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**MATTIE KELLY ARTS FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES PROGRESS OF  
THE MATTIE KELLY CULTURAL ARTS VILLAGE**

**DESTIN, Fla.--Feb. 28, 2013**--In August 2012, the Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation (MKAF) announced the organization would receive a generous \$1 million capital improvement grant from the Dugas Family Foundation to make Phase I of the Mattie Kelly Cultural Arts Village a reality. MKAF is pleased to report the project is progressing rapidly and is half way to projected completion at the end of April.

"We have been on the fast track with this project in an effort to ensure it was ready in time for our spring/summer concert series, which begins May 2," said MKAF Executive Director Marcia Hull.

"Everything has come together seamlessly, thanks to generosity of the Dugas Family and the hard work and dedication of the MKAF chairman, Glenn Cooper, the board, our executive committee, DAG Architects, Innerlight Engineering, Beauchamp Construction and Construction Services Company of Florida. This cultural facility will offer our coastal communities the needed cultural infrastructure and amenities that define our quality of place, and provide an essential source of economic impact to draw cultural tourism."

The Mattie Kelly Cultural Arts Village will be the permanent home of the MKAF's two signature events, Concerts in the Village (May 2- July 3) and the Festival of the Arts (Oct.26 & 27) and will be a new cultural venue to host a variety of artistic performances.

The Cultural Arts Village is housed within the 52-acre parcel of land donated by the late Destin Matriarch Mattie Kelly. Located in the heart of Destin, the new project comprises approximately 6.76 acres of green space and will have the ability to accommodate audiences of up to 5,000. Approximately 79,550 square feet of this space will be highly-flexible space for seating and events of all kinds. Phase I of the project includes the Dugas Pavilion, a 1,600 square-foot permanent stage covered by a majestic 4,860 square-foot (60'x81') canvas canopy, which opens onto the Village Green. Additional amenities include a commanding 20-foot metal sculpture entranceway, 1,924 square foot bathroom building with 360 square feet of general storage, and 168 additional on-site grass parking spaces combined with 309 shared parking spaces from adjacent property owners.

"We are excited about seeing this project come to fruition," said Glenn Cooper, MKAF chairman. "Our vision to create a cultural hub for the region that will serve future generations is well underway. We look forward to building community partners and alliances and welcoming new members that will provide valuable support once the project is complete."

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The Cultural Arts Village's flexible space will also be available for rental. MKAF is designing an affordable offering for other non-profit community organizations, businesses and the public to use the facility for performances, cultural and corporate events, weddings and other community functions.

By attracting large meetings, groups and cultural travelers, which traditionally stay longer and spend more, the Cultural Arts Village is expected to have a powerful impact on the local economy. The *Arts & Economic Prosperity III* study commissioned by Americans for the Arts showed that communities that invest in the arts reap the additional benefit of jobs, economic growth, and a quality of life. Construction activities and event attendee spending will generate local jobs and earnings as well as pump vital revenue into restaurants, lodging, retail stores, and other local businesses.

"This project will have a dramatic and ongoing impact on the region's economy, generating income, jobs, and tax revenues for state and local governments," said Mayor Sarah "Sam" Seevers. "Destin's central location will allow the Mattie Kelly Cultural Arts Village to serve residents and visitors throughout Northwest Florida by providing exceptional art and cultural entertainment."

When fully developed, the Mattie Kelly Cultural Arts Village will include (Phase II) a mixed-use building that will house administrative offices, student art labs and classrooms, gallery and meeting space, and more, as well as (Phase III) an Artists' Village providing a serene, productive environment for in-residence artists to live and educate the public on the processes and methods of producing art.

For more information, visit [www.MattieKellyArtsFoundation.org](http://www.MattieKellyArtsFoundation.org) or call 850-650-2226.

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The Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation, a 501-c-3 not-for-profit charitable arts organization, was founded in 1995 on the cultural, educational and spiritual beliefs of the late Destin Matriarch, Mattie Kelly. The Foundation's mission is to be the leading art advocate supporting cultural arts and student educational outreach serving Okaloosa and Walton counties in Northwest Florida.

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