

The letters above the former Ralston Arena's marquee will be "recycled" into a public art sculpture in celebration of the recently formed Ralston Arts & Creative District (RACD).

The Ralston Arena was renamed the Liberty First Credit Union Arena as part of a sponsorship agreement that began January 1st, 2022, creating a new and unique opportunity for Ralston to celebrate the arts.

"Ralston is challenging artists from across the Metro and surrounding region to use the letters in the word "Ralston" to create a unique public art sculpture that will become the highlight of the entryway at 72nd and Main Streets," said RACD Board Member Chloe Hamel.

"Our Recycled Letters sculpture competition is an incredible way to celebrate the new Ralston Arts and Creative District. The contest will help draw attention to our community's goal of becoming a metro destination to experience art and culture while enjoying the charm of our small-town-in-the-city-vibe," Hamel continued.

Ralston City Council member Brian Kavanaugh stressed the economic development impact of the newly formed Ralston Arts & Creative District, "Attracting new entrepreneurs to Ralston is what inspired the City Council to create the Arts & Creative District."

"Ralston's new Granary redevelopment is home to a business incubator that is mentoring a new generation of entrepreneurs, including the last two Metro Start-Ups of Year, Event Vesta and Retail Aware. The Arts will make our community more interesting to this next generation of young business leaders," Kavanaugh said.

"We are competing for talent in a tough market," said Retail Aware COO Brent Blecha. "An arts district is a great attraction to the millennials we depend upon to keep us growing. One of the reasons we located in Ralston was the efforts the community is making to appeal to a new generation."

"I was a part of a group of business leaders that implemented a similar plan in Breckenridge, Colorado years ago. We made Breckenridge a destination for more than skiing by building on our community arts scene," said Jody Strauch, a co-owner of the interior design and furniture business Out of the Box.

"We are doing the same thing here in Ralston. The Recycled Arts competition is a unique and interesting way to market Ralston's strong art and culture scene to the Metro," Strauch continued.

According to Hamel, the Recycled Letters sculpture competition includes a \$3,000 award for the winning artist and funding to pay for fabrication and installation of the sculpture.

Hamel said the winning sculpture will be viewed by the 38,000 drivers that travel 72nd Street daily, "Our new entryway sculpture will be one of the most widely viewed art pieces in the Metro."

Interested artists can review the Recycled Letters Call to Artists at ralstonarts.org.