



Photo by Ellarry Prentice

The Miller family built their house south of Paynesville last summer and moved in Labor Day weekend. They moved to Paynesville – where Rory grew up – after living in Grand Rapids for over seven years.

## Family constructs country home south of lake

By Ellarry Prentice

It wasn't that Rory and Jennifer Miller didn't like where they used to live... they just needed more space. "It was just too small," said Jennifer of their home in rural Grand Rapids.

The couple built a home there in 2001, shortly after marrying in 2000. They liked the home's layout, decor, and style, but with two young children and plans to have a third, they realized that it would be unfunctional.

Rory, a 1995 PHS graduate, and Jennifer, a native of Hamel, always wanted to move back to Paynesville. While living in Grand Rapids, they waited several years for a position with Rory's employer, Grey River Electric, to open in Hawick. Moving to Paynesville would also allow them to be closer to Rory's family.

In January 2007, after Rory filled the lineman position in Hawick, the couple and their sons, Grant, two-

and-a-half and Gavin, four, moved in with Rory's mom in Paynesville while they began looking for land to buy in the area.

Having lived in a quiet location of Grand Rapids for over seven years, they knew they wanted to live in the country, said Jennifer. They also wanted plenty of room for the kids to play outside and plenty of room for the family to feel comfortable inside. They decided that a home with a similar layout to their home in Grand Rapids and an area of land around 40 acres would be just right.

In April, while browsing a real estate website on the Internet, Rory found 35 acres of farmland for sale south of Paynesville.

"This was a little hillier, so it would work good for a walk-out," said Rory. With plenty of trees, wildlife, farmland to rent, and room for the kids to play, it would be perfect for their family of five, thought Rory and Jennifer.

Anxious to settle into a new home, they began the groundwork on May 10, 2007. Using their experience from building their last house was helpful, but having to make hundreds of decisions over again didn't make building their second home much easier than the first, they agreed.

Jennifer said it was nice that she and Rory could agree on almost everything throughout their home-building process. They also had a dry summer to work, added Rory.

During this time, the Millers welcomed their third child (daughter, Graysin) on May 22. "We were busy," said Jennifer.

"We had a lot of friends and family help out quite a bit," said Rory. The couple did a lot of the painting themselves and had help from Rory's family. His brother, Adam, did a lot of the building.

They moved into their new 3,300 sq. ft. walk-out rambler over Labor Day weekend.

"Everything ended up being bigger," said Jennifer of their new home. They replaced their walk-out rambler in Grand Rapids with one about 1,000 square feet more in size.

The large main floor includes: an entry; adjoining kitchen, dining room, and living room; mud room; laundry room; Graysin's bedroom; Grant's and Gavin's bedroom; the kid's bathroom; and a master bedroom and bathroom suite.

"We wanted all of the bedrooms on the same side of the house," said Jennifer. "I want (the kids) next to me," she added.

Putting a walk-in closet in their master bedroom wasn't possible with their house plan, so they decided to install large, double closets. Jennifer said the couple actually has more space with these than they did with the walk-in closet in their last home.

**MILLERS – see page 2C**

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Photo by Ellary Prentice

Their kitchen includes a large center island, black appliances, cherry-stained maple cabinets, and a convenient entrance to the mudroom and garage. The kitchen also adjoins the dining and living area.

## MILLERS – from page 1C

The layout of the home is very similar to their old house, said Jennifer. The only changes they made were an addition of the mud room (between the kitchen and the entrance from the garage), a laundry room on the main level instead of in the basement, added an extra bedroom on the main floor, and enlarged most of the rooms.

In the mud room, Grant, Gavin, and Graysin each have their own lockers where they can hang their jackets and store other items. Jennifer liked the concept of lockers because it keeps their gear organized. The mud room also has a separate storage area and a convenient entrance to the kitchen for unloading groceries.

Their unfinished basement will have two bedrooms (one for each of the boys), a bathroom, a family room with access to a patio, and a utility room. Other areas of the basement will be used for storage (something that they didn't have much of in their other house).

Since Grant and Gavin aren't ready to move into the basement, they aren't in any hurry to finish the basement. When the boys do move into the basement, Graysin will move into their bedroom, and her bedroom will become an office or guest bedroom.

Their large kitchen faces the adjoining dining and living area. It includes a large center island that Jennifer wanted for the kids (someday they can sit there and do homework, she thought), maple cabinets stained in a dark cherry finish, laminate counter tops with tan tones resembling granite, a black granite kitchen sink, and new black appliances.

According to Rory and Jennifer, they chose black appliances because they don't show messes or spots as well as white appliances, and they won't show the kids' fingerprints like stainless steel would have.

To match spots of black throughout the kitchen, they also chose black pendant light fixtures above the kitchen sink and island.

Jennifer, a stay-at-home mom, loves the open feel of the kitchen, living room, and dining room. Having the dining room and kitchen so close makes it so much easier with kids (serving, cleaning up, etc.), she added.

A built-in pantry, located just off the kitchen near their dining room table, is perfect for storing food and other household items. The pantry – with pull-out cabinets in the center and large shelves on the sides – is stained to match the kitchen cabinets.

To keep the look of their home simple and consistent, Rory and Jennifer choose to use the same oak laminate flooring in the kitchen, the hallway to their bedrooms, and in the master bedroom; tile flooring in the bathrooms and laundry room; and carpet in the kids' bedrooms and living room.

With three young children, they had to consider flooring that is both durable and affordable, said Jennifer. She likes oak laminate flooring because it looks like real wood and holds up well to heavy traffic in the house.

They also have similar light fixtures in each room and dark cherry-stained maple cabinets throughout the house.

MILLERS – see page 4C

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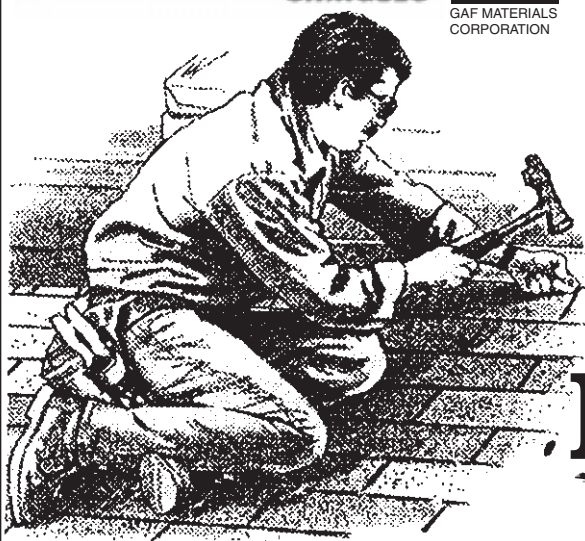
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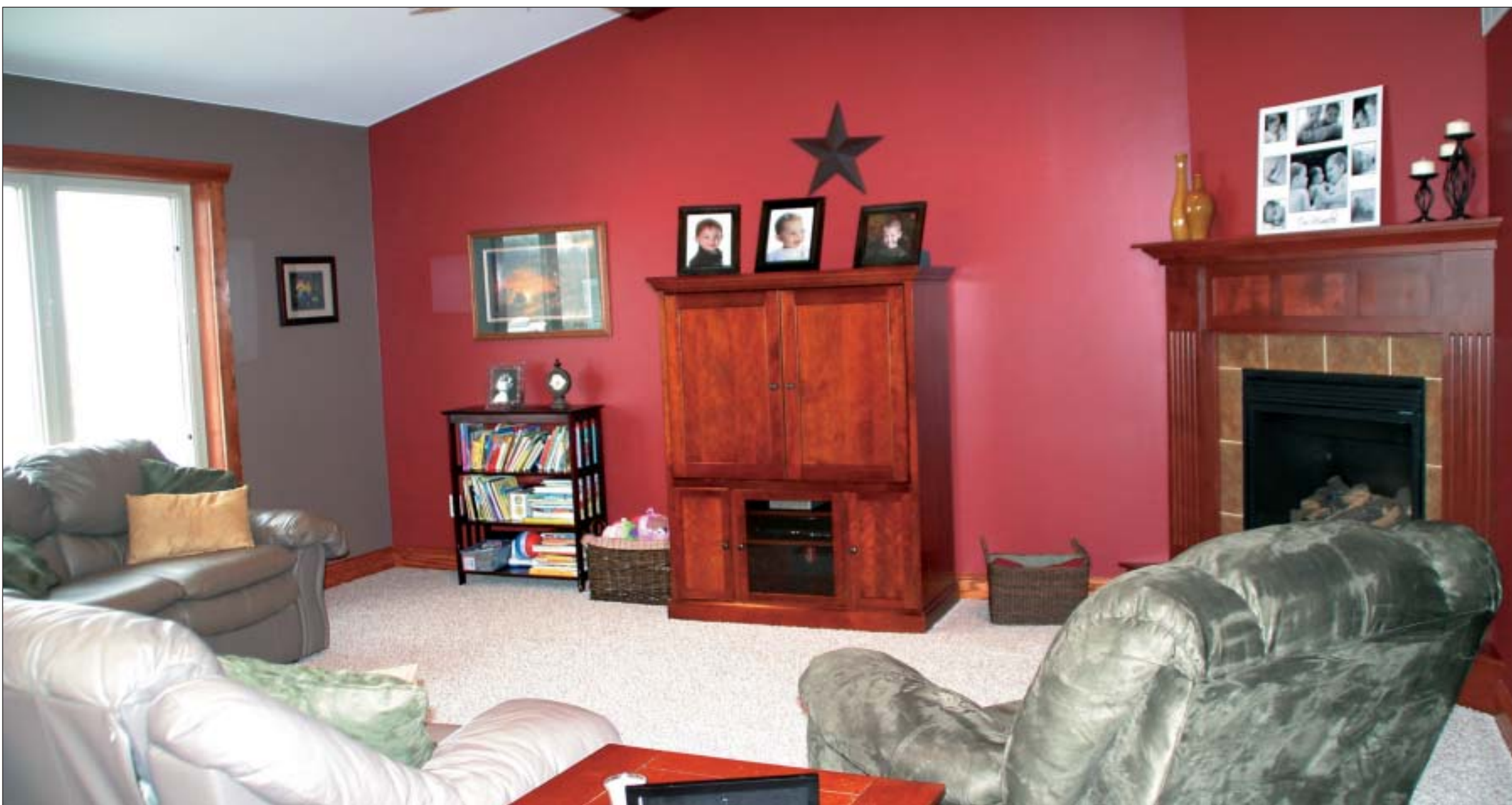


Photo by Ellarry Prentice

The Millers have always wanted a fireplace in their living room. Another warm feature of the room is a burnt red paint color beside the fireplace. They enjoy watching wildlife from a large three-section window.

## MILLERS – from page 2C

A three-section window in the living room gives view of trees and wildlife (mostly deer and pheasants) in the backyard. They are planning to add a deck off the dining room to enjoy these views from outside as well.

Another selling point of the land was the opportunity for Rory to deer and pheasant hunt.

The house could have been put farther back on their property but the views were the best from this location. Rory, who works in the industry, said as much as he loves powerlines, he didn't want them to block his view of wildlife.

Jennifer loves the addition of a gas fireplace (with maple trim to match the kitchen cabinets) in the living room. "That was kind of the thing we wished we had (in their old house)," said Jennifer. The fireplace is nice because it takes the morning chill out of the house and helps the family relax in the evening, she added.

Since the basement in their old house had nice furniture, they decided to use that in their living room. They only had to buy one new recliner, said Jennifer.

Another warm feel to the living room is the burnt red and olive green paint colors that Jennifer

matched to the furniture. "I like dark, warm colors," she said. "That real warm cozy feeling."

Jennifer chose other dark colors – including mustard and dark chocolate brown – for other areas of the house.

They still plan to finish the basement, do more landscaping, add a concrete apron, add a big shed to the backyard, and add a turnaround to their driveway. "As long as the grass grows, we'll be in good shape," said Rory.

Rory planned to use the back portion of one of their two garage stalls as a workshop but decided to leave room to park a third vehicle. They like that it appears to be a two-stall garage from the outside but is big enough for three vehicles.

They chose cement board siding for the exterior of their home because they were told it holds paint for at least 15 years. According to Jennifer, they considered using steel siding, but, "I didn't know if in 15 years I'd want the same color house or not," she said. Instead, they choose to paint the house green with cream-colored trim.

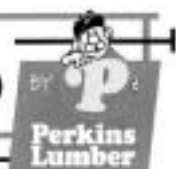
As for the home building process, "It's endless," said Rory. "This time with the friends and family closer, I think it was easier," he added.



Photo by Ellarry Prentice

Gavin, four, Grant, two, and Graysin, ten-and-a-half months, enjoy playing in the boys' room, which includes John Deere tractor decor and matching beds. Once the basement is finished and the boys get older, they will have their own rooms there, Graysin will take their room, and her room will become an office.

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Jennifer and Rory Miller's master bedroom includes an adjoining bathroom, large double closets, and dark, warm colors. Having young children, they wanted all the main-level bedrooms to be located on the same hallway.

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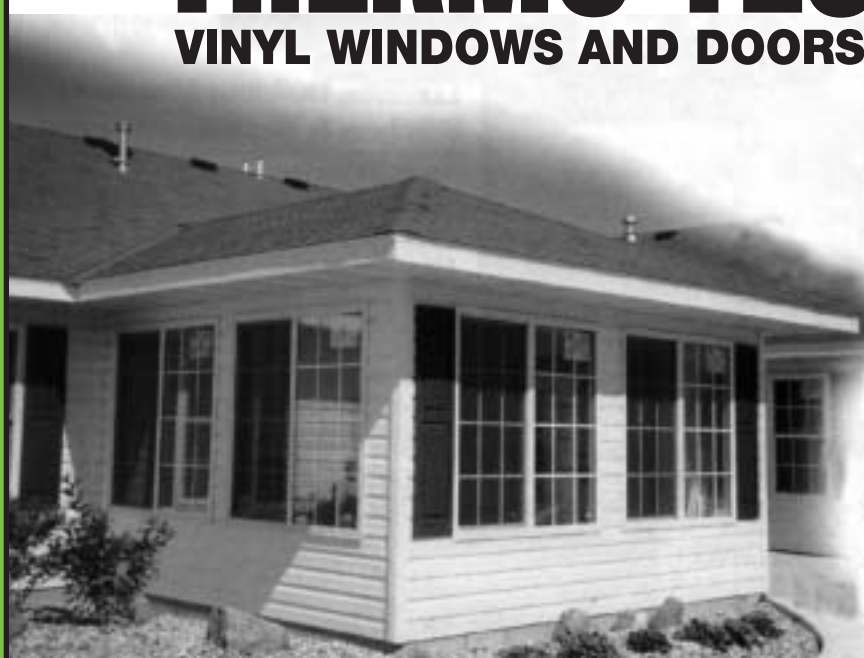
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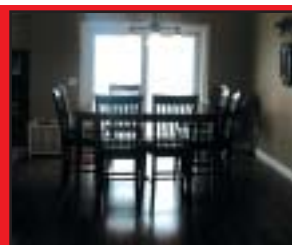
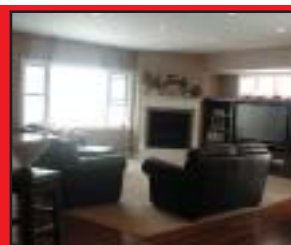
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