

Downtown could get DREAM sculpture

By Kathryn Cargo, The Shorthorn staff | Posted: Wednesday, March 4, 2015 12:00 am

A 12-foot tall and about 50-foot long statue of the word dream could come to downtown Arlington as soon as September.

Bob Pruitt, photographer and business owner of Inks and Links, is heading a project to bring the public art piece to downtown Arlington. The piece is projected to sit in the grassy area between North Mesquite Street and North Center Street, south of East Front Street.

Pruitt wants the statue to inspire people to be “released to dream.”

“I hope it spurts creativity in everybody that sees it,” Pruitt said. “I hope people stop over there in front of Mellow Mushroom, and they are engaged to walk out of their car and see what this is.”

The artwork will be a complement to Arlington’s current slogan, “The American Dream City.” Arlington took on this slogan last summer, Mayor Robert Cluck said. Arlington has everything someone needs to start his or her dream, council member Charlie Parker said.

“We can house a baseball player who is making millions of dollars or a guy who has an entry-level job,” Parker said. “We have that spectrum of ability. There are lots of things to work and play here.”

Jeff Schomberg and Laura Kimpton are co-artists of the piece. Kimpton is designing the piece, called DREAM, and Schomberg is making it. DREAM is part of a word series Kimpton and Schomberg started six years ago. Each letter will be 12 feet tall, 8 to 10 feet wide and about 4 feet deep, Schomberg said. The statue will be made out of steel, with a life of more than 50 years, Schomberg said.

Pruitt is in partnership with Downtown Arlington Management Corporation to bring DREAM to Arlington. A public art piece is a part of the 5-year plan the corporation has for downtown Arlington, corporation president Tony Rutigliano said.

“It will really become a destination within downtown and a place for people to meet,” Rutigliano said. “That’s one of the biggest reasons I’m excited about it. We’re finally making art accessible to Arlington.”

The Downtown Arlington Management Corporation is funding \$25,000 of the \$75,000 needed for the art piece, Rutigliano said. The project still needs \$50,000, and the next big step in the project is



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A statue of the word dream is planned to be created for Downtown Arlington near September.

fundraising, Pruitt said. Downtown Arlington Management Corporation and Pruitt are applying for a grant and collecting donations for the project.

The piece will not be solid letters but have several openings that are the shape of a bird. The bird is Kimpton's signature, and represents flight, freedom and creativity, after her late father.

The artwork will have LED lights inside each of the letters, leaving a projection of the birds all around the statue, Schomberg said. The plan is for viewers to be able to control the lights with a downloadable app on their smart phone, he said. DREAM is a texture piece, Pruitt said, and is meant to be a touchable piece of artwork as well as visual.

"I believe that public art and public sculptures are really good for a city," Schomberg said. "In the past when we've had installations, people do things like poetry readings at them. They seem to draw a crowd and things happen around them. I think it will be a good fit for Downtown Arlington."

Production on the project began last week, starting out with the D, Schomberg said. He said he starts by cutting out sheets, with about 300 birds per steel sheet. One letter takes about 10 sheets. He welds a frame, then attaches the sheets to it.

The plan is to have the artwork installed the last weekend of September to compliment South Street Art Festival, Pruitt said. Downtown Arlington Management Corporation and Pruitt have a goal to create a park, called DREAM Park, on the land DREAM will be placed and extend east to Mary Street, creating a mini Klyde Warren-like park, he said. Pruitt wants to bring other art pieces to the park and create an environment where people can do anything from studying to yoga classes.

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