

County's 281st Barn Quilt Honors American Farmers

Shawano County's 281st barn quilt, called Saluting America's Farmers, is now on display on the dairy farm of Clayton and Pauline Nooyen, W1580 Highway 156, Pulaski. Pauline came up with the idea for the pattern and worked with project coordinator Jim Leuenberger on its design. "We just love it," Pauline said. "It's beautiful."

Pauline sponsored the barn quilt as a Christmas present for Clayton and as a gift for their 40th wedding anniversary which they celebrated on December 14. "My idea of a quilt is squares patterned and designed by using pieces of life," Pauline said. "Ours symbolizes the way we've always been able to pull things together. To me, it also stands for the backbone of America, the farmer, and how we live our lives."

Clayton and Pauline bought their farm in 1983 from Ray Zablocki. At the time, there was no barn on the farm, so with the help of family members, they got one built, doing all the cement work themselves, and also planted crops. Today they farm 109 acres and rent an additional 20 acres. The Holstein dairy herd totals 60 milk cows and about 40 head of young stock.

Pauline was a 4-H leader for 28 years and is proud that their son, Clayton Jr., and his wife Wendy, met when they were 4-H members. "We have three wonderful grandchildren, Caleb, Hailey and Casey, all of whom love being on the farm and love looking at all the barn quilts," Pauline said.

In June 2013, the machine shed on the barn burned, destroying a lot of their farm equipment. They built a new one in the same location, on which their barn quilt is mounted. "It was pretty devastating at the time," Pauline said, "but we realized we just had to pick up the pieces and move ahead. And that's what we did."

The Nooyen barn quilt was painted by the Shawano County barn quilt committee and was put on display by LeRoy Raddant and Bruce Teetzen 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 jamesmleuenberger@yahoo.com or by phone at 715-524-5685. You can also contact Patti Peterson, tourism manager at the Shawano Country Chamber of Commerce at 715-524-2139 or tourism@shawano.com. A link on the Shawano Chamber Web site includes photos and information on every barn quilt on display in Shawano County. Just go to www.shawanocountry.com and click on the barn quilt icon.

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