

2008 “Excellence in Downtown Revitalization” Award Winner

Port Angeles’s Original Bench Design: Artwork You Can Sit On



Project Overview

To enhance the visual appeal of downtown, the Port Angeles Downtown Association (PADA) decided the deteriorating wooden benches lining the sidewalks desperately needed to be replaced. As design committee members discussed the difficulty of finding street furniture unique to downtown Port Angeles, committee member and internationally known artist Bob Stokes began sketching a design — it was the one-of-a-kind design the committee was looking for.

The sketch incorporated a diamond shape, a prominent design element throughout downtown Port Angeles. To further personalize the benches, a call went out for artwork based on the theme “What the Northwest Means to Me.” 65 people of all ages submitted designs ranging from ferry boats to Native American art. Welders from a local machine shop and the local community college helped turn Mr. Stokes’ inspired sketch and the selected artwork into functional, weather-resistant, and unique street furniture for downtown Port Angeles.

Funding

PADA paid for the original prototype bench. For efficiency and cost, a minimum of 15 benches needed to be pre-sold before production could begin. To market the benches, the prototype was rotated through downtown businesses, shown at the local Home and Garden Show, and even appeared in the 4th of July Parade. Within seven months, all 15 benches were sold to the public for \$1500 each. The purchaser chose the artwork for the back, where they would like the bench placed, and the plaque inscription.

The Result

The project brought together college students, children, professional welders, business owners — in fact, the entire community.

18 benches now enhance the streetscape of downtown Port Angeles as tributes, love stories, memorials, and legacies. The design of the bench spawned the design of a trash can as well.

This project also brought Lincoln Industrial welding back to downtown where they had been located for decades.

Contact the Port Angeles Downtown Association at 360-457-9614 for more information.