

GALLERY GUIDE

Art gallery owners believe there is strength in numbers

BY ANDY TAYLOR-FABE
Record-Eagle staff writer

Many businesses see competition as a threat. Once they have found their niche, they don't want anyone else muscling in on their territory or cutting into their profits.

However, the proprietors of new art galleries in the region find that in northwestern Lower Michigan, there is strength in numbers.

Many galleries have come to understand that "having more galleries is better for everybody involved," said Dan Oberschulte, owner of Traverse City's Oberschulte Gallery.

In short, "The more, the merrier," said Amy Stinson, owner of the Art and Soul Gallery in Acme.

The reason that local

artists have the luxury of being so inclusive is that they hope to build the region's reputation for art. That would benefit all local artists and galleries, said Oberschulte.

"We could become destination for art instead of a destination for malls," he added.

Pier Wright, who opened the Wright Gallery in Northport earlier this month, has more specific hopes for the area.

"I have this dream that Northport will turn into an art destination somewhat like Saugatuck," he said.

Although owners of local galleries are happy to have company, some have also made deliberate decisions to set up shop in areas that do not currently have developed art industries.

Ray Algueseva, co-manag-

er of the River Street Gallery in Manistee, and wife Lois had previously opened galleries in other Michigan locales. But they felt they would fit in nicely in Manistee because "it was ready for an upscale gallery."

"Manistee feels like Traverse City 20-something years ago. But unlike Traverse, which exploded, Manistee is growing very proportionally," he added.

Diane Craft, owner of the North Star Gallery in Traverse City, also believed that opening a gallery in an



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The River Street Gallery in Manistee features local artists as well as many who are known nationally.

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The Oberschulte Gallery, formerly Gallery 544, now features the work of its owner, Dan Oberschulte.

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