

Lakewood Goes Back-to-Back at CBCA

By M. Perry Williams

The City of Lakewood was recently named an All-America City for the second time—first in 2011 and again in 2016. And it has yet another feather in its hat as well.

Its West Colfax corridor, home to 40 West Arts District, Rocky Mountain College of Art + Design, Lakewood Arts Council and numerous other creative enterprises, is burgeoning with arts and culture activities. And for the second year in a row, that did not go unnoticed by the Colorado Business Committee for the Arts (CBCA).

Former Mayor Bob Murphy was honored with the 2016 John Madden, Jr. Leadership Award from the CBCA at its annual Business for the Arts Awards luncheon. The prestigious award was presented to Murphy for his vision and unwavering support of the arts and creative enterprises throughout Lakewood, and particularly for his efforts along West Colfax. And this was one year removed from West Colfax advocate Bill Marino receiving the very same Leadership Award for his energy and commitment to the business of the arts by leading 40 West Arts to its goal of becoming a Colorado Certified Creative District. Lakewood is the first community outside of



Former Mayor Bob Murphy (left) and Bill Marino (right) flank current Lakewood Mayor Adam Paul following the presentation of the 2016 CBCA Leadership Award.



Governor Hickenlooper welcomed keynote speaker Jane Chu, Chairman of the National Endowment of the Arts, marking its 50th anniversary here in 2016.

Denver in the event's 30-year history to receive the leadership award in back-to-back years. In both years, the event attracted a sold-out crowd of 700+ arts, business, and civic leaders at the DCPA's Seawell Ballroom. This signature Colorado event began in 1985 as a way to honor companies and individuals for their exemplary partnerships and engagement with the arts.

Perhaps having National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Chair Jane Chu in attendance delivering the keynote address was a good omen as well. Just two months after receiving the CBCA award for the second year in a row, Lakewood and 40 West Arts learned it received the NEA Our Town

Grant (the largest in Colorado in 2016 and the largest ever for Lakewood) in support of the community's vision to create an arts loop. Envisioned as a continuous and distinctly designed pedestrian and bicycle route encircling 40 West Arts District, the arts loop will connect people to unique art experiences along the way, in parks, and other public and private spaces. The grant will help plan and design the first phase of this artistic experience, developing a local amenity for walking and biking, and advancing place-making efforts in a way that adds to the economic vibrancy of the district.

Civic engagement and collaboration continue to be the hallmark of Lakewood, as city leaders and community members work together to shape a brighter future for Colorado's fifth largest city.