



Keirsten tells the names of cars to father Nick while George, center, clowns for the camera. Jennifer holds baby Chloe at right. (Republican photo)

# Coltons drawn to Imperial by technology, feeling of caring

■ **Editor's note:** This is the one in a series of feature stories about people who have returned with their families to their hometown of Imperial, after working in other communities.

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THE IMPERIAL REPUBLICAN

Nick Colton grew up in Imperial, graduating from Chase County High School in 2000. After meeting future wife Jennifer while they both lived in Denver, they decided to return to town before they were married.

They were married June 12, 2004 and began raising their family in Imperial. But it wasn't as cut and dried as it sounds.

They met while working at Office Depot in Northglenn, Colo.

Nick then began working for Dish Network, overseeing technical operations for eight centers over a three-year period while in college.

He obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Network Management from Westwood College in Denver in 2003.

Jennifer received her Associates Degree in Medical Assisting from Everest Community College in 2002. She then was a medical assistant at Kaiser Permanente HMO for two years.

Dish Network is a big company, and Nick began to tire of it. "The position I was in, I was reporting to people high up and I got tired

of the politics...of a big company. I was 'working for the man' and wanted to work for a smaller company and make a difference," he added.

The economy in Denver was also "going bust," he noted.

Allo Communications of Imperial offered Nick a job. Jennifer was happy. "I think I was looking for something different, a change of pace. When we visited Nick's parents here I liked it."

They moved to Imperial in August of 2003, when Nick became Director of Network Operations for Allo. He makes sure fiber networks are operational and evaluates new products and services.

Jennifer was first employed by Imperial Beef, then by Chase County Community Hospital for two years. She then joined Allo for three years as a purchasing and billing agent.

She now stays home with Keirsten, 4; George, almost 3 and Chloe, 3 months.

Jennifer appreciates the 'quietness and slow pace' of Imperial. It's a change from her upbringing in Denver and graduation from Thornton High School in 2000.

The 27-year old also appreciates not worrying about her children playing outside while she and Nick prepare dinner.

Nick, 26, thinks its important that in Imperial "Everyone's not out to better themselves over others. There's a sense of community. Everyone cares about each other.

In Denver, everyone just wants to get ahead."

He said the town hadn't changed a whole lot since he graduated from high school, so there weren't many adjustments for him to make.

However, Nick did note that when they pulled in with their U-Haul about 8 p.m. the night they moved back, Jennifer told him she was going to the store to get something to eat.

The stores in Imperial closed for the evening back then.

"It took a good three years to completely adjust to small town living," Jennifer laughed, "and say I'd never move back to Denver. Having kids helped."

The couple belongs to St. Patrick's Catholic Church, where Nick is a member of the Knights of Columbus. Most of their time is taken up with their children and extended family living in town.

The couple agreed that Imperial is a great place to move back to if a person is married and wanting to raise a family. "If you're in a relationship, it's a good place to settle down," Jennifer said.

Nick added that the couple's mortgage payments are less than their apartment rent in Denver. "There are trade-offs. Wages are fairly good out here, and the economy is better than a lot of areas."

And, there are those children to raise, surrounded by grandparents, aunts and uncles, and extended family.

