

## **Robert Johnson Foundation to open Next to the Depot Museum**

Hazlehurst residents will get their first peek at the Robert Johnson Center, a new branch of the Robert Johnson Foundation, during the official grand opening on May 4<sup>th</sup> from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Located at 138 Ragsdale Street, next door to the Depot Museum, the new center hopes to bring the arts into the community through school programs and community projects.



According to Steven Johnson, Vice-President of the Robert Johnson Foundation and grandson of Robert Johnson, "Opening a location in Hazlehurst is a step toward fulfilling the mission of our organization. We want to help make Covich County a better place to live. We want to help through the arts."

The opening of the Robert Johnson Center in Hazlehurst is scheduled one day before the grand opening of the Robert Johnson Foundation Museum in Crystal Springs located at 218 E. Marion Avenue. Both events occur before the second annual Robert Johnson Blues festival which runs May 6<sup>th</sup> and May 7<sup>th</sup> at Chautauqua Park in Crystal Springs. The festival features Robert Lockwood Jr. and has a lineup that includes Reggie P., Sunny Ridell,

Crossroads, Soul Shot, Rocky Lawrence as well as, The Canton Spirituals and Lee Williams and the Spiritual O.C.'s.

When asked about why the foundation decided to open the new location in Hazlehurst, Johnson said with a smile, "The Foundation has always intended to become active in the Hazlehurst community. We've wanted to expand. You know, it's about Covich County for us. My grandfather didn't know when he was playing the blues here in Hazlehurst that he would become one of the most famous blues singers and guitarists ever. In fact, he didn't have any idea what he'd accomplished while he was alive. But, through this organization, we'd like to help kids in this region understand that they have opportunities and that the Robert Johnson Foundation can help them realize their potential--in their lifetime. We also want to help aging musicians who are in need. This new location will help us do that. So, on the 4<sup>th</sup>, we want the public to come out and see the center and enjoy the free entertainment."