

# Ensuring Unlimited Possibilities

*Dr. Mike Lee's New Practice Has Him Poised for Future Success*



*“I never thought I'd have an office like this. You wish for it, but you never actually think you're going to do it.”*

*– Dr. Michael Lee*

After 27 years of dentistry, Dr. Michael Lee's wish has come true. At age 56, Dr. Lee made a leap even the youngest, most determined dentists may avoid. He went from debt-free owner of a successful, well-established Baton Rouge, La., practice to proud (but no longer debt-free) owner of a brand-new, technology-filled practice.

“I was in a small building and it just wasn't very efficient. We were using every quarter inch of the building,” said Dr. Lee. “I didn't feel like I was taking advantage of new equipment and technology.” Dr. Lee started his journey toward the new practice with his Patterson Equipment Specialist Mike Talley, who also helped him set up his first practice in the early

1980s. Talley helped Dr. Lee realize that his old practice was too small and under-equipped to be a viable purchase option for an associate or new dentist.

Dr. Lee chose to work with Patterson for his new office because of his history with Talley. “I'd known Mike for a long time. He helped me with my first building. It was a natural transition. I really didn't consider going with any of the others,” said Dr. Lee.



## Pre-construction Savings and a Streamlined Building Process

GO Zone post-Hurricane-Katrina economic recovery incentives allowed Dr. Lee to save money on his new practice by accelerating depreciation on equipment. Dr. Lee, Talley, New Orleans Branch Manager Chris Counce and Dr. Lee's CPA all worked together to maximize Dr. Lee's tax savings.

Dr. Lee credits Talley with simplifying the entire building process. In addition to saving him money on equipment, Talley saved Dr. Lee money on his land purchase. He designed a practice that fit onto one lot rather than the two neighboring lots Dr. Lee had initially planned to purchase. Talley also created wooden templates for pipe, drain and conduit placement to ensure they would be exact in all of Dr. Lee's five new operatories. During construction, Talley took pictures of all the wall supports and sent them to Dr. Lee via e-mail so he would have a permanent record of their location when it came time to hang lights and monitor arms. Talley also visited the construction site every day to check on overall progress. "Mike really impressed my builder. So much so that the builder is courting Mike to build his next new office," said Dr. Lee.

Dr. Lee and his staff moved into the brand-new, 2,100-square-foot Dr. R. Michael Lee Family Dentistry practice on St. Patrick's Day 2008, just five months after beginning construction and just one-half mile away from his old practice.

## Comfort for Patients and Practitioners Alike

The new brick-exterior practice greets patients with cedar columns and elegant gas lanterns. Patients are also treated to a large parking lot; while this may not seem a noteworthy extravagance, Dr. Lee had just five parking spots at his old office. Once inside, patients are welcomed at the spacious front desk, which Talley designed for maximum efficiency and privacy. Patients may then relax in a waiting area decorated by Dr. Lee's wife, Darlene, to feel like a living room rather than a dental practice. "It's very homey. People say it's comforting," said Dr. Lee. He has even had a patient ask for the paint color code. The practice also features stained concrete floors, which have proven to be beautiful, durable and extremely easy to clean.

Dr. Lee is also very pleased with his new circular workflow. "The old office was laid out in a rectangular space...we made the office fit the rectangular space," he said. "Here, we designed it the way we wanted to with a circular pattern. There's a lot better flow in the office." In addition

to the improved workflow, Dr. Lee and his staff appreciate the "extras" the new practice affords, including granite countertops, a comfortable breakroom, a separate staff bathroom and a huge bulk storage closet.

After 25 years, Dr. Lee's old location offered no room for additional growth and required many updates. The spacious new practice is a huge hit with patients and staff alike.





## First to Appreciate his Last Office

"This is my last [office]," said Dr. Lee. "I wanted to enjoy my last years of practice." Dr. Lee spared no expense in ensuring his professional satisfaction. He equipped his five open-design operatories with all-new equipment, moving only his three X-ray units from his old office. After an A-dec VIP tour with Talley, Territory Representative Christy Dupré and additional local branch staff, Dr. Lee selected A-dec cabinetry, treatment centers, chairs and monitor mounts. "In my old office, the computers were just sitting in the corner with the monitor mounted on the wall. Now my chairside assistant can enter data without leaving her chair, and so can I," he said. Dr. Lee and his staff also appreciate the ability to show patients X-rays, photographs, CAESY and even television shows while they're sitting in the chair.

While Dr. Lee and his staff thoroughly enjoy working in the new high-tech environment, he truly appreciates his operatories' finer points. "My electric handpieces...they've just transformed the way I do dentistry," he said. "I do a lot of my own root canals, and I can use the same handpiece. I don't need separate things on a little cart as I did in my old office." He also appreciates the fact that all his tools are within reach. "Everything's very ergonomic. I don't have to get up once I sit down. I wanted to make this as easy as possible on me physically," he said. Plus, every operatory has a big window overlooking a backyard garden; after working for more than two years in an office with no windows, Dr. Lee vowed he'd never again work in a window-free practice. But most of all, Dr. Lee enjoys the fact that he is easily providing top-of-the-line dentistry. "We do more with less effort," he said.

Dr. Lee is extremely proud of his new A-dec sterilization center. The open center, opposite his operatories, is also home to his panoramic X-ray machine. "The sterilization area has been really nice. It was well-designed and it looks great," he said. "Patients are very impressed with

it. They're a lot more confident that we follow procedure."

The laboratory is a definite improvement over his old one, which was basically a big

closet/storeroom. "You had to stand on boxes to grind models," he said. Dr. Lee's lab is now home to a new bench grinder and his CEREC® MC XL milling unit. And since the lab is easily accessible from all of his operatories, he encourages patients to watch their restorations being milled. "Every patient I've done a CEREC on wants to get up and watch their crown being made," he said. "They just think it's great."

The CEREC milling unit is just one of Dr. Lee's patient favorites. Patients have complimented Dr. Lee on his new practice environment, the abundant parking, the new technology and the overall size of the new practice. "It's two-and-a-half times larger than my old office. It's very modern," he said. "They really like the new equipment and the comfort and they feel that they can get in and out of the chair more easily. They feel like they're getting the highest-quality dentistry." The overwhelming patient reaction to the new practice has been pride. "They're all proud of it. They're as happy as I am and they're proud for me. It makes me feel that I did the right thing."

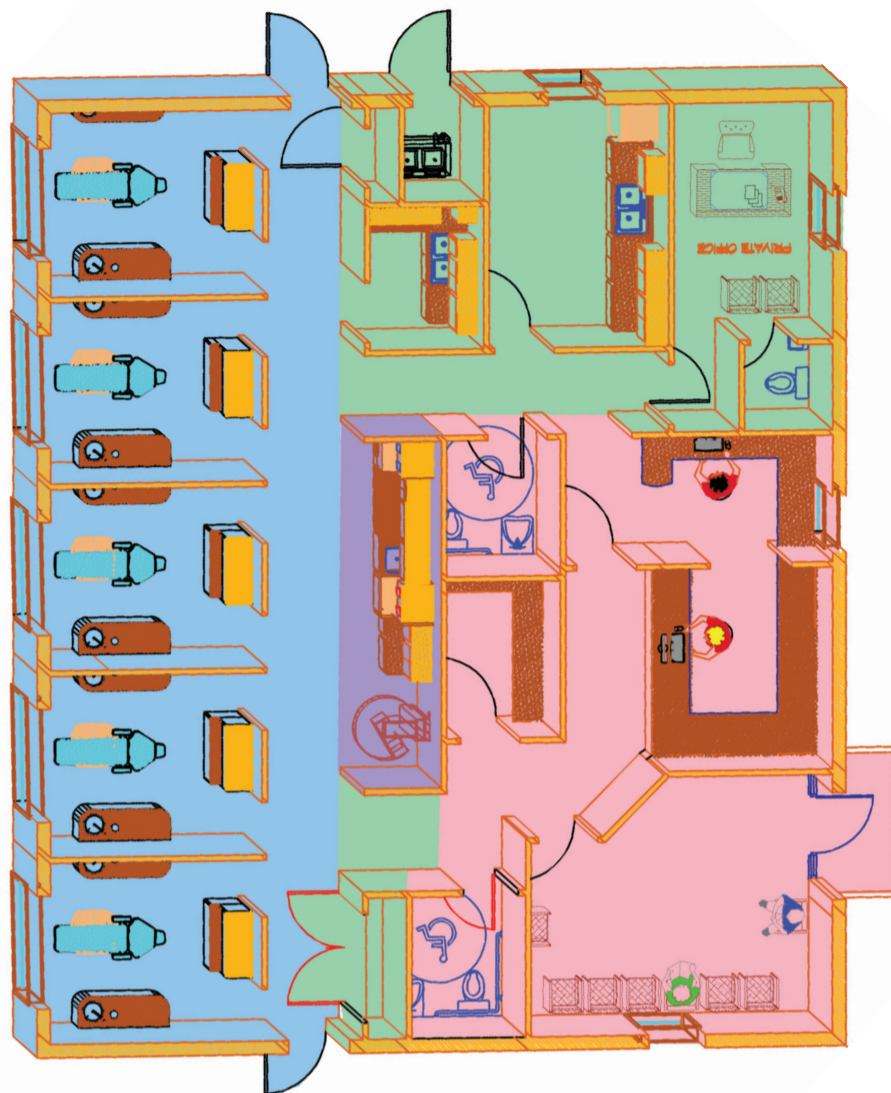
## New "Love," New Patients, New Opportunities

For Dr. Lee, the new office was much more than a financial investment – it was also a much-needed change. "I've fallen in love with dentistry again. I had fallen into a rut and didn't know how much longer I was going to do this. I was always under pressure," he said. "Now I'm excited to go to work. It's recharged me for the last phase of my practice. I don't feel like I'm winding down. I feel like I'll go full tilt and then just hand it over [to an associate.]"

Dr. Lee is in no danger of winding down. Since opening the new practice, productivity and his new patient count have increased at least 20 percent each month. "It'd gone flat because we didn't have any room for [patients]. Hygienists were booked up solid and I had no place for new patients," he said. "Our new patient count has doubled in three months since opening the new office. It's all referrals." In fact, Dr. Lee recently hired a new hygienist to better accommodate all his patients.

Booming business fueled by solid, lasting technology has Dr. Lee thinking about bringing on an associate sooner than he'd originally planned – most likely within the next five years. "I plan to bring them up slowly and bring me down slowly," he said. Dr. Lee figures he'll practice for at least 10 more years. "I enjoy dentistry, so I don't see myself quitting any time soon. I may cut back the number of days, but I'm not going to quit."

In 2006, Dr. Lee considered merely remodeling his old building. Two years later, he's very glad he decided to get out of his "comfort zone" and open a new practice. He encourages his peers to do the same. "If you're thinking about it, be brave and go forward," he said. "Plan carefully, get out of your comfort zone a little bit and you'll be blessed. Go ahead and do it."



### Practice Profile

#### DENTAL PRACTICE

Dr. R. Michael Lee Family Dentistry  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Dr. R. Michael Lee

#### OFFICE

Square feet: 2,100

This practice is a member of  
Patterson Plus<sup>sm</sup> Gold.

### OPERATORY EQUIPMENT

- A-dec<sup>®</sup> Cabinetry, Central Consoles, Treatment Consoles and Accessory Consoles
- A-dec Chairs, Stools, Delivery Units, Dispensing Units, Monitor Mounts and Lights
- A-dec ICC 12' Custom Sterilization Center
- CEREC<sup>®</sup> 3D
- Air Techniques VacStar<sup>®</sup> 50H Vacuum System
- Air Techniques AirStar<sup>®</sup> 30C Oil-Free Air Compressor
- Porter Digital MXR-D Cabinet-Mount Flowmeters
- CAESY<sup>®</sup> Patient Education Systems
- eImagine<sup>®</sup> Supply Management Software
- Patterson Office Supplies
- Apollo by Midmark Rock<sup>™</sup> Triple Oil-Less Air Compressor
- Accutron Guardian II<sup>™</sup> Nitrous Oxide Package
- Matrix Digital MDM Nitrous Oxide Flowmeter
- Planmeca ProMax Digital Panoramic X-ray with Tomography
- Planmeca Intraoral X-ray
- Schick Digital Sensors
- Ivoclar Vivadent<sup>®</sup> Odyssey<sup>®</sup> 2.4G Soft Tissue Diode Laser

### PATTERSON TEAM

- Chris Counce  
*Branch Manager*
- Mike Talley  
*Equipment Specialist*
- Christy Dupré  
*Territory Representative*
- Leonard Koenig  
Larry LaFrance  
Gordon Barth  
Mike Meadows  
Jeremy Monroe  
*Service Technicians*



From left to right: Mike Talley, Dr. R. Mike Lee, Chris Counce and Christy Dupré.