

Munro takes reins at Sisters Folk Festival

By Jim Cornelius
Editor in Chief

Crista Munro of Eugene has taken the reins as the new executive director of Sisters Folk Festival.

Munro, who is moving to Sisters with her husband, Dan Appenzeller, is a highly-respected figure in folk and roots music circles. She and Appenzeller are co-founders of the roots music non-profit FolkWest, Inc., which produces the Four Corners Folk Festival and the Pagosa Folk 'n Bluegrass Festival in Colorado.

The couple had to leave Colorado due to a medical issue that precluded Appenzeller living at Pagosa Springs' high altitude. The couple moved to Eugene and continued to operate FolkWest, Inc. from a distance. When the opportunity arose to apply for the Sisters Folk Festival position, Munro jumped at it.

She looks forward to leading an organization that is so deeply embedded in the community.

"The involvement with the town itself is really exciting," she told *The Nugget*. "That's the part that's really exciting to me."

The SFF board of directors announced in January that the organization had decided that it needed to move away from a co-directorship that had run the festival for the previous five years with Ann Richardson as managing director and Brad Tisdell as creative director. The organization has grown significantly, is purchasing the building it occupies at Sisters Art Works, and is navigating a changing landscape in the music industry. The board felt that a singular leader was needed to move into the future.

The board considers itself fortunate to have drawn Munro to the position — because she fits all of those criteria.

SFF board chair Sue Boettner told *The Nugget*, "I'm excited that we found somebody who not only has the business sense, but who has been working with arts and music for the past 25 years and can take us to the next level with the purchase of the building and the growth of the festival."

Tisdell, who has collaborated with Munro, remains as creative director.

Munro traces her passion for music and for staging events to the experience of a festival presented by music impresario Bill Graham in



PHOTO BY JIM CORNELIUS
Crista Munro is the new executive director of Sisters Folk Festival.

Telluride, Colorado. The lineup included Jackson Brown, Los Lobos, Blues Traveler and The Allman Brothers — and Crista was transported.

"The lineup was pretty epic," she recalled. "It was kind of a life-changing weekend for me."

Another life-changing moment came when a fellow came in to her graphic design business in Pagosa Springs to make flyers for a bluegrass event. They got to talking about how great it would be to stage a music festival in Pagosa Springs.

"We decided to put a committee together and try to put on a festival," Munro said with a smile. "We ended up getting married."

FolkWest and the Sisters Folk Festival grew up over the same period of time and at a similar pace, sharing tips about new and exciting artists.

Munro noted that she is not a musician; her talent lies in making the music happen and building and developing the organizational underpinnings needed to sustain the arts. And that's what she'll be working on in Sisters. One of the attractive aspects of the festival for her is the number of venues the festival offers, allowing a wide palette of musical styles to flourish.

"I love the variety of musicians you're able to present here," she said.

Munro is handing off the baton of the events in Colorado, and transitioning to Sisters. She was in town last week house-hunting and meeting with SFF staff, gearing up for the September festival. She knows her mission:

"Create goosebump moments," she said. "That's what I love to do."

Sisters Folk Festival is hosting Josh Ritter & The Royal City Band in concert on June 27, in support of its capital campaign. Festival is scheduled for September 6-8. For information visit www.sistersfolkfestival.org.

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