

# MR. & MRS. WARREN COUNTY



## Earl & Hazel Barr



Earl and Hazel Barr can relax in the comfort of knowing they have been named Mr. and Mrs. Warren County.

Furniture store owners since 1963, the two say they have no plans to retire and have been able to strike a healthy balance between work and community service.

"We're so used to coming here every day, we don't know what we'd do if we retired," said Hazel. "This store is such a big part of our lives."

The Barrs attend Cornerstone Baptist Church where Earl serves as a deacon. It's through the church Earl does evangelism work as he makes trips to the South American country of Brazil twice a year and has been on more than 25 trips.

"They have nice resorts on the beaches, but if you go a few rows back there are people living in huts," said Earl. "It's especially bad in the rural areas."

He says an emphasis of the mission trips is to visit smaller areas that don't have many estab-

lished churches. He says a city he plans to visit in September has about 1,500 residents.

The Barrs have opened their home when people are in this area doing evangelical work and have served as hosts to several pastors and interpreters. Earl currently serves on the Security Federal board of directors and has served on the Chamber board, including as board chairman in 1995.

They have been fortunate to win several awards through the years including the Chamber's Free Enterprise Award in 1999, the Noon Exchange Club Community Service Award in 2010, and Edwin Partin Retailer of the Year Award in 2012.

Through all the community service work, one constant that's remained in their lives is Barr's Furniture in Mt. Leo. "We're very appreciate of our customers because they are the ones who

have allowed us to be here for 55 years," said Hazel.

Like everything else, the internet has changed the way people buy furniture, according to Earl. He says he used to provide customers with much of their knowledge on furniture, but now that's changed.

"People get educated on furniture and research it on the internet," said Earl. "Sometimes that helps and sometimes that makes things more confusing."

La-Z-Boy recliners are always popular, no matter the time of year, Earl says. Furniture is not immune to technology as sofas and recliners are now built with ports for charging your devices while you relax.

While Earl makes regular Brazil trips twice a year, Hazel does traveling with a Just Friends group and has recently visited Washington, D.C. and Branson, Missouri.

"We take vacations from each other," said Hazel, who said the breaks are needed because they spend so much time together at home and work.

Barr's is a true family business with son Mark playing an active role. He does sales, handles advertising, and also serves as a buyer. Daughter-in-law Kim serves as the social media director.

Another popular fixture at the store is Manny, a friendly dog who serves as an eager door greeter. Many customers enjoy petting Manny and showering him with affection. If he's not around the store, they ask where he is.

One key aspect of the business is free delivery and set-up. Earl says that has helped Barr's distinguish itself in what was once a very crowded furniture market in Warren County with eight to 10 furniture retailers at one point.



## CONVENIENCE STORE

### M&M Sparta St. Smoke Shop

It's probably no surprise to local residents that M&M Sparta Street Smoke Shop has been named Best of the Best convenience store for 2018.

"We're friendly, but if you want to know the real reason people come," said cashier Samantha Tramel, "it's the biscuits!"

Located at 1200 Sparta Street, people even come from other counties to stop by for breakfast and lunch. With great food, clean restrooms and solid customer service, some people prefer the Smoke Shop to larger convenience store chains in town.

"With my schedule being so squirrely, I have to eat lunch at 11 o'clock so I come here," said McMinnville resident and Smoke Shop regular Cordell Smith. "It's the best price, best people. It's like eating momma's cookin', but the best thing is that the ladies treat you like you're somebody, joke with you, and leave you with a smile."

The Smoke Shop has a variety of breakfast



biscuits on the menu, including sausage, bologna, fried steak, bacon, and tenderloin. "Our busiest time is between 5 and 8 a.m.," said longtime cook Marsha Webster while making a fresh batch of biscuits. She brushes the tops with butter just before serving.

"The ladies remember you and it's flattering that they know your usual order, especially considering how many people go through their line for breakfast," said regular customer

Nikki Childers.

When it comes to snacking, the Smoke Shop offers a plethora of available foods and drinks along with whatever else you may need to grab while on the go. If you have a lunch break, you can take a seat in the booths by the window and enjoy your food along with friendly conversation.

The Smoke Shop opens bright and early at 5 a.m. and closes at 11 p.m.

Quick Shop finishes second, followed by Korner Market in third.



## MEXICAN RESTAURANT

### Jalisco

After opening the doors to Jalisco Mexican Grill in March 2016, the owners are excited to receive the Best of the Best Mexican restaurant honor, as well as second place in the taco category.

Jalisco owners Hector and Yuliana Marquez, and Yuliana's father, Antonio de la Paz, have worked hard to make the facility the best it can be, priding themselves on the delicious food served.

"We strive to have quality food, and the freshest we can obtain," said Yuliana. "Everything is made daily at the restaurant, and we try to use the best quality food we can."

The Jalisco Dip is quickly becoming famous around town. It includes ground beef, pico de gallo, and queso sauce, all blended together making a delectable treat. It's complimentary, and served along with the traditional salsa dip and chips.

Classic Mexican dishes are available, as well as some featuring a different twist on the classics. There are favorites like the burrito and enchilada. The large nachos are big enough to satisfy those with very large appetites. There's also a fully stocked bar and beverage selection for the



customers' enjoyment.

"It's a wonderful feeling to receive this recognition, and we are appreciative to our customers and supporters," said Yuliana. "We are a family-owned and operated business, priding ourselves on our service and food. We have worked very hard for two long years to get where we are in this restaurant."

Jalisco Mexican Grill is located on Smithville Highway next to Foodland Plus. The restaurant is open seven days a week beginning at 11 a.m. each day. They can be reached at 507-4747.

Second-place honors are bestowed on Chabilita's, with Fiesta Ranchera coming in third.