



Spirit of Nebraska's Wilderness

"First National Bank was founded about the same time that Nebraska became a state, so we wanted the sculpture to capture that heritage. At the same time, we wanted it to speak to the future. Kent Ullberg has done a spectacular job of symbolizing both the spirit of the past and our optimism for tomorrow," said Lauritzen.

Consisting of 58 bronze and stainless steel Canada geese, the sculpture is one of the largest bronze monuments in the country. The sculpture starts at a granite fountain, where jets of water give an illusion of geese taking flight. From there, the larger-than-life bronze geese appear to fly through the 16th and Dodge streets intersection with several pieces attached to buildings and light poles. The flight path circles back to a glass-and-steel atrium beside the Tower, where several stainless steel geese are featured inside.

The sculpture attempts to capture the spirit of wilderness experienced by the early settlers in Nebraska, according to Ullberg. "I chose Canada geese because they have a beautiful flight pattern, a powerful take off and are just downright majestic." Visitors to the sculpture will notice traditional bronze structures representing Nebraska's history, as well as several stainless steel pieces symbolizing the state's future. "What this sculpture is really about is progress and how the spirit of wilderness still continues. The landscape has changed, and our way of life is different, but that sense of awe is still there," said Ullberg.

The sculpture project is part of First National Center, a \$300-million development effort highlighted by the 40-story Tower at First National Center, which is the tallest building between Chicago and Denver.

The fountain component of the sculpture contains 43,730 gallons of water that circulates 159,000 gallons per hour (2,650 gallons per minute). The fountain will operate continuously except in the winter and during regularly scheduled maintenance. The fountain is illuminated at night by nearly 40 lights for a dramatic effect.

Architect: JVR & Associates
Leo A. Daly
Contractor: Kiewit Construction Company
Artist: Kent Ullberg

FEATURES OF THE PARK: Dedicated - September 2002

Fountain – Base contains 43,730 gallons with water cascading over the sides of the Absolute Black Granite. The stone pavers and curbing are Hayton Stone quarried in Wisconsin.

Number of Geese – 58

Individual Goose – Each goose weighs approximately 200 pounds and is 1¼ times life-size. They were modeled after Canada geese.

Goose Composition – In the park, each goose and bison is cast bronze. The geese, which compose the flight transition, that moves from the park, over 16th and Dodge Streets to the First National Parking Garage, onto the First National Bank Plaza and culminate in the First National Tower Wintergarden, are cast from bronze and stainless steel.

Number of Bison Installed – 9

First National Sculpture Parks – Bison's create a unique link between First National's Pioneer Courage and Spirit of Nebraska's Wilderness parks - Beginning at Pioneer Courage Park on 14th and Capitol Street, wagon trains disturbs a nearby group of bison, causing them to stampede down 15th Street onto Dodge, where they step onto the Spirit of Nebraska's Wilderness Park and flush a flock of geese from a pond.

SITE DESCRIPTION:

Location – Southeast corner of 16th & Dodge Streets

ARTIST DESCRIPTION:

Kent Ullberg is a native of Sweden and now lives in Corpus Christi, Texas, while maintaining a studio in Loveland, Colorado. Some of his more famous works are "Deinonychus Dinosaurs" in Philadelphia; "American Eagle" in Washington, D.C.; The Broward Convention Center Marine Fountain in Florida; and an installation at the Swedish Government Tele-Com Center in Stockholm.