

## Spectrum Dental Science draws media spotlight to its tech-savvy business

Crown and bridge laboratory is the focus of local newspaper article.

FOR LABORATORY OWNERS Brian and Toni Ann Johns, their help wanted ad in a local paper unexpectedly served a dual purpose: they hired a new technician and their lab, Spectrum Dental Science, became the focus of an article in the *Lincoln Journal Star's* "Hometown" section (see article at right). A reporter from the newspaper noticed the help wanted ad and proposed writing a profile on the business.

The 600-word article, *Dental lab finds home at Union*, singled out Spectrum as one of the few high-tech businesses in Union, Nebraska, a small, rural town located 30 miles from Omaha. Since it opened eight years ago, the four-person C&B lab has done mostly higher-end ceramic work. They invested in a CAD/CAM system and Johns says there has been a steady increase in the lab's cosmetic cases over the years, thanks in part to shows like *Extreme Makeover*.

The couple decided to open its own lab after Brian Johns' 1 1/2-hour daily commute to work became too much of a strain on family life. With the advent of digital photography, next-day delivery service and e-mail, Johns finds there's no need to be in a big city to run a successful, technol-

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ogy-advanced business. "Location isn't as important as it used to be," he says.

Now, he enjoys working close to home—really close: the lab is located in a refurbished building adjacent to the couple's house, where they live with their two children. Despite the rural setting, Johns says it's still possible to do the occasional in-person visit to a dentist-client's office when he needs to consult on a tricky shade, for example.

The couple has gotten plenty of positive feedback on the article from other lab owners, clients and neighbors and they have gotten at least one new case as a result of the media attention. As one local lab owner told him, "You can't pay for advertising like that." **LMT**



Toni Ann and Brian Johns opened their high-tech dental business next to the house they live in outside Union.

### Dental lab finds home at Union

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

UNION

#### For more information

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

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 2,000-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-

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. Herrmann's 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.

Reach Dave Carew at (402) 994-2445.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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