

Gallery displays student's work

By JOHN McCURRY
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Sculpture, ceramics, paintings and various other art forms are now on display in a unique gallery in downtown Morganton.

The Union Street Gallery, designed to display and offer for sale the works of students and alumni of Western Piedmont Community College, opened Saturday after more than two years of planning and renovation.

"It's a way of reaching out to the community and it gives students a chance to run a gallery," said Raymond Goodfellow, WPCC art instructor and advisor of the college's art club, which is known as the Portfolio Club.

The gallery, located upstairs at 135½ West Union Street, is a product of the work of WPCC art students and has received the support of organizations such as the



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Photo by Brady Linkou

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WPCC students view works in new art gallery located in downtown.

Gallery downtown

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Burke Arts Council. It is located in a two-room space grouped among several art studios.

Goodfellow said he is not aware of any community college, or four-year institution for that matter, that operates a similar gallery. Heretofore, the artwork of students was displayed on campus.

"It gives students an opportunity to share their art with the community," said WPCC art student Bryan Propst. Initially, the gallery will be open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturdays. Goodfellow hopes logistics can be worked out to increase the gallery's staffing to allow for additional hours. About 20 students are involved in the gallery's operation and more may be added later, he said.

"We want to let students make their own decisions in running the gallery with some direction," Goodfellow said.

Artwork by WPCC alumni will also be exhibited and sold at the gallery. Several students who participated in the refurbishing of the gallery have graduated and Goodfellow said he wanted to give them an opportunity to display their work. Also, outside exhibitors may occasionally be invited.

Price of the art available for sale will vary, but most will range from \$15 to \$100, Goodfellow said. The work of the college's pottery club is also on display.

The space for the 400 square foot gallery is leased by the college. Students originally will man the gallery on a volunteer basis and the staff will be rotated about every two weeks. Various art classes will also be held in the gallery. As the gallery

begins to support itself through the art sales, students may be paid.

The refurbishing of the gallery space has taken more than a year because the effort has depended on volunteer work by students. Lights and hanging panels were installed and the art was hung last weekend.

"It's been pretty continuous work, just slow," Goodfellow said.

During December, the work of students Gail Caudell, Propst, Sheryl Keever, Sue McMahon, Lucy Folger, Charles Milne and John Ross will be exhibited. Nearly all of the students plan some type of art-related career.

"It's worth coming up the stairs to take a look," said Caudell, president of the Portfolio Club.