

SAVAGE Pacer



Artist makes progress on Dan Patch Statue

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The design for the Dan Patch and M.W. Savage sculpture going up in Savage next year has been approved, and the sculptor is making progress in her work.

Earlier this year, the state Legislature voted to give \$75,000 to the city of Savage to create a statue that honors legendary racehorse Dan Patch and his owner, M.W. Savage.

Now some decisions have been made about what it will look like and when it will arrive.



The statue will be bronze and will stand about 64-65 inches tall, or about one-third life size, said Alexa King, the Madison, Wisconsin sculptor commissioned for this project. It will be placed outside the Savage Library and will likely be unveiled during community celebration Dan Patch Days next year, she said.

“He really loved that horse,” King said. “And that’s what I want to show in this portrait.”

For the love of Dan Patch

King is originally from Indiana. Her dad was a commander at an army base in Edinburgh, Indiana.

King remembers that not far from the base was a sign that read, “Dan Patch raced here.” She was just a little girl, but she grew up racing horses.

“I have been into horses ever since I was a kid,” she said.

She's now a full-time sculptor who focuses on horse art. For example, she has created a piece for the Kentucky Derby. And currently among her projects is a life-size horse piece for a farm in Paris, Kentucky, she said.

"As an artist, you really need to do what you know," said King, who originally studied painting in college.

King has been studying all the materials she can get her hands on to learn about Dan Patch and M.W. Savage, as well as the horse's pedigree. She's soaked up everything from videos to books to photographs to learn what she can.

"The historical society has supplied me with a lot of photos," she said.

The next four to five months will be spent sculpting, and then about two months are set aside for casting, King said. That will be done in Loveland, Colorado, she said.

She said she plans to blog about her progress on the Dan Patch and M.W. Savage sculpture soon.

"As these things move forward, the timing's perfect," she said.

Telling a story

King connected with this project through a friend, Kari Lundin, a fellow horse lover who happened to have fond childhood memories of Savage. Lundin has been heavily involved in getting the sculpture project off the ground.

"Public art does educate," she said of the sculpture. "It's supposed to tell a story."

The state Legislature agreed with that idea enough to fund it. But as part of the state funding, the city of Savage has to come up with 25 percent of the project, or \$25,000 toward the \$100,000 sculpture.

Mayor Janet Williams said fundraising efforts are currently underway to reach the goal. So far the Rotary Club of Savage has provided \$5,000.

"Donations may be sent to the City of Savage or the Dan Patch Historical Society if a tax deduction is preferred," Williams wrote in an e-mail.

The Legislature in its last session did not approve a larger Dan Patch statue proposed to be installed at the State Fair. But they could choose to fund it next session.

If it does, King is ready.

"If they approve it next year... I'll be able to get started on that," she said.

