



*City of Reidsville Press Release – Release Date October 12, 2017*

# Unveiling of Directional Signs Also Launches Downtown QR Code Tour

Reidsville City staff was tasked with two different projects – implementing wayfinding signs in the downtown area and improving on the City’s downtown walking tour.

During a brainstorming retreat of the Reidsville Downtown Corporation, one of the suggestions had been to provide such signage in the downtown area. City staff had been looking at revamping the downtown walking tour, and City Manager Preston Mitchell had seen a QR Code video project being done in another city.

The two projects were merged into one.

Instead of the traditional walking tour of the past, the City has created a series of YouTube videos, which tell the stories behind the sites listed on the directional signs. Each location has a corresponding QR Code that directs viewers to short 2-3 minute videos highlighting the history of the sites. Interested persons only need to download the QR Code Reader to their smartphone and click on the QR Code to view the corresponding video.

On Tuesday, October 10, Reidsville City Council unveiled the wayfinding sign located at the Scales-Morehead roundabout, one of six such signs located in and around the downtown area directing visitors to key locations in the business district. The six signs, depending on their location, direct visitors to City Hall, the Police Department (Municipal Building), the Reidsville Public Library, Market Square, The Penn House and RCARE. The “Shop & Dine” sign goes to the Downtown video on the City Website’s Video Tourbook at [www.reidsvillenc.gov](http://www.reidsvillenc.gov).

In addition to the directional signs, the QR Codes also will be displayed in front of the individual locations.

A key component of the project was to involve local students in the creation of the videos. City staff met with school system officials, including teachers, at Reidsville High School to discuss the project. Barbara McMillan, a teacher at RHS, agreed to take on the project.

Of the two projects selected by students in McMillan’s class, The Penn House became the first video made for the City’s QR Code Video Tour. Reidsville Mayor Jay Donecker and



Reidsville City Councilman William Hairston, center, and Councilwoman Sherri Walker, far right, led the unveiling of one of six directional signs erected by the City on Tuesday, October 10. Also on hand were Rockingham County Schools officials, including Superintendent Dr. Rodney Shotwell, Reidsville City staff and others who helped with the project.

City staff met with the students to discuss the video tour and to suggest contacts to help the youth in researching their projects. Local videographer Chase Nappier has been working with the City, tweaking the Penn House video and creating the others.

“This project was definitely a ‘win-win’ for us all the way around,” said Reidsville Mayor Jay Donecker. “We are sharing the stories associated with our City’s downtown area and its buildings while also engaging our young people to take an active interest in Reidsville and its history.”

School leaders were also glad to be a part of the project.

"We are very appreciative of the opportunity to be included in this exciting project," said Christy Barham, Director of Digital Learning, Professional Development & Media for the Rockingham County Schools. "Through the creation of the videos, our students have been able to expand their research and technical skills. They have also been afforded the opportunity to enhance their civic engagement by collaboratively creating a product that benefits their community."

In the meantime, City staff started working on the scripts for other locations on the video tour. They were aided by Reidsville Area Foundation summer interns Zack Tate and Abby Bryan, who created several scripts for current and future projects.

In addition to the locations listed on the directional signs, videos have been made for American Tobacco Company, Kelly’s Way and Mural Park. A video for the sculpture, “Budding Future,” is near completion. The videos have been narrated by the Mayor and current Council members as well as past Mayors of Reidsville. Rockingham County Library Director Michael Roche narrated the history of the Reidsville Library.

The success of the Penn House project has led to a new class of Reidsville High School students working on two other videos, one for The Block, the former African-American downtown business district, and the other for the Rockingham Theatre. With the retirement of McMillan, the school project is now being done by students in Kate Knabel’s classes at RHS.

Other City-owned sites will be added to the tour.

Reidsville Assistant City Manager Chris Phillips noted that the City was excited because this project involves students and, hopefully, helps them to understand the importance of preserving Reidsville’s history.

“So much of our history is being lost because it is not being recorded or written down,” he stressed. “Projects like this help preserve that history. It will also help us as the City prepares for its 150<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2023.

“We also hope that working on these historical narratives can be a legacy project at Reidsville High school, something that one class can pass down to the next class,” he said.

Future phases of the project could also include local businesses recording historical narratives about their buildings. There has even been talk of local churches recording their histories for a church video tour.

“We just see endless possibilities for this project, and we hope that the local business community and others will see the potential and get involved in the future,” Phillips said.