

Dental lab finds home at Union

Couple opens high-tech business next to home outside town.

BY DAVE CAREW

For the Lincoln Journal Star

UNION — Drive down the main street of Union in eastern Cass County and you'll see an elevator, bank and post office. Familiar sights in a Nebraska small town. But just on the outskirts you'll find one of the most up-to-date dental labs in the state.

Spectrum Dental Science Inc. is housed in a refurbished 2,800-square-foot building next to the home of owners Brian and Toni Ann Johns. The laboratory uses high-tech equipment to produce state-of-the-art dental restorations.

Brian came into the business naturally. His father, Kenneth Johns, ran dental labs during his Air Force career. After retirement, the elder Johns started his own lab in Bellevue and later moved it to Omaha.

Brian started sweeping floors and making deliveries for his father's lab. He worked in all departments and became a certified dental technician.

Brian and Toni wanted to raise their children, Adam and Carly, in a rural setting. So they built a home on land the family owned outside Union. Starting their own lab was the next step.

Brian felt ceramics was the area of greatest potential and considered it the field he enjoyed most. Although gold dental restorations have been in favor for many years, ceramic materials offer durability and a more natural appearance.

If you have watched the TV show "Extreme Makeover," you have seen how important smile improve-

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For more information

To contact Spectrum Dental Science Inc., call (402) 263-4930 or e-mail Spectrumds@yahoo.com.

ments are to a person's appearance.

"People are living longer and their demands are higher," Brian said. "There is an explosion of need for this type of dental care. Dentists are using more sophisticated procedures."

The most sophisticated item in Spectrum's lab is a computer-aided design/computer-aided manufacture machine. The equipment allows Brian to scan tooth dimensions in 10 minutes, load a blank and remove a complete frame in another 15 minutes.

After firing in an electric oven, the frame goes to the bench. Here enamel is added, and color and shading are done by hand under a microscope.

Digital photography and e-mail enable Brian and the dentists he works with to follow through on every step of the process. Some dentists have invited Brian to their office for a face-to-face meetings with their patients. Their goal is to give the patient exactly what he or she wants.

At this time, Spectrum works primarily with Omaha-area dentists but plans to expand into Lincoln. With a recent addition, they have a staff of four.

The couple is pleased that they and their children can enjoy living in a small town while operating their own high-tech business.

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