

New Travel Center Opens Along Interstate 77.



Handcrafted furniture, rugs and other decorative items greet visitors to the North Carolina Welcome Center along Interstate 77 in Surry County near the North Carolina—Virginia line. Information about the state is plentiful too in printed material and from welcome center personnel.

By Glenn Mays
MOUNT AIRY—It says "Welcome" to North Carolina in a special sort of way.

From its fireplace, where a fire will warm the hearts of winter travelers, to its handcrafted furniture, which beckons visitors to sit a spell, North Carolina's newest welcome center says a stylish "hello" to people coming to the Tar Heel State.

It's the work of many North Carolina artists and craftsmen that bids welcome along Interstate 77 at the North Carolina-Virginia line. The state's sixth and newest welcome center is completely furnished with the work of more than 20 of the state's artists and craftsmen.

Near the fireplace, a rocking chair, done by David Scott of Waynesville, silently invites visitors to relax a while.

Other chairs, benches and tables done by David Scott of Cleveland County town of Casar. Wayne Rabb of Waynesville, Dan Atwood of Candler and Bob Kopf of Walnut Cove give just as pleasing an invitation.

"We really wanted the center to make a statement about North Carolina," said Terry Flanagan, director of the state's welcome centers for the Department of Commerce. "When someone walks in there we want them to know they really are in North Carolina."

Flanagan said using North Carolina crafts seemed a natural way to welcome visitors to the state.

"North Carolina has long been known for the high quality and diversity of its crafts," she said. "The state is one of the major crafts centers in the country. This is a good way to tell our visitors about that. What we have in the center is typical of the style and quality of crafts found all over the state."

Along with the furniture in the center, there is pottery by Ian Ellenbogen and Rebecca Plummer of the Penland School of Crafts in Penland and by potters from Jugtown Pottery near Seagrove. Potter Tom Suomalainen of Walnut Cove did a goosehead lamp of clay for the center.

Carroll Davis Strider, Jr., of nearby Dobson designed and made a wooden clock for the center. Peter Gollup of Canton made chests and Susan Turner of Asheville did a quilt which graces a wall.

Some of David Brewin's work is appropriately evident at the center's fireplace—fireplace tools. Brewin is resident blacksmith at the John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown.

Rugs by Colleen Greiner of Greensboro and decorative wallpieces by Bryant Holsenbenk of Carrboro and Edwina Bringle of

Charlotte accent the center.

Another highlight of the center is the North Carolina relief map done in ceramic by Alice Proctor of Raleigh. The work incorporates many of the state's resources including its wildlife, agricultural products, flowers such as a dogwood and rhododendron and the state tree, the pine.

The work of several North Carolina photographers gives the center additional Tar Heel flavor. Nona Short, Chip Henderson and Steve Murray of Raleigh, Diane Davis and JoAnn Sieburg-Baker of Charlotte and Marshall Clayton of Cary capture the essence of North Carolina through its countryside and its people.

The new center opened to visitors in late May and already more than 300,000 visitors have been greeted by North Carolina's arts and crafts.

"We have been quite pleased with the reception this concept has received," Flanagan said. "It's

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something that people don't really expect in a center like this. It's really a pleasant surprise for visitors."

Another center, which is to be furnished in the same manner, is to open later this year in Polk County along Interstate 26 at the North Carolina-South Carolina line. One also is being planned along Interstate 77 near Charlotte.

The projects are being supported jointly by the North Carolina Arts Council and

the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington, D.C. in conjunction with the North Carolina Department of Commerce, Transportation and Cultural Resources.

Welcome centers have long been seen as places for rest stops and obtaining information. Those conveniences still are available at the new center but the context in which they are found has changed to say a very warm "Welcome to North Carolina."

This Halloween . . .

Meet 'n Treat



As October 31 approaches, the anticipation of children across the country mounts. For this is the day they dress up in fanciful costumes and go knocking on neighbors' doors to receive delicious confections. But in all the excitement, it's easy for them to forget some common-sense safety rules.

The confectionery industry, wishing you and your family a safe and happy Halloween, suggests that you accompany your children as they go out treating. Visit houses in familiar territory, and remember that wrapped confections are best. Go out during daylight hours, if possible, making certain that your children's costumes permit adequate visibility and are also short enough to prevent tripping. And, be especially careful when crossing streets.

After the treating, return home for a "Meet 'n Treat" party, to "meet" the neighbors and "treat" the kids. Decorate your house in keeping with Halloween, serve a variety of colorful holiday confections, and play traditional games, like bobbing for apples. Meet 'n Treat turns Halloween into a safe and fun celebration for young and old, neighbors and family alike.

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