or lots available for restoration and/or development? **check**

Loveland has what it takes to attract attention.

Not just in spring for the Governor's Art Show & Sale. Not only for the nation's largest outdoor sculpture show every August. Loveland has caught the eye of America's leading nonprofit real estate developer for the arts, Artspace (artspace.org). Its mission is to create, foster and preserve affordable space for artists and arts organizations. Artspace accomplishes its goal through property development, national consulting, asset management and performance property management.

What could an Artspace project mean for Loveland?

First, consider that economist and author Richard Florida identifies the socioeconomic "Creative Class" as a key driving force for economic development of post-industrial cities in the U.S.

A project of this scope could just be the catalyst for significant economic development in Loveland. It would be yet another anchor point for culture and the arts, with excellent potential to increase jobs for artists and also collateral industries.

Artspace is a progressive organization that looks for sustainable options to minimize environmental impact and reduce energy consumption. They hold a U.S. Green Building Council Certificate of Membership and work with the community to repurpose and preserve older and historic buildings, or build new ones in order to develop a viable mix of affordable live/work units, retail space and administrative and performance space.

Every year Artspace conducts 20 to 25 feasibility visits to cities around the country. Only two to four of these lead to projects. They look for community involvement, desire and ability to follow through. Already there has been a substantial response from local businesses and foundations: the City of Loveland, Community Foundation of Northern Colorado, Erion Foundation, Mueller & Associates CPA, Novo Restoration Inc. and now the Loveland Chamber of Commerce. This support, coupled with the need and desire of artists for affordable housing/studio space, will help secure Artspace in Loveland.

Artspace vice president of consulting and resource development, Wendy Holmes, points to what happened in Santa Cruz, Calif. Artists had been priced out, but Santa Cruz did not want to lose its "arts edge." They proceeded with Artspace Tannery Lofts. For this city of 50,000, construction and renovation produced 100 units of live/work space, 25-30 working studios for individual artists and a \$6 million remediation of the decaying tannery. Artists were eager, says Holmes. "Three hundred people lined up two days prior to opening up for application acceptance to get an apartment." More than 400 submitted applications the first month.

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Artspace assembles the requisite financial resources from a variety of public and private sources. This method takes time but ensures that projects are fully funded when ground is broken for any project.

Low Income Housing Tax Credits, Historic Tax Credits, CDBG and HOME funds, Federal Home Loan Bank funds, Tax Increment Financing, city and state cultural facility grants, a conventional first mortgage, and philanthropic gifts are resources Artspace is good at tapping into.

Loveland resident Phil Farley is on the community fund committee for the Community Foundation of Northern Colorado. He explains that each community (Berthoud, Estes Park, Fort Collins, & Loveland) has a community fund committee responsible for spending allocations for that particular city.

If the survey proves there is a need and demand here, an Artspace project award could be the stimulus for enriching and invigorating Loveland's art community and the entire city with a comprehensive business model that follows through.

Farley believes what he heard keynote speaker Bill Hudnut say, "You have to be what you are. And Loveland is defined by the arts."

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Side Bar:

Take the Survey! Five minutes of your time could have a significant impact on Loveland's economic development if it tips the scale in favor of Artspace awarding Loveland one of its prized projects.

Survey:

http://deploy.ztelligence.com/start/survey/survey_taking.jsp?PIN=15W4PZMQVJP5N

If you have dreamed of a studio with enough light, an affordable place to live and work, and a supportive arts community, take the survey!

If you need practice space for your band or a larger space for your dance troupe, take the survey!

If you are among the throngs of Lovelanders who visit our Museum/Gallery's exhibits and attend performances at the Rialto, take the survey!