



A Complicated Move Brings A New Family To Barnesville Area Sometimes a move is as simple as signing a few papers, turning the key in the front door and making the monthly payments forever after. Sometimes it gets a little more complicated than that. For Scott and Michelle Zajac and their two children, three-year-old Alexia and four-month-old Andrew, it took a team effort from lots of folks to complete their move from Fargo to Barnesville. It all started with, oddly enough, the demolition of the old downtown lumberyard. The Barnesville Economic Development Authority had been negotiating a price and demolition costs to get the deteriorating property removed from the downtown area. During the twisted events that usually accompany government work, an application for a grant was filed with West Central Initiative Fund to provide money to help with the demolition. EDA Director Karen Lauer reported at a meeting in late 2004 that the grant had been approved and West Central would participate in the demo costs, but there were strings attached. In return for their \$10,000 contribution, they wanted the donation of two residential building lots to be used for moderate income families to build on. The EDA then went through the process of acquiring two tax forfeit lots in the Holland South Addition from Clay County. The EDA contacted Barnesville resident Dale Rollie who works with various housing projects in Clay County through Lakes and Prairies Community Action Partnership. He had been working with Scott and Michelle Zajac of Fargo. They were interested in purchasing a home that was being constructed by the students at the Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton School. But they were even more interested in a move to Barnesville where Michelle had learned there was a critical shortage of day care facilities. The solution to everyone's needs would be moving the home under construction to Barnesville. So the paperwork process was underway again. With the general agreement between EDA Director Karen Lauer and the Zajac family that the lot was available and adequate for their needs, the process moved on to the Barnesville Planning Commission. The Commission reviewed all of the details of the home that would be moved in and the daycare business that would be run from it. A conditional use permit was granted. During the construction phase at DGF High School, Barnesville Building Inspector Don Sakry made a number of trips to inspect the home. On the local end, Jeremy Krause at Barnesville Building Center had been working with the Zajac family identifying local contractors to do the work. As soon as the frost was out of the ground, on-site construction began on the property by Plath Excavating, Peterson Plumbing and Heating, Danny Erdmann of Improvement Specialties out of Glyndon, Marvin Stetz and Jason Thompson of Lakes Country Construction and Magnum Electric. Another local resource used was the Minnesota First Time Homebuyer Program administered through the Barnesville office of the Economic Development Authority. Annually the EDA makes sure that Barnesville is eligible for these funds although with the present low interest rates, they are seldom used. In this case, however, they were a perfect fit and the Zajac family will be able to utilize the low interest rates offered through the program. Ultimately West Central Initiative wrote a check to the Barnesville EDA for \$10,000 which covered part of the acquisition and demolition costs at the lumberyard. In turn the EDA donated one of the tax forfeit lots to Lakes and Prairie Community Action Partnership who transferred the title to the Zajac family who are now responsible for the mortgage, taxes and special assessments. Last Wednesday, July 13, the house that had been constructed by the DGF students became a mobile home if only for a little while. Crews from Schmit House and Building Movers of Wyndmere loaded the house up and transferred it safely to Barnesville. They used mostly county roads to cause as little disruption as possible and pulled into Barnesville from the south before noon. By late afternoon the property was settled on to its new foundation. As you can see, it took the efforts of a lot of different people to make this happen. But it is an example of various government agencies and individuals working towards a common goal that produces benefits for the entire local community. The Zajac family plans to be completely moved in before August 1. Then the work on the yard can begin. It has been a win-win situation for everyone. An unsightly, deteriorating old structure is gone from downtown. A tax forfeit lot is again producing a tax base to support the city, county and school, not as bare land, but as a home. A young family has a brand new home in the community of their choice. A new business will open in town and daycare will be available for commuting parents. There are two young children added to the school census. Local work was provided for contractors. The city has a new customer for municipal utilities.

And the ripple effect is not over yet. The Barnesville EDA still has one of the two tax forfeit lots available and is planning a similar project just to the east of the Zajac's new home. Know anyone who might be interested? Contact Karen Lauer if you do.

Scott and Michelle Zajac take a moment away from a hectic moving day schedule to look at their new home. The house was moved to a foundation at 604 10th Avenue Southeast on Wednesday, July 13. The family will be moving in as soon as utilities can be hooked up in the new house.