

## **Fabrications Company President “Pays it Forward”**

When plans were being made for Ocala, FL-based JRS Custom Fabrications, Inc. to visit Chester County, SC in the fall of 2006, it seemed like just another client visit to local economic developers. They quickly learned that there was nothing ordinary about the company’s owner Greg Linton.

“Typically, company executives are looking for reasons to eliminate an area from their site location search, said Karlisa Parker of Chester County Economic Development. And there were plenty of reasons Mr. Linton could have turned his back on the rural county just outside of Charlotte, which, due to textile manufacturing plant closings had seen better days. Contracts on two sites fell through. But for some reason Linton couldn’t turn away.

During one of his three visits to Chester County, Linton wanted to stop in at The Crossroads Restaurant. “The name called out to him,” said Parker.

The restaurant owner, had fallen on bad times and shared with Parker and Linton that people won’t come into the restaurant because the parking lot gets muddy when it rains. She just couldn’t understand why she had so much misfortune when she fed pastors for free and tried to do so much to help others.

At the airport before his return trip home, Linton called Parker and said he was going to do something for the restaurant owner. “I am either going to pave the parking lot, give her a catering trailer so she can deliver food outside the restaurant or hire her to provide meals for my employees when I open a facility there,” he said. He asked Parker to find out what the restaurant owner needed the most. The conclusion was a paved driveway would be most beneficial.

During his last visit to Chester looking at the site he finally was able to purchase, Linton told Parker, “You know where I want to stop to eat.” They had lunch at The Crossroads and Linton went to the counter to whisper something to the restaurant owner. The owner said “I must not have heard you correctly. It sounded like you said you wanted permission to pave my driveway.” Not only did Linton pay almost \$30 thousand to have her driveway paved, he provided her with a catering trailer and hired her to cater a celebration for the new location.

When Linton returned to Ocala a neighbor whom he had many time invited to stop by his plant finally did so. The neighbor said, “Do you know what I do for a living?” Linton said “No.” The neighbor explained that he worked in emergency relief services and he needed 45 trailers that could be used to serve food to those serviced by the agency. He asked if Linton would be interested in placing a bid on the project. Linton got the project and made the forty-sixth trailer for the restaurant owner.

This Friday, as Linton celebrates the announcement of his new facility in Chester and bringing more than 150 jobs and more than \$3.5 million in investment to the community, he will also bring along more than 100 devoted employees who work in his Ocala plant. The employees, many who have disabilities or have had troubled lives, will help landscape and spruce up the Chester restaurant, which has already seen three-times as much business as it did before the driveway was paved.

“We are what we repeatedly do,” says a quote on the company’s website. Linton’s successes no doubt are the result of his kind ways and acts of paying it forward.

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