

Winfield barn made into bed and breakfast

By Ron Wilson
*Director
Huck Boyd National Institute
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The head of security for the National Football League is staying overnight in Kansas. Is he lodging at some four-star urban hotel? No, he's staying in a barn - specifically, a barn which has been remodeled into an elegant bed and breakfast in rural Kansas. Today in Kansas Profile, we'll continue our intermittent series on historic barns, but these barns have taken on an entirely different life.

Martin and Cheryl Rude are owners of the Barns at Timber Creek, a bed and breakfast located near Winfield. They met while Cheryl was a youth minister in Wichita and Mar-

tin was in a Christian band. They married and moved to Dallas.

After children, they opted to move back to Kansas and took positions at Southwestern College in Winfield. Cheryl is the faculty director for an undergraduate and graduate leadership development program and Martin works with students preparing to lead worship in the church.

In 1997, Martin and Cheryl purchased a rural property along Timber Creek north of Winfield. This place included an 1881 stone barn and an old stone quarry. They considered remodeling the stone barn into a home, but decided to leave it in its historic state.

Then they found another barn west of Winfield, near the rural town of Oxford, population 1,162 people.

Now, that's rural. A hailstorm had recently taken the roof off this old barn and a flood had taken the foundation. Martin and Cheryl decided to save the old barn and moved it to their place north of Winfield where they remodeled it into a residential bed and breakfast.

"There's no limit to what you can accomplish with tenacity and complete ignorance," Martin said with a smile. "Being Kansans, we'd seen too many old barns get torn down. We connected with the Barn Again movement and found people who could help us rebuild this structure."

When the paint was still drying on just two of the five guest rooms, the first lodging request came. During the annual bluegrass festival in Winfield, the local chamber

of commerce called and asked if some of the overflow out-of-town visitors could stay overnight. They did, and enjoyed it so much that they told other people. Interest grew and the rest of the rooms were quickly finished. The Barns at Timber Creek opened.

In the bluff east of the house was the old stone quarry which had become overgrown with trees. Martin cleaned out the trees and placed a gazebo at the top. When some Southwestern College students asked to have a wedding there, they rearranged some of the old quarry stones to make a natural, secluded outdoor chapel.

Meanwhile, the original stone barn on the place was in need of repair as well. Martin took a year cleaning vegetation from the old

barn site. He burned the brush, but eight days after his brush burn, a spark from an old stump caught the barn on fire. Community members helped clean it up. Martin used cables to straighten the old stone sides. Then a funnel cloud came through and took down one wall. The Rudes finally decided to fully restore the barn, with modern doors, floors, and structural trusses. Not all of the lofts were put back in, so it is very spacious.

"It's not historic in that sense, but it is alive," Martin said. Now this building is used for parties, weddings, and receptions.

The bed and breakfast has been busy. Rooms are decorated in various themes reflecting local history and culture: Railroad, Barnyard, Southwestern College, Granary

and the Birdhouse. The Birdhouse, for example, is located in the loft of the barn and accesses a balcony from which visitors can view the surroundings from a 40-foot-tall perch. Guests have come from coast to coast and as far away as Scotland, Germany, Greece, and Malaysia.

For more information, go to timbercreekbarns.com.

The head of security for the National Football League is overnighing in Kansas. The place where he chooses to stay is the Barns at Timber Creek. We commend Martin and Cheryl Rude for making a difference by preserving this history and sharing this hospitality.

Singing the blues



Kieron Lafferty as "Elwood Blues" (left) and Wayne Catania as "Jake Blues" sang to a crowd during the Official Blues Brothers Review, sponsored by the Western Plains Arts Association in Oakley recently. Photo by Evan Barnum/The Goodland Star-News

Norton facility files for bankruptcy

By Carleen Bell
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Stemming from company leaders say is too much debt and low occupancy, the Whispering Pines assisted living facility in Norton has recently filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in Kansas Bankruptcy Court to reorganize the facility's debt. According to information from court documents of case number 12-40080-JMK of the United States Bankruptcy Court in the District of Kansas, Norton Retirement and Assisted Living, LLC (Whispering Pines) filed for bankruptcy on Jan. 26, citing concerns over debt and ability to continue operation.

Prior to the filing, the Whispering Pines board of Directors contracted with a company as GraceTeam. Though a temporary appointment, the GraceTeam is working to manage Whispering Pines and help facilitate the bankruptcy process.

Whispering Pines Board of Directors President Ted Sanko reported Thursday that the purpose of filing for bankruptcy is to reorganize the company's debt and make long-term operation feasible again.

"The facility is going to run like it always has except with a different manager," Sanko said. "After the GraceTeam is no longer managing the facility, it will go back to local management and we will be out applications to find a new manager."

According to John Grace, President of GraceTeam, the consulting

team will be working with Whispering Pines through the bankruptcy process for six months. Grace cited low occupancy and heavy debt as cause for the restructuring.

"The goal is keep the facility locally owned and keep providing services to the community," he said. "Restructuring will lead to a better financial position and help alleviate some of the concerns Whispering Pines now faces."

Sanko reported that the bankruptcy process is "moving along well" and will take five to six months to complete. Officials had their first bankruptcy court hearing in Topeka on Wednesday.

While the GraceTeam is managing Whispering Pines, the facility is operating under the interim leadership of Evelyn Walters. The facility currently offers 26 retirement living apartments, with 10 of those dedicated to assisted living. The facility currently employs approximately 20 people.

"We didn't file for bankruptcy to shut down the facility or change the services it provides," Sanko emphasized. "We want to make some positive changes and possibly even expand the services we provide. Restructuring our debt will help ensure that our community continues to have access to this much-needed facility."

corrections

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College technicians in demand

By Leland Williams
and Dan Ordonez

*Northwest Kansas
Technical College*

The word needs to get out that Goodland is home of an Engineering and Drafting Technology program whose graduates are being sought by world-class companies. The program at Northwest Tech prepares graduates for starting an exciting career as civil, mechanical or architectural technicians.

Technicians are involved in bridge, railroad, structural and mechanical design. Mechanical design can include gas plants - a

booming industry right now - or farm machinery. Technicians can also go into civil engineering with jobs like field surveying and construction inspection.

The program has connections with high-profile firms from the central United States, with offices in the region that will be interviewing and attending the program's advisory committee meeting on February 9th and 10th, firms such as CH2MHill, HNTB, and Wallace Engineering as well as Kansas based companies such as SMH, AGCO and Wilson & Company. Other visitors the program will host will

be Michael Baker and Associates from Colorado, and Woofter Construction from Colby. These advisory committee members will be consulting with the program about curriculum and equipment and offering jobs to graduates ready to go to work in a progressive field.

Instructors Ordonez and Zimmerman are always ready to give visitors a tour of the program and talk about the tremendous potential of this career path. Call them at (785) 890-1542. Go online to nwktc.edu, click on Academics, then on Construction to find Engineering and Drafting Technology.

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Kindergarten Screening 2012

For all children who have reached the age of 5 (five) on or before August 31, 2012

Wednesday, February 15
8 a.m. - 4 p.m. (no appt. necessary)
At West Elementary (912 W. 12th)

Each child will complete a screening in August at the Elementary School Enrollment.

****IMPORTANT**** Bring to screening: certified copy of birth certificate, Child's immunization records and copy of social security card and School Entry Physical!

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