

# We made it:

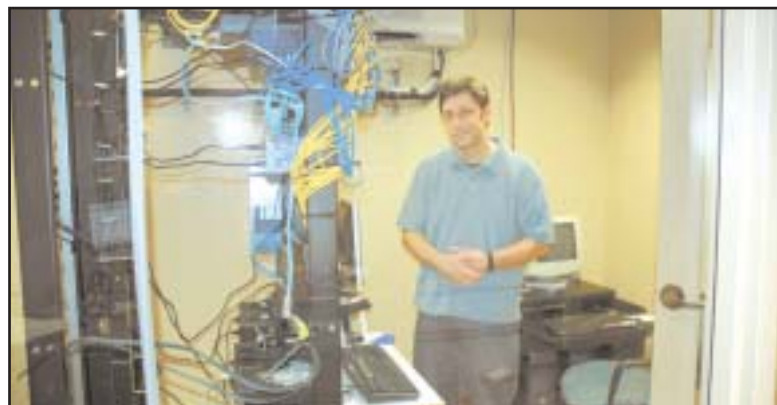
## Worker bees adjust to new hive in Alcoa



Millie Meese, print media coordinator, applies the Holston Conference label to the front entrance.



Controller Rick Cherry likes how his office is quiet, with large windows.



Information Technology Manager Brent Sharp works in a new, glassed-in, temperature-controlled room where the conference server and network cables are housed.

### By Annette Spence

It took eight truckloads, 10 strong men, and 20 paid hours of lifting and hauling.

One staff member injured her back. Another lost a box of vital information, including passwords and financial data. Two staff members weren't even there, but were in Sudan with the conference missions team.

Yet, the Holston Conference Center successfully made its move, 17 miles south from west Knoxville to Alcoa, Tenn., with 28 staff members and all their computers, paper clips, and plastic plants.

The relocation officially began on Friday, March 8, at 8:30 a.m. By Saturday, March 9, at 7 p.m., the boxes and furniture were inside the building at 217 South Rankin.

But in reality, a few staff members spent days packing until the wee hours, and several more days into the month of March to get the wires appropriately crossed and the plastic plants into the right corner (to camouflage the wires).

Administrative Assistant Lori Sluder juggled a myriad of duties, packing boxes as she managed the switchboard and made preparations for the Jubilation older adult retreat. Meanwhile, her husband, the Rev. Mike Sluder, was away in Yei,



The entrance at 217 South Rankin

Photos by Annette Spence, The Call

Sudan, with the conference missions team.

She not only kept in contact with the team, spending hours to arrange their return to Holston after weather conditions in New York City foiled their airplane reservations. She also helped oversee the relocation of offices for fellow staff members who were in Sudan: Anne Travis and Anita Henderlight.

Brent Sharp, information technology manager, spent nights and

weekends away from his young son, ensuring that the conference server was safely transported and operational. Angela Lee, finance administrative assistant, coordinated the move and said that on more than one occasion, she woke at 5:30 a.m., worrying about storage space and air-conditioning issues.

"I'm sleeping a little better now," Lee said. "I was really glad that staff members followed our instructions so well."

Now, staff members are settling into the drive from Knoxville and sampling restaurants in Alcoa and Maryville. While some are adjusting to bigger or smaller offices, others are adjusting to being separated on two floors.

Twenty-one workers are stationed on the second floor. Seven, including Bishop James Swanson, have offices on the third floor. The Maryville District office is also located on the third floor. The first floor is leased to a data-processing company.

At the first staff meeting in the new building, workers observed that the "corporate" feel of the new building has reduced the "connection" previously felt at Cokesbury Center.

"While we have more space and it is quieter in general, we seem to be locked in padded cubicles and glass-door offices," Administrative Assistant Sue Weber said. "No longer do we have the open-door, yell-back-and-forth camaraderie like we did at the 'back 40' at the old place. And the folks on the third floor might as well be in another continent ... We will have to make large efforts to restore the feeling of community."

John Templeton, architect for Foxhollow Goodson, worked for months to ready the former Ruby Tuesday office building for Holston Conference. Templeton's

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... my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." When she had said this ...