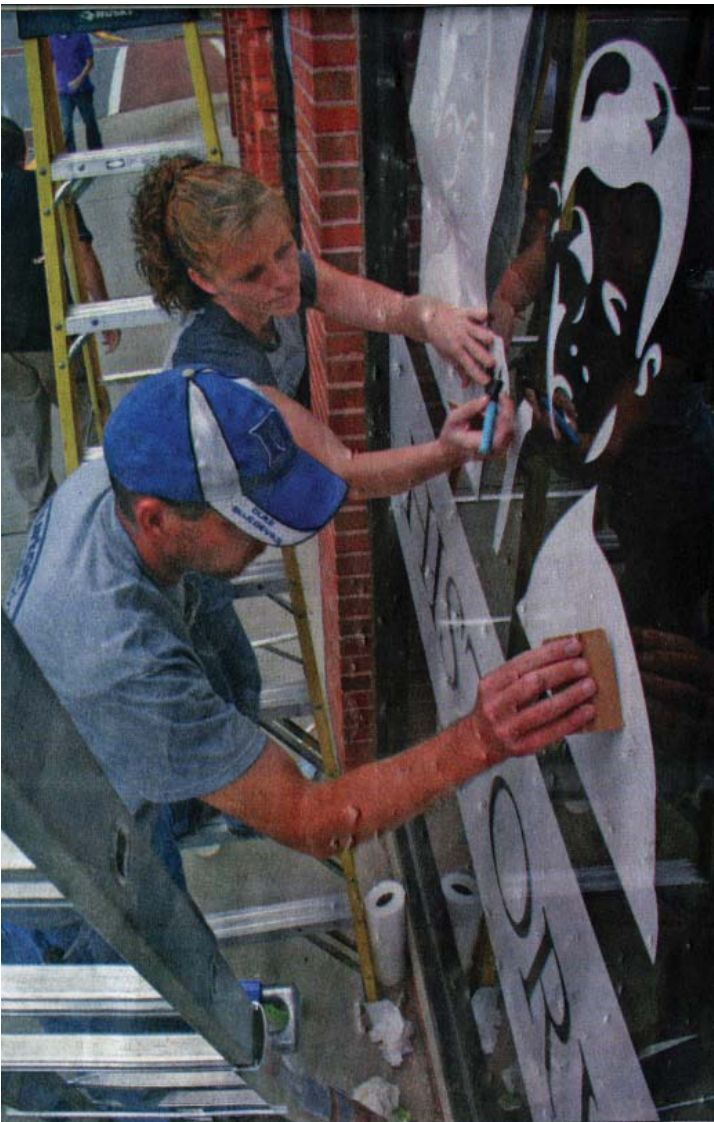


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Phil Goble Jr./The Messenger
Michelle Baker and Rusty Ring of Burton Signworks work on the windows at the museum.

Not to be missed

Museum's new window graphics set it apart downtown

By Phil Goble Jr.
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One look is all it took.

After, one look at the nondescript brick building, Linda Blue Stanfield knew something had to be done.

"One day, I was up at the chamber and there were some people looking for places to go, you know, the jail, Snappy Lunch," Stanfield, executive director of the Mount Airy Museum of Regional History, said Thursday. "I asked them if they had been to the museum and they said 'Where is the museum?' I turned and looked at our building, and it just looked like a nice, three-story brick building. There was nothing that made it stand out."

That is not the case now.

On Thursday, a crew from Burton Signworks placed a series of 20 graphics on the windows that face Main Street.

The design by SouthData starts at the corner of the building at Oak Street and Main. It starts high on that window and swoops down the neighboring glass with an arrow pointing to the entrance.

Around the large white swoosh, there are pictures of a train, musicians and other items associated with displays in the museum.

"It goes from one end to the other," Stan Simmons of Burton Signworks said. "We're going to be here for a while."

"I turned and looked at our building, and it just looked like a nice, three-story brick building. There was nothing that made it stand out."

— Linda Blue Stanfield

The three-person crew — Simmons, Michelle Baker and Rusty Ring — started putting the vinyl on the windows about 8:30 a.m. Thursday and expected to be done by noon.

"This is her job," Ring said, pointing to Baker. "She does this every day."

Weather has been a problem. Winds can cause the vinyl to fold over or tear.

Both Simmons and Ring were confident — because Baker was there.

"Nobody does it like Michelle does it," Baker said, laughing.

The emblems are first put on with a strip of adhesive tape to hold the decal in place. A soapy solution helped keep the material pliable enough to push and move into place.

"If you put it on dry and get a bubble, you can't get it out," Baker said. "Usually, a solid

figure would be harder, but not with the weather today."

Bigger pieces bubble easier than the small silhouette details. The crew was working with both on the museum windows.

"We're just real excited about it," Stanfield said. "We want people to know we're a museum."

The museum's long-range planning committee, which has been meeting since January, initiated the project after Stanfield's observation.

The purpose, Stanfield said, was to let visitors and locals alike know there is a top-quality museum in Mount Airy.

Organizers did not know the cost of the project since a donor came forward to cover all expenses.

There is still one final piece to the new marketing design — a flag will be installed on the corner of the building in a manner that will allow it to move with the wind. Breezes regularly tore previous flags down.

"We need to start singing our song," Stanfield said. "We want the people in the community to be as proud as we are. It's a good thing."

Now, she's ready to see its affect.

"If you put stuff out front, that's fun and exciting, people will come in," she said.

"It was a well-thought-out design."

And one look is all it took.