

## A Special Message from Mayor Roach --

In case you missed it – another great article from the *American Press* on Millennium Park, this time in Sunday's Life section highlighting the art work of members of the Rebuilding Millennium Park art committee. Here's an excerpt:

“While many have seen it as a construction project or a rebuilding community effort, Erik Jessen, art committee member for Millennium Park II build, said he has seen the new park through the eyes of his inner-child. Jessen said the rich history of Southwest Louisiana, with a colorful backdrop of pirates, indians and alligators, makes the new Millennium Park very much like something from the world of Peter Pan as explored by J.M. Barrie. “I got back into that sense of being a kid again and how would I play. And I turned it into a lot of design elements” he said. “The other art committee member and architect, Jeff Kudla, and I were walking through the pirate ship the other day. I told him, ‘Can you imagine being a kid walking through this thing?’ It’s going to feel like real, life-size to kids. I think they’re going to love it.” Within the pirate ship, Jessen said he designed and placed cartoonish cargo barrel cutouts. He said the imaginary cargo on board the Millennium Park pirate ship will be root beer, jelly beans and butterscotch candy.

“Jessen said the attraction to children is going to be in the details. “We’ve had a great crew of artists come and help with some characters. We have some crawfish and crab pirates, along with some opossums and squirrels,” he said.

“It’s been a super fun project,” Jessen said. “As an artist coming into this, I think a majority of adults just don’t think of it that way. But there’s also a fun element to it, too. Because, I’ve got a sense of humor and I think that spills out in my work. And that’s important because I can incorporate some of this fun story into the area history. So when kids and adults see it, they’ll just smile.

“Jessen said that by bringing some images of indigenous species of animals to the playground wasn’t enough. He said bringing them to life for the children was crucial for fun learning and playing.

“Seeing it as a cartoon character, seeing the crabs and the alligators and crawfish in these fun forms is really important. My generation grew up with Clovis Crawfish and I think we need some stuff like that again. We need these characters that we, in Southwest Louisiana, can get excited about again to get back into our childhood and our history.”

I hope you will join with me in congratulating and thanking all the artists who worked so hard to help bring a sense of imagination and fun to Millennium Park. Their words speak volumes about the importance of the project for the countless children who will visit the park time and time again. Once children themselves, their professional artistry and talent as adults has created a youthful spirit of creativity for the project – the end result of which will be lasting enjoyment for years to come.

On behalf of the community a special thanks ---

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Randy Roach". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "R".