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### **Hunter Tunnell Completes Eagle Scout Project Benefitting Kentuck Art Center**

[*NORTHPORT, ALABAMA*—Hunter Tunnell, a Life Scout Troop 90 member and 17 year old student at Tuscaloosa County High School, has successfully completed his Eagle Scout Project, which involved building 6 Leopold benches for Kentuck Art Center's Courtyard of Wonders.

Tunnell spent eight months planning the project, beginning with ideation and building a project proposal with the help of his coach, to financing the project himself and working with 8 fellow Scouts and 4 adult volunteers to build the benches onsite at Kentuck Art Center on March 4, 2023.

The Leopold benches are a great addition to Kentuck Art Center, providing a comfortable and inviting place for visitors to enjoy the whimsical outdoor sculptures and Kentuck's events in the Courtyard of Wonders.

The Leopold bench design was originally created by Aldo Leopold, an environmentalist and avid birdwatcher, and considered by many to be the father of wildlife ecology. This bench design is favored by birdwatchers because it allows people to sit both forwards and backwards. Sitting backwards on the bench allows birdwatchers to steady their elbows while looking through binoculars, or excited art patrons to view the Courtyard of Wonders from multiple angles. Tunnell and his team worked to ensure that each bench was of the highest quality and met all safety standards.

"Kentuck Art Center is thrilled to have new places for arts patrons to sit when they visit Kentuck's Courtyard of Wonders," said Amy Echols, Executive Director at Kentuck Art Center. "Hunter and his team did a wonderful job organizing this project and building these benches. Thousands of courtyard visitors will benefit from Hunter's work for years to come. Thank you Hunter and all the volunteers for your hard work."

"Personally I am pleased not only with the completion of 6 benches, but more so with the leadership Hunter developed over the entire process, said Mike Henderson, Tunnell's project coach. "He has matured and gained confidence in his own abilities as he worked his way through this process. This project was not only a benefit for Kentuck; it was a benefit to Hunter and his character."

The completion of the benches marks a significant milestone for Tunnell as he prepares to join the few who have achieved the rank of Eagle Scout, the highest rank in the Boy Scouts of America. His final steps in this project include submitting a written project report and a presentation to the Eagle Scout Board of Review.



Hunter Tunnell and project coach Mike Henderson



Hunter Tunnell and volunteers who assisted with bench construction



Hunter Tunnell, project coach Mike Henderson, and volunteers who assisted with bench construction

Kentuck Art Center and Festival was established in 1971. Kentuck's mission is to perpetuate the arts, engage the community, and empower the artist. The Kentuck Festival of the Arts is nationally recognized for its quality, diversity, and celebration of artistic style ranging from folk to contemporary arts and traditional crafts. The 52nd Kentuck Festival of the Arts is October 14-15, 2023 at Kentuck Park in Northport, Alabama.

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