

Hometown

Time moves forward again on Main Street

By **BOBBY ALLEN ROACH**
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Eugene Volk spent three days returning the clock at First Citizens Bank on Main Street in Chatham to operational form.

Volk, of Lake Toxaway, N.C., said the clock has been through a series of repairs and upgrades during its lifetime.

“We have upgraded the clock now to an electronic system,” Volk said.

While the mechanisms operating the clock are very new, the two faces of the clock look the same as before.

“The outside is identical. It’s only the inside that’s changed,” Volk said.

He also said that he believes the clock was originally placed at that location in the late 1800s or early 1900s.

Volk said he and his wife, Barbara, made three trips to Chatham to assess the clock’s then-current state, to remove the unusable old parts, and then to install the upgraded parts.

The north-facing side of the clock stopped working several years ago, resting at 6:34, and the south-facing side stopped approximately 18 months ago and stopped at 4:12.

Volk says the new machinery that operates the clock is self-correcting, meaning that if the clock loses power, it can reset itself when electricity is restored as well as self-adjust for daylight savings time.

Volk has been repairing clocks since the 1960s.

“I’m a mechanical engineer and it just seemed like a follow-on trade. The nice thing about it is you know when you did it right and when you did it wrong because either the clock runs or it doesn’t run,” Volk said.

Volk knew his work would result in something special for the community.

“We’ve heard from a lot of people that have walked by while we’re working on it saying they’re so glad that somebody’s finally going to fix the clock and we’re just glad to be a part of it,” Volk said.

The clock face is illuminated from within by a white light and surrounded by green stained glass on both sides.



Bobby Allen Roach/Star-Tribune

Eugene Volk stands with his wife, Barbara, in front of the newly-repaired clock at First Citizens Bank on Main Street in Chatham. Volk repaired the clock over three visits from his home in North Carolina.