

New racks are art you can use

BY CAITLIN SMITH
newsroom@milehighnews.com

The handful of brightly painted bike racks, installed on Washington Avenue last week and designed to resemble silhouettes of 10-speed bicycles, might look like modern art, but they are more than decorations.

"Some people have already told us they are not sure if they're bike racks or if they're statues," said Mark Heller, director of Golden Urban Renewal Authority. "They are functional. Spread the word: They are for use."

GURA ordered the quirky new additions from a Minnesota company in response to complaints by downtown merchants of clutter caused by increased bike traffic.

"People have put a lot of effort into the streetscape for many years," Heller said about why GURA commissioners chose to deviate from the galvanized wave structures that already populate the avenue.

"We have such a unique downtown. I think we deserve bike racks that measure up," Heller said.

Despite their newness, Golden residents such as Fran Loft already have formulated opinions on the structures, which will total 11 when the final installation is complete.

"I think it's good, but it looks like only two bikes at most could fit," said Loft, gesturing to one of the new racks, which appeared mostly

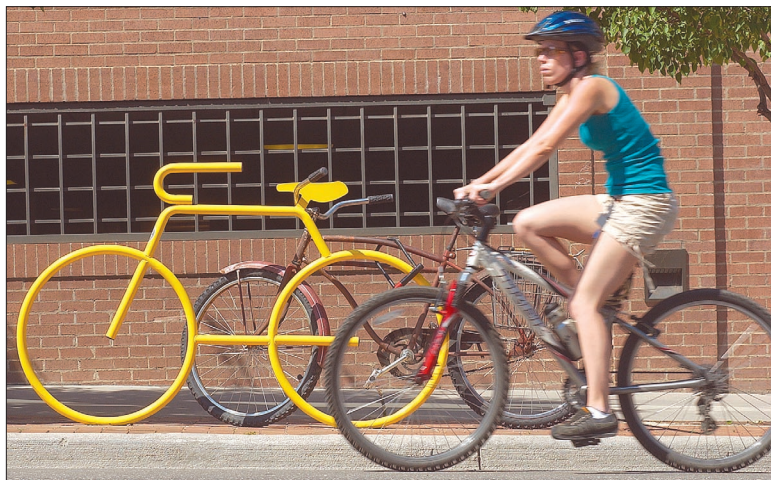


Photo by CHRIS STARK

Xali Sommers, of Golden, rides past one of the new bike racks that have popped up along Washington avenue. The Golden Urban Renewal Authority has installed nearly half of the 11 racks they say offer an aesthetic quality as well as functionality. GURA has added the racks as a response to complaints by downtown merchants, who say bicycle traffic has caused too much clutter on the sidewalks.

consumed by just one two-wheeler. "It stands out, but I don't think it's super practical."

Heller says two bikes can fit on each end of the racks if locked by the rear wheel.

As the owner of Pickets, an eclectic home and garden shop, Sharill Briggs said her downtown business was disrupted by the overflow problem that spurred GURA to action.

Parked cycles would pile up against the tree and planters outside her storefront, and at times

would tip over and interfere with sidewalk traffic, said Briggs.

"I think they're needed," Briggs said.

Most of the new stations will be scattered along Washington, and by the luck of the draw a crimson rendition has already been secured just a few yards from Picket's door.

Briggs is not only pleased about the storage space but also about the visual appeal, saying the racks add whimsy to the avenue.

"I'm glad because I get to have a red bike outside my store," she said.

Arson suspected in 'horrific' Applewood fire

Family left homeless, neighborhood buzzing

BY NICOLE FREY
nicolef@milehighnews.com

Applewood resident Scott Youngmark had only been asleep for an hour when his barking dog woke him up.

Walking out of his home, Youngmark took in the flames licking the roof of his neighbor's house next door. In just minutes, the flames were about 12 feet high, he estimated, eventually reaching a peak

of 50 feet. The trees shading the home still carry the scars of that night.

Beth and James Rodasta lost their home at 13990 Braun Drive to the fire June 24.

"It's just about the most horrific thing that could happen to a family," Youngmark said.

According to Michelle French, spokeswoman for the West Metro Fire Protection District, firefighters received the emergency call at 1:17 a.m. Able to see the flames from the firehouse from their sta-

tion down the road, 25 emergency personnel with 11 vehicles were at the house in three minutes.

"James (Rodasta) said he heard from the investigator that it was definitely gasoline that started the fire," Youngmark said.

French said an arson investigation is pending. The alleged arson is as a shock to neighbors.

"It's not the kind of thing that usually happens here," said Applewood resident Robin Lincke, who added her kids are worried the same could happen to them.

MOBILE SERVICE INSURANCE APPROVED

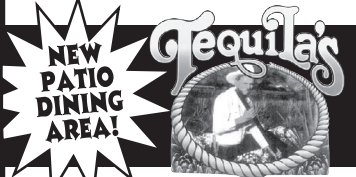


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