

Vail Daily

Manhole covers on sale

Christine Ina Casillas
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The phones haven't stopped ringing about Vail's manhole covers, and they're selling quickly, says Leslie Fickling, coordinator for the town's Art In Public Places committee.

Vail manhole covers will be available for purchase from 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. today at Vail's weekly Farmers' Market, along East Meadow Drive in Vail. The manhole covers, in fact, will be sold every Sunday throughout the remainder of the summer.

"People are buying the manhole covers for all sorts of things," Fickling says. "I love the weight of them. They're so different, and they're one of the things you wouldn't find in a souvenir shop, even though it's a souvenir for grown-up people."

The manhole covers come in two sizes - mini and large. They will be sold at a booth sponsored by Vail's Art In Public Places program, which will use the proceeds from the sales to fund other art programs throughout Vail, Fickling said.

"We went through a budget cut in April, and to offset the expenses, we're getting these proceeds," she says.

The town began selling the manhole covers last July to help thwart thefts of the real ones, which were installed to commemorate Vail's 40th anniversary, she said. Vail's logo, along with its 1962 founding date and elevation, 8,150 feet above sea level, are on the manholes.

"It's a buy for all sorts of things," she says. "People buy it for holidays, anniversaries, wedding gifts. Others use them for tables, embedded in their patios. Usually, people use them for their patios."

"It's a wonderful conversation piece."

Other people have used the manhole covers for stepping stones and table covers.

"It brings back happy memories of Vail," she said. "As a conversation piece, people may be able to tell their friends what they do at their leisure."

The town has sold more than 300 manhole covers from buyers in 30 states, totaling close to \$50,000, she said. The covers are priced at \$65 for the 6-pound small cover and \$295 for the 52-pound full-size cover.

"We ship them any place in the country," she says. "The East Coast has been really interested in them, and we even sent one to Hawaii. But we haven't sent any to foreign countries so far, but I'm sure that's coming soon."

For more information, call Fickling at 479-2344.

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The town of Vail began selling manhole covers to help thwart theft of real ones. It has sold more than 300 since last July.
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