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New Keeling neighborhood obelisk reflects amenities
A new public art piece that originated from neighborhood inspirations stands tall in the Keeling neighborhood, where Keeling residents and other interested spectators observed its recent installation on the 4th Avenue/Fontana Bike Boulevard, just south of Blacklidge Drive.

The obelisk, which was partially crafted during Cyclovia Tucson 2, includes a variety of glazed tiles and the names of many of the Cyclovia 2 neighborhood and public participants who biked, walked or skated to the Keeling Activity Hub during the event. The obelisk was installed June 20.

Pima Association of Governments (PAG) provided $1,600 in funding support for the construction of the obelisk through its Travel Demand Management Program, which last year initiated a pilot project, Keeling On the Move, with the City of Tucson, to encourage residents in the Keeling neighborhood to become more active in biking, walking or riding the bus. PAG’s Keeling On The Move continues to support neighborhood initiatives that promote alternative transportation.

When PAG’s TDM Manager Ruth Reiman learned of the vision of Jane Evans, a resident of Keeling and neighborhood association board member, for the obelisk, Reiman directed Evans to work with the Tucson Pima Arts Council and the City of Tucson to make sure the design meets city specifications. Evans envisioned the obelisk as a reflection of the natural habitat and bicycle friendliness of Tucson, something that all those biking or walking on Fontana Bike Boulevard could enjoy.

In the process of planning for the obelisk, Evans recruited several neighbors, Mark Perry, Dwayne Arnspiger and Joe Lupiani who have expertise in metalsmithing, mosaic tiles, ceramics and engineering. Other neighbors contributed to the project by glazing tiles, digging the hole for the installation and pouring concrete.

“Art is an expression of community and we are so pleased to have this colorful tiled bike obelisk on the Fontana bicycle boulevard where everyone can see it,” said Leslie Carlson, president of the Keeling Neighborhood Association. The idea also may cross into the

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international realm. June Flanigan, a former Tucson resident who now lives in Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada, visited Tucson to assist Evans in the project and learn how to construct a similar art piece for the city museum in Lethbridge.

“The mosaic tile obelisk and the dog on his bike on the finial is a beautiful and colorful addition to the scenery along Fontana and will hopefully attract more bikers and walkers to the bike boulevard,” Reiman said. “This project is a tribute to the Keeling neighborhood, which continues to build their community after the Keeling On The Move Program.”

Other recent neighborhood efforts include adopting Keeling Desert Park and planting trees on Fontana Avenue.

Pima Association of Governments is an association of local, state and tribal governments with a mission to build consensus among its members and the public on regional planning for transportation, energy, watershed and air quality. PAG’s staff gather and analyze data, provide accurate information, and coordinate an open and cooperative planning process to promote good decision-making for the region. Please visit www.PAGregion.com for more information or www.facebook.com/PAGregion

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