



## ELECTRIC LINE

Issue No. 42

Our line of communication to you

February 1998

## World's largest cafeteria located in Johnson County

According to owner, Jonathan Byrd, his eighty-eight foot long serving line and banquet hall makes his cafeteria the worlds largest. For the last 10 years his restaurant has stood as a landmark amidst all the construction and change at I-65 in Greenwood. Built in 1988, when the only other business "way out there" was a truck stop, the Williamsburg style cafeteria is now surrounded by the many businesses that have located along the Main Street corridor leading to the interstate.

A man of vision, Byrd recognized the opportunity building a restaurant just off of the interstate offered. He saw this restaurant as a place for both the weary traveler hungry for home-style food and the local lunch crowd that would be created from the new businesses locating in the area. During construction of this huge one acre building, he had well-meaning friends and knowledgeable advisors warn him he would be committing economic suicide if he continued with his plans not to serve alcohol. In spite of their warnings, he proceeded. Today he has a thriving business that employs an average of 150 people. On Thanksgiving Day they served 1800 at the banquet buffet and approximately 3,000 customers in the cafeteria. Not bad for a man who was told he'd be bankrupt in six months if he didn't serve alcohol!

The cafeteria features a minimum of fifteen hot entrees daily, as well as fresh salads, hot vegetables, an assortment of breads, and homemade desserts. In addition to the vast array of food to choose from, the cafeteria offers extras like a "Ginny Plate" (for varying budgets and appetites) and "cart ladies". They assist



*Jonathan Byrd poses by the fireplace in his cafeteria.*

customers to their table and get drink refills for customers. The cafeteria is beautifully decorated with oak trim, a fireplace and a collection of Norman Rockwell memorabilia. Also prominently displayed throughout the restaurant is an assortment of framed Bible pages, mostly from the 17th century. In addition to the ones he has on display, Byrd regularly buys and sells antique Bibles to help raise money for another pastime of his: exporting Bibles throughout the world.

A devout Christian, Byrd, has successfully incorporated his religion into his business. The banquet facilities, which can seat 800, routinely hosts world famous gospel groups. This year's schedule includes such popular artists as Bill Gaither and The Kingsmen. Tickets for these events sell fast so call 787-9770 now to make your reservation. Over the years the banquet hall has been the site of the Greenwood Mayor's Prayer Breakfast and other major events featuring guest speakers such as Alan Keyes, presidential candidate in 1996; Elizabeth Doles, head of the International Red Cross; and Colts quarterback, Jim Harbaugh, to name just a few. The banquet hall can be divided into five separate rooms and is regularly reserved for wedding receptions, reunions and business meetings.

If you are looking for a location for a special function call Marie Finch-Hibner at 881-8888.

Next door to the cafeteria and banquet facility is JB's Bakery & Carry Out, offering a large selection of the same delicious food served in the dining room. The bakery offers a complete line of pies, breads and bakery items, made fresh daily. JB's also features drive-up service.

Byrd's success can be attributed to his keen eye for business and being a hands-on manager with good employees. Three of his longtime staff are General Manager Jim Young, who has been with him for 25 years; Marie Finch-Hibner, manager of banquets and catering; and Linda Felton, R.D., director of operations, both having been with him for 10 years. His wife, Ginny, and sons Jonathan II and David are also involved in the restaurant.

Asked if his interest is waning now that the building is complete and the cafeteria is running smoothly, he said "Absolutely not! As long as my name is on this cafeteria I will continue to keep a close eye on the food and service. Quality food and excellent service are what keeps people coming back. I grew up less than a mile from where this cafeteria sits, I have friends and family in the county and will always stay involved in the business and the county."

### Race on over



To J.B.'s Bakery & Take Home for big savings during the month of March. **Buy 1 pie and get 1** of equal or lesser value **free** when you present this coupon!

Exclusively for Johnson County REMC members.  
Offer expires April 1, 1998

Clip this coupon and redeem at J B's Bakery & Take Out.