

Rolling out the welcome mat

Luncheon informs newcomers about community perks

By LISA HOBBS

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Being new in town is sometimes hard to overcome and usually brings more questions than answers — Where's that? How do I get there? Who do I need to call? What's there to do?

Fortunately there are people and organizations in Warren County who understand the difficulties involved in acclimating to a new and unfamiliar community and want to help.

That's why some new residents of Warren County received a warm welcome, a hot meal, and a presentation by several local residents Tuesday during a Newcomer Luncheon.

Sponsored by the McMinnville-Warren County Chamber of Commerce and River Park Hospital, the luncheon is the second one of its kind to be held at River Park to welcome newcomers into the community and show them some of what Warren County has to offer.



Lisa Hobbs photo

The McMinnville-Warren County Chamber of Commerce and River Park Hospital held their second Newcomer Luncheon on Tuesday. Wayne and Debbie Moore are pictured with their grandchildren Emma Randall, 5, left, and Adeline Randall, 2.

Invited were 20 recently relocated individuals. Among those were Wayne and Debbie Moore, who moved here from Missouri one month ago. After looking at other counties and not finding a good fit there, they chose Warren County and now live in the Shellsford Road area.

"I think this is a great thing to do," said Wayne. The couple attended the luncheon with their grandchildren visiting from Georgia — Emma Randall, 5, and Adeline, 2. "Being newcomers, you are dependent on other people to steer you to the right contractors and the right businesses. So far, we've been able to find everything we want."

Mark and Monica Augustin moved to Warren County from Milwaukee in search of a warmer climate. The couple relocated in October.

"We got temperatures 20 below in Milwaukee," said Mark. "The bad part about it was the snow storms in May. Winter goes on forever."

Warren County was chosen because of Overton Retreat, one of the upscale residential communities being developed on Harrison Ferry Mountain, which they found when researching areas on the Internet. Although not ready to retire at this time, the couple is looking toward the future.

Mark is a project manager for an automation company. He's the "go-to" and "find-it" guy when things go wrong. Monica, a longtime corporate travel agent, is currently looking for a position in Warren County or in a surrounding county.

Among those who spoke at the luncheon were Teddy Jones, general manager of Cumberland Caverns, and McMinnville Parks and Recreation director Carlene

Brown.

Jones offered a top 10 list of reasons to visit Cumberland Caverns, which features 27 miles of mapped caves with more to discover. The cave was discovered in 1810 by Aaron Higginbotham who got trapped in the cave for three days in darkness and his hair turned white.

"We aren't an ordinary cave," said Jones. "We'll turn your hair white. I see some of you have already been there."

There is a Volcano Room with a three-quarter ton crystal chandelier hanging from the ceiling. The room can be reserved for weddings, birthdays, reunions, etc. A radio show called "Bluegrass Underground" is recorded there.

Brown was not born or raised here. Much like those attending the luncheon, she moved here as an adult in 1986. Since that time, she has discovered something she wants to share.

"The people in Warren County are the nicest people in the world," she said. "When someone is sick or in need, this community comes out stronger than any community I've ever been in. It is a wonderful community and it will be bigger and better the more you put into it."

For those not from a small town, she light-heartedly sent a warning that brought laughter, "Everybody is related to somebody else. Never talk about anybody with someone standing next to you. I guarantee you they are related to somebody you will have to answer to."

Another Newcomer Luncheon will be scheduled later in the year. Those who know of a newcomer to the community can contact the Chamber at 473-6611.

