

# Roaming Around Reidsville

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City of Reidsville

Last month's exciting announcement about the Reidsville Showcase coming to the former Rockingham Theatre on Gilmer Street in our downtown area has been described as a true "game changer" for our City. We truly believe this will be a huge tourism attraction not only for Reidsville but for all of Rockingham County.

If you haven't heard, Dewey and Leslie Brown of Brown Entertainment, LLC, have purchased the Rockingham Theatre from the Robertson family, who has owned the historic building since 1993. The couple has done an amazing job with the Liberty Showcase in Liberty, N.C., and we expect the same spectacular results here in Reidsville. What has been a beautiful movie theatre since the late 1920s will be turned into a live entertainment venue that is expected to draw national acts as well as visitors to Reidsville from all over. Here's a big shout out to City Marketer Judy Yarbrough, Economic Development Director Jeff Garstka and other City staff for working with the Browns and Robertsons to make this project happen!



But this isn't the only thing happening in downtown Reidsville and its immediate area. Even in our COVID-19 world, businesses are beginning to adjust and plan for the future. Our downtown area landscape continues to change. Last month's "Roaming Reidsville" column focused on plans for The Depot District across the railroad tracks where investment in the former Adams Electric building is poised to turn this area into an eclectic mixed use neighborhood with everything from commercial and light industrial to arts and entertainment. Carpino Investments has big plans for the former Adams Electric building, including approximately 14 apartments and a ground floor that will feature a food court and beer garden. Michael Carpino will be building on his efforts in downtown Reidsville, where he is already renovating three apartment units and ground floor retail space at 105 Gilmer Street.

Even in the midst of COVID-19, new stores are opening or planning to open in the downtown. A diverse mix of retail, service and restaurant merchants are getting ready to call Reidsville home. Right across from the Reidsville Showcase will be the Lucky City Brewery, which is making great progress to be open in the near future.

Yet it won't only be commercial ventures making their way to the City. Several other projects that will foster pride in our local community are getting ready to take shape. We had already mentioned The Block Mural in a past column. The Reidsville Downtown Corporation and the Mural Committee have already raised nearly \$14,000 towards this mural memorializing The Block, Reidsville's once prosperous African-American business district.

Like The Block Mural, other projects in the downtown area are designed to help us remember the past while we look to the future. Two of those projects, a 9/11 Memorial planned in front of Fire Station No. 1 on South Scales Street and Patriot Park on North Scales Street, will serve as bookends to our downtown area. Both of these projects have been mentioned during recent Council Retreats and Council members reiterated their commitment to making them happen during the Council's October monthly meeting.

The 9/11 Memorial is an art piece dedicated to first responders created by Greensboro sculptor Jim Gallucci, who was commissioned to do the Budding Future sculpture at the roundabout of Scales and Morehead streets. Mr. Gallucci has agreed to provide the piece, made out of metal from the Twin Towers in New York City, to the City on permanent loan. Local businessman Ricky Loye has offered his time and services to prepare the area and also transport and install the art piece. Some donations will be needed for the project, which will also include the design and building of a retaining wall so that the area can be brought up to street level. It is hoped that other agencies throughout the County will help support this project since the memorial will be for all first responders. The Reidsville Downtown Corporation has agreed to support the memorial, recognizing the sculpture as a part of Project DREAM (Downtown Reidsville Empowering Art Movement). A formal dedication of the memorial is planned for September 11, 2021, the 20<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the terrorist attack on our country.

Patriot Park will be part of a "pocket park" the City has planned for the northern end of Scales Street between Sprinkle and Morehead streets. This park will showcase replicas of four historical documents that speak to our freedoms as citizens of the United States. While adding to the beauty of the downtown area, this park will also be an educational tool highlighting the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, the Bill of Rights and a fourth document yet to be decided. This fourth document will represent the Civil Rights movement.

Similar projects have been established in cities and counties across the State of North Carolina. While many of these have been erected at County Courthouse locations, the City was very interested in having such a project here; therefore, staff is pursuing that possibility and has identified possible co-chairs for this fund-raising effort. We can envision residents and visitors coming to our City to view these historical documents, not to mention classes of school children touring these educational sites in the downtown, including the existing Budding Future sculpture with its historical elements. It would be easy for people to spend the entire day in the downtown area, visiting these outdoor educational sites and enjoying our local restaurants and shops.

While many businesses and ventures are moving forward despite COVID-19, the pandemic has left some of our traditional holiday events up in the air. Unfortunately, by the time this column went to press, we still don't know whether some of these events will take place or will have a whole new look in 2020. Be on the lookout for details as the month progresses.

However, the City's new Main Street/Market Square Manager Jill Weston has several fun activities that we already know are planned in November. They include:

- **A Holiday Scavenger Hunt:** Participants can get a card listing those downtown businesses that are joining in the fun. Patrons will get the card validated when they visit at least 10 of the stores listed during the month of November. Once the cards are completed, they can drop the cards off at the Water Bill drop-off box located behind Reidsville City Hall. There will be two drawings for prizes. One prize, a large candy tree, will be selected from those cards returned to the Water Bill drop-off box. The second prize will be available to those participants who spend at least \$35 total at any downtown business and get the validation from a store owner. They will then be entered into a drawing for a grand prize. Cards will be available at retail businesses downtown.
- **Window Decorating Contest:** Downtown Merchants who are participating in the Holiday Window Decorating Contest will have their windows decorated by November 15<sup>th</sup>. Members of the Reidsville Downtown Corporation Board of Directors will judge the contest and announce the winners on November 24<sup>th</sup>. A list of participating businesses will be available on City social media sites.
- **Story Walk:** The RDC is teaming up with the library to provide a walking story book throughout downtown on Scales Street. The pages of the story *Gracias/Thanks* will be displayed on the windows of several businesses. The story will start at the Library. Maps will be available to follow the walking story. Once a child has completed the story walk, they can take their map card back to the library to be entered into a drawing for a hardback cover of the book. Another story walk is already planned for December, using the book entitled, *When Winter Comes*.

2020 is definitely a year to remember even though many would like to forget it. Yet life goes on, which is shown in the businesses and projects that are forging ahead despite the pandemic. As the sign says, "We will get thru this together". Thank you TEAM REIDSVILLE!