Main street Lexington brings good news for some local shops

By Lindsay Castelberry

For new businesses, putting up a sign and getting a good logo is an owner’s to-do list.

That’s exactly what happened at Cobblestone Shoe & Leather Repair, which opened on East Nelson Street in December. The store opened without a sign and kept the lights on last week.
The business was able to replace its makeshift paper sign with one made of metal and vinyl thanks to Main Street Lexington’s new signs and Amming Grant Fund.

“It was a pleasant surprise to realize someone would pay anything at all with a much lower cost that occurs now to open a business,” Greg Moore, the store’s owner, said. “Signage is a very small part of it, but every dollar helps to offset our costs.”
The city granted $2,000 to Main Street Lexington, a volunteer or ganization that works to enhance the city’s livability, helping new and existing businesses rearrange their storefronts.
Cobblestone Shoe & Leather Repair is the first local business to benefit from the program.

Eight businesses — including a restaurant, a real estate agent and an antique store — have expressed interest since the program announcement was three weeks ago.

Sophie Wilkinson, executive director of Main Street Lexington, said the recent revival of downtown Lexington made it the perfect time to launch the initiative.

“One of the most important times you have in a beautiful town like we have in Lexington is when existing and new businesses rearrange their storefronts,” Wilkinson said. “We take a lot of pride in Lexington and how our town looks.”

There were almost 100 empty storefronts today than there were three years ago, Wilkinson said. “It’s not easy for businesses to thrive in the small town. Many individuals who own businesses in town don’t own the buildings they operate from. We can make interesting a storefront

Wilkinson said the signs and Amming Grant Fund is one way to support local businesses and street improvement projects to help downtown area look good.

When the new grant program was announced, businesses were asked to submit a request for a new sign or awning and the city helped businesses submit an application for Main Street Lexington.
The Architectural Review Board then approves or rejects applications before shop owners can officially get their sign.

To determine the level of funding, Main Street Lexington conducted a small survey of businesses that had recently purchased their own signs. The group found the median cost for a sign was $500, while average costs started at $3,500.

Businesses in downtown Lexington can receive a dollar for dollar match, up to $300 for signs and up to $500 for awnings.

According to Wilkinson, many communities across the nation have this kind of program. “It’s a very common program and that’s because it works. It’s common because it’s the mission of a community that cares about its downtown.”

The sign Moore chose was less expensive than the median price.

For that reason, Wilkinson said the number of businesses that will benefit from the grant depends on how much money each business spends.

Wilkinson said Main Street Lexin
gton confirmed the necessity of the program.

“It’s common because it supports the mission of a community that cares about its downtown.”

In 2014, researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Extension and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation studied 24 downtown store improvement projects to help downtowns.

Local businesses and community leaders told the researchers that they found that small investments in storefront improvements have major impacts on overall revenue and property values.

More than 80 percent of the businesses in the case study reported an increase in the number of first-time customers and a boost in sales. It also found that nearby businesses experienced increased sales from improvements to neighboring buildings.

City Council approved funding for this program for the rest of this fiscal year, which ends in June. When the next budget cycle begins in July, Wilkinson said Main Street Lexington plans to request more money to fund the program.

“Today everyone is taking steps to improve everything you do costs, and again, it’s not a huge amount of money, but still it was just kind of like saying, ‘Thank you for being part of the downtown…’”

Liberty University student dies after hiking accident

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — A Liberty University student has died after falling while hiking in Apple Orchard Falls in Botetourt County.

Media outlets report that stu
dent Dylan Engel died Wednesday afternoon after falling about 75 feet from a trail. 

Crews from Buchanan Fire Department, Blue Ridge Fire Department and Botetourt County Search and Rescue responded.

Upon reaching Engel, crews tried to resuscitate him but were unsuccessful.

Liberty University issued a news release confirming that a student was killed.

McCullough certified for VA Supreme Court

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Re
democrat lawmakers approved cleavage of Court of Appeals Judge Stephen McCullough to the Virginia Supreme Court on Thursday, defeating Gov. Terry McAuliffe in a last-ditch effort to prevent Virginia’s highest court from reflecting the state legislature.

McCullough’s selection as law mak
er racists to finish their work for the year means little.minority legislation has not been cleared.

In Virginia, governors can temporarily appoint judges and jus
tices when lawmakers aren’t in session. But the final authority for electing judges rests with the General Assembly. McCullough initially appointed judges to fill the vacant seat, last summer, but Republican leaders refused to go along with it because they said the governor didn’t consent with them.

Prior to being elected to the House Courts of Justice committee last summer, McCullough worked in the Virginia attorney general’s office for over 10 years. He told lawmakers Wednesday that his view of the issue was “clearly aligned with the late U.S. Supreme Court Jus
tice Antonin Scalia.”

Republican lawmakers didn’t disagree that Scalia was qualified for the vacant seat.

But they said McCullough breached the trust by not getting them a heads-up before appointing his last Thursday. On Thursday, McCullough was re-elected as a highly McCullough served as a Virginia Supreme Court Justice by the House Courts of Justice committee (AP Photo/Richmond Times-Dispatch).

Upset over school that honors Virginia segregationist

Jordan Chapman, who is leading the charge to change R.F . Byrd’s Middle School name, stands next to the sign for the school.

Buchanan County Fire and EMS respond to brush fire near Liberty University

BUCHANAN, Va. (AP) — A Liberty University student has died after falling while hiking in Apple Orchard Falls in Botetourt County.

Media outlets report that stu
dent Dylan Engel died Wednesday afternoon after falling about 75 feet from a trail. 

Crews from Buchanan Fire Department, Blue Ridge Fire Department and Botetourt County Search and Rescue responded.

Upon reaching Engel, crews tried to resuscitate him but were unsuccessful.

Liberty University issued a news release confirming that a student was killed.

McCullough certified for VA Supreme Court

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Re
democrat lawmakers approved cleavage of Court of Appeals Judge Stephen McCullough to the Virginia Supreme Court on Thursday, defeating Gov. Terry McAuliffe in a last-ditch effort to prevent Virginia’s highest court from reflecting the state legislature.

McCullough’s selection as law mak
er racists to finish their work for the year means little.minority legislation has not been cleared.

In Virginia, governors can temporarily appoint judges and jus
tices when lawmakers aren’t in session. But the final authority for electing judges rests with the General Assembly. McCullough initially appointed judges to fill the vacant seat, last summer, but Republican leaders refused to go along with it because they said the governor didn’t consent with them.

Prior to being elected to the House Courts of Justice committee last summer, McCullough worked in the Virginia attorney general’s office for over 10 years. He told lawmakers Wednesday that his view of the issue was “clearly aligned with the late U.S. Supreme Court Jus
tice Antonin Scalia.”

Republican lawmakers didn’t disagree that Scalia was qualified for the vacant seat.

But they said McCullough breached the trust by not getting them a heads-up before appointing his last Thursday. On Thursday, McCullough was re-elected as a highly McCullough served as a Virginia Supreme Court Justice by the House Courts of Justice committee (AP Photo/Richmond Times-Dispatch).

Upset over school that honors Virginia segregationist

Jordan Chapman, who is leading the charge to change R.F . Byrd’s Middle School name, stands next to the sign for the school.

Buchanan County Fire and EMS respond to brush fire near Liberty University

BUCHANAN, Va. (AP) — A Liberty University student has died after falling while hiking in Apple Orchard Falls in Botetourt County.

Media outlets report that stu
dent Dylan Engel died Wednesday afternoon after falling about 75 feet from a trail. 

Crews from Buchanan Fire Department, Blue Ridge Fire Department and Botetourt County Search and Rescue responded.

Upon reaching Engel, crews tried to resuscitate him but were unsuccessful.

Liberty University issued a news release confirming that a student was killed.

McCullough certified for VA Supreme Court

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Re
democrat lawmakers approved cleavage of Court of Appeals Judge Stephen McCullough to the Virginia Supreme Court on Thursday, defeating Gov. Terry McAuliffe in a last-ditch effort to prevent Virginia’s highest court from reflecting the state legislature.

McCullough’s selection as law mak
er racists to finish their work for the year means little.minority legislation has not been cleared.

In Virginia, governors can temporarily appoint judges and jus
tices when lawmakers aren’t in session. But the final authority for electing judges rests with the General Assembly. McCullough initially appointed judges to fill the vacant seat, last summer, but Republican leaders refused to go along with it because they said the governor didn’t consent with them.

Prior to being elected to the House Courts of Justice committee last summer, McCullough worked in the Virginia attorney general’s office for over 10 years. He told lawmakers Wednesday that his view of the issue was “clearly aligned with the late U.S. Supreme Court Jus
tice Antonin Scalia.”

Republican lawmakers didn’t disagree that Scalia was qualified for the vacant seat.

But they said McCullough breached the trust by not getting them a heads-up before appointing his last Thursday. On Thursday, McCullough was re-elected as a highly McCullough served as a Virginia Supreme Court Justice by the House Courts of Justice committee (AP Photo/Richmond Times-Dispatch).

Upset over school that honors Virginia segregationist

Jordan Chapman, who is leading the charge to change R.F . Byrd’s Middle School name, stands next to the sign for the school.

Buchanan County Fire and EMS respond to brush fire near Liberty University

BUCHANAN, Va. (AP) — A Liberty University student has died after falling while hiking in Apple Orchard Falls in Botetourt County.

Media outlets report that stu
dent Dylan Engel died Wednesday afternoon after falling about 75 feet from a trail. 

Crews from Buchanan Fire Department, Blue Ridge Fire Department and Botetourt County Search and Rescue responded.

Upon reaching Engel, crews tried to resuscitate him but were unsuccessful.

Liberty University issued a news release confirming that a student was killed.

McCullough certified for VA Supreme Court

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Re
democrat lawmakers approved cleavage of Court of Appeals Judge Stephen McCullough to the Virginia Supreme Court on Thursday, defeating Gov. Terry McAuliffe in a last-ditch effort to prevent Virginia’s highest court from reflecting the state legislature.

McCullough’s selection as law mak
er racists to finish their work for the year means little.minority legislation has not been cleared.

In Virginia, governors can temporarily appoint judges and jus
tices when lawmakers aren’t in session. But the final authority for electing judges rests with the General Assembly. McCullough initially appointed judges to fill the vacant seat, last summer, but Republican leaders refused to go along with it because they said the governor didn’t consent with them.

Prior to being elected to the House Courts of Justice committee last summer, McCullough worked in the Virginia attorney general’s office for over 10 years. He told lawmakers Wednesday that his view of the issue was “clearly aligned with the late U.S. Supreme Court Jus
tice Antonin Scalia.”

Republican lawmakers didn’t disagree that Scalia was qualified for the vacant seat.

But they said McCullough breached the trust by not getting them a heads-up before appointing his last Thursday. On Thursday, McCullough was re-elected as a highly McCullough served as a Virginia Supreme Court Justice by the House Courts of Justice committee (AP Photo/Richmond Times-Dispatch).

Upset over school that honors Virginia segregationist

Jordan Chapman, who is leading the charge to change R.F . Byrd’s Middle School name, stands next to the sign for the school.