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1 Sign, 3 Lines, 2 Poems Per Week

■ *Curators of art branch out to literature if they get the funds*

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A lonely Pojoaque road sign that once trumpeted cold beer and hot chile is taking a more literary turn, thanks to Santa Fe's gallery on wheels.

The operators of Axle Contempo-

rary, that retrofitted a '70s aluminum step van that pops up all over the City Different, plan to sponsor a series of poems with plans to present two per week (one on each side of the sign) throughout the summer. Santa Fe poet laureate Joan Logghe will jury the entries.

They're seeking pledges from \$1 up to fund the project, and they're offering incentives such as buttons, T-shirts, archival prints and a chance to chauffeur the step van around the Plaza. The latter pre-

sumes a valid driver's license, the skill to drive a stick shift and strong upper body strength, according to the Axle website.

Pedestrians, motorists and cyclists can expect the sign to pop up around Santa Fe County along well-traveled routes such as Cerrillos Road, Rodeo Road, St. Michael's Drive and Cordova Road. The project will be funded only if supporters pledge at least \$2,000 by May 2.

See 1 SIGN on PAGE 4



COURTESY PHOTO

If they get \$2,000 in pledges, the operators of Axle Contemporary, an art gallery on wheels, will use this old road sign to present haiku poems at locations around Santa Fe County.

from PAGE 1

"We'll try to move it (the sign) to different locations around Santa Fe County, kind of to surprise people," gallery co-owner Jerry Wellman said.

Wellman got the idea from his memories of the old Burma Shave signs along roadsides from the 1920s to the 1960s. The shaving cream brand was famous for its advertising gimmick: a series of small highway billboards, with a word or phrase on each sign, making a humorous poem.

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Wellman remembered spotting the signs along northern Wisconsin roadsides during childhood vacations to grandma's.

"Any break in the landscape would be absolutely thrilling," he said. "In a way, it really hearkens to that."

Gallery co-owner Matthew Chase-Daniel spotted the old 4-by-8-foot sign leaning against a shed at Dee's Towing in Pojoaque while he was driving his son to school in Los Alamos. The sign can be customized with stick-on letters.

"I was thinking what we could do with it in an innovative, creative way that would support the gallery," he said. "It's just an interesting context to read on a sign."

The pair chose haiku because its strict three-line

architecture fits the sign's format. They plan to professionally photograph each displayed poem and publish a book combining the writings with photographs and an essay about the project. They also plan to post the poems and photos on a blog.

The two will support the project through an online funding campaign. As of Saturday, they had raised about \$1,470 toward the \$2,000 goal. Sponsors — businesses ranging from restaurants to gas stations — have agreed to let the van park in their space.

Check out www.kickstarter.com/projects/axleart/axleart-roadside-haiku-project to donate or check the progress of the fundraising effort.

"This is a project that is very dear to us," Wellman

said. "We're pretty literary people."

"We might use the sign after this," Chase-Daniel added. "If someone donates \$1,200, we'll ship them the sign itself. If no one does that, we'll use the sign for a project for the future."