



Swain County High School Carpentry II students built nine Adirondack chairs for the Folkestone Inn to place around their fire pit. The chairs were built at the school and brought to the inn. This was one of several collaborative projects between the carpentry classes and Folkestone Inn.



Swain County High School Carpentry II students built this chicken coop for Toni and Scott Rowe, owners of the Folkestone Inn in Bryson City. The coop was built at the school and then taken to the property. The students then added a porch. Pictured from left are: (back row) Jared Hair, Jamie Edwards, and Dylan Edwards; (front row) Colt Thomasson, Nick Brock, and Khorie Miller.

## Swain students' work on display at local inn

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Swain County High School Carpentry II students recently built Adirondack chairs for Toni and Scott Rowe, owners of the Folkestone Inn in Bryson City. The students built the chairs at the school and then delivered them to the inn to be placed around the fire pit. Carpentry teacher, Derek Oetting said the students spent about 15 hours building the nine chairs.

This was just one of many collaborative projects between the Swain County High School carpentry program and Folkestone Inn over the years.

According to the Rowes, the collaboration between the school and the inn goes back to the 1970s, when then owners Irene and Bob Kranich began converting the home into a bed and breakfast.

The original home, built in 1922, had a dirt basement,

which the Kraniches decided to convert into rooms. Students from Swain County High School helped to dig and remodel the basement.

An email from former student Harold Davis said that he along with five of his classmates, Allen Bolick, Kenny Kent, Joel Ellixson, Bob Jenkins, and L.D. Longwith, helped remodel the basement. They worked after school and on Saturdays doing carpentry, masonry and painting, the email said.

The Kraniches also used materials from the old high school in the renovation. The windows in the dining room are from the classrooms and still have the original glass, and the wood flooring came from the old gymnasium floor. Old tin from the classroom ceilings was also used in the basement remodel.

Toni Rowe said that she and her husband Scott purchased the Inn in 2016, and upon

learning the history of the connection between the inn and the high school, she decide to contact carpentry teacher Derek Oetting about doing some additional projects around the inn, including a new deck and a chicken coop.

"Toni contacted me and said the deck was rotted out and a tree had pushed it up so high you couldn't get out of the house through the door there," Oetting said. "So we had to...tear up the old deck and drop the new one down low enough that you could get the door opened."

Once the deck project was completed, the Rowes asked about building a chicken coop Oetting said. The coop was built at the school and moved to the property, where a porch was then added.

Rowe said she tells all of her guests about all the work the students have done over the years and they think it is so

valuable that we are interacting with the community and the high school in this way.

"It's important to Scott and I that we continue this relationship, especially with these guys because there is so much history of it in this house," said Rowe. "There's a culinary program at the school and we'd like to expand on that. We can offer an internship where the students can learn real things like curing meats, making sausage and bacon, and the importance of farm to table dining. We are hoping that is something we can grow on next year."

Oetting said he has been taking his carpentry classes off campus for projects for the last six years and they have done a variety of projects including decks, home additions, sun room, and even a kitchen remodel. Some of the projects Swain carpentry students have worked on include the batting cage at the school, the pavil-

ion at Bright Adventures Pre-K School, and the Hawthorne House pavilion and fire pit.

"Every year there are projects," Oetting said. "People contact me all the time. The benefit is the experience the kids get in working through a project. They get to see how I interact with a customer. It's a good tie in between the school and the community and business owners-kind of like an internship."

If anyone is interested in involving the students in a project, they can call the school Oetting said. They are always looking for outside work where students can get experience that is relevant to what they would be doing on a job site. Custom-

ers buy the materials and pay a small percentage of the material costs for the labor. That money goes back to the school for the carpentry program.

"The good thing for the customer is that it's cheap," said Oetting. "The labor is cheap and the work is probably better than what you would pay somebody else to do. It all meets code, it's all well built. I feel the integrity of me and the school is involved in the project, so I want everything to be good. That's a bonus for the customer. Whenever the school is tied to the community and vice versa, that's a good thing."