

## **Goodbye to AT&T tower**

*By Rick Maier*

I love the Macon landscape - except for one monstrous blemish. So pardon me if I seem overly excited, but the big ugly transmission tower on Cherry Street will soon be torn down!

My information comes from a reliable source, and has been confirmed through other avenues.

The gargantuan wrack of red rails at the top of Cherry Street was erected in the late 1950's as one in a series of line-of-sight stations to transmit long distance calls via microwave signals.

In the last several years, microwave transmission has been replaced with underground fiber optics cables that carry a lot more conversations cheaper, better and faster.

Over the years I have often thought that I was the only one who could see the misshapen monstrosity. Folks born around Macon have somehow tuned it out, whereas I notice the darn thing at every turn. People have no idea what I'm talking about until I point to it, and they said: "Oh, THAT tower!"

Oh well, it will be gone soon.

Weeks ago I noticed that a sister tower just off I-75 in Forsyth had been partially dismantled. They removed the big transmission dishes, but left the tower structure to hold a few spindly antennae on top. I was hoping that wouldn't happen in Macon, and from what I hear it's not.

AT&T is apparently stepping up to the plate. I applaud them for spending what is probably a small fortune to completely dismantle the tower behind BellSouth (old timers remember when these companies were part of the same corporation).

I'd like to think that my April 2000 letter to the Telegraph prompted the decision, but I suspect that it's just that the old structure has outlasted its usefulness and the lease on the space has expired.

Gone will be any chance of turning the steel structure into Macon's own Eiffel Tower, a shrine to the loblolly pine or a revolving restaurant with a view.

Photographers will no longer need to find the right angle or brush out the tower when taking pictures of Macon. I've suspended any plans to organize a mob to storm the tower and tear it down like goalposts after a game.

I'm excited because this move complements all the other fine improvements to downtown over the past few years – the Greenway park and trail, the new museums, updated lights and sidewalks, loft apartments, and great new restaurants.

Even Milton Heard, who jokes about using the tower as a landmark for people to find Hart's Mortuary, will be happy when the beast is gone. Never again will he have to refinish his fleet after they paint the tower and sprinkle everything below with red and white speckles.

On behalf of the entire community, thanks to AT&T and BellSouth for taking the high road and removing this once vital, but now dated structure. In a few months, the magnificent steeples, handsome tall buildings and proud flag atop the bank will dominate our beautiful cityscape once again.