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Elderton restores historic Keystone Town Markers

By Mitch Fryer, LEADER TIMES
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ELDERTON -- Residents have put new life into the town's age-worn, landmark guideposts seen by travelers along Route 422 halfway between Kittanning and Indiana. The two blue-and-gold, keystone-shaped, historical markers at each end of Elderton Borough are part of the Keystone Town Markers system.

Keystone Town Markers provide a brief look at Pennsylvania's small towns and villages along with their histories. The signs were erected all across the state from the 1920s to the 1950s.

The local signs which tell people they are in Elderton were recently taken down, repaired, the rust removed, repainted and put back in place.

"It was something we needed to preserve," Elderton Mayor Larry Prugh said. "They're something for the town to be proud of."

The Elderton markers not only tell people what town they're in, but at closer look, the markers also announce that the town was formerly named New Middleton, named for Sarah Elder, founded in 1822, and how many miles it is to Kittanning or Indiana depending on their direction of travel.

Sarah Elder was a local settler captured by Indians in 1770 and later rescued. The original name was Middleton for the midway stop for travelers between Indiana and Kittanning.

"It's the history," Prugh said. "The signs give passersby a little bit of what our town is about."

While some communities are replacing their classic posts with modern replicas, Elderton decided to restore and keep its original signs, Prugh said.

Local business owners Terry and Greg Dobrosky of Showtime Designs cleaned them with a blasting machine and welded a broken piece.

The borough's roads supervisor Bill Miller and assistant roads supervisor Tom Weiers added a fresh coat of paint in the maintenance shop, fixed the signs' posts and reset them Monday at their original sites.

Chuck Foster, a former mayor of Elderton for 24 years and a resident for about 50 years, said he couldn't recall a time when the markers weren't there.

"This is a good community with an important history," Foster said. "The signs remind people of that."

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