

Sierra Valley Barn Quilt Project

Barn Quilts are coming to the Sierra Valley. The Sierra Valley Barn Quilt Project is having an organizational meeting on Wed., Jan. 28 at 12:00 noon at the Sierraville School, 305 Lincoln St, near the intersection of Hwys. 49 & 89. Carolyn Kenny, who was instrumental in the creation of the Quincy Barn Quilt Project in Plumas County, will be guest speaker. Barn Quilts are a national movement featured in counties throughout the United States.

Barn Quilts honor the economic, cultural, and historical contribution of ranching and farming to our rural communities, while also celebrating one of America's historic art forms, the quilt square. Barn Quilts become local landmarks helping to preserve our rural heritage and provide points of interest for visitors and sightseers. Barn Quilts contribute to local economies by incorporating art, agriculture, and local culture with an effort to promote tourism on the local, state, and national level. In the Sierra Valley, Barn Quilts will enhance local events like the Tour de Manure and the Gran Fondo, creating destination points along the cycling route. The Sierra Valley Barn Quilt Project will be centered in the Sierra Valley including Sierra County and portions of Plumas County.

Barn Quilts are painted quilt squares-usually fashioned on boards and then mounted on a barn. A barn quilt is almost always a single square. Quilt squares come in all sizes, but traditionally are large, between 6ft x 6ft and 8ft x 8ft, depending on the size of the hosting structure. The pattern for a particular barn quilt may be chosen for myriad reasons. Often the Barn Quilt is a replica of a painted quilt that resides on the property or honors a loved one. A pattern may be selected because of its name; Corn and Beans is popular among farmers. Sometimes, the barn quilt is simply one whose pattern is appealing to either its creators or its owners.

Barn Quilt Trails can be found in counties throughout America. Barn Quilt Trails usually include a map of local Barn Quilts and lead tourists through the countryside, providing information on local history, culture, landscape, and may include other points of interest including local businesses. Groups including cyclists, motorcycle clubs, and Sunday drivers may enjoy a ride through the scenic Sierra Valley following the Barn Quilt Trail. Information on Barn Quilt Trails throughout the nation may be found on line at barnquiltinfo.com.

Last year Loyalton artist, Betty Thatcher, was featured at an art show for the Alpine Valley Art Connection at the Golden West Restaurant and Saloon in Loyalton. She suggested to B.J. Jordan, Executive Director of the Sierra County Arts Council, that barn quilts would be a perfect project for the Sierra Valley. Betty has since then created a small barn quilt of her own and Sierra County Arts Council (SCAC) is now spearheading the Sierra Valley Barn Quilt Project. As State-Local Partner with the California Arts Council (CAC), the SCAC is in a prime position to apply for a grant from the CAC as part of their Creating Places of Vitality (CPV) Program that supports rural and underserved communities through grant opportunities for small arts organizations.

Local organizations and volunteers will play an essential role in making this project a success. Community support is what will make the Sierra Valley Barn Quilt Project a reality. Among those organizations we expect will play a vital role in our project: Plumas-Sierra Cattlewomen, 4H, Sierra County Historical Society, Rotary, Mountain Star Quilters, Eastern Sierra County Chamber of Commerce, the City of Loyalton, Sierra County, and Sierra County Volunteer Fire Departments. This is just the beginning of the list. We hope to also bring in local sponsors and businesses and any volunteers who would like to help. Community involvement and landowner cooperation is essential to this project.

How may you get involved? Come to the meeting on Jan. 28 and find out. If you can't make the meeting please call or email B.J. Jordan at (530)289-3673 or info@sierracountyartscouncil.org. Website: www.sierracountyartscouncil.org