

# Picture perfect

## Historic building graces note cards

BY LENA MITCHELL  
*Daily Journal Contributing Writer*

BOONEVILLE — A lot of effort has gone into making the historic Old Depot in Booneville picture perfect. Now the beautifully renovated building, home of the Booneville Area Chamber of Commerce, is featured as a pencil drawing on a note card that is being sold in packages of 10 for \$10.

"We've had people who have asked in the past if we had postcards or note cards of Booneville for them to buy," said chamber director Tanya Finch. "Launching it now seemed like good timing because it's getting close to the holidays, and people will be in from out of town with relatives or want to give them as gifts."

The man whose work graces the cards, artist Michael L. Johnson, has lived in Booneville less than a year, but he has taken the community to heart.

Johnson moved with his wife, Booneville native Jennifer Shearon Johnson, and son to the area in the spring, and the historic buildings have given him a rich group of subjects for his work.

"I like to draw historical landmarks, bring people's attention to them, especially things people have forgotten," Johnson said.

His portfolio already includes other well-known Booneville treasures, many around the courthouse square.

"Several months ago when he came in with a portfolio in his hands, he showed me these really beautiful pictures of historic buildings in downtown and asked if we'd be interested in using them for some kind of project," Finch said.

"It's not often you have something like this drop into your lap. Because of earlier interest our board was looking for something like this as a fund-raising project."

Johnson, who grew up in the Hattiesburg area, soon will get his teacher's license to teach high



PHOTOS BY C. TODD SHERMAN

Booneville resident Michael Johnson holds a card bearing one of his sketches at the Booneville Chamber of Commerce.



The train depot in downtown Booneville is featured as a pencil drawing on a note card.

school art and history.

Meanwhile, he works as a substitute teacher and pursues his passion for drawing as a freelance artist.

Among his more notable credits is design of the Jones County flag, created in 1996. He beat out 36 others who submitted designs in a contest.

"I've found my place here and really feel at home," Johnson said. "I want to learn as much as I can about the area to preserve it, spark someone else's interest and pass it on."

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### Booneville Chamber fund-raiser

- **What:** Note cards with Old Depot drawing
- **Where:** Booneville Area Chamber of Commerce
- **Cost:** \$10 per package of 10
- **For more information:** (662) 728-4130