

Lemkes Sponsor Patriotic Barn Quilt

When Lee and Rita Lemke, W4364 Lake Drive, Shawano, decided to sponsor a barn quilt as part of Shawano County's barn quilt project, they knew they wanted a pattern with a patriotic theme since Lee was a Naval officer in WWII and the Korean War. "Rita and I feel a great love for our country," Lee said, "and we wanted a patriotic quilt everyone could enjoy."

The Lemke quilt now adorns a barn on property the Lemke family has owned since 1893. The original small barn and farm house were built in 1897 by Julius Lemke. His son Elmer built the present barn and named the property "Deer Haven Ranch."

In 1963, Lee and Rita bought the old farm house and used it as a summer home. They raised six children who ran a mini bike trail ride through their woods as a summer job. "Even some Green Bay Packers came to ride these small bikes," Lee said.

Lee's sisters, Sandra Lemke Vanderwater and Luanne Lemke Gabriel grew up at Deer Haven Ranch. Lee and Rita's son Mark and his family live next door.

In 1982, Lee retired from International Harvester after 34 years working on construction equipment. He is a pilot and flies his 1946 Ercoupe from his grass strip. Rita loves and shows Arabian horses.

The Lemke barn quilt is the 34th now on display in Shawano County.

Photo caption

Lee and Rita Lemke are shown with their barn quilt, an original Patriotic Five-pointed Star, located at W4364 Lake Drive, Shawano.