

Downtown Longmont to be home to another Roosevelt

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POSTED: 08/28/2014 03:59:42 PM MDT | UPDATED: 11 MIN. AGO



Gov. Teddy Roosevelt was a Republican vice presidential candidate when his whistle-stop tour hit Longmont on Sept. 25, 1900. He's shown here on the east side of Main Street, with the train parked across Main. The Longmont Ledger reported that, because of his grueling campaign schedule, Roosevelt appeared "careworn, nervous and tired." (*Courtesy Longmont Museum*)



Cotton Burden, whose company built Roosevelt Park Apartments, commissioned Dan Snarr, the sculptor who did the Teddy Roosevelt statue in front of Burden's Roosevelt Place, to make this statue depicting Roosevelt during his whistle-stop tour through Longmont in 1900. The statue will be installed in front of Roosevelt Park Apartments in late September. *(Photo courtesy of Cotton Burden / Longmont Times-Call)*

Sometimes, one Teddy is just not enough.

Developer Cotton Burden, who installed the statue of Teddy Roosevelt in front of his company's Roosevelt Place office building more than a decade ago, is adding a second bronze Roosevelt statue to Longs Peak Avenue. This one, to be installed in front of Roosevelt Park Apartments, will depict the then-vice presidential candidate on his whistle stop tour through Longmont in 1900. An 11-foot-high bronze sculpture shows him campaigning off the back of a train.

"It's the Roosevelt corner," Burden quipped on Thursday, saying his permits to begin construction of the foundation just came through on Wednesday.

Crews were out ripping up the sidewalk along Longs Peak between the building's front doors and the entrance to Modena Wine Cafe on Thursday. The statue, meanwhile, is done, but it's still in Utah, where its sculptor lives. Burden said he expects the installation to be some time around the third week in September.

"We've got Roosevelt the conservationist," Burden said, referring to the original statue on the southeast corner of Longs Peak and Coffman Street, which was installed in 2003. It features the former president in boots with spurs, a western jacket and cowboy hat, a bandana around his neck and canteen at the ready. "He certainly was at the forefront of the

conservation movement, in terms of our forests and our national lands, but I thought, you know, the guy was also a very interesting president."

It was local real estate agent Arnold Turner who reminded Burden about Roosevelt's whistle-stop visit to Longmont, Burden said, and when he saw the photo of that event, the idea for a new statue was sealed.

"I just think he's an incredible character in our history," Burden said. "I don't necessarily agree with everything he believed in, but I just think he was a fascinating character."

At first he had some difficulty locating Utah-based Dan Snarr, who had done his original Roosevelt statue, so Burden had some other sculptors making miniature mock-ups of their work in a bid to win the commission. But Snarr contacted Burden on an unrelated matter, and when he heard about Burden's plan for a second Roosevelt statue, Snarr made a mock-up of his own in a very short amount of time and won the job.

"He got the concept better than the other three did, so we gave him the commission," Burden said.

"It's going to be life-sized, as opposed to the one across the street, which is 110 percent (of actual size)," Burden said. "And you'll be able to climb up on the car and and get your picture taken with him. You can even spin the brake wheel if you want to."

Like he did with the first Roosevelt statue, Burden said he intends to donate the sculpture to Art in Public Places. He declined to say what it was costing him to commission the statue because its actual value will be determined at a later date by an appraiser.

Gus Escobar of Longmont's G.A. Escobar Associates has designed the foundation, which "is stout, let me put it that way," Burden said.

The installation will likely be around Sept. 22, right about the time that Mountain Sun's Longs Peak Pub & Taphouse is slated to open on the corner of Longs Peak and Main on the ground floor of the building.

What's now called Roosevelt Park was home to a racetrack when Roosevelt made his stop in Longmont on Tuesday, Sept. 25, 1900. He was the governor of New York who, fresh off his exploits with the Rough Riders in Cuba, was campaigning for the post of vice president, to serve under William McKinley.

"He is standing, I believe, on the east side of Main Street, speaking off the back of the train," said Erik Mason, curator of research at the Longmont Museum, referring to a photograph of Roosevelt's appearance in Longmont that ran with a story about the visit in the weekly Longmont Ledger.

"In this case Governor Roosevelt impressed us as a thinker rather an orator," Mason said, reading from the article.

While no doubt a stirring moment for the Longmont crowd — the bespectacled adventurer was already, by then, a folk hero — the reporter noted the campaign's grueling schedule, and recounted that despite his bigger-than-life presence, Roosevelt looked "careworn, nervous and tired."

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Antonio Alvarado of Total Concrete Services Inc. uses a pickaxe to break up the ground on Thursday in front of Roosevelt Park Apartments in Longmont. A statue depicting Teddy Roosevelt on the back of a train during his whistle stop tour in 1900 will be installed in late September. (Matthew Jonas / Longmont Times-Call)