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## **Lake Mills' First Annual Art Festival Proves A Success**

*July art event attracted many visitors to downtown Lake Mills and created significant sales for its artists*

Lake Mills, WI – July 17, 2006 – 12 painters, five jewelry designers, three potters, three textile artists, two woodworkers, as well as one stone carver and one metal artist were among the 27 fine artists that displayed their handiwork and demonstrated their techniques on Saturday, July 15 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. in Commons Park, the center of historic Lake Mills.

The festival, with an attendance of 2,150 proved to be a resounding success for both Lake Mills and the artists. One artist commented, "The standard has been set high for the rest of the shows I enter."

Sales were substantial for many of the artists involved and awards were prevalent. Two awards of \$250 each were given: Acrylic Painter, Richard Patt from Wauwatosa won "Best of Show - Artwork" and Adirondack Furniture Designer, Tom Benware from Arborvitae took "Best of Show – Display". The Purchase Award Program, where eight local businesses made a commitment to purchase a piece of art from the festival to display in their place of business also proved popular. Donors and their chosen artists include: Bank of Lake Mills, First Weber Group/Lake Mills Main Street Program and Jensen Plumbing; Peggy Furlin, Watercolorist, Oak Creek; Forest Landscaping and Construction, and Re/Max Community Realty: Richard Peterson III, Metals, Beaver Dam; Timber Creek Pizza for Kevin Beth, Jewelry Artist, Lake Mills; TJS Cabinetry for Nicholas Rostagno, Pottery, Milwaukee; and Wisco's Russ Roedl for Joe Keifer, Oils, Lake Mills.

Volunteers, who performed tasks such as booth sitting and booth set-up for the artists, numbered at 33. Of the volunteers, one artist commented, "I would come back again next year just because we were so spoiled (by the volunteers)!" A favorite service provided by the volunteers was the distribution of bottled water and the free five-minute neck and shoulder massages offered by local massage therapist, Jill Armentrout.

Live music highlighted the day. Local folk band, Borderlands, rocked the stage from 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. The Frayed Knot String Band graced the stage for the last two hours of the festival from 2:30-4:30 p.m.

A variety of food pleased hungry patrons, including brats and hot dogs offered by Real Hope Church, baked good by the Lake Mills U.C.C., sweet corn and kettle corn by John Wilson and the hot weather favorite, custom sundaes by the Lake Mills Moravian Church.

The Arts Alliance of Greater Lake Mills sponsored a "Make and Take It " Art Yard to make yard art, for children of all ages from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. One of the coordinators of the children's area, Mary Ellen Vinz, said that she was pleasantly surprised by their turnout. She said the children loved working on their junk sculptures, and also enjoyed beading, easel painting and printing. Parents also thanked the Alliance for allowing their children to make "a mess here and not at home"! Vinz says they'll do the Art Yard again next year.

The Lake Mills Arts Demonstration Festival (LMAF), is a joint effort put forth by local artists, community members, and the Lake Mills Main Street Program to support visual artists, and provide the community with access to the creation of art. Members of the Lake Mills Main Street Art Committee include: Sherry Vandre, Public Relations Coordinator; Pat Forest, Volunteer Coordinator; Alicia Glassel, Site Coordinator; Karen Goeschko, Fundraising Coordinator and Marion Lundy, Artist Relations Coordinator. On June 13, the Wisconsin Department of Commerce officially announced Lake Mills as a Main Street Community. The Main Street Program promotes the economic redevelopment of historic business districts in Wisconsin.

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