

SOMETHING BIG IS COMING...

A student-created landmark gets a new chapter.



WHERE WE STARTED

We began our design with a simple question:

How can each letter tell the story of Norton?

L — OUR MOUNTAINS & FLAG ROCK

The history represented in this part of the redesigned LOVE sign

L

A View That Says “Norton”

The L celebrates the mountains that surround Norton and the landmark known as Flag Rock. The American flag overlooking the city has long been one of Norton’s most recognizable sights. The mountain scenery reflects the natural beauty of Southwest Virginia and the outdoor heritage that helps define our community.

A 40-to-50-foot sandstone pillar on the slopes of High Knob that gained its name in the 1920s when a German immigrant named Karl Matuszczyk climbed the rock and placed an American flag there as a symbol of love for his new home.

O — THE WOODBOOGER

The history represented in this part of the redesigned LOVE sign

O

Norton's Legendary Mountain Creature

Inside the O is the Woodbooger, a local legend associated with the wooded mountains around Norton. The figure represents the stories, folklore and sense of fun that have become part of the city's identity. Today, the Woodbooger is also closely connected with local tourism and community events.

Following a 2011 visit by Animal Planet's, *Finding Bigfoot*, the city declared the area a Woodbooger Sanctuary in 2014 for the local Bigfoot-like creature, adding a prominent statue near the overlook.

V — NORTON'S RAILROAD HISTORY

The history represented in this part of the redesigned LOVE sign

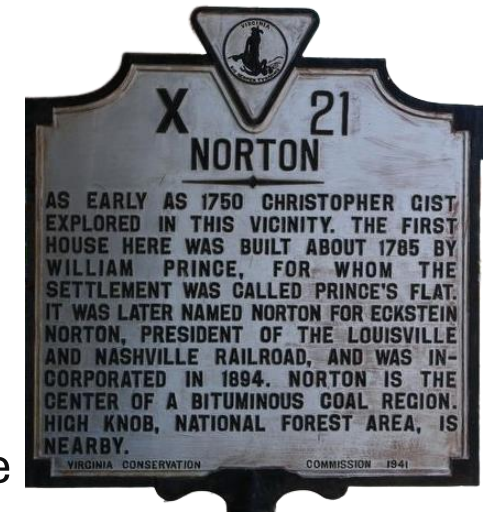
V

The Railroad Helped Build the City

The V uses railroad tracks and a steam locomotive to recognize Norton's railroad heritage. Rail transportation played an important role in the growth of the community and the movement of coal, people and goods through Southwest Virginia. The railroad theme also honors the history behind Norton's development as a regional center.



In 1890, the town was officially renamed Norton to honor Eckstein Norton, the president of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad. The arrival of the Louisville and Nashville and the Norfolk and Western railroads between 1889 and 1891 opened the region to commerce. Situated in the center of a rich bituminous coal region, Norton's economy shifted heavily toward coal mining and coke production to support steel manufacturing.



E — THE CITY & THE RAIDERS

The history represented in this part of the redesigned LOVE sign

E

Landmarks, Downtown and School Pride

The E brings several pieces of Norton together: mountain scenery, a lookout-style landmark, historic downtown architecture and John I. Burton Raider pride. It connects the city's past with the students who represent its future—showing that Norton's story is not only about where we have been, but who will carry it forward.



The High Knob Tower - The original tower built in the '30s burned down 40 years later. In 1978, Flatwoods Job Corp. built a new three-story tower that met its demise by arson in 2007. Thanks to a dedicated community of volunteers in partnership with the Clinch Ranger District, a new, fire-proof tower was built. It has become a symbol of hope, like the legendary phoenix rising from the ashes, offering locals and visitors alike an unparalleled view from Stone Mountain. The High Knob area of Stone Mountain forms one of the greatest natural areas in the eastern United States. On a clear day, visitors can see across five states: Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, North Carolina, and Tennessee.



The Hotel Norton was built in 1921 at a cost of \$375,000. The Hotel Norton operated as a hotel until the mid-1960s when the structure began to need repair. In 1987, NIDA purchased the building and began work to save the structure. On December 5, 2001, the Commonwealth of Virginia officially placed the Hotel Norton on the Virginia Landmark Register and on May 16, 2001, it was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

It Started Here

The original LOVE sign in its permanent location.



A familiar Norton landmark

Students had already helped create something the community could see and enjoy.

The students explored the “common thread” that exists among different cultures and generations through textile arts, while showcasing both past and present techniques. Each letter of LOVE represented a different hands-on art:

- L – Weaving**
- O – Crochet**
- V – Knitting**
- E – Sewing**

It highlighted the value of hands-on arts for all ages, particularly young adults, while connecting our Appalachian heritage with traditions found in cultures around the world. We loved seeing our students recognize that although communities and cultures may be different, there are often common threads that connect us.

Over time, weather and age gave us an opportunity to imagine what this sign could become next.

Not a replacement. A new chapter.

The Challenge

How do you redesign four letters to tell the story of a whole community?

PLACE

The mountains and landscape that surround us.

HISTORY

The railroad and downtown that helped shape Norton.

LEGEND

The Woodbooger — part of our local identity and folklore.

PRIDE

John I. Burton Raiders and the school community.

An Idea Takes Shape

Each letter became a canvas for a different piece of Norton.



MOUNTAINS + FLAG



WOODBIGGER



NORTON + RAIDERS

Students Bring It to Life

A collaboration across classrooms, programs and the community.

- 01

ART

Sketching • painting • visual storytelling

- 02

CTE

Design • planning • hands-on problem solving

- 03

HISTORY + ENGLISH

Research • Norton history • telling the story

- 04

WISE COUNTY CAREER
TECH CENTER

Fabrication • metalwork • student craftsmanship

- 05

CITY OF NORTON

Welding • support • community partnership

The People Behind the Project

CONCEPT + DESIGN

Stephanie Adams
Career & Technical
Education Director

Yearbook Class -
Pictures

Additionally, the Wise County
Career & Technical Center, the
Norton City Schools
Administration and City of
Norton Public Works
Department who helped turn
an idea into a reality.

STUDENT ARTISTS

Brianna Canter
Cheyanna Collins
Zoe Addison
Elliot Walker
Sean Cole
Gracie Bolling
Aubrey Thompson
Alicia Graley

with Art Instructor
Neil Walker

HISTORY + ENGLISH

Robert Bentley
Local History Class –
Research

English – Sandi Roop
Write-up of project,
Proofreading

Look Closer

Four letters. Four stories. One community.

L

**Our Mountains •
Flag Rock • Natural
Beauty**

O

**The Woodbooger •
Local Legend •
Appalachian
Folklore**

V

**Railroad Heritage •
Norton's History**

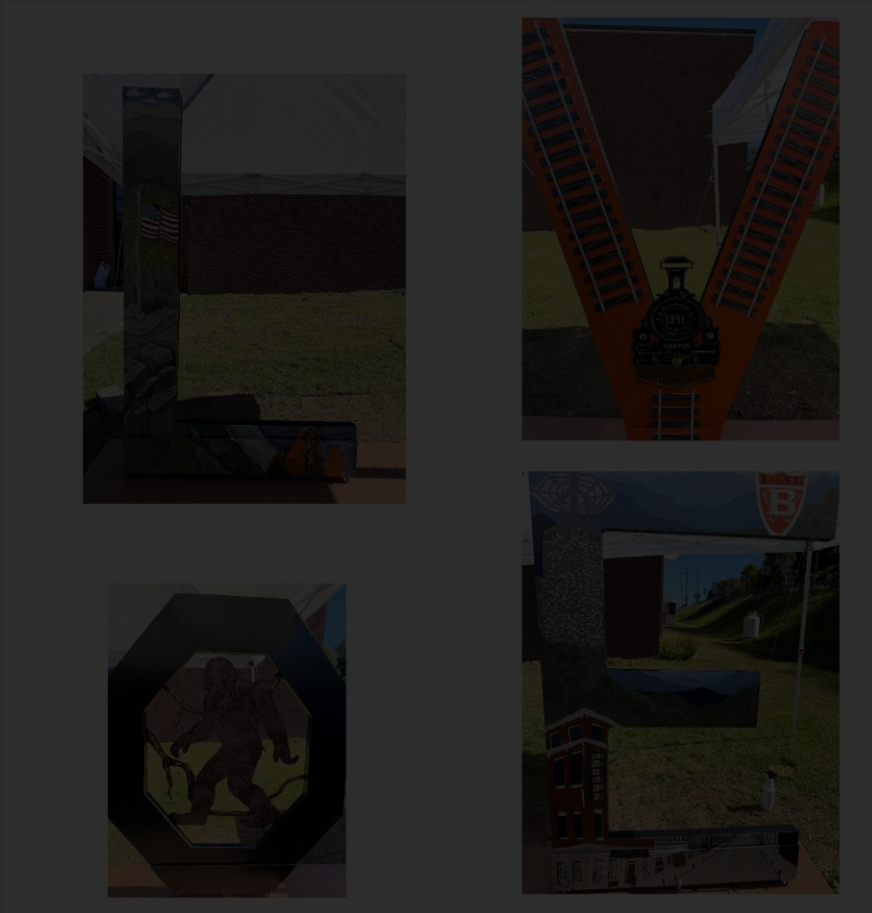
E

**Downtown • Hotel
Norton • High Knob
Lookout Tower •
Raiders • Norton
City Schools •
Community Pride**

MORE THAN A SIGN

**A piece of Norton
created by the next generation.**

This is what happens when students are trusted to leave their mark.



WE LOVE NORTON

Our History. Our Community. Our Students. Our Home.

THANK YOU

to every student, teacher, instructor and community partner who helped make this possible.

JOHN I. BURTON HIGH SCHOOL × WISE COUNTY CTC × CITY OF NORTON