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New sculptures are dressing up this Jackson County trail

Updated: Nov. 04, 2021, 8:00 a.m. | Published: Nov. 04, 2021, 8:00 a.m.



"Ter Mors" by Gregory Mendez is one of the new sculptures along the Falling Waters Trail in Jackson as seen on Tuesday, Oct. 26, 2021. The Lavery Family Foundation has rented several sculptures from the Midwest Sculpture Initiative. There are eight sculptures on the trail.

By [Chloe Miller](#) | cmiller@mlive.com

JACKSON, MI – If you've been on a walk, run or bike ride along Jackson County's Falling Waters Trail lately, you've probably noticed some art on your route.

The trail at 3720 Weatherwax Drive now hosts an eight-sculpture exhibit, all loaned from the Midwest Sculpture Initiative and sponsored and fully paid for through the [Lavery Family Foundation](#) of Jackson.

"We're hoping it's going to bring people to Jackson; it just all fits into the growth and development of Jackson," said Kevin Lavery, a Jackson ophthalmology

specialist and founder of the Lavery Family Foundation. “I’ve got a love for sculptures (and) my family does, too.”

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The Midwest Sculpture Initiative, formed in 2004 by Michigan sculptor Ken Thompson, runs the program in which municipalities can rent artwork for a year, with the option to later buy the pieces. The group’s mission is to provide outdoor sculpture exhibitions to demonstrate how visual art affects quality of life and economic development, according to the [MIS website](#).

The Falling Waters Trail is a Jackson County park and Lavery said he approached Jackson County officials this summer with this idea to bring art to it. The county was happy to help, said Kyle Lewis, Jackson County Parks director.

“We are thankful and excited that Kevin approached us with this opportunity,” Lewis said. “It really enhances the experience of the Falling Waters Trail and it creates a sense of community.”

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The eight sculptures on the Falling Waters Tail range in size and shape and were selected to provide “something for everyone,” Lavery said. Made of steel and stone, they include a figure of a person striking a pose and a collection of green geometrical shapes, which has been popular with children, he said.

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“A kid can see that and think, ‘I can make something like that,’” Lavery said.

On the north end of the trail is a sculpture of two colorful, tall columns that were made in remembrance of the World Trade Center Twin Towers before the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in New York City, he said. The piece is titled, “Magnificent 11,” by Todd Kime.

The sculptures will remain on the trail until January 2022, but if the exhibit is a success this year, Lavery plans to continue the project for the next year, and will even raise money to purchase the favorite sculpture from this year to stay on the trail, he said. The sculptures range in cost from \$5,000 to \$20,000.

“If people like it and it gives them joy, we want to keep it going,” Lavery said.

Lavery said he hopes local organizations eventually will purchase sculptures, or local artists will create pieces on commission or for donation to the county. He hopes this can grow into an art garden on the county trail, he said.

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