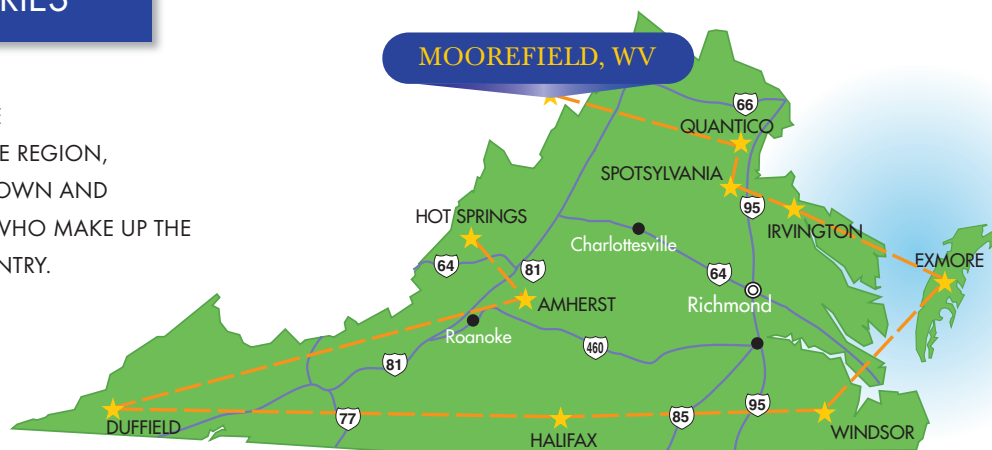


## DOWN HOME SERIES

AGAIN IN THE YEAR 2007, WE'RE  
MAKING OUR WAY AROUND THE REGION,  
EACH ISSUE VISITING A SMALL TOWN AND  
MEETING SOME OF THE FOLKS WHO MAKE UP THE  
HEART OF ELECTRIC CO-OP COUNTRY.  
ON THIS YEAR'S FIRST STOP,  
WE'LL BE ...



## DOWN HOME IN

# MOOREFIELD, WV

BY CAMMIE TUTWILER, CONTRIBUTING WRITER • PHOTOS BY CAMMIE TUTWILER

### HOME OF THE YELLOW JACKETS, SIX-TIME STATE FOOTBALL CHAMPIONS

Moorefield, West Virginia, is a place where people say that “everybody knows each other,” yet there are 13,900 vehicles that enter town daily. The residents are described as “real,” and the area draws many week-end visitors and retirees from the Northern Virginia region. The town is expanding, yet holds tightly to its historical ties. Moorefield’s landscape is a quirky mix of old buildings, modern facilities, and farmland that is practically adjacent to downtown. It is an interesting one-and-a-half miles from one end of town to the other on Main Street, crisscrossing generations of growth.

Located in Hardy County, Moorefield is named for Conrad Moore, who owned the land where the town was laid out. It was chartered in 1777 and is the second-oldest town in West Virginia.

Moorefield is known for its friendly people, historical sites, and state-championship football.

The Moorefield High School Yellow Jackets participated in eight straight state-championship football games, from 1996-2003. The Yellow Jackets have won the state title six times, from 1996-1999, and again in 2001 and 2003. The pride that the town has in its high school is evident in the Yellow Jacket flags flying from many houses both on Main Street and the streets surrounding Main Street.

Besides its successful football history, Moorefield High was one of 17 schools designated by the state school superintendent in 2005 as a West Virginia School of Excellence.

Of historical interest in Moorefield is the Hardy County Courthouse, which was built in 1792 to replace the original log structure. It is located on Washington Street just off of Main Street, and there is a stone memorial with names of local people who served and lost their lives in various wars and conflicts.

Another historical location is the S.A. McMechen House, which was built in 1853. According to information posted on the side of the building, officers from both sides of the Civil War occupied the home, “as the fortunes of the war



## AT A GLANCE ...

POPULATION: 2,375, as per 2000 census.

SCOPE: About 1.5 miles from one end of Main Street to the other.

FOUNDED: Chartered in 1777.

ELEVATION: About 800 feet.

FUN FACT: Moorefield is the second-oldest town in West Virginia.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: 1) Moorefield High School, a West Virginia School of Excellence. 2) Hardy County Courthouse, built in 1792. 3) Of Civil War significance, the former home of S.A. McMechen now welcomes bed-and-breakfast guests.

changed.” The McMechen House is also a restaurant, and is known as both “The McMechen Inn” and “1853.”

The McMechen House may have been welcoming to soldiers during the war, and the town continues that tradition today.

“The people are mostly friendly, and there is a low crime rate, that’s what I like about Moorefield,” says **Rick McMillion**, a resident since 1977.

### REAL PEOPLE, LOCAL CHARM

The townspeople are described by their own as friendly and down-to-earth.

“The people of Moorefield are real,” says **Carol See**, director of the Hardy

County Library. “That’s one of the things I like to say about people from Moorefield and Hardy County. If you want to meet real people, they’re here.”

The town is growing, and with it, grows a challenge to maintain the way of life that people are used to.

“They try to keep it old-fashioned, but new-style,” says McMillion. “They want to bring in new businesses, but keep it ‘old school,’ as they say.”

On Main Street, several structures give the area an old-time feel: a free-standing hardware store; the McCoy’s Theater, built in 1927; and various gift shops. Downtown is alive and vibrant, another

characteristic of Moorefield that is reminiscent of older days.

“We want progress,” says See. “But also want to maintain that small-town feel.”

New restaurants and coffee shops have established themselves, and seem to fit right into the niche that Moorefield offers.

O’Neill’s, located on Main Street, opened in June of 2005. It is a full-service restaurant and also offers catering. The business is family-owned and operated by **Michael** and **Jammie O’Neill**, who relocated from Northern Virginia. Jammie’s mother, **Gladys Funkhouser**, makes the home-made pastries, cakes and pies.

“She’s our food background,” says Michael.





He is enthused about the direction Moorefield is taking.

"I'm excited about Moorefield; it's growing, and it's a quality place to raise a family. The pace of life is a little slower than what I'm used to. I've embraced it," he says.

In addition to the restaurants, the historical stops, and the gift shops along Main Street, there are also flea markets at each end of town.

"If you like poking around in estate stuff, that's the place to go," says See.

#### GROWTH ON THE HORIZON

For a growing number of folks from Northern Virginia, Moorefield also seems to be the place to go for weekend or retirement.

To enable easier access to Moorefield and the area, planning for Corridor H start-



ed in 1965 with creation of the Appalachian Regional Commission as well as the Appalachian Development Highway System, which was created to, "... open up an area or areas where commerce and communication have been inhibited by lack of adequate access." Corridor H will connect the Potomac Highlands to the central part of the state, more specifically from the Virginia border near Wardensville to Elkins, W.Va.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: 1) McCoy's Grand Theater is home to community productions and live musical performances. 2) Owner Michael O'Neill of O'Neill's says the restaurant is known for its prime rib and steaks. 3) Hardman's Hardware has been in operation since 1907. 4) The town offices, along with the library, offer information about Moorefield.





ABOVE: In the midst of older buildings, the Summit Financial Group stands out on Main Street. BELOW: Corridor H will provide easy access to the town.

“Locally, old Rt. 55 was always considered a dangerous highway, and we’ve taken care of that problem,” says See.

When traveling to Moorefield from the east, hitting Corridor H at Baker is the best way to go. The views along the corridor are gorgeous, especially during the fall, and the drive is easy, with wide, four-lane roads and a speed limit of 65 mph.

Restaurateur O’Neill says many people from Washington have bought property and retirement homes in the Moorefield area. Corridor H will open the way for easier access to the area.

“Construction of the corridor will impact tourism and residential [growth],” says **Rick Freeman**, the office clerk for the town of

## IF YOU GO...

Take your walking shoes. Moorefield’s Main Street stretches for about one and a half miles, and has fun trinket shops, with **Tony’s Flea Market** on the south end of town, **J & K Flea Market** just off of Main Street, and **Rexrode’s Cabinet’s & Flea Market** in the north-

ern area of town. A stroll down Main Street offers several interesting detours.

You might consider going on a Friday night in the fall. The Moorefield High School football team has won six state championships, and it could be fun to catch them under the “**Friday Night Lights.**”

Experience the culture, history and beauty of Hardy County during the annual **Hardy County Heritage Weekend**, which takes place the last weekend in September.

For a dining experience with a historical flair, stop by the **McMechen House Inn and 1853 Restaurant**, where soldiers stayed during the Civil War (304-530-1853). One of the newer restaurants in Moorefield, **O’Neill’s**, offers a full menu with many tasty selections (304-530-2727).

At **The Hardy County Library** you can learn more about the area, and stepping through the curved front door is a neat experience (304-538-6560). **McCoy’s Grand Theater**, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is open for special events.

**The Hardy County Courthouse** is also worth a stop; it is a stately building with interesting, older architecture. ■



If you’re looking to pick up a treasure, Tony’s Flea Market is located on the south end of town.

Moorefield. “People from D.C. are moving to the area for weekend homes.”

Freeman adds that currently, about 400 townhouses are in the works for the very near future. He said that some are being planned for both north and south of town.

Growth seems inevitable to the Moorefield area, but it’s been slow coming. “In 1977 we had one stoplight,” long-

time resident Rick McMillion says. “In 2006 we have two [on Main Street].”

According to some residents, the people of Moorefield are accepting the growth graciously.

“You used to know everybody, or be able to connect everybody with somebody, but now we have newcomers and you can’t do that,” See says. “It’s not a bad thing, it’s just new.” ■

