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To: [Shelly L Armstrong](#); [Archive](#)
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Included below is a press release regarding the Festival of the Arts, a community celebration of art, music, film, poetry and more. Further information is available by contacting Leah Nixon, assistant director of News Services.

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Festival of the Arts returns to Big Rapids

BIG RAPIDS – After a long absence, the Festival of the Arts is returning to Big Rapids and includes a wide spectrum of artists such as architects, poets and dancers, as well as musicians, among other community performers.

The monthlong celebration of art, music, film, poetry and more begins on Jan. 31 and will feature more than 32 events. The festival will highlight such professional performers as the Grand Rapids Symphony and local talents from both the University and Big Rapids communities, said Bruce Dilg, associate professor of Architectural Technology and Facility Management who has worked with other Ferris staff and the community for more than a year to revive the festival.

“We have an incredible amount of talent in this little town,” Dilg said. “The festival is a way to use the arts to bridge any gap between the community of Big Rapids and Ferris. It will show how the arts can enhance community members’ lives, especially in the dead of winter.”

During the opening night reception from 6 to 7:30 p.m. on Jan. 31, Ferris President David Eisler, Artworks Board Chairman Karl Linebaugh and Downtown Development Association member Carlleen Rose will serve as featured speakers. Ferris’ resident artist Robert Barnum will serve as the evening’s keynote speaker.

Barnum and his art students are designing a major piece of civic sculpture for the festival. Welding Engineering Technology associate professor David Murray and his students will fabricate the sculpture and it will be donated to the community of Big Rapids as an extension to the Ferris State University Art Walk.

Other notable appearances during the festival include Jef Mallett, creator of the comic strip “Frazz;” Susan Ager, a columnist for the *Detroit Free Press* and author who will give a workshop titled “Everyone Has a Story to Tell;” Terry Wooten, a Traverse City poet who will give an interactive poetry session; and Benjamin Busch, a Reed City resident, HBO television actor and major in the United States Marine Corps who will display his “Art in War” exhibit.

The Festival of the Arts’ variety and uniqueness is sure to have something for everyone, bringing energy and entertainment to the winter season, Dilg added. For further information about Festival of the Arts events, visit www.ferris.edu/htmls/visitors/festival.

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