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# City's character on display

## Ornaments mark history, help the needy

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Grand Prairie's downtown revitalization efforts are showcased in the city's fourth annual collectible Christmas ornament.

The ornament, a red and white Uptown Theater with pink and green highlights flanked by fireworks in a gold setting, is just the latest in the series, which included

tributes to Lone Star Park's hosting of the Breeders' Cup, an ornament called "Starry Night" and another titled "I love Grand Prairie." The ornaments, which sell for \$10 apiece for previous years and \$14 for the newest, go to fund local charities.

The ornaments were the brainchild of Janice England, the wife of Mayor Charles England, who said the idea for a city collectible was inspired by state and national ornaments. The state uses the funds raise by its ornament's sales to upkeep and for revitalization of the Capital in Austin.

England said the money raised from the city's ornament sales would be given to the Lone Star Park Charitable Organization, which distributes the funds to worthy local charities.

England said this year's ornament sales could be the best yet, with many people going back to buy past years' collectibles as well as this one.

"I'm very encouraged by that," she said, adding that when the idea first came up, it was developed as an annual tradition. "We just hoped it would be an ongoing thing. We hoped it would be a collectible thing and people would buy them each year."

And how to bring people back next year? England said next year's theme is already being considered and it could relate to the new ballpark going up in the city's entertainment district, an idea kicked around for this year's ornament as well.

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## Ornament

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This year's design was the work of local artist Myrle Knox, who said she was inspired by the revitalization efforts downtown. She said she focused on the slogan that adorns the ornament's marquee, "Going Downtown to The Uptown" and worked from there.

The Uptown Theater, a multi-million dollar project will resurrect the feeling of a classic single-screen theater downtown, while providing a state-of-the-art venue for visual and performing artists. And Knox said she hopes Grand Prairie's artistic community can grow along with that space.

"I think that Grand Prairie is

beginning to take part in the arts," she said. "That's what they are doing to downtown with the Uptown."

Knox said that the ornament, while sold at the holiday season, was more than just a Christmas bauble.

"I think it is more than just a seasonal thing," she said. "I think it is something that can be out all year. It is not just something that says 'Christmas.'"

For more information, call 972-237-8086, or pick up an ornament at the marketing department in city hall, 317 College St., or the Grand Prairie Tourist Information Center, at 2170 N. Belt Line Road.