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Arts Council raising money for live/work artist building

By CONOR GLASSEY

The life of an aspiring artist can be difficult — after all, the term “starving artist” didn’t come out of nowhere. Artists in Snohomish County, however, have some hope on the horizon with a new building scheduled to open in downtown Everett by 2010 that will offer 40 apartments geared toward artists struggling to get by.

The building is the result of a partnership between the city of Everett, the Arts Council of Snohomish County and Artspace, a Minneapolis-based company that builds and transforms buildings into artist communities throughout the country.

“It’s a unique facility, so we think it will draw lots of attention to the city of Everett,” Arts Council executive director Judy Tuohy said.

The site of the building is currently a parking garage, located at 2919 Hoyt Ave., and it will also feature two multipurpose classrooms for painting, drawing and ceramics. There will be a hot shop and a warm shop for glass work and the second story of the building will look over the hot shop, giving onlookers more opportunities and angles to watch glass being blown. The building will also have a jew-

elry studio, a ceramics studio and a printmaking shop. There will be two art galleries, a store and a cafe.

“It’s going to provide a tremendous amount of opportunity for, not only artists, but students as well,” Tuohy said. “It will also give families an area to take classes and come and watch art being made.”

The building will cost about \$20 million to construct. Artspace will pay nearly \$14 million to build the shell of the building and the living spaces. The Arts Council of Snohomish County will be on the hook for the additional \$6 million necessary to create the art studios, galleries and classrooms.

“We’re getting a shell, but we’re putting in everything you see between the walls,” Tuohy said.

Currently, the Arts Council is in the middle of its capital campaign. They have already raised \$2.8 million and have \$2.2 million pending in grants.

“We hope to be at that magic number five (million) by the end of the year,” Arts Council financial manager Glenda Anderson said.

Tuohy met last week with ARC Architects, the company design-

ing the building. She said the Arts Council is working with local artists during the design process to ensure all the studios are designed and set up for “ideal” production spaces.

Artspace is on schedule to break ground on the building in December and a grand opening of the building is planned for mid-2010.

The 40 rent-controlled apartments geared toward artists and their families looking for an affordable place to live, work, teach and network. The one- and two-bedroom lofts will range from 800 to 1,300 square feet. Renters will have to prove that they meet certain income restrictions and the rent will range from \$676 to \$974 per month. Applications will be available approximately three months before the lofts open, but an interest list is currently being generated.

Local artist Paula Rey is excited about what the new building will bring to Everett.

“You’re going to have a good concentration of people that are really involved in being part of a creative community,” Rey said. “It will also allow for people who work in the arts — and they usually have an-

other job — but they will be able to have a live/work space and be able to survive. It’s going to be a jewel for the community.”

The building is also striving for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design silver certification. It will have a green roof, collecting rainwater that will be used for a water feature in and around the building. Tuohy said they are also looking for other environmentally-friendly ideas, such as capturing heat from the glass-blowing studio and using that to heat water in the building.

In 2006, the City Council authorized the mayor to negotiate a 100-year lease agreement with Artspace. The terms are similar to those in place at the Everett Events Center — the city owns the land, while the public facilities district owns the building.

Artspace has completed 21 projects across the country, including two in Seattle, and has 11 other projects in the works.

For more information, visit www.artscouncilofsno.org or www.artspaceusa.org.