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**Bakers is 200 Years  
Old in Stafford Springs**

# Press Release

## **Baker's Country Furniture celebrates 200 Years in Stafford Springs, CT**

**One of the nations oldest continuously operated furniture stores**

*For Immediate Release*

*January 9th, 2008*

Not many businesses today can celebrate one hundred years in business, let alone two hundred years. Baker's Country Furniture in Stafford Springs, Connecticut is one of the oldest continuously operated furniture stores in the nation and is celebrating its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.

Founded in 1808 by Henry C Baker with the help of his brother John, Baker's Furniture opened as one of the first furniture stores to service the expanding base of inhabitants working and living around Stafford Springs. As the town grew with industrialization, so did Baker's. After Henry's death in 1851, his son Gilbert successfully conducted business and expanded the store. In 1878, it was moved into a new location - a large 3 story brick block, with well over 16,000 square feet. For almost another hundred years, the Baker family continued doing business until a young cabinet maker working for them named Rossi changed the family ownership tradition.

Roger Rossi was offered a partnership in the early 1960's and eventually purchased the remaining Baker family shares with the help of his father. Thus, the family ownership changed, but the Rossi's decided to keep the heritage Baker's name forever.

In 1969, they moved into their present twenty thousand square foot location at 42 West Main Street in a historic old Victorian house, less than a mile from the original store.

During this time, the store began to evolve from a manufactured furniture selection to more handcrafted and higher quality furnishings. "It has always been our desire to sell furniture that is well constructed", says John Rossi, the second generation of Rossi's to own the store; "We have made principled decisions over the years to discontinue lines of furniture that we feel have inferior construction. That has distinguished our business plan from big box furniture stores". One of the largest single trends the Rossi's have seen in business over the last decade is a tremendous flood of low quality imported furniture. "We have seen furniture quality levels drop precipitously, along with prices. It has been hard to resist stocking imported furniture in our store, but we have made a conscious decision to not sell any product that we would not be confident enough to place in our own home", added Rossi.

For Release 9 a.m. EDT, January 9th, 2008

John Rossi and his wife Patty have worked for the family store since their teenage years, and recently have taken the reigns from John's parents. In addition to sales inside, John's son, Tim, maintains and operates a fine quality furniture manufacturing operation. "Tim has allowed us to offer fine quality furniture and reproductions at a lower price point because we are the manufacturers." said the elder Rossi. Although the furniture manufacturing is a small portion of the overall sales, it allows Bakers Furniture more quality and pricing control by eliminating wholesalers and middlemen. "I can meet with a customer, have them describe or point out a piece of furniture that they desire, and then offer them the same product at nearly the same quality level at a reduced cost", added Rossi.

Even though times have changed, Bakers Country Furniture takes you into a time of yesteryear with their distinctive line of country furniture, reproductions, and unique accessories from artisans, curtains and window treatments. The store features many different lines and beautiful antique reproductions. In Bakers Reproduction showcase, discover heirloom quality handcrafted reproductions by D.R. Dimes, Tom Seely, Le Fort and others. You can find the highest quality upholstery by renowned names such as Hallagan, Bradington-Young and Highland House. "Many of our customers know us for our fine furniture, but one of our strongest departments is our extensive curtains, window treatments and accessories department", said Rossi. Bakers stocks hundreds of different styles and selections of window treatments.

One recent big change at Bakers has been the renovation of their children's store into a fine local restaurant, John Henry's. "The store occupied a classic old brick house, but was separated from the main store. After we received notice from our insurance carrier that housing the restaurant with our main building was not desirable, we renovated the building in the premises which now houses the upscale casual dining establishment", said Rossi, "It just made more sense to bring all the retail functions within the twenty thousand square feet of our main building and move the restaurant to its own location".

John Henry's has become a rapid success, and was recently voted *Best New Restaurant in Tolland County* by *Connecticut Magazine*.

During the year long celebration at Bakers Country Furniture, Bakers will be offering special discounts and incentives on many of their fine products. A full selection and calendar of monthly events is available online [www.bakersfurniture.com](http://www.bakersfurniture.com) and at the store. Look for giveaways, raffles, and in store presentations by a variety of artists. You will be able to see cabinet makers, rug hookers, artists painting on canvas, upholstery instruction, floral design and more.

The majority of the workforce is still family at Bakers. They continue to be a very family oriented business and are committed to a high quality level of customer service. Visit them at 42 West Main St. in Stafford Springs, CT or on the web at [www.bakersfurniture.com](http://www.bakersfurniture.com)