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ARTISTS CHOSEN FOR MBTA TWENTYNINE PALMS TRANSIT CENTER

Twentynine Palms is about to receive two art installations to add to its public art scene in the downtown area. The works are planned for the Morongo Basin Transit Authority's new Twentynine Palms Transit Center, which is currently under construction at the corner of Adobe Road and Cactus Avenue, across from the Senior Center and the Twentynine Palms Fire Department.

At its regular meeting on Thursday, Nov. 19, the MBTA Board of Directors approved the selection of two Morongo Basin artists for the transit center project, Randy Addy of Pioneertown and John Whytock of Joshua Tree.

Addy and Whytock were among four finalists chosen by the City of Twentynine Palms Public Arts Advisory Committee from nearly a dozen responses to MBTA's call for artists last September. After reviewing formal presentations from the artists in October, the final selection was made by an MBTA art committee, headed by board members Lori Herbel, Council member of the Town of Yucca Valley, and Steve Flock, Mayor pro tem of the City of Twentynine Palms.

Addy, in partnership with his brother, Marshall Hale, also of Pioneertown, will create a stone sculpture featuring a 6-1/2-foot-tall rock façade composed of Texas limestone, accented with cast bronze sculptures of a prowling coyote, a full moon, and a life-size red-tailed hawk sitting atop the wall. The installation will include a water feature, symbolizing a desert spring, and two stone benches to provide an artistic seating area for the public at the sculpture.

Whytock will be creating a 12-foot by 8-foot desert mural diorama in three levels. The mural panels will be framed in sculpted concrete and native rock and enclosed with tempered glass, featuring Twentynine Palms pioneer Bill Keys in his 1910 Chase truck, known as the Keysmobile, driving through a desert landscape on the dirt trail that eventually became Highway 62.

The Twentynine Palms Transit Center was designed to incorporate a three-dimensional art piece to enhance the project site, similar to the sculpture commission for the Yucca Valley Transit Center created by Yucca Valley artist David Falossi in 2008. MBTA selected Addy's stone sculpture for the corner of

the project site on Adobe Road, and, after much deliberation, decided to select Whytock's diorama for an additional installation on the Cactus Avenue portion of the site, facing the Twentynine Palms Senior Center.

According to MBTA General Manager Joe Meer, part of the decision to do joint awards was based on Whytock's compelling proposal for a mural subject that not only relates to transportation but also honors and preserves the image of Bill Keys, featured in the City's first mural in 1994, which is expected to be lost in the next two years when the building is torn down and replaced by a Walgreens store.

"We believe the two pieces selected are complementary and the overall effect will be very complementary to the project site," Meer said.

The artists are due to begin construction of their art pieces in December, and the City and MBTA anticipate installation and an unveiling celebration for the project by March 2010.

Both Addy and Whytock have been working artists for more than 30 years. Randy Addy has created cast bronze and stone sculptures throughout Southern California, including public commissions for the City of Indio and the City of Rancho Mirage Public Library. John Whytock is the creator of more than 300 murals from Las Vegas to Costa Rica, including two murals in Twentynine Palms, The Dirty Sock Camp in 1996 and Desert Gold Mining Days in 1998.

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