
THINGS TO DO

Project will wrap 158 St. Paul lampposts with cozy, colorful yarn



Knitters and crocheters gather at Hygga Lowertown in St. Paul for a “meet and make” session Wednesday, Dec. 13, 2017. The women are working on the Saint Paul Cozy project, which will wrap 158 lampposts from Rice Park to CHS Field with knitted, crocheted or quilted coverings. (Kathy Berdan / Pioneer Press)

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It’s called a “cozy.” And the reason is obvious.

Artists in St. Paul’s Lowertown are organizing a pop-up art project that will wrap the lampposts from Rice Park to CHS Field in cozy, colorful yarn. That’s 158 lampposts around Rice Park, down Fourth Street, into the Union Depot driveway, known as North Plaza, and up to the St. Paul Saints ballpark.

The Saint Paul Cozy yarn bomb is looking for 158 knitters, crocheters, quilters and textile artists to each take on a lamppost. As of Wednesday night, 130 had been adopted, said Tara Weatherly, one of the project organizers.

Lampposts will be cozy in time for the St. Paul Winter Carnival and the Super Bowl festivities in Minneapolis.

Weatherly thinks the “homey, crafty” art project fits St. Paul. Minneapolis feels sleek and gray, she says, “but St. Paul is like sitting in your den in front of the fireplace. It has a more historic feel.”

Rachel Wacker, a Lowertown artist who is coordinating Saint Paul Cozy with Weatherly, has been working with public art in St. Paul for years. She says the historic nature of Lowertown can make it difficult to set up art projects. The yarn-bomb is “noninvasive art,” Wacker says.

Wacker and Weatherly measured each of the lampposts. “You can imagine the looks you get when you’re measuring lampposts with a cloth tape measure,” Wacker says.

The tallest cozies will be 5 feet, Weatherly says.

Cozy creators are assigned a lamppost and can use any colors or textiles they choose (bright colors are encouraged), says Wacker, who is the art program director for the St. Paul Saints. But there are a few rules: A cozy can’t stick out more than 3 inches from the lamppost and it cannot have any licensed logos or political or religious symbols.

The project is put together by the Rage to Order Artists Initiative of Lowertown, which is led by Wacker and Weatherly. The artist-led group’s recent projects include “100 Love Signs for Lowertown,” a Valentine’s Day lawn sign campaign, and “Domination Corporation,” an immersive play at Northern Spark 2017.

The Saints are providing support for Saint Paul Cozy, which will have a large display on the CHS Field plaza. (A giant snow slide will be set up inside the ballpark as part of St. Paul Super Bowl-related events.)

Cozy creators can join meet-and-make sessions at Hygga Lowertown on Wednesdays and Saturdays and at Amore Coffee in West St. Paul on Thursdays. The gatherings will continue through Jan. 17, when the cozies will be collected. Installation will be Jan. 21-24 and the lampposts will stay cozy until March 4.

The artist group will be looking for sponsors for the cozies, Wacker says. Sponsors will get their name on a tag on the lamppost.

Wacker and Weatherly have made a commitment to repair and clean the cozies during the exhibition.

Wednesday night at Hygga, Deb Cici was crocheting her cozy and pointed out a benefit of the yarn coverings: Gone is the temptation to see if your tongue will stick to a frozen lamppost.

FYI

- **What:** Saint Paul Cozy, a pop-up art project yarn bomb on St. Paul lampposts
- **When:** Jan. 25-March 4
- **Where:** 12 city blocks between Rice Street and CHS Field along Fourth Street.
- **How to get involved:** There are still a few lampposts that need to be adopted. Knitters and crocheters are also invited to contribute squares and pieces that can be attached to a 4-foot-by-16-foot project sign in CHS Field plaza. The contributions can be dropped off at cozy Meet and Make gatherings or at the Saints office during regular business hours.
- **Info:** saintpaulcozy.com

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Kathy Berdan

Kathy has been an arts journalist for almost 25 years. Her career goal is to interview all four Monkees, and she's three-fourths of the way there. (Yes, she did talk to Davy Jones before he died.) She loves Twin Cities theater and is a huge fan of the St. Paul Winter Carnival and the Minnesota State Fair.



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