

Javelina artwork joins parade of new attractions in Sedona

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Coming soon to Sedona: A colorful herd of javelinas. Look for them at local businesses rather than among the red-rock slopes surrounding town.

"Javelinas on Parade" is Sedona's answer to Chicago's Cows on Parade and the bigger-than-life guitars dotting the Valley.

The statues, a mother javelina named Mabel and her baby, Oscar, will start popping up next week when the Sedona Arts Festival runs Oct. 8-9 for its 15th year.

It's one of the new attractions Sedona offers as it readies for the fall season in red-rock country.

The town, about 100 miles northwest of the Valley, also boasts a new hotel, a first-ever arts festival following the Sedona Arts Festival, new accolades for existing landmarks and the promise of road work, complete with traffic roundabouts.

In fact, it was the prospect of traffic headaches that prompted local business officials to launch the Javelinas on Parade.

The painted pigs should be a fanciful diversion from the road work, said Debra Bodnar, executive director of the Sedona Arts Festival.

Local businesses are invited to sponsor a pair of the javelinas for \$2,000, decorate them in whatever theme they prefer and display them outside their offices and stores.

"We chose javelinas because they hadn't been done before," Bodnar said. Chicago has its cows, Norfolk has its mermaids and Seattle had pigs a few years ago, but no one had chosen javelinas.

Bodnar said she's encouraging artists to play off the "Beauty and the Beast" theme, since she regards Sedona as the most beautiful city in the U.S. and the javelinas as, well, as not so gorgeous.

Already, the javelina are attracting attention.

Gov. Janet Napolitano on Tuesday designated the Javelinas on Parade an "Arizona treasure," part of her campaign to promote Arizona attractions.

Char Beltran, president of the Sedona Chamber of Commerce, said 28 pairs of javelinas have already been "adopted," and she's hoping for 50 to 70 sets to eventually grace city streets.

The javelinas will be on display through 2007, when they will be auctioned to benefit local arts programs.

Road work will begin in November on Arizona 89A in uptown Sedona.

"We're making it more pedestrian-friendly, widening the sidewalks," Beltran said.

That work should continue through April, overlapping with the start of work to widen Arizona 179, the main road connecting the village of Oak Creek and Sedona with Interstate 17.

Last week, a nearly eight-mile stretch of Arizona 179 was designated an "All-American Road" by the Federal Highway Administration. The award recognizes the scenic attractiveness of the road and is a nod to the work state transportation officials have done with local community members to protect the road's scenic qualities even while widening it.

The road work will keep Arizona 179 at two lanes, but add wide shoulders, passing lanes, left-turn lanes, bike paths, walkways, and cutout areas for cars to pull over, said Doug Nintzel, a spokesman for the Arizona Department of Transportation.

As Arizona 179 pours into the busy center of Sedona, the road will take on a roundabout at its intersection with Arizona 89A. A second roundabout will be built about a block west, at the intersection of Arizona 89A with Brewer Road.

"89A will take on a different feel with efforts to slow traffic," Nintzel said.

Over the summer, Sedona added other attractions and readied plans for new work that will begin this fall.

The Sedona Rouge resort opened earlier this year, complete with a new spa.

Meanwhile, the Enchantment Resort's Mii amo won national plaudits, being named the No. 2 destination spa in the nation by *Travel + Leisure* magazine. Miraval Resort's Life in Balance spa, in Tucson, won the top spot.

The magazine also ranked the Enchantment resort 53rd on its list of the top 100 hotels in the continental United States and Canada.

Expansion is also under way at local tourist destinations, Beltran said.

The Sedona Real resort is adding about 40 rooms, while the Tlaquepaque shopping center is adding a patio that will include 3,000 square feet of new retail. The addition should be done in time for Sedona's holiday-themed light show, which begins in late November, Beltran said.

Next weekend's arts festival offers more than 110 artists displaying their work on the grounds of Red Rock High School.

It will be followed Oct. 29 by Sedona's first-ever Plein Air Arts Festival, in which 30 renowned artists who do their painting outdoors will be stationed around town, on public display. It will be followed by a public art sale Oct. 30.

'Javelinas on Parade' called 'Ariz. treasure' by governor



WIS MIDDLETON/SPECIAL FOR THE REPUBLIC

Gov. Janet Napolitano (right) takes a look at one of the colorful javelina statues from the "Javelinas on Parade" program at an event in Sedona. Local businesses are invited to sponsor a statue for \$2,000.

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