

Boulder's Dairy Center to receive new entryway, thanks to Western Disposal

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After 18 years of using the same outdated entrance that Watts-Hardy Dairy employees used when milk was still processed on the premises, Boulder's Dairy Center for the Arts will soon be adding a new entryway.

Officials announced Tuesday that Western Disposal Services will be donating \$300,000 to the arts center over the next three years. The money will be used to build a new facade and lobby area for the building, part of a larger construction project that will add an art-house movie theater.

"It's really the first really large donation that is going to the front of the building, rather than the theater," said Richard Polk, board chairman for the Dairy Center.

The design will encompass a large portion of the center's current outdoor patio under a flowing curved roof, atop a clear glass atrium. It will add gallery and program space while creating a larger entryway that will be better suited for evacuations in dangerous situations and will be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

"We want everyone to safely enjoy the arts," Polk said.

Dairy Center fundraisers have been looking for a way to finance the new entry since announcing plans for the new 100- to 130-seat art-house theater in November. They have been in talks with Western Disposal about the project for the last three months.

"It's nice to see an essential service like Western Disposal contributing to the arts," Polk said. "We had high hopes when we went and spoke to them, but our hopes weren't as high as what their gift ended up being."

The \$300,000 contribution is one of several large donations Western Disposal has made this year to commemorate the company's 40th anniversary. It contributed \$100,000 each to nonprofits Crayons to Calculators, which donates school supplies to children in need, and Special Transit, which provides transportation options for the mobility-impaired.

"It was really our way of thanking the community for their support and their business over the years," said Gary Horton, Western Disposal president.

Horton said he was familiar with the state of the Dairy Center's entryway and was happy to provide the art scene in Boulder with a little aesthetic lift.

"This new addition on the front is going to make the Dairy a more welcoming place," Horton said. "It's going to give people a place to gather before entering the new Boedecker theater."

The Boedecker Foundation, founded by former Crocs Shoes CEO George B. Boedecker Jr., donated an undisclosed amount to build the new theater at the Dairy Center last year.

The nonprofit Dairy Center for the Arts hosts 35,000 lessons, classes and performances for more than 150,000 visitors each year, according to Polk. He said the theater and entryway will make the Dairy Center one of the nation's premiere arts centers, and he hopes both will be completed in time for the winter holiday season.

"Boulder should be world-class in the arts, like it is in so many other things," he said.

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