

Full service with family feel at Harbor Recreation

By Jack McLaughlin
Special to the Lakes Edition

Newville's own Harbor Recreation, located south of Edgerton and just across the Newville Bridge, has offered water-sport services to area residents for nearly 40 years, after opening in 1980, on the shores of the Rock River just below Lake Koshkonong.

The local business is a full-service marine dealership (complete with a boat showroom) selling a variety of watercraft, including Manitou Pontoons, Crestliner boats, Honda, Suzuki, Evinrude, and Mercury outboards, in addition to MerCruiser Stern drives and a full line of marine accessories. With such an extensive offering, sales manager Mark Richardson is confident that customers will be able to find a craft specifically suited for their needs.

"We sell primarily pontoon boats, both twin and triple tube, fishing boats for those who primarily fish, as well as fish-n-ski style boats for those who like a more multi-purpose boat," Richardson said.

In addition to providing watercraft for all varieties of use, Harbor Recreation supplies the area with

much needed, top-notch service and maintenance.

"Boat and engine sales have been and are a large part of our business, but I believe that our quality service shop has been a big part of generating boat sales. It all starts with service before and after the sale," Richardson noted, adding that each employed technician is factory trained.

A large part of this quality service the store is able to provide comes down to one irreplaceable factor: location. With the Rock River as Harbor Recreation's backyard, repairs and other issues can be understood and sorted out with a certainty and precision that wouldn't otherwise exist.

"Being able to test repaired and serviced boats and engines on the water really helps to get the job done right," Richardson said.

What's more, this waterfront locale allows the business to act as a marina as well, providing boat slips and storage.

And even though the Rock County business can match the selection and services of larger chain stores, it's been locally-owned and family-run since its start.

Patriarch Jerry Richardson, now holding more than 50 years of industry experience, first worked at the Janesville-based Richardson Marina, opened in 1946 by his father Roy Richardson. The store then moved to Newville in 1960, and Richardson eventually relocated onto the banks of the Rock River in 1980 under the name Harbor Recreation. Now it is operated primarily by Mark and his sister, Sara Lipke.

While decades have passed for the business, the store has retained its family-run character.

"Everyone in our family has had a hand in running the business," Mark Richardson stated.

Harbor Recreation's family-owned approach is visible not only in the store's rich local history,

but also in their community-focused approach to business. Not only are yearly fishing seminars, on a variety of topics (catching Muskies and lake ecology, for example), held on-site free of charge, the store also supports a large number of important organizations.

One of these is Take-a-Vet Fishing, a nonprofit group that organizes fishing trips for military veterans free of charge.

"The founder of Take-A-Vet Fishing, Jay Garstecki, has been a customer of ours for years. After he started, we know it was something that we wanted to be a part of," Richardson recalled.

As Mark Richardson's son and nephew are both current service members, and founder Jerry Richardson is a veteran of



Above: Boats, parts and supplies in Harbor Recreation's showroom. The Rock River serves as Harbor Recreation's picturesque backyard. (Photos submitted by Jack McLaughlin)



the Navy, Harbor Recreation takes their commitment to the armed forces seriously. "It's a great way to give back to those who keep us free," Mark Richardson said.

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