

Digital Sign Gives Drivers a New View

Landscaping also unveiled at overpass

By Deana Stroisch, Staff Writer

October 2013

Mark McWilliams remembers talking about how to improve the looks of the railroad overpass at Sixth Street and Stanford Avenue - one of the city's busiest entryways - during a Springfield Green meeting six years ago.

"We talked about getting the railroad to paint it," he said. "And it was a lot of work. We just always struck out."

McWilliams and his wife, Laurie, of CopperTree Landscaping, joined Ward 6 Ald. Cory Jobe, Mayor Mike Houston and other community members Thursday in dedicating a new, 8-foot-tall welcome sign at that very corner.



Caption: Mark McWilliams and one of his landscape crewmen install plant material at the site of the new South Sixth street entrance to Springfield.

The LED-lit digital sign highlights various Springfield attractions, from Lincoln's Home to the Old State Capitol. The sign also can be used to display messages to drivers in case of a local emergency. The slides can rotate every 11 seconds.

"This sign is the first of what we hope will be municipal gateway signs at all the major entry points to Springfield," Houston said. "Not only is it informational, but the enhanced signage like this beautifies our entry points."

CopperTree Landscaping donated the landscaping and will maintain it for the city.

"Without their donation of time and materials and ongoing maintenance, this project would not have been possible.

City and state crews last summer resurfaced and painted the railroad overpass at the South Sixth street entrance to the city, which is used by about 35,000 drivers a day.

The sign, designed by Dennis Bringuet and his son, Scott, has been in the works for two years. Dennis Bringuet, president of Ace Sign Co. said the slides can be controlled via the Internet.

"We're anxious to keep it fresh and keep it interesting so the visitors can enjoy it," he said.

Jobe described the project as a unique public-private partnership.

"This is about welcoming visitors to the capital city. This is about making a difference, building partnerships, inspiring residents to get involved in their community," Jobe said. "And I think this is what we're doing today with the new South Sixth Street gateway project."