

Star Tribune

VARIETY

Minnesota's 'most visible' artist designs icons for exploring west-metro neighborhoods

Adam Turman's characters create an "Artventure" in St. Louis Park and Golden Valley.

By [Rachel Hutton](#) Star Tribune

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ADAM TURMAN / DISCOVER ST. LOUIS PARK

Adam Turman characters "Hotdish Girl" at Golden Valley Commons and "Kenny" at Wolfe Park near Excelsior & Grand are part of a west-metro "Artventure."

TEXT SIZE

Chicago had its cows. St. Paul had its Snoopys. And now St. Louis Park and Golden Valley have 10 quirky characters created by resident artist [Adam Turman](#) to encourage neighborhood "artventures."

Turman's bold, graphic illustrations, which often depict Minnesota culture, can be seen around the state on [murals](#), [posters](#) — and even [underwear](#).

For this project, Turman refashioned some of his recurring icons as larger-than-life cutouts to highlight local attractions: Paul Bunyan swings a club at Brookview Golf & Lawn Bowling and Hotdish Girl totes shopping bags at Golden Valley Commons.

Turman also created several new personalities to [mark the area's prominent nodes](#). There's Freddie the fox, mountain biking at Theodore Wirth's Trailhead; Oscar the oriole splashing at the Rec Center Aquatic Park; and a Lebowsky-esque Bowling Guy representing Texa-Tonka Shopping Center (and nodding to SLP natives Joel and Ethan Coen).

QR codes at each destination link to web pages with information about the area's history, nearby attractions and special offers from businesses.

Discover St. Louis Park wanted to collaborate with Turman, who lives in St. Louis Park and has a studio in Golden Valley, on a project that would showcase his artwork throughout the communities. The format was inspired by Turman's annual Halloween display of oversize characters painted on plywood, said Trish Foster, the organization's marketing director.

The characters make the districts more memorable and draw attention to their hidden gems, Foster said. "We have a winery and two distilleries located in an industrial area tucked behind Methodist Hospital," she explained. "A lot of people don't realize they're there."

Even Turman, a local for two decades, learned something new about his own backyard. "I had no idea the industrial park area off of Louisiana Ave. had a name!" he said. "Skunk Hollow: How cool is that!"

Social media [promotions](#) encourage visitors and residents to share selfies with the characters, explore the area's amenities and win gift-card bundles to restaurants and shops from each node. Plus, there's a chance to win an area staycation for those who visit all 10 characters before the display ends on Sept. 5.

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