



Dining with a View Foster's Riverview Inn

The drive along the River Road, Highway 178, is a beautiful one no matter what the season. Spring and summer produce greens of every hue, fall has the gorgeous colors of autumn taking center stage, and winter has the white snow and frozen Chippewa River.

Along this road is a longstanding establishment that takes advantage of the seasonal view. Known as Foster's Riverview Inn, the building originally sat farther back from the road. The original building burned down, and the owners at that time rebuilt closer to the road so patrons could enjoy a view of the river while dining.

The current building was built by the Weisheipl family in the 1930s. The Weisheipls also owned the Edge-water Motel to the north and the house next door to the inn. The family lived in the house.

The Weisheipls sold the business to the Brunet family. Howard Foster bought the business next and operated it for 24 years. He renamed the establishment Foster's, and that is what it is called today even though the business has gone through several more owners.

Foster sold the business to Ed Spletter, who operated it for 26 years. He was followed by the Jannusch family, which only had it a very short time before Spletter regained ownership. Kevin and Bobbie Meistad, who own it today, bought Foster's from Spletter.

Although Kevin and Bobbie bought Foster's in early 2000, they did not open until July 1 of that year as they spent two and a half months cleaning the place up. Kevin said in addition to some sweat-producing labor, it took 26 gallons of paint to make the place presentable.

Prior to buying Foster's, Kevin and his family owned and operated Blondie's in Mondovi for 23 years.

Bobbie had come to the area from Montana on vacation with her family, and she met Kevin in Mondovi. Following their marriage, the couple looked for a place to buy for more than two years and liked the area near Holcombe and Cornell. Eventually they bought Foster's.

Kevin and Bobbie are an engaging, likeable couple who really enjoy what they do. They mingle with their customers, joking with them, generally making everybody who walks through their door feel welcome and immediately comfortable.

Kevin and Bobbie take pride in the fact that everything they serve is made from scratch. They use no processed foods in their meal preparation, which shows in both quality and taste. Their beer batter recipe is a 30-year-old one handed down from Kevin's mother, while the baked beans recipe is from his grandmother. They also serve a lot of homemade pizza that is absolutely delicious.

Kevin considers steak their best menu item because all Foster's steaks are fresh, hand cut, and served on "sizzle platters." When the waitress brings a steak to a table, you can hear the sizzle all the way from the kitchen to the table. Your mouth waters despite yourself.

Bobbie does the majority of the cooking. She took over as cook two years ago and cooks every night the restaurant is open. Kevin does most of the catering, although the couple works together for bigger events. Bobbie says the Wednesday night liver-and-onions special is her least favorite meal to prepare, mainly because she does not like liver. But, it is delicious, just like everything else on the menu. Her favorite menu item to make is the hand-cut steaks because she loves the way they smell and sizzle.



Kevin and Bobbi Meistad greet customers at Foster's Riverview Inn.

The second Monday of every month, the couple takes the show on the road to Rose's Bay on Potato Lake. There, they grill steaks and serve anywhere from 100 to 125 people on any given night. They have been doing that for five years, and because Foster's is normally closed Monday, this is something they can do together.

The interior of Foster's is decorated with all sorts of antique clothing and memorabilia that the couple has accumulated and displayed on the walls and in bookcases. There are two wood-burning fireplaces, and if Kevin does not light them, his customers let him know that he is slacking off. He said chopping the wood, which he does himself, is a lot of hard, back-breaking work, but his customers appreciate the fire, especially on cold winter evenings or in the fall when there is a chill in the air. After all, as Kevin pointed out, there is nothing better than warming yourself by a nice fire.

In addition to the main dining and bar areas, there is a spot behind the building where people can go to relax



and where parties are held and catered. There are tents in case of bad weather, a fire pit, and plenty of parking. Recently, Kevin and Bobbie hosted a birthday party in the back yard for a very well known Cornell resident.

In addition to hosting birthday and graduation parties, Foster's caters for corporate functions such as Xcel Energy and serves as far as La Crosse, Marshfield, and New Richmond. The Meistads wanted to get the restaurant going first so did not really get into catering until 2005, at which time things became very busy. Kevin had done catering in Mondovi and enjoyed it so it seemed like a good fit. Their biggest catering job was for 600 people. They fixed a Wisconsin fish fry for the BMW motorcycle rally at the Northern Wisconsin State Fairgrounds the weekend of July 4, which made the purchase of Kevin's newest "toy" a necessity. The latest acquisition is a deep fryer capable of holding three 30-gallon containers of oil.

Usually, there are 12 employees and Kevin says during busy times even that is not enough. He said it is dif-

ficult to find people willing to work the hours Foster's is open, which he understands. He and Bobbie have missed a lot of family functions over the years because one of them is always at the inn, ready to serve their customers, but that's the way they want it. They pride themselves on being hands-on owners. They love the area and say they have met so many nice people from Cornell, Holcombe, Chippewa Falls, and elsewhere they would not want to be anywhere else. They received an offer to purchase another place a year ago but turned it down after deciding Foster's was where they wanted to be.



Above: The back of the inn has a dining area and buffet table. Left: In back of the inn, customers can relax and have an outdoor party.

The couple owns a cabin by the lake which they rent out, and they have rented the four rooms above the inn to pipeline workers in the past. They would rent them again, but only if all four could be rented at the same time.

Kevin and Bobbie have two daughters, Jennifer and Arica, who both work at Foster's part time. They also have three grandchildren, Kendall, Kaytryn, and Hannah.

Foster's Riverview Inn is open Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday from 4:30 p.m. for the bar and 5 p.m. for the restaurant. Sunday, the restaurant opens at 4 p.m. Reservations are appreciated for larger parties but not necessary for a few people, although a diner with no reservations may have to wait for a table on a busy night. Foster's can be reached at 715-239-6611 or online at fosters.catering@yahoo.com.

Take a nice drive along the River Road and enjoy the scenery. Then visit Foster's and prepare yourself for a delightful, delicious meal served with care by Kevin and Bobbie.—Carol Paus ■

CVEC Linemen Complete Safety Training

Each year, Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC) requires its linemen to complete Pole Top Rescue, Bucket Evacuation, and Aerial Basket Rescue testing to become re-certified as linemen. This testing is a component of the Wisconsin Rural Electric Cooperative Safety Manual. Once a year, a safety director from Dairyland Power Cooperative travels to CVEC to spend the day conducting these tests.

The Pole Top Rescue test requires linemen to wear climbers on their boots and a climbing belt to ascend to the top of an electrical pole to rescue a 160-pound dummy, which represents another lineman who has become injured (i.e. burned, heart attack, etc.) on the job.

Linemen use climbers when climbing a pole without rungs or without the benefit of a truck with a utility lift. The climbers are hooks that



Above: CVEC linemen practice pole-top rescue. Inset at left: When climbing poles, linemen wear these special climbers; the hook runs vertically alongside their leg with the gaff extending past the sole of the boot.

are attached via a series of straps and pads to the lineman's legs. The shaft of the climbing hook goes under the boot, and the gaff, or metal spur, is embed-

ded into the pole while climbing.

Bucket Evacuation simulates a situation where the bucket truck is not functioning properly and the lineman who is up in the bucket needs to get down to safety. Aerial Basket Rescue is the procedure to retrieve an injured coworker from the bucket by using the lower controls to get the bucket to the ground, then tilting the bucket so the lineman can pull the injured lineman to safety.

Preplanning for possible emergencies is important, and prompt action by trained employees is essential in effecting rescue operations. CVEC values its employees, and the purpose of this training is to help ensure that if an emergency situation should arise, linemen will react and respond properly to best protect the safety of themselves and their coworkers. ■



These photos show a bucket evacuation test in progress.



October is Co-op Month

Cooperatives are part of the self-help tradition of America. They are based on values not unlike those we subscribe to individually, including self-responsibility, democracy, equality, honesty, and social responsibility.

In addition to these common values, seven basic principles serve as guidelines to provide a democratic structure for co-ops around the world.

Those seven cooperative principles are:

- Voluntary and open membership
- Democratic member control
- Member economic participation
- Autonomy and independence
- Education, training and information
- Cooperation among cooperatives
- Concern for community

Co-ops Are All Around Us

Cooperatives are businesses organized by people to provide just about any goods and services people need. Cooperatives offer credit and financial services, health care, child care, housing, and insurance. Cooperatives sell food, farm supplies, and hardware. They provide utilities, such as electricity, telephone, television, and Internet service.

Throughout the United States, approximately 48,000 cooperatives of all kinds serve 120 million citizens. Worldwide, an estimated 750,000 cooperatives serve 730 million members.

EXPERIENCE THE CO-OP DIFFERENCE

Capital Credit Retirement Change

We will be changing our general retirement of capital credits this year. Retirement amounts less than \$25 will be applied to any active member's electric bill. This change should save Chippewa Valley Electric up to \$2,000 in check processing and mailing costs.


A number of checks will still be written to inactive members and amounts greater than the \$25 cutoff. We will also be mailing the checks directly from our printer, so they can be mailed presorted at reduced postage.

We know quite a few of you look forward to the annual retirement check, which many of you will not be receiving this year because of this change. We are doing this to help reign in our continually increasing operating costs and thank you for your understanding.

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**Chippewa Valley
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