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Greetings

Community groups join forces to propose new city of Napa 'welcome' signs

Jennifer Huffman

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Napa artist Gordon Huether designed this image of new city of Napa "welcome" signs. They would replace the Gordon Huether image

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Visitors to the city of Napa could soon be greeted by shiny new
meant to replace the aging billboards currently on display.

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Two Napa city welcome signs are found at the city limits. One is beside the Meadows senior living community next to Highway 29. The other is located next to Napa State Hospital on Highway 221.

Both are “decrepit” and in need of replacement, said Paul Oseso. In his travels, he’s noticed that other cities have far nicer welcome signs. “Napa deserves better,” he said.

Oseso, the general manager at Napa’s Áegis Living, is enrolled in the current Leadership Napa Valley class. The nine-month program provides leadership development for community-minded individuals.

One group of Leadership participants, known as “Wine Inclined,” decided to re-imagine the city of Napa welcome signs, with “more iconic signage” befitting “the legendary Napa Valley and city of Napa.”

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Called the Napa Gateway Project, the new signs will signal that travelers have arrived at a world class destination, said **a website created by the group**.

Napa artist Gordon Huether agreed to donate his time to design the new sign.

“We want a gateway that visually conveys Napa; a gateway that is inspired in part by our agrarian identity” and includes the logos of local service clubs, said Huether.

“I have taken the shape of a traditional barn and made that the basis for the design. Corten steel is the primary material and is a rust color.”

With these new signs, “Visitors they will know with certainty that they have arrived to the CITY of Napa,” Huether emphasized.

The signs, currently without lighting, will also be brightened at night by solar-powered lights. They will remain the same size, about 30 feet wide and 15 feet tall.

The Leadership Napa Valley group is not working alone. The Kiwanis Club of Napa oversees the upkeep of the displays.

“The club sign is dated,” said Kiwanis member Frank Carr, who chairs the service club sign committee.

It is thought that the signs were first made in the 1960s and then remodeled in the ‘80s. They were created to display the emblems of local service clubs and related groups.

“The city of Napa needs to have a welcome sign that people are proud of,” Carr said.

Carr said the Kiwanis group has been working on raising funds to renovate the signs. But after Carr connected with Wine Inclined’s practicum group, the two joined forces and this new collaboration has reinvigorated those efforts.

Oseso said he’s optimistic about completing the project. He’s hoping the Napa Valley Tourism Improvement District can contribute \$100,000. The group plans to raise \$50,000 from other sources. And if each organization with an emblem on the signs contributes \$5,000, the budget would be met.

It is Oseso’s understanding that because the group is replacing existing signs, formal design review by the city is not required. However, the group will apply for a building permit when the time comes.

The Leadership group working on the sign project includes Oseso, Monica Stevens, Rina Faletti, Laila Subaie, Wendy Lombardi and Jeremy Mostfanejad.

To learn more

The Napa Gateway project:

thenapagateway.com

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