

# Greater Lowell Tech students unveil new welcome sign for Lowell's Centralville neighborhood

Students replace sign run over by car



Construction and carpentry students at Greater Lowell Technical High School unveil the welcome sign to Centralville at the intersection of Aiken Street and VFW Highway on June 13, 2022. MELANIE GILBERT / LOWELL SUN

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LOWELL — The last Centralville sign that stood at the intersection of Aiken Street and VFW Highway was run over by a car; the new one was almost a victim of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bruce Brown, an instructor at Greater Lowell Technical High School, said the welcome sign project was delayed for more than two years due to pandemic-related school shutdowns and disruptions.

“A couple of veterans approached School Committee member Paul Morin about replacing the sign that used to be here,” said Brown. “We started this project right before COVID hit. Then we had to leave it for a couple of years. This year, the kids finished it, and got it ready to go.”

Students from the school’s construction and carpentry program completed the large neighborhood sign as part of their junior year studies. The project provided in-house training before they go out into the community on co-op jobs to gain real-world experience in their senior year.

“We put it all together, and we came out last week to set it in the ground for today’s ceremony,” Juan Naut, of Lowell, at the sign’s rededication Monday morning.



Aiding in the effort was Boston Concrete, which donated the concrete to anchor the two sturdy posts for the 15-foot-long structure.

The students, wearing white hard hats on their heads and tool belts on their waists, had the honor of unveiling the gable-styled sign, painted in bright yellow with white letters on a fire engine red background. The sign occupies a green

space entrance to the neighborhood that sits off the major thoroughfare.

The ceremony was attended by Superintendent Jill Davis. In a speech after the unveiling, Davis spoke of how projects like this “give students the opportunity to practice their hands-on, authentic, real-world skills. We’re very proud that we’re able to do this and give back to our city.”

That sensibility was echoed by student Morgan Lobas, of Tyngsboro.

“We wanted to replace the old sign and add something nice to the community,” she said.

City Manager Tom Golden mingled with the students, admiring the detailed hand work that went into the sign including an intricate wood-shopped sunburst design.



“The council’s been talking about trying to engage the talent at the vocational school,” Golden said. “This sign is representative of the kinds of programs we want to promote through co-op programs with juniors and seniors at the school. We’re looking to tap into that talent and have them work right here in the city.”

After the ceremony, city Parks & Cemetery workers Derek Heron and Tim Zannoni watered the newly seeded lawn. Zannoni attended the technical high school in the carpentry program nearly 20 years ago, and he said he was “really impressed with what the kids did.” Heron said that even after 24 years with the department, “I love these events. The kids did the majority of the work to get the sign balanced and upright in the concrete footings. Start to finish, they did a fantastic job.”