

# Southeast Oklahoma Quilt Trail joins other quilt trails over 50 states

submitted by *Teddi Irwin*

What is that big red, white and blue geometric design affixed to the side of the building at the corner of the building at the corner of Dallas and First Street in Talihina? It is the first official Quilt Block on the Southeast Oklahoma Quilt Trail. This newly formed Quilt Trail joins hundreds of the other 7,000 plus quilts displayed on structures in all 50 states.

Quilt blocks are part of the fastest growing cultural folk art form in America.

Quilt Trails are known to have boosted the economic development in communities that exhibit these hand painted art forms.

A Quilt trail is a collection of painted on wood or metal quilt blocks and affixed to structures.

Originally displayed on a series of barns, the quilts can be viewed from a walking path, highways, streets and rural roads. The quilts don't have to be on barns, and now appear on any type suitable structure professional buildings, barns, houses, churches, garages and sheds, historical sites and even on free standing posts.

The quilts are usually painted by volunteers from the community or by property owners where the quilts will be placed.

The quilts are generally chosen from a family's own colorful quilt pattern that has been passed down through the years. The family's quilt pattern is turned into public art on their own barn or other building, and it becomes part of a quilt trail.

Since its beginning, the barn quilt project has launched many quilt trails, and these works of art have brought serious tourism boosts to communities.

The scenic drives through rural and urban areas to see the colorful quilts adorning the fronts and sides of buildings has become a beloved folk art tradition in many areas.

People often plan "Quilt Trail Vacations" and travel hundreds of miles and visit many states to visit these quilt creations.

Each trail is managed by individual communities and a map showing numbered quilt locations is made available free to travelers at designated locations and the internet.

Thanks to Donna Sue Groves and the Ohio Arts Council, old barns and other structures are now a must-see for anyone who enjoys American art, and family-friendly tourist attractions that both kids and adults will love.

The quilt at Dallas and First Street welcomes



Signs on the corner of Dallas and First Streets in Talihina.

residents and visitors to Talihina, OK as the "Welcome" sign above the quilt greets passers by.

This quilt is the first of 10 quilts ordered by businesses and residents in Talihina and will be exhibited on the SE Oklahoma Quilt Trail in the near

future. It was planned to have the Quilts up earlier, but the shortage of needed products caused by COVID-19 has resulted in a delay. We hope to start painting next week.

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(about our "Save the Change" program)

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# "Quilts" continued from page 1

Flore County (Talihina area) quilts, orders have also been placed by Latimer and Pushmataha County residents and businesses and will become a part of the SE Oklahoma Quilt Trail. When finished, the SE Oklahoma Quilt Trail will encompass 10 contiguous counties in Oklahoma and will join the Texas Barn Quilt Train to the South and the Arkansas Quilt Trail to the East. This will make the Southeast Oklahoma Quilt Trail a "must see." We believe we will be a part of the biggest contiguous quilt trail in the U.S. Certainly something to draw people to our area.

Existing quilts that you may have seen already displayed in our area will be invited to join the SE OK Quilt Trail. Anyone interested in exhibiting a Quilt on a house, barn, pole, shed, fence or any outside structure is welcome to apply. There is NO charge to display a Quilt on the trail although they do have to be approved by the committee. No advertising is allowed on the quilts. Although businesses who want to sponsor a Quilt on an historic area may pay the initial set up fee and it will be able to say "Sponsored by ABC Company, 123 Main St, Talihina, OK."

A prospective quilt owner may pick the design and color of their quilt block. They may even help paint their block if they choose. Our standard size quilt block is 4'x4' although larger sizes like the 8'x8' quilt block or larger can be painted and priced according to size.

We don't charge for painting the quilt but we do charge a one time fee of \$75.00 for cost of materials, advertising, creating and maintaining a website, telephone, and printing of brochures. Our brochures will contain a description and history of each quilt and a map showing the location of each quilt.

Quilts are often created and dedicated to family members, celebration of a birthday, anniversaries and gifts for other important occasions. A grandmother and grandfather in Talihina ordered an eight pointed star quilt block to honor their eight grandchildren.

In many counties quilts are predominately painted on wooden barns, so you will hear trails called Barn Quilt Trails. Our area has not been blessed with very many wooden barns, but we have plenty of interesting historic locations so in addition to barns and other farm buildings, homes, businesses, and churches we are

going to erect quilt blocks on historic sights. So we call our trail a Quilt Trail not a Barn Quilt Trail.

Quilt blocks may hang on a structure or on two 4x4 sign posts cemented in the ground.

These quilts are not meant to be a money maker for SE Oklahoma Quilt Trail or its members. We only charge for materials and service costs.

The Quilts, painted by volunteers of SE OK Quilt Trail, are hand painted on aluminum sign board using industrial paint. The blocks are expected to last at least 10 years.

If you are interested in learning how to paint a Quilt, classes are \$50.00. All materials are included and you take a 2x2 Quilt block home. Bring a beverage and a sack lunch.

Classes will be held at a time to be announced. You can call us now to be put on a waiting list. Classes will be held on a date in the future at Talihina School Ag Barn. Four people will be allowed in a class to insure social distancing. Please call to be put on a class list or to order a quilt.

Call SE OK Quilt Trail at 580-898-2105 to put your name on a class waiting list or to order a 4x4 quilt suitable for outdoor display.

The 8x8 Quilt at Dallas and First was made possible by caring Talihinians. Francis Williams, local business woman and owner of the building, the Welcome Sign was donated by Elizabeth Blagg with CCAF and the Shingle, installation of the Quilt and Welcome Sign was provided by Gary Wall owner of Valley Septic Co. and employees David Carrell, Jasper Carrell, and Lloyd Davis, materials to create the 8x8 quilt were donated by In a Good Way, Inc. and pick up and delivery of materials from the supplier in Fayetteville, AR were completed by Scott Medders a local rancher. Quilt painters were Charlotte Coleman, Cathy Humphrey, Laverne Kennedy, Teddi and Sylvester Moore. A special thanks to Dale and Lisa Robinson of Alabama Quilt Trail for creation of our logo, creating a "how to" youtube on how to cut the aluminum sheets and for their unselfish support including making the nine hour trip from Alabama to teach us how to paint a Quilt.

Other members of the committee include Justin Kennedy and Peggy Faulkner of Kiamichi Technology.

ors are here for you!

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