

Prairie Song



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This artwork was completed in 2013 and funded by the Art in State Buildings Program. The piece consists of five 20-foot tall blades of prairie grass, made from stainless steel. Each "leaf" encases a corrugated steel tube filled with steel balls that rattle in the wind. The artist team calibrated the poles' hinges to sway in a heavy gust of wind. Like seeds in the wind, these "pods" chime with the movement of the stalks. Each stalk is made out of stainless-steel segments, joined with pivots, and narrowing in diameter as they ascend in height up to 20 feet. The sound they make is subtle and localized, like the sound of wind over grasslands. The installation was made in conjunction with the construction of the eco-friendly building for the Iowa Utilities Board and the Attorney General's Office of Consumer Advocate, near the Iowa State Capitol. It reminds people of the wind turbine powering the building from its spot just down the hill.