

Big sculptures headed for Atlanta



Mike Jacoby / Daily News

The horse-drawn caisson carrying the sculptures titled 'Peace' and 'Justice' makes its way up Main Street in LaGrange on Friday afternoon. The artworks, created by renowned sculptor Alexander Stoddart of Scotland, arrived earlier this month in Savannah and have been touring the state en route to their final destination at the Millennium Gate in Atlanta. They will be situated in a lakeside park in Atlantic Station, a new 'city within a city' in midtown Atlanta at the former site of the Atlantic Steel mill.

'Monumental Journey' makes stop in LaGrange

By Debby Durrence
Staff Writer

Jeffery Keenan, 10, peered down Main Street on Friday afternoon, barely able to contain his excitement.

"Do you see them yet?" he asked. "Are they coming?"

Almost 30 minutes late, they arrived—four black Percheron horses pulling a caisson on which sat two bronze statues.

"A Monumental Journey" was passing through LaGrange.

Two original classic sculptures, one titled "Peace" and the other "Justice," came to LaGrange as part of the "Monumental Journey" tour across the state before completing the trek at Atlantic Station in midtown Atlanta. There they will flank the Millennium Gate, said to be the largest national monument of its kind to be constructed since the Jefferson Memorial, which was dedicated in 1943. Construction is expected to begin on the gate by the first of the year and is expected to take about 14 months to complete.

These seated bronze sculptures, each about 8.5 feet tall and each weighing 1.5 tons, are produced by sculptor Alexander Stoddart of Scotland.

Michael Lock, 78, of LaGrange said he wanted to see the statues after read-

ing about them in the paper.

"I wanted to see these wonderful statues crafted by this wonderful Scottish sculptor," he said in a lilting British accent.

Lock said he has lived in LaGrange for 34 years but is originally from Cambridge, England.

Dianne Holbrook with the LaGrange-Troup County Chamber of Commerce helped coordinate the visit.

"This is so exciting," she said. "The horses and the statues are so beautiful. I just wish more people had come out to see this."

Although the traffic was heavy around Lafayette Square, a few people lined the route, which wound its way from in front of the Troup County Archives, around the square and down Broad Street to Hills and Dales.

The horses, caisson and statues remained on display at the estate's welcome center for a couple of hours before officials held a brief ceremony.

Speer Burdette, chairman of the Fuller E. Callaway Foundation, welcomed guests.

"It is a real honor to have these two statues here today at Hills and Dales," he said. "I can't think of a better setting."

Mayor Jeff Lukken thanked the Callaway Foundation, one of the sponsors

of the event, for its continued support of the arts.

"Generations to come will remember and honor you for your commitment to the arts in this community," he said.

Rodney Cook, president of the National Monuments Foundation, described the Millennium Gate project and its importance to the state and the nation.

"The gate is modeled after the Arch of Titus in Rome," he said. "These two statues will be seated on pylons and will flank the gate. They will serve as a prologue to the other sculptural wonders that will be featured" at the site.

There will be seven bronze statues at the gate, he said.

"A Monumental Journey" will end Thursday in Atlanta, when Gov. Sonny Perdue climbs into the driver's seat of the caisson and drives the statues across the bridge into Atlantic Station.

"Too often the people of Georgia and her great capital do not visit (each other) enough," he said. "Please come to Atlanta to visit the gate. It is now a part of your history."

Debby Durrence can be reached at ddurrence@lagrangenews.com or at (706) 884-7311, Ext. 229.