

MOUNT AIRY, N.C. — The Andy Griffith Museum has reopened following a renovation of more than half a million dollars that touched on every aspect of the popular attraction.

The revamped visitor experience takes guests on a stroll with Andy through various stages of his life. Exhibits, built in the form of storefronts, memorialize a particular aspect of Griffith's long-reaching career. And each exhibit is populated from a trove of more than 1,000 pieces of memorabilia collected by the late Emmett Forrest, a life-long friend of Griffith.

The museum closed for the project on April 7 and reopened to the public on June 29.

Tanya Jones of the Surry Arts Council led the drive to build the museum in 2009. She said the plan was always to renovate with professional exhibits once the museum was established.

"The concept is strolling through Mayberry and various phases of Andy's life," Jones says. "You begin with the Snappy Lunch showcasing his early years, then you move to the Earle Theatre featuring is movie clips. Next is Floyd's Barber Shop, followed by Emmett's Fix-It Shop. The Mayberry Courthouse & Jail is the centerpiece. There's also a Hollywood display, musical recordings and a Matlock exhibit.

"Many people don't realize the depth of his career — he was a comedian, Grammy-winning musician, Broadway actor, and a movie star from the 1950s until just prior to his death in 2012," Jones said.

Although the museum focuses on Griffith's entire life and not just *The Andy Griffith Show*, there are plenty of items from the famous television series. Folks can see Andy's sheriff shirt, the gavel and eagle from his desk, both sets of jail cell keys, Barney Fife's salt-and-pepper suit worn on dates with Thelma Lou, the suit of town drunk Otis, and Goober Pyle's bronzed beanie.

The newest item on display is a neatly pressed white suit worn by Griffith in Brad Paisley's "Waitin' on a Woman" video in 2008.

Exhibit designer was Mark Meagher of Nashville, while another Nashville resident, Jim Clark, president of The Andy Griffith Show Rerun Watchers Club, conceptualized the design and handled content. Studio Displays Inc. in Charlotte built the displays and LKC Creative of Raleigh did the audio/visual stations.

"Our goal is to preserve Andy's legacy with a quality experience and this renovation achieves that," Jones said. "Emmett would love this. This exceeds his dream, no question."

For museum information, call 336-786-7998, or go to: [www.andygriffithmuseum.com](http://www.andygriffithmuseum.com).

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