

## Ninmans Host 163<sup>rd</sup> Shawano County Barn Quilt

When you drive by the Bill Ninman farm at N3364 State Highway 22 between Shawano and Embarrass in the Town of Belle Plaine, not only will you see wagonloads of pumpkins, squash and other farm produce, you'll also get to see Shawano County's newest barn quilt.

The quilt, Shawano County's 163<sup>rd</sup>, is painted in beautiful earth tones that complement the white painted barn. In the center of the quilt pattern, called "Campaign Trail," is a pumpkin, appropriate since Bill has enjoyed growing pumpkins since he was a young boy, according to his mother Etta, who also lives on the farm.

The Ninman quilt was sponsored by Qualheims True Value of Shawano. The store's owner Willis Qualheim said that as a locally owned business, they believe in giving back to the community. "The barn quilt project is an example of how we like to support our area," Qualheim said. "It's really a nice project that has brought a lot of interest and attention to our area."

Qualheim's parents, Gerry and June, started in the hardware store business in downtown Shawano in 1979, purchasing the original Coast to Coast store. Willis joined the business in 1981. It was switched to a True Value store in 1995 and now has 50 full and part time employees.

Bill Ninman has had a produce stand at Qualheims True Value at 1345 East Green Bay Street since 1997. He is there every Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. from late May through late October. During the week, you can purchase produce at Ninman's Century old farm that was homesteaded in 1866 by Bill's great grandfather Friedricke Ninman. It was later sold to Fred's son August, then to Art and Etta in 1950. Bill purchased the farm in 1985.

Originally a dairy farm with 24 cows, Bill sold the cows in 1992. The majority of the 118 acre farm is rented out, except for about ten acres Bill uses to grow his produce. The barn on which the quilt is displayed was built in 1951, but the oldest building on the farm is a granary that dates back to 1876.

Anyone who would like to participate in Shawano County's barn quilt project can contact project coordinator Jim Leuenberger at 715-524-5685 or via email at [jamesmleuenberger@yahoo.com](mailto:jamesmleuenberger@yahoo.com). You can also contact Patti Peterson, tourism manager at the Shawano Chamber of Commerce at 715-524-2139 or [tourism@shawano.com](mailto:tourism@shawano.com). A link on the Shawano Chamber of Commerce Web site includes photos and information on every barn quilt on display in Shawano County. Just go to [www.shawanocountry.com](http://www.shawanocountry.com) and click on the barn quilt icon.

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