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New billboards promote N.C. Research Campus

By Ben McNeely

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KANNAPOLIS - There are new billboards around the area, touting the dawn of a new age in research.

A new marketing campaign from the North Carolina Research Campus features a new logo and bold statements in white lettering on a black background.

Statements such as "Historians will no longer argue about when the modern age of science began." And, "In 2008, construction ends and groundbreaking begins." And, "Always see the beaker half full."

This new campaign comes ahead of the opening of the Core Research Laboratory in April and the start of the Duke MURDOCK Study - which proposes to study human disease at the genetic level. Castle & Cooke hired an Atlanta-based advertising firm, DENMARK, whose clients include Ryland Homes, BellSouth, Crescent Resources and The Ritz-Carlton Company, to design the new billboards.

At Exit 60 on Interstate 85 - Dale Earnhardt Boulevard - a billboard proclaims, "Exit 60: Home to science."

Castle & Cooke marketing director Phyllis Beaver said the company has trademarked the phrase "home to science."

Priscilla Jessup, CEO of DENMARK, worked on the billboard campaign with Castle & Cooke. She said "there is nothing timid about them."

"When you have a billion dollars behind a project like that, you have to step out and be bold," Jessup said. "The boldness matches Mr. Murdock's vision."

Jessup said it took the creative team at DENMARK about four weeks to complete the process.

Beaver said the slogans were to set the tone for growth at the campus in 2008.

"We involved the university scientists and garnered their input with the slogans," Beaver said. "The universities really liked the slogan 'Always see the beaker half full' because there are tremendous challenges, but we want to show faculty members that come here to know that there are no back seats. Everyone is in the front seat of history."

Jessup said the billboards are designed to entice people about the research that will happen at the campus.

"We wanted outdoor boards that are designed to make a statement that begins to hint at what is going to happen," Jessup said.

DENMARK is designing the Web sites for the research campus and the David H. Murdock Research Institute, Jessup said. She also said DENMARK is looking to open an office in Cannon Village.

"Nothing has been finalized, but we've picked out our spot - near the Dale Earnhardt statue," Jessup said.

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