

ABOVE: Jasper Junction, the oldest structure in Pickens County that is still being used, was built in 1832.
(Photo: G. Reid)

Roberts Family Finds A Home In Jasper Junction

-by Gerald Reid

It's been 4 1/2 years since Wendy and Dan Roberts left the hustle-bustle of Gwinnett County, opting for the serenity of the north Georgia mountains. With children Danny, Sarah, and Kelly, now ages 14, 12, and 7, respectively, they made the move. They have one other son, Nate, age 24, who still lives in Lawrenceville.

They purchased the building at the corner of Grandview and Cove Roads known as Jasper Junction from Jerry Lawson. "Our philosophy when we got up here was we just liked this place so much we could make something out of this," recalls Dan. Without a retail background, they started out with the gifts and antiques that were already there and added to that. They quickly found out that they didn't like that type of business.

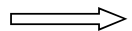
Eventually, they decided to open a restaurant, serving barbeque, hamburgers, and hot dogs. Last year, Nina Hill came to Jasper Junction with her own secret fifty-year-old recipe for Brunswick stew. Currently, Jasper Junction is serving lunch and is also catering.

Dan also finds time to run a computer business as well as manage a website that keeps track of all the towers in the country, all of the transmitters on those towers, and all of the frequencies on those

towers. It is primarily a service for radio dealers.

The Roberts family had looked at Ellijay initially. But, coming back through Pickens County, they decided to look at a property for sale listed in the paper as "apartment above a general store". Wendy laughs as she describes the apartment as "a loft." The joint decision to make the move was final. She continued, "We both really liked the place and fell in love with the location."

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This would preserve the area and be a benefit to the community. They envision a place where the youth of the community as well as visitors could come and learn history in a rustic setting. They have applied for designation on the Historic Registry. To turn the vision into reality, they would need support from others as well as a grant.

“This is our ministry,” Dan stated. People come in to talk about things. They can find someone who will truly listen. The Roberts give temporary jobs to people. High school students with disabilities come once a week to work at tasks such as putting napkins in the holders. One of their own children has Down’s Syndrome, so they understand the needs of special people.

Whether you need a barbeque sandwich or just a friendly smile, you’ll find both here. If you don’t have time to stop, just wave.



*ABOVE: Wendy and Dan Roberts
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So, they made the move and were soon indoctrinated into the small county environment where conveniences are not around the corner. During that first winter, as the temperature reached nine degrees and the propane tank ran out, Wendy said, “We also learned about the community. When the guy who sold us this place (Jerry Lawson) found out what happened, he brought down a truck load of wood and put it up here on the porch for us.” Wendy and Dan Roberts found out that the community of Pickens County is much different than the metropolitan area.

What does the future hold for Jasper Junction and the Roberts family? They have a vision of a