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Capitol Region Watershed District celebrates 20 years of service

Posted on 08 October 2018 by Calvin



The iron used to make Ringler's sculpture was heated to 2,500 degrees, and carried very carefully to the pour site by her students. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

Capitol Region Watershed District (CRWD) celebrated two decades of exemplary water stewardship on Sept. 21. The well-attended gathering served several purposes: it showcased the agency's new headquarters at 595 Aldine St., which will be completed in November. It was a chance to celebrate CRWD's many achievements and strong community partnerships. And last, but far from least, supporters were able to watch sculptor Tamsie Ringler and her team make an art piece out of molten iron as the sun went down.

CRWD is a local, special-purpose unit of government that works to protect, manage, and improve lakes, streams, rivers, and wetlands within its boundaries. The district covers 40 square miles and includes portions of Maplewood, Rosedale, and St. Paul. All of the water in the district eventually drains into the Mississippi River.

Administrator Mark Doneux opened the evening's program by saying, "We have had many successful projects and innovations in the last 20 years, all of which happened because of strong partnerships."

Ramsey County Commissioner Janice Rettman was the first to lift her glass and offer a toast. "I haven't seen another agency that does a better job of using tools and tax levies responsibly. Here's to another 20 years!" she said.

CRWD Citizen Advisory Committee Member David Arbeit has been on the board since the first day. "We moved to the Como neighborhood from Austin Texas," he said, "and couldn't believe how awful the water quality of Como Lake was at the time. The District 10 Council invited neighbors in to talk about what could be done. A group of us petitioned the State of Minnesota, and a modest version of CRWD was created in 1998. We're proud of how far we've come."

Following complimentary food from the Foxy Felafel food truck, beverages from Burning Brothers Brewery, and live blues music by Dan Rumsey, sculptor Tamsie Ringler supervised a live performance pour of molten iron. The iron used to make Ringler's sculpture was heated to 2,500 degrees

and carried very carefully to the pour site by her students. The bright red metal filled the rivulets and streams of the 8 1/2' x 12' mold, eventually forming a portrait of the river that will hang in the new office building.

CRWD is excited to start the next chapter in its history. They'll be moving into their Midway location in November, a repurposed building that formerly housed city street sweepers. Green building principles have been used to remodel the entire building, including stormwater management and energy-saving practices. The building will have public, interactive features designed to provide a unique look at watershed science. There will also be an on-site watershed learning center and a pocket park with water elements for neighbors and visitors to enjoy.

For more information, visit www.capitolregionwd.org.

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