



MARY JANE SCHULTE/The Register-Guard

**Artist Bayne Gardner** speaks to a crowd about his mural on the side of Wynant's Family Health Foods store during the Springfield Mural Tour on Saturday. An estimated 200 people turned out for the event.

# Mural walk and talk

## Dozens turn out for a tour of Springfield's public art

By EDWARD RUSSO  
*The Register-Guard*

**S**PRINGFIELD — A throng of art lovers moved through downtown Saturday to see what the city had to offer, which was plenty.

About 200 people took a walking tour organized by the Lane Arts Council to see more than two dozen murals in downtown.

"What we have seen so far is beautiful," said Dan Harris of Eugene, who attended with his wife, Andrea, and daughter, Megan. "It's such a nice turnout. I had no idea there would be so many people here."

Mija Marie Andrade, the resident artist at the Oregon Supported Living Program, led the tour.

The tour was meant to raise residents' awareness of Springfield's public art, she said.



**Merideth Ferrell** of Eugene admires the "Official Simpsons Mural" during the Springfield Mural Tour on Saturday.

A wide variety of art was represented in the murals, from pastoral McKenzie River scenes to colorful fantasies.

Some of the murals were painted by students from

Springfield High School, Gateways High School and downtown's Academy of Arts & Academics.

People attended the tour to learn about the murals that grace downtown build-

ings, including some that they have been driving by for years.

Carol Sirious was curious about several of the large paintings, including "The Oregon Trail," on the exterior of Emerald Art Center on Main Street.

Sirious, who has lived in Springfield about 14 years, said she wanted to learn the story behind the mural, painted by Ann Woodruff Murray.

"I didn't know if it was the artist's idea, or whether there is a story behind it," she said.

The tour began at 10 a.m., at Wynant's Family Health Foods, which has three exterior and two interior murals.

Wynant's manager Greg Daily said he supports wall art as a way to beautify the area.

"My grandparents started Wynant's 35 years ago, and

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we wanted to come downtown and make it more family oriented," he said.

Murals also help art students at the Academy of Arts & Academics, who can satisfy a graduation requirement by participating in a mural project, he said.

"I'm heavily involved with the Arts & Academics and that is why I let them paint on the back wall," Daily said.

Several of the artists that created the murals participated in the tour and answered questions for the public.

The large crowd gathered around an outside wall of Wyant's while artist Bayne Gardener explained that Daily gave him free rein to paint whatever he wanted. Sometimes it's not easy to paint on the outside of a building, he said.

"There are a lot of bends on this wall and

a lot of surface area," Gardner said. And it has a lot of slats, so it was a challenge."

Other downtown Springfield walking tours will take place in the future, Andrade said. She suggested that people check the Lane Arts Council website to learn those dates.

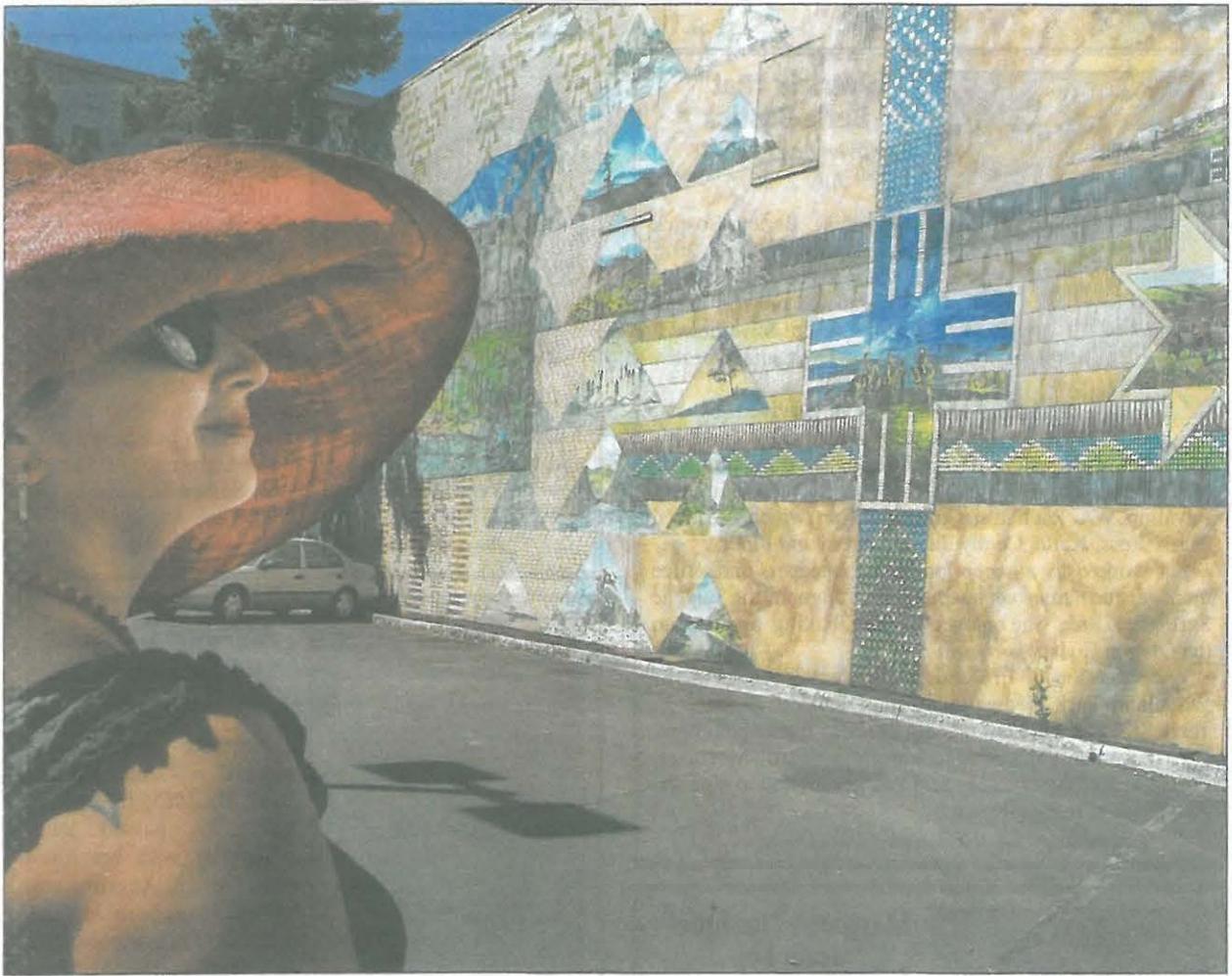
In the meantime, she said, residents can get information from the website at any time and take a self-guided tour of the murals.

Eugene has many public art pieces and a thriving arts culture, but so does Springfield, Andrade said.

Springfield is "definitely becoming a viable place to seek out arts and culture, just as much as Eugene," she said.

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**Meisha Linwood**, board member of the Eugene Springfield Art Project, enjoys the Springfield Mural Tour.



**People walk** through downtown Springfield to learn about the local murals during the Mural Tour.



**A large group** of people pass the murals in downtown Springfield.