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On the Road Again

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Billboards, the advertising behemoths that line our highways, did you ever wonder just what happens to them after their month or more appearance on Route 35? I set out to find out the answer to that very question and to find out if the material was suitable for apparel. The answer is: they are taken down and rolled up bundled in a tight dirty roll with duct tape then tossed in a dingy warehouse on the outskirts of an industrial park and after a few months in that state they most likely become part of the local landfill! Discovering this I set out to repurpose a discarded billboard skin into a functional creative garment that would be deemed marketable to the contemporary woman.

The Choctaw Casino Resort sign I rescued was made of double sided vinyl and measured 12' x 40' it had countless possibilities for design. After experimenting with the material I decided on a classic swing style raglan sleeve coat to enable the smooth construction from this rigid material. The pattern was created through the draping method. Each piece was placement cut so that the final garment had a pleasing assemblage of images from the board including the nose mouth chin on the back, money front and chevron sleeves. Decorative grommets asymmetrically placed on the collar and right front body reflect rain drops and the red lining peeks through adding additional interest.



Because of the rigidity of the material despite its thin profile, the inability to iron seams because of its vinyl material it was best to top stitch the seam allowances with an edge stitch to give a crisp seam appearance. A Teflon foot was critical to allow smooth sewing and a heavy duty nylon thread with a longer stitch length was required for proper assembly. Hems and edges were top stitched in place to keep a sporty appearance and handle the material more easily. The coat is fully lined with a closed red Poly satin lining that picks up the accent color of the ad and is highlighted through the grommets that pierce the skin. Chrome latches form the center front closure. The collar is "piped" with the red under collar adding an exciting detail at the neckline. Hence a nylon net reinforced double sided vinyl billboard tarp is back on the road as rainy day apparel for a chic woman, guaranteed to stay dry in the worst of gales!