Blue Ridge Arts Center unveils cats

BY CHRISTINA CLEVELAND
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SENECA — The Blue Ridge Arts Center (BRAC) unveiled its public art project Thursday night, which includes 12 decorative steel cats that will be bolted to city property.

BRAC board of directors vice president Suzette Cross introduced the cats during Jazz on the Alley, and the cats were unveiled by their respective artists and Seneca mayor Dan Alexander.

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"I'm really excited about what Suzanne is doing with the Blue Ridge Arts Center," Alexander said Thursday. "It's going to be great."

Local artist and Seneca resident Donna Bradley attended the event to unveil her cat named "Cotton." Bradley said her grandfather was a cotton farmer.

"I went with cotton," Bradley said. "And all the different colors signify all the different people who have come to Seneca. I did the cotton for the history of the cotton farmers that bring cotton into town, and then I also worked into that the textile industry."



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The cat "Catfish," painted on both sides by artist Karen Drake, was one of the 12 cats unveiled Thursday at Jazz on The Alley.

At the event, Cross also unveiled the proof for the "Welcome to Seneca" mural designed by Jim Juras, which will be located in Ram Cat Alley. Two benches with the "All Aboard" train theme will also be dedicated.

"It's been a long process — choosing what kind of material for the cats, having the students cut them and finding artists to do the cats, to jury the cats and then have them done and then to have them out downtown to go on the 's-cat-enger' hunt."

The art project was funded by a $5,000 grant from Hughes Investment in Greenville in correlation with Ten at the Top's Our Upstate Vision forum. Representatives from Ten at the Top also attended Thursday's event to see the unveiling. Executive director Dean Hybl said one of the focuses of Ten at the Top is community vibrancy, and Hughes has committed to donate $10,000 a year for the next five years to promote vibrancy in the Upstate.

"We're very excited for here finally," Cross said. Seneca because we think it's going to bring people

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