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Ozark Beer Company to Transform Backyard into Community Gathering Space

Rogers, AR, September 2023 - Ozark Beer Company is collaborating with local artists to reimagine the downtown Rogers Brewery's backyard as a family-friendly place for welcoming the community and hosting public events. In addition to expanding seating space for patrons, the brewery aims to have the ability to host popular programming like festivals, artist fairs, and swap-meets without the threat of rainouts or the need to block off Arkansas St., and to make the integration of art a priority as development of the back yard takes shape.

Founded in 2013 by Lacie Bray and Andy Coates, the brewery was the first in Benton County and has remained committed to its community-centered approach to brewing, hospitality, and programming, even as the brewery has grown significantly in ten years.

The proactive hospitality strategy is also a response to growth in Ozark's Downtown Rogers neighborhood, with the addition of over 300 residential units within a mile of the brewery anticipated to be completed over the next several years.

"We've been dreaming about this backyard space since we acquired the building in 2016. We're finally getting to a point where we must use the space to continue growing. Ozark's success cannot be separated from our community, so developing this space for and with our neighbors is truly a dream come true for Ozark," says owner Lacie Bray.

The brewery is teaming up with Urban Land Institute's (ULI) NW Arkansas district council to bring artists into the design process at its earliest stages. The collaboration was sparked by an *Art in Place* grant awarded to ULI NWA by ULI's National Council, and the project is being planned and developed with a mind toward integrating feedback, inspiration, and participation from artists in the region.

“The purpose of *Art in Place* is to cultivate better relationships and promote better understanding between artists and private real estate developers, making it easier for the integration and commissioning of art in new development, and to make a case for economic benefits of placing the arts at the center of community engagement and placemaking,” says local project leader Dayton Castleman, Director of Creative Placemaking and Artist Lead at Rogers architecture firm Verdant Studio.

Northwest Arkansas was selected among nine other grantees worldwide to participate in the Art in Place grant program, with each grantee convening artists and developing pilot projects unique to their own urban areas. The other locations include district councils in Austin, TX, Cleveland, OH, Hong Kong, and Tampa, FL, as well as state and national councils in Indiana, Louisiana, Germany, and France.

Building excitement and soliciting community input for the project is also a priority. In addition to artist feedback through ULI, the brewery is currently inviting patrons to draw their “Dream Ozark Beer Co. Backyard” on printed coloring pages, then display them in the Rogers taproom for public viewing and discussion.

Coates’ eyes sparkle when he describes their visions for art woven into the Ozark backyard space. “The blank slate of the space lends itself to big ideas. We’re beyond excited to explore this project artistically.”

For more info:

[Ozark Beer Company](#)

[ULI’s Art in Place Grant](#)

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