

Cumberland Transit gets new look inside, out

By **LINDA BRYANT**
Staff Writer

Cumberland Transit is getting a new look, thanks to muralist Michael Cooper.

Cooper, whose eye-catching murals are a common sight in downtown Nashville, is painting a whopping scene of a mountain lodge and human images, which include a mountain climber, a fly fisherman and a backpacker, on the outside of the store.

"It was an ugly green piece of tile," said Allen Doty, co-owner of Cumberland Transit, a 32-year-old outdoor gear store on West End Avenue near Vanderbilt University. "The scenery around here is getting better."

The store also is putting the finishing touches on improvements to the 12,500-square-foot interior, including timber doorway entrances and poplar floors with wooden inlays that form the shape of Tennessee in sassafras and cherry wood.

The timber used for the doorways was salvaged from a century-old chair factory that was torn down in the 1990s to make way for The Coliseum.

Mark Gingles, Doty's business partner and co-owner of Cumberland Transit, has been hanging onto the big timbers and planned to use them to build a home. But Gingles parted with some of them for the store, Doty said.



MICHELLE MORROW / STAFF

Michael Cooper, owner of Murals & More, works on a mural outside Cumberland Transit, an outdoor gear and bicycle shop on West End Avenue. The huge mural features a mountain lodge and human images, which include a mountain climber, a fly fisherman and a backpacker.

said. The interior renovation has been going since the "dead of winter."

"We've done it all in stages," Doty said, adding that carpenter Sandy Hepler is responsible for the interior changes.

For the next week or so, Cooper's highly visible presence — standing on a "scissor lift" platform with paintbrushes in hand — is sure to be a big hit with drivers streaming along West End Avenue and pedestrians who wander by and ask questions.

Cooper specializes in *trompe l'oeil* painting, which means "to fool the eye" in French.

He worked as an interior

"People wonder how I can work on such a large scale and still maintain perspective."

— Muralist
Michael Cooper

designer for 20 years before taking up mural painting, an occupation that has kept him busy on a full-time basis for the past 13 years.

"People wonder how I can

Getting there

► Cumberland Transit, 2807 West End Ave., specializes in outdoor gear and bicycles. Call 321-4069.

► For more information about Mural & More, Jim Cooper's business in Williamson County, call 591-2575.

work on such a large scale and still maintain perspective," Cooper said.

The task is accomplished with simple tools, such as string and a

Related Web sites

Murals & More: www.muralsandmore.com/about.html

Cumberland Transit: www.ids2.com/cumberlandtransit/bicycles

tape measure.

One tool used in the current project to create a wood grain impression effect on paint was picked up by Cooper at a yard sale for 50 cents.

Several of Cooper's other murals are in downtown Nashville, including a highly detailed one at the downtown Arcade.

Cooper, a Franklin resident who runs his business from a stu-

dio in his back yard, is also responsible for painting the ever-changing faces of Vanderbilt coaches on an outside mural at the nearby You Greek, Me Greek store on West End Avenue.

But most of the time his office and studio are in the back of his copper-colored 1996 Ford pickup truck.

"That's where the paints get mixed," he said. ■