



Roanoke Arts Commission
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**NEW GREENWAY MURALS TO BE
CELEBRATED AT SATURDAY'S WRAP PARTY**

Volunteers and supporters gathering for group portrait

Roanoke, Va.— (October 17, 2022) — Neighbors, volunteers and greenway users are encouraged to attend a public celebration of three new murals in Roanoke's southeast portion of the Roanoke River Greenway:

Mural Wrap Party with light refreshments

Saturday, October 22

11 AM - 12 PM

[Bennington Park](#), 13th Street Bridge
Bennington Street SE, 24013

Three murals now enliven the underside of two bridges at two well used neighborhood greenway access points. Local artist [Jon Murrill](#) created the large works with the help from neighbors who were encouraged to sign up through the *I Heart SE* community network and from high school students enlisted by the Patrick Henry High School art teacher.

Covering the supports of the 9th street bridge and the 13th street bridge are colorful images of native birds, community icons, and even a street map of the Southeast neighborhood. Project development background is at www.roanokearts.org/southeast.

“We’re so pleased with the project,” says [Roanoke Arts Commission](#) Chair Meighan Sharp. “In the Year of the Artist, we’re actively demonstrating the role of community driven, artist-led projects in making Roanoke an even better place. Jon did much more than put paint on a wall. He helped dozens put a positive fingerprint on the community around them.”

More than 50 volunteers participated in the painting of the bridges between the July 4th weekend and the end of September. The artist provided the design, leadership, active on-site coordination, and the implementation of the detailed work.

“It’s been one of my largest and most rewarding projects to date,” says Murrill. Many of his murals to date have been interior works commissioned by private businesses. “I really enjoyed working with others,” says the artist, “and I plan to do more projects that engage others in the process.”

“This entire project was a fit for our neighborhood from start to finish,” says Sunni Purviance, the lead of the community engagement and action network, [I Heart SE](#). We worked with the Roanoke Arts Commission in applying for the funding and students from Roanoke College helped us explore potential themes. Neighborhood residents identified potential goals for the project helped select the artist, and had a lot of fun painting. And on Saturday, we’re making chili for our wrap party. It shows how much we love SE.”

The \$20,000 project was funded by the City of Roanoke through the Percent for Art Program with matching funds provided by the National Endowment for the Arts.

Saturday’s event will take place at 11 AM to 12 PM at the Bennington Park Trailhead. Light refreshments will be provided, and Mayor Sherman Lea is expected to attend. Volunteers and supporters will gather for a group picture in celebration of the civic energy through which our neighborhoods and community become their best.



About the Roanoke Arts Commission

The Roanoke Arts Commission (RAC) was established in 1983 to “advise and assist City Council on matters relating to the advancement of the arts and humanities within the city.” Fifteen volunteers appointed by council work to increase the collective impact of arts and culture in the community by

- Guiding City investments in arts and culture.
- Advancing the City’s Arts and Cultural Plan.
- Developing and Implementing the City’s Public Art Plan.
- Advocating for arts and cultural initiatives and investment.

About I Heart SE

I Heart SE is a positive action campaign and neighborhood network centered around caring for Roanoke’s Southeast neighborhoods. Largely organized through Facebook, it’s intention is to highlight good and positive aspects of Southeast Roanoke and spread love for the neighborhood. This month the network celebrates three years of Plawking —Picking up litter while walking. The community is invited to attend and equipment is provided. The next two group plawks are on

10/18 (Tue) Belmont Christian Church— 1101 Jamison Ave SE—5:15 pm
10/25 (Tue) La Roca Church—929 Murray Ave SE—5:15 pm

About the Artist: Jon Murrill

Jon Murrill is a professional portrait artist and muralist located in Roanoke, Virginia. He obtained his Master's of Fine Art degree from Radford University with a concentration in both painting and drawing. He has exhibited in juried exhibitions, solo exhibits, and group shows across the United States. Murrill currently teaches art at Patrick Henry High School.

About The Year of the Artist

The Roanoke Arts Commission invites artists who live, work, or are civically involved in the Roanoke community to participate in the Roanoke’s **Year of the Artist** (YOTA) activities. During the 2022-2023 fiscal year, the City of Roanoke will invest more than \$300,000 in community-driven and artist-led projects advancing the community in a variety of key areas.

The YOTA network is offering **free artist trainings** in a variety of professional development topics, including business practices, community development and facilitation, self-care, and specific engagement strategies. Sessions will occur every Tuesday this fall. The next virtual will take place on Tuesday, September 18 at 7 PM and focus on hosting effective community meetings. Those interested in participating can learn more and register to receive login information at www.roanokearts.org/YOTA. The Year of the Artist is funded by National Endowment for the Arts through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and the City of Roanoke. ###