

Kropfs Sponsor County's 179th Barn Quilt

Kropf Meat Processing of Bowler has sponsored Shawano County's 179th barn quilt. It is on display on their barn next to their meat processing facility at N7666 Kolpack Road, just north of Bowler off County Road D.

The farm was homesteaded by a Malueg family and was operated as a dairy farm. The original barn the quilt is displayed on was made of logs but burned in 1924. It was rebuilt the following year. Owner Mark Kropf said a lot of work has been done to restore the barn over the years, including adding a metal roof, new flooring, and rain gutters.

The pattern Mark Kropf and his sister Cindy chose for their quilt is called Rose Mosaic. "A couple of our neighbors have barn quilts and of course we've seen a lot of others around the county, so we thought it would be nice to have one on our barn too," Mark said.

After coming to America from Germany, August Kropf started the Kropf family meat processing business in Tigerton in 1912. Later it was moved to downtown Bowler. In 1936, his son Victor took over the business and moved it to its present location north of town just off County D.

Victor's son Jim took over the business in 1960 and added on to the buildings four times as the business grew. "Being a meat processor is all I ever did," Jim said, "just like my dad and grandfather. I wouldn't have stayed in the business if I didn't enjoy it. The best part has been meeting all the people who come in."

At first, only butchering and processing was done at Kropfs, but now they sell meat wholesale and retail and also smoke meats and make sausage. Their busiest time of the year is in the fall when they process over 3,500 pounds of meat daily. Overall for the year, they average processing about 10,000 pounds of meat per week.

Jim and Donna had four children, including son Mark and daughter Cindy who took over the management of the business in 1993. They have seven full time employees and a few part time during the peak season.

"What we are most proud of is the quality and flavor of the complete line of homemade sausage and fresh meats we process here," Mark said.

The Kropf barn quilt was painted by the Shawano County barn quilt committee and was put on display by Bruce Teetzen and LeRoy Raddant of Raddant Electric in Shawano.

Anyone who would like to participate in Shawano County's barn quilt project can contact project coordinator Jim Leuenberger at 715-524-5685 or by email at jamesmleuenberger@yahoo.com. You can also contact Patti Peterson, tourism manager at the Shawano Chamber of Commerce at tourism@shawano.com or by phone at 715-524-2139. A link on the Shawano Chamber Web site

includes photos and information on every quilt on display in Shawano County. Just go to www.shawanocountry.com and click on the barn quilt icon.