

search and post ads for free



backpage.com
ct.backpage.com

autos | buy-sell-trade | real estate | employment

BROADCASTER

◆ A REMINDER COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER ◆

Countdown to SPRING
it's coming look inside this issue to get READY for the season

ReminderNewspapers.com • 875-3366
or toll-free 888-456-2211

March 24, 2006 • Broadcaster North Edition

Billboards designed by ECSU students greet drivers



The big picture. Richard Harrinton of Plainfield, a senior graphic design student at Eastern Connecticut State University, proudly points to his billboard displayed on Bridge Street, beside the Chamber of Commerce building. His is one of three chosen by the Willimantic Food Co-op.

By BRENDA SULLIVAN
Staff Writer

WILLIMANTIC — For the last couple of weeks, drivers on Route 195 and Route 32 have been greeted by cheerful billboards announcing the opening of the Willimantic Food Co-op's new store.

There are three in all, one located behind the Chamber of Commerce on Bridge Street, another standing across the road from Caisse Park on Route 195, and a third just beyond the Mansfield Drive-In on Route 32.

For the three Eastern Connecticut State University graphic arts students who designed these billboards, it's been a real treat to have their work displayed so publicly.

Their artwork is larger than life

The billboards were designed by seniors in the ECSU Design group, headed by June Bisantz-Evans, at the request of the Willimantic Food Co-op.

"The Food Co-op had plans to put up three billboards to advertise their new location. During the [university's] winter break, Sarah Keleher, the Co-op's community relations liaison, contacted me and asked me about the mechanics of billboard design," Bisantz-Evans said.

"I suggested that the Co-op use my students as designers on the project, because that's what the ECSU Design Group is about, doing real jobs for real clients," she said.

"Sarah and the rest of the Co-op leadership thought it was a great idea, and gave me their — very tight — deadline, and let me manage things with the students," she said.

The students were given the text for the billboards, and a copy of the Co-op's logo, which includes a large orange carrot. They also visited the store that recently opened on 91 Valley Street.

"It was the first time I'd been there in my four years at ECSU. It was great. The look is kind of retro, so I figured on earthy tones for my design," said Krista Utke, from Southington.

The students submitted digital drawings that were then sent to Vincent Printing in Hixson, TN. The printed billboards, which "tile" the design into four-by-four sections, were sent to Bob Brown of Standish Johnson Advertising in Providence for installation. The billboards will be up until April 1, or until



A big statement. Krista Utke, whose graphic design also decorates the lamp posts along Willimantic's Main Street, poses beside her billboard design. She enjoyed the experience because it was a chance to work with the community, and share her work with "the real world," she said.

someone else rents the spaces.

As it turns out, Utke and her fellow graphic design students Adam McLaughlin and Richard Harrington used similar colors, which prompted the Co-op staff to decide to use three designs, instead of one.

McLaughlin, who lives in Plainfield, also is pleased to see his work so prominently displayed. "That's my most successful work that people have been able to see," he said.

"I took my family down there to see it. They were very proud," he said.

A fourth design created by Keegan Stiles also was chosen from the originally submitted 10 drawings, and is now being used for the store's "open/closed" door sign.

The billboard designs are just what the Co-op was looking for, said the store's manager Alice Rubin.

"We've all been driving around looking at them. I think the students did great. We were very, very happy," Rubin said. "I just saw the one on Route 32 for the first time, and I was really impressed."

"We've wanted a billboard for the past 10 years. We never imagined they would look so great," she added.

For Utke, who has a student job working in the Department of University Relations, the project is a nice culmination of her experiences while at ECSU. Besides working on the billboards, she designed winter banners displayed on the lamp posts that line Main Street in Willimantic, and she did graphic design for the Foxwoods Casino for two months as an intern.

"This is what I've been going to school for four years for. This is what I want to do. Having my artwork in the public eye is the best. I am pretty impressed with my education at Eastern. My senior year has opened up different avenues to explore," Utke said.

Besides telling customers about the Co-op's new location, another goal of the billboards is to let people know that anyone can shop there, not just Co-op members. More information is available online at www.willimanticfood.coop or by calling 456-3611.



Bright idea. Adam McLaughlin of Manchester stands in front of his billboard design, located on Route 32 South, just past the Mansfield Drive-in. McLaughlin recently brought his family to see his work.