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Mountville unveils historical markers

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By DEAN LEE EVANS
 Correspondent

Mountville leaders Monday unveiled one of the newly minted Keystone identification markers that haven't been seen in the borough for decades.

Councilman Richard Spiegel, chairman of the parks and recreation committee, said a formal dedication of the markers is planned for April 26. It will be at 12:30 p.m. on West Main Street near Trinity United Church and Froelich Park.

"Two county commissioners and representative (Ryan) Aument responded (to the dedication invitation)," said council president Paul Chin.



This Mountville Keystone marker will be dedicated later th...

The dedication of the markers is seen as a precursor to the celebrations and events associated with the borough's 200th anniversary in 2014.

The keystone-shaped identification markers could once be found in nearly every town and city in Pennsylvania.

Few intact signs remain, and those that can be found are often in poor shape or missing original components that defined the markers such as pole and ball finials.

But an organization called Keystone Marker Trust has been working with municipalities statewide to replace the signs with replicas manufactured by Spring City Electrical Manufacturing Company.

At one time, Mountville had two of the distinctive blue and yellow markers at each end of Main Street.

One has long since disappeared, while a second damaged sign sits in storage at the borough's public works building.

The borough decided last year that it was more economical to replace the original cast iron markers with lighter cast metal PennDot-approved replicas.

"The three signs and poles weigh about 945 pounds," said Spiegel.

Council decided to include a third marker for College Avenue due to its traffic flow into town.

Spiegel did not say what the markers cost, but according to the trust website, three signs with poles cost \$4,000.

Spiegel said a representative from Keystone Marker Trust is expected at the dedication.

The markers were a common fixture in the 1920s and 1930s when paved highways and roads began to connect towns and cities with greater ease.

They typically contained information such as the town or city being entered, the founding date, and the name and distance of the next town or city based on the direction of travel.

In some cases, such as Mountville, the signs also contained information about a town's original name.

Mountville, founded in 1814 on the Lancaster and Susquehanna Turnpike, now Route 462, was originally called Mount Pleasant due to its elevation that offered a pleasant view of the

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When the first post office was established in 1842, the name was changed to Mountville because another Mount Pleasant has already recognized by the post office.

According to the trust, Greensboro became the first municipality in Pennsylvania in nearly 70 years to receive newly forged markers last November.

The trust's website, keystonemarkertrust.org, allows people to search for markers, send pictures and locations of markers or report on the fate of missing markers.

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