



Staff photos by R. David Duncan III

**Michael Cooper paints children into a 100-foot-long mural of a cornfield at Farmers Seed & Supply Co. in the 1300 block of Main Street. Cooper hopes the mural will add some excitement to the neighborhood.**

# Mural magic

## Artist hopes painting will boost spirits

**By Ron Brown**

The News & Advance

**F**rom his scaffolded perch high above the ground, Michael Cooper paints soul into a community.

For a better part of two weeks, his task has been to transform a barren brick wall at Farmers Seed & Supply Co. into the image of a flourishing cornfield.

In his 100-foot-long portrait, located in the 1300 block of Main Street, youngsters and their dogs skirt the field en route to a forbidden fishing hole.

Cooper hopes his work will



**Michael Cooper climbs onto a lift to work on his mural. The mural combines photos of a cornfield in Kentucky and children from Virginia.**

help breathe life into a neighborhood in need of a fresh dose of self-esteem.

"It will affect people's lives," Cooper said. "This building will be known now for its mural."

And a downtown, once given up for dead, is renewed by a colorful reminder of the community's not-too-distant past.

Please see **MURAL**, Page A-8