

Roaming Around Reidsville

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Last month's column was all about the City's actions regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, the virus remains front and center on everyone's radar, but due to the efforts of Rockingham County residents through social distancing and staying at home whenever possible, the number of COVID-19 cases remained at less than 20 when we went to press. You can still get the latest local updates from the City on our City website, reidsvillenc.gov and our social media, including the City of Reidsville Facebook page.

We hope that within the coming weeks, we will be able to get outside more and more and enjoy some of the projects that have been ongoing despite the virus. One such endeavor is "Project DREAM (Downtown Reidsville Empowering Art Movement)" sponsored by the City of Reidsville and the Reidsville Downtown Corporation. Last month artist Gina Franco donated her time and materials to create a "happy" mural on the retaining wall of the parking lot on North Scales Street behind the Reidsville Police Department. In a time of uncertainty, this upbeat mural includes sayings like "Spread Kindness" and "See Good in All Things". We really need those kinds of positive statements in our lives right now!

And if you have traveled in the 100 block of downtown Scales Street, you may have noticed



Downtown Reidsville is looking especially beautiful with all of this wonderful public art, thanks to the efforts of local artists who want to brighten our day!



“Abstract Alley”. Rafael and Raquel Cruz, founding members of the Rockingham County Youth Arts Council, wanted to create a colorful spot that would attract people their age, again, adding positivity to downtown Reidsville. Solar string lights are strung to illuminate the beautiful walkway even at night. We love it when people, especially our young people, try to be a positive force during this difficult time.

We have so many talented artists here in Reidsville. If you go to the City-owned public parking lot behind Abstract Alley, you will find that artist Ruby Blanco has taken dull utility meters and transformed them into a whimsical turtle, “Esmeralda” and colorful mandala designs, again part of the ongoing art project. She has taken something that is typically an eyesore and turned it into a work of art.

All of these newest designs are continuing Project DREAM that started back in the fall of 2018 with the “Greetings from Reidsville” mural at the corner of Scales and Gilmer Streets, followed by the Lift Me Upwards mural at the Reidsville Public Library in the spring of last year. Added to the murals were the beautifully painted hydrants in the downtown area and the colorful pianos added to the downtown landscape as part of the “Scales on Scales” project. Other projects are in the works and hopefully will be announced over the next year.

Let me do a “shout out” for our riseupreidsville.com website. Public art in Reidsville was a focus of a recent Team Reidsville blog on the website. If you haven’t had a chance to see them, go to the site’s “Team Reidsville” page and look for the blogs and stories that have been done over the past two years. Local sports, food, art and more have been highlighted in these wonderful blogs. Please check them out!

If you are going out

While we are all encouraged to stay home as much as possible, we also realize that people need to get out and get some fresh air. As long as you practice social distancing and mass gathering guidelines, there isn’t a reason you can’t do both. Lake Reidsville and Lake Hunt are open for fishing, boating and walking the trails. (Sorry, playground areas are still closed!) While there is a small charge for fishing and boating, it costs you nothing to take your family for a picnic or hike at our lakes. As the weather continues to get warmer and warmer, you can get some good exercise while maintaining social distancing from others.

Downtown Farmer’s Market opens May 2nd.

While there are no organized City activities going on through the COVID-19 pandemic, the Downtown Farmers Market at Market Square will be open beginning on Saturday, May 2. Outdoor Farmers Markets are exempted from Governor Cooper’s Executive Order 131, but the Reidsville market will be adhering to new COVID-19 guidelines. You can still get your fresh fruits and vegetables, but realize that entry into the market, etc. will be a little different as visitors

must practice social distancing rules. The hours are still 7 a.m. until 1 p.m. Saturdays, Tuesdays and Thursdays starting May 2.

But while you are staying at home

If you read my columns each month, you know I can't end without encouraging you to fill out your 2020 Census! The City of Reidsville was halfway there at last report, reaching a 50% response rate within the first 21 days of the 2020 Census. Go **TEAM REIDSVILLE!!** Why is an accurate reporting of how many residents live in Reidsville so important? The Federal Government distributes approximately \$675 billion annually to local and state governments and exactly how much a municipality or State gets is based on population. The more people you have, the more money you get. Cities rely on getting grants and other disbursements to help us with various projects, especially water and sewer. If cities receive grant monies, they are less likely to have to raise rates or taxes so it truly affects all of our pocketbooks. It also affects economic development because census data is used by business owners and developers to decide where they will open new stores or expand their operations. And a final reason is that population counts help decide our electoral districts, which affects who represents you on the State and National level. So help us on Team Reidsville and **FILL IT OUT!**"