

# Design & Price: Monument sign for a church

In every issue, *SignCraft* gives a few sign makers an imaginary project. We ask them to do a sketch of the sign they might have produced, and to quote a price for the job. Most of the details are left to the designer's imagination. The object is to see how different sign makers approach the same project. Here's the scenario these sign makers were given:

*After receiving a donation from a church member, a committee from the church contacts you about getting a new sign. They saw a pre-fab monument sign being installed at a gated community just down the road, and they're interested in that sort of free-standing sign. They're asking for a price that includes graphics, the monument (either pre-fab or site-built) and installation.*

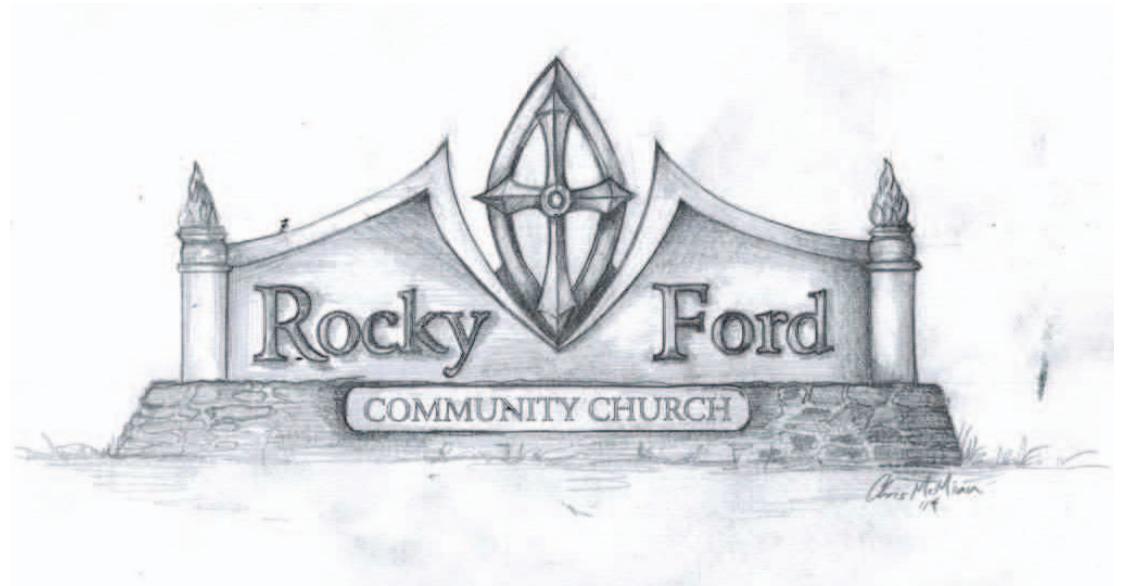
## John Ralph Quail Run Signs, Hamilton, Virginia

We like to collaborate with our customers in a design-build fashion on projects like this. Initial concepts are created based upon an anticipated budget, but we really try not to let money drive the design. Once this concept is agreed upon, we offer varying construction and detailing options so that we can provide, and the customer can receive, the best and most highly appointed sign within their budget.

For this project we felt that some ornate architecture would pick up on the aesthetics

of a classic church. With the church's name, a stone base seems to be a critical design component.

**The stone base** We have had great success building these types of signs this way: We set a pair of pressure-treated inner posts and scratch back the topsoil where the masonry will go. The masons can then dry-stack/mortar-back the stonework. This gives the look of a classical dry stacked stone wall, but the entire



thing is blindly mortared together.

The masonry is non-structural, so it doesn't require excavation, footings or foundations—thus avoiding both the expense and the permits and inspections for these elements. Back in the shop we completely assemble the sign/hollow post structure and then deliver it to the site. It slips over the treated posts that are now embedded in the masonry and secured.

**The sign** The actual finished sign and post assembly can be rendered many ways depending on the customer's budget, while maintaining a similar design. If the budget is high, we would propose clear-finished mahogany posts and caps with 23k hand-carved flames.

The sign backer would be HDU (earth tones, stucco finish) with a mahogany frame. Primary lettering would be raised and prismatic with a painted shadow and 23k letter faces. The central *Vesica Piscis* would be mahogany with a raised, hand-carved gilded cross. The secondary copy could be a carved and painted *Extrita* panel, blind fastened to the stone.

If the budget is lower, we would change the posts to hollow aluminum (square or round) with a painted or powder-coated finish. The entire sign could be made of HDU, carved to simulate trim and molding. Here the *Vesica Piscis* and cross could have their depth, dimension and detailing reduced. Obviously painted gold could replace the real 23k gold leaf for additional savings.

**Price:**

Concepts and design .....	\$500
Masonry (subcontracted).....	\$1500
Initial site-work, setting posts and removing topsoil .....	\$500

The finished sign/structure would range from \$9,000 to \$12,000 for the most highly detailed and expensive options to around \$6,000 for a nice, but more bare-bones version.

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## Kevin and Geri Seiberling etc!graphics, inc., Carlisle, Iowa

We like to look at every project from a marketing perspective, whether it is a business or a church. We would first visit with the client to see their current marketing material, and view the landscape and architecture. In this case, we agreed to go with the “natural” look to fit into the rocky foothills and forest nearby. We would encourage the use of the type font chosen for all other labeling and promotion, for a unified feel throughout.

Before design begins we always check with local zoning for any requirements that will dictate size, height and placement of any signs. Often what the client wants will not be allowed, and design time can be wasted if started too soon.

On a project of this caliber we would spend a little extra time on the design and presentation (because it’s fun!) and that will often sell the job. Always remember to copyright and stamp your art—you can’t afford to donate good design.

We would design the pre-fab monument and have Peachtree City Foamcraft produce the monolithic 6-by-10-ft. unit with a faux stone base and multi-layered effects. We have used

Foamcraft products for over 10 years and are very pleased with the long-term results.

Once utilities have been located and we are clear to dig, we would use a skid loader with an auger to dig two 12-in.-diameter posthole footings to the frost line. A sign of this size can be installed by two (not too old) men. We would level and secure the posts, hand mix concrete for each hole then clean up, returning the following day to remove any bracing or leveling blocks.

### Price:

Design cost: .....	\$350
Sign unit, crated and delivered to us: .....	\$7520
Trip charge (two men @ 4 hrs.), auger charge, installation: .....	\$925
Total: .....	\$8795

Permit and sales tax are additional.

Landscaping, plantings and lighting would be the responsibility of the customer.

