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Workers are installing 8-ton sculpture in Silver Beach County Park

By CARL BEVELHYMER / H-P Correspondent

Installation of the Richard Hunt sculpture, "And You, Seas," was on schedule and well under way Wednesday.

Workers from Superior Construction Services completed work on the foundation and base where the 48-foot, 8-ton stainless steel sculpture will stand just before lunchtime Wednesday before turning the project over to the staff of the world-renowned Chicago-based metal artist who began assembling the sculpture in the afternoon.

Construction workers said they were pleased to be part of the project. While they have all poured a lot of concrete, none had ever worked on the installation of a piece of artwork.

"It was very challenging, but quite fun for us," said Perry Gibson, General Manager of Superior Construction Services. "It's the first time we've been out on a project like this. The concrete and steelwork is the same, but the end result is totally different."

Construction Supervisor J. R. Benavidez said the challenge of the project made it all the more enjoyable to be part of. "It was tough and challenging, and that's what we like," he said.

Work on the site, adjacent to the Shadowland Pavilion on the approach to the South Pier, began two weeks ago. Once a hole was excavated, construction workers began preparing the foundation by driving seven H-beam piles 50-feet down into the bedrock beneath the site.

After positioning a number of steel rods for reinforcement, workers poured concrete to form the foundation and base for the sculpture.

Gibson said the early phases of the project were complicated by three tiebacks that ran across the hole. Tiebacks are the 3.5-inch steel rods that hold up the corrugated steel seawall that makes up the side of the pier. Damaging them can upset the stability of the pier.

"The Army Corp. of Engineers took lots of precautions to make sure we didn't hurt those," said Gibson.

Benavidez said this project was different from others his crew has worked on in that the margin of error was narrow.

"It's not like a regular concrete job ... it needs to be reinforced so many times and the dimensions have to be just right," he said, in order for the \$150,000 sculpture be flush with the base and stand plumb. "It's so expensive, there's no room or time for a screw up."

While only eight cubic yards of concrete are visible, it took nearly 100 cubic yards to form the over 7-foot deep foundation and 24-foot diameter base.

"There were many, many people involved in this project, including the construction workers," said Susan Wilczak, curator of the Krasl Art Center. "It's good that their work is being recognized."

The sculpture arrived in pieces on flatbed tractor-trailer rigs Tuesday and Wednesday. Now that the foundation and base for the sculpture are finished, Hunt's staff has begun the task of polishing and assembling the pieces.

A dedication ceremony will be held 5:45 p.m. Friday at the Shadowland Pavilion at Silver Beach County Park followed by a reception at the Krasl Art Center.

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