



Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Downtown Festival & Art Show Receives both State and National Awards

GAINESVILLE, FLA. - The Downtown Festival & Art Show, North Central Florida's premier fall festival of the arts, is pleased to announce that the 2007 Festival is now ranked No. 23 as the best fine art show in the country by Sunshine Artist magazine's "200 Best" list. This is the first time Sunshine Artist magazine ranked the Festival in the Top 25, although it has been ranked in the Top 200 since 1996. The show's rankings rose to new heights in 2005 when it jumped from No. 81 to No. 28. The Sunshine Artist magazine received ballots from thousands of artists who listed their top-selling shows. In total, the magazine received votes for almost 1,000 shows around the country, and only 200 shows made the final cut. It is a great honor to be numbered among the best shows in the country.

Gainesville's high standard of excellence has also paid off at the recent 14th Annual Florida Festivals & Events Association (FFEA) Annual Conference and Trade Show held in Orlando. The convention and trade show brings together more than 300 festival and fair planners and special event professionals from across the state for training, idea sharing and an annual awards competition. The Media and Promotional Awards signify the highest level of achievement for members of FFEA. The Department of Parks Recreation and Cultural Affairs, Division of Cultural Affairs was awarded one first place award and two second place awards for the Downtown Festival & Art Show. The television commercial that the City's Broadcast Operations Division produced won "Best TV Production." The art festival image took second place for "Best Poster" and "Best T-shirt Design." The 2007 image was a dazzling oil-on-canvas representation of the historic Thomas Center gardens and fountain, painted by talented Gainesville artist Eleanor Blair. This is the most highly-competitive and prestigious awards program in the Florida festival and event industry, and Cultural Affairs is honored that the promotional materials submitted were considered as professional and exciting as those from other festivals including the Coconut Grove Art Festival and Strawberry Festival.

The Downtown Festival & Art Show was also chosen as one of the American Bus Association's Top 100 Events in North America for group travel in 2009. A group panel of ABA-member bus and tour operators selected our event from hundreds of entries nominated by state tourism offices and local visitors and convention bureaus. The winners will be published in September in a special supplement to Destinations, ABA's award-winning magazine, and the Top 100 Events will be posted on the Web site, www.buses.org.

Since 1996, The Downtown Festival & Art Show has consistently received national honors from prominent publications including Sunshine Artist magazine, America's premier show and festival publication.

This year, the Downtown Festival & Art Show will celebrate 27 years of excellence in art and musical expression on Saturday and Sunday, November 8 and 9, 2008, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., in the heart of historic downtown Gainesville.

The festival will showcase artwork from 250 of the nation's top artists and feature only the finest in art, food and entertainment. For more information on the City of Gainesville Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs' 27th annual celebration, please visit www.gviculturalaffairs.org.