As director of Abilene's Convention and Visitors Bureau, it is Julie (Roller) Weeks' job to promote everything Abilene. Which gives her a special bond with Elliott Belden, whose family was the second to live in the home she and her husband, Ryan, now own.

Belden was director of public relations and advertising for United Telephone, the wildly successful enterprise founded by Abilene's own C.L. Brown that today is better known as Sprint.

"He worked in PR for the company," Julie said. "And I work in PR for Abilene."

The stucco Spanish Colonial Revival style home at 805 Spruceway is the first home Julie has owned – "I have only lived in four houses my entire life" – but it wasn't her first choice.

That was the house next door, at 106 Naroma Court. The two houses, along with two others, were built in 1926 by Brown as homes for United Telephone executives (one of whom was married to Brown's daughter Mina). Salina architect C.W. Shaver, who was the first registered architect in Kansas, designed all four homes in the Southwestern style. Today the homes make up the Naroma Court Historic District, one of five historic districts in Abilene.

Julie was smitten by the coffered ceilings in the house at 106 Naroma Court, but buying a house was just too big a step for her. And in any case, it sold quickly. The architectural style, though, made a lasting impression.

Then 805 Spruceway came onto the market. It had equally attractive coffered ceilings. It had the same Spanish influence, It too was priced above her comfort level. This time she mustered the courage to make an offer, and then a counter and when it was over she became the owner of not only a piece of Abilene's history but a house she dearly loves.

"It was the ceiling," she says. "You walk in and it's just so grand. Then once we got the carpet out and had the floors redone – we got our money back on the floors."

She loves the house – she really does – but that doesn't mean she loves everything about it. "I hate this chandelier," she says as she looks at the dining room ceiling. "I absolutely hate it. But have we changed it out yet? No. Will we eventually? Yes."

And some of the shortcomings are more than cosmetic.

"I think that when we first looked at it, [her husband Ryan] saw all the work that needed to be done. I just really like it," Julie says. "He's really handy, and really patient, and I don't have either one of those skills. He will stick with it until it's right. Ryan is slowly falling in love with it. He appreciates it now."

The home and others in the historic district were built after Brown asked the city to build a new north-south street between 8th and 10th, just west of Buckeye called Spruceway.

The first occupant was Amanda Gray and her two children. She was the widow of Edward Gray, an electrical engineer working for Brown who died before the house was completed. After living there for several years, she rented it to the Beldens from 1933 to 1936. The second owner was Emmett Graham, who was the first secretary of what today is called the

Eisenhower Foundation. The only other owner of the home before Julie bought it last year was Pat Sweeney, who bought it in 1968.

One of the notable features of the house is its windows – there are many, and they are not necessarily standard-shaped. The small foyer has a remarkably tall, skinny window, while the dining room has windows with cutout corners.

The hardwood floors present an irresistible running surface for Julie's 4-year-old nephew, who thrills at being unable to stay upright as he attempts the corner from the living room to the dining room at top speed in his socks.

The location is another important attribute: even though it is just a block off Buckeye, the traffic noise is minimal. The street is one of the very few in Abilene with its own acorn-style street lights and stone posts.

There are other reminders of the different era in which the house was built.

"It's funny to me that we have telephone outlets all over, but we don't have a land line," Julie says. "The house was built with telephone money. C.L. Brown would really be taken aback." It's not difficult for visitors to conclude which state university is most admired in the household. And there is plenty of artwork on the walls to reflect Julie's earlier job of promoting all things Kansas.

The living room has one of the more unusual decorations to be found in Abilene. It turns out Julie has a thing about the Statue of Liberty.

"There are a couple dozen Statues of Liberty around the State of Kansas, and I have visited all except the one in Kansas City," she says. "And I had a chip on my shoulder that there was no Statue of Liberty in Abilene."

A friend found one for sale – a 6-foot tall version cast in aluminum.

"And I hauled her home. In my Jeep. I had to drive home with her torch underneath my arm." Julie is acutely aware that a home with the history of hers, as well preserved, in such an ideal neighborhood, would in most parts of the country be vastly more expensive.

"To be a young family living in a historic home – they're affordable in Abilene," she says. "But you just have to have the vision that you're not going to have a perfect house right off the bat. Or ever. We can update along the way. I can change out the chandelier. I can change out the counter-tops. But the rest of it you can't replace."