

The Winds of Change



Practice Profile

DENTAL PRACTICE
Cullman Cosmetic & Family Dentistry
Cullman, Alabama

Jonathan B. Echols, DMD
Ronald Carter, DMD

OFFICE
Square feet: 5,600
Eight operatories

EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

- Accutron Manifold and Digital Ultra Flush Flowmeter
- A-dec 1601 Doctor's Stools
- A-dec 1621 Assistant's Stools
- A-dec 332 Traditional Delivery Systems
- A-dec 511 Dental Chairs
- A-dec 533 Continental Delivery System
- A-dec 545 12 O'Clock Assistant's Instrumentation
- A-dec ICDV Cleaning System
- A-dec LED Dental Lights
- A-dec Preference ICC Sterilization Center
- A-dec Side Cabinets
- A-dec Treatment Consoles Extra Tall

- A-dec/W&H Handpieces
 - Air Techniques AirStar 50 Air Compressor
 - Air Techniques Mojave Vacuum Dual System
 - CEREC Bluecam AC and MC XL Milling Unit
 - Eaglesoft Practice Management Software
 - Midmark M11 Sterilizer
 - Miele G7881 Dental Washer
 - PLANMECA Intraoral X-rays
 - Schick Elite Sensors
 - SciCan Statim 5000 Cassette Autoclave
 - Sirona XG 3D Ready Pan
 - SoprolIFE Intraoral Camera with Caries Detection
- This practice is a Patterson Advantage® Gold member.*



*Editor's note:
From April 25
through April 28,
2011, one of the
worst tornado
outbreaks in history
ravaged the eastern*

*United States, killing more than 300
people and destroying thousands
of homes and businesses. April 27,
2011 was the most destructive day
of the outbreak, with 60 tornado
touchdowns in Alabama alone.*

Wednesday, April 27, 2011 is a day that Jonathan B. Echols, DMD, will never forget. What started out as a typical day ended in tragedy when an F4 tornado

flattened his four-operator dental practice in Cullman, Ala.

Unsure of where to turn for help, Echols held tight to his faith and the belief that everything was going to be all right. "You don't know what to do when you're hit with a tragedy like that," Echols said.

The doctor's deep faith – and a partnership with Patterson Dental – sustained him through some of the most difficult days of his life. "Patterson took a big part in helping me get back on my feet," he said. "The whole Patterson team was really proactive in helping me jump-start my practice from this tragedy."

An Unexpected Tragedy

Early on the morning of April 27, tornado activity was already occurring just a few miles south of Cullman. "It was an eerie

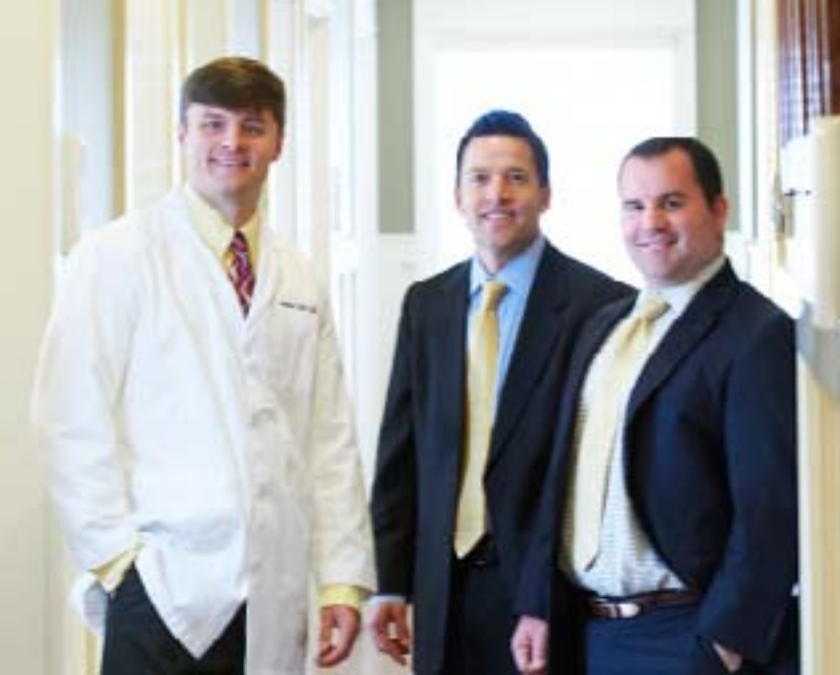
day and we were a little edgy," said Echols. He and his staff continued to see patients throughout the morning while keeping an eye on the weather. By mid-morning, meteorologists were reporting that it was the worst tornado outbreak they'd ever seen. Echols decided to close the office for the afternoon to allow his staff to be home with their families.

Around 2:00 p.m., a tornado warning was issued in Cullman. Echols took shelter in the basement of his home with his wife and children. While waiting out the storm, he watched the local news, which showed footage of a tornado getting closer to the town by the minute. When the power went out, Echols knew that the damage was serious.

After the storm blew over, Echols drove into town to survey the damage. He

felt confident that his practice had been spared from the brunt of the storm. "When a disaster like this happens, you always think it's happening to someone else," Echols said. "I wasn't even thinking about my own office or the possibility that it could have been damaged."

The doctor's confidence quickly turned into fear as he got closer to the office and saw significant property damage and trees down in the streets. When he could not get any closer to the office in his vehicle, he parked and walked the remaining five blocks. He arrived at the spot where his office should have been and was blown away by the devastation: "It was like a scene from a Hollywood movie. Steam is coming off the office and sparks are everywhere. The walls are gone, the roof is gone. It was one of those drop to your knees moments in life," Echols said. >>



With the tornado sirens sounding, Echols hurried to save as many pieces of equipment and patient files as he could find before the next storm hit. He hid his CEREC AC in the shower, where he felt it would be safest from any further damage.



Despite the uncertainty of the situation, Echols had faith that he would recover from the tragedy. "It was shocking, but in the back of my mind, at that moment, I knew everything was going to be okay," he said.

The next day, Patterson Sales Representative Joe Cooper and Equipment Specialist Scott Crane arrived in Cullman to check on Echols and his family, assess the damage, salvage anything worth saving and discuss the doctor's options for moving forward. In the days following the tornado, Echols, Crane and Cooper forged a strong relationship and friendship. "This tragedy cemented my relationship with Patterson," said Echols. "Patterson really banded together and took care of my needs."

The Day Everything Changed

Echols graduated from the Alabama School of Dentistry in 2001. Three years later, he purchased a practice in Cullman from a retiring dentist. He started out slowly and though his practice wasn't extremely busy, he was happy. Over the years, he had contemplated expanding his practice, building a new practice and possibly purchasing the patient list from the dentist next door who planned to retire. However, those plans never came to fruition. "I was never 100 percent interested," Echols said. "Then came April 27, 2011, and everything changed."

The disaster jolted Echols out of his comfort zone and forced him to make some difficult decisions. Would he rebuild his practice, which would take at least a year, or would he renovate an existing building, which would only take three months? Crane and Cooper sat down with the doctor to discuss his options. "I asked him, 'Which choice is going to be the best decision for you, your family and patients, tomorrow and decades from now?' He appreciated that our focus was on making the right solution, versus the quickest or simplest solution at the time," Crane said.

Echols decided to purchase the patient list from the doctor next door, whose office had also been destroyed, and rebuild his practice where the previous office once stood. "I wanted to contribute back to the community to motivate other people in the area to rebuild," Echols said. "Joe and Scott had a big part in



helping me decide that."

New Opportunities Emerge

After helping Dr. Echols set up a temporary office in a local hospital, Crane and Cooper walked Echols through every step of creating a new, state-of-the-art office. First, they invited the doctor and his wife to the A-dec Educational Experience in Newberg, Ore., so they could experience the culture of the A-dec family and see firsthand how the equipment is made. There, Echols was able to test drive various chairs and delivery systems in more than 20 different working operatories, so he could compare and choose the best set-up for his new office. After the trip, going with A-dec was an easy choice for the doctor. "The equipment is really well made and it won me over," he said.

Echols wanted his new practice to be as streamlined and efficient as possible, and his equipment and technology choices reflect that philosophy. A-dec 533 Continental Delivery Systems on 511 dental chairs put all of Echols' accessories right at his fingertips, including his SoproLIFE intraoral cameras. This

configuration ensures that Echols does not have to twist and turn to access the tools he needs.

A purified water system pumps fresh water to the sterilization area and operatories, reducing downtime previously spent changing water bottles and buying distilled water. "It's a small thing but it makes a huge difference," Echols said.

Though he had previously used a competitor's digital sensors and practice management software, after seeing the dedication of his Patterson team and the integration capabilities, he decided to invest in Schick Elite sensors and Eaglesoft practice management software. "I wanted to call one number to service everything," Echols said. "This was my chance to make a clean break and make my office the most efficient it can be."

Coming Back Strong

After going through such a significant tragedy, Echols wanted to give his staff a space where they would feel comfortable and safe. He added a concrete safe room to the basement to give them more



security. He also made sure to include creature comforts such as extra windows in the operatories and two microwaves in the break room. "It's mentally taxing when you go through something like that and see your workplace destroyed," Echols said.

The practice also had to be comfortable and calming for the patients, who were still reeling from the destruction in their community. Outside, the practice blends seamlessly with the historical homes in the neighborhood, complete with a front porch and four rocking chairs. In the reception area, cozy couches flank a stately fireplace. However, the real focal point of the waiting area is the doctor's CEREC MC XL milling unit, displayed behind a glass partition on a dolly. Patients can watch restorations being milled and staff can easily access the unit from the hallway without entering the reception area.

In August 2012, Echols and his staff moved from the hospital to the new building. Just a few months later, he is already seeing a 50 percent increase in productivity and his passion for >>

dentistry has been rejuvenated. He is performing more cosmetic procedures than ever before and maximizing his CEREC AC powered by Bluecam. "I'm going to be here for the rest of my career," Echols said. "It has sparked something in me."

Echols credits Patterson for helping him come back so strong after the tragedy. But he also believes there's something bigger at play. "I believe things happen for a reason," Echols said. "I didn't intend to do this and now I'm sitting in my dream practice. I went through a tragedy and I came out stronger." **PT**

To learn more
about Jonathan B. Echols,
DMD, visit
facebook.com/cullmandentist or
cullmandentist.com.



To watch a video of Cullman Cosmetic & Family Dentistry, scan this QR code with your smartphone.

If you don't have a QR code reader on your phone, there are free apps available for download. Once you've got your free app, point your phone's camera at the QR Code and you'll be taken to the video!



From left to right:
Matt Schweikher, Jonathan B. Echols, DMD, Joe Cooper and Scott Crane

PATTERSON TEAM

Matt Schweikher, *Branch Manager*

Joe Cooper, *Sales Representative*

Scott Crane, *Equipment Specialist*

Don Sanders, *Service Technician*

Geoff Young, *Service Technician*

Tony Clemons, *Technology Service Technician*

Bob Morrison, *Technology Service Technician*

Doug Zannis, *CEREC Technician*

Dell McCraney, *CEREC Specialist*



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Basement

Main Floor

