

New owners continue building on Anchor's legacy

*Michelle Lovrine Honeyager
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Anchor has brand new owners: Kevin and Debbie Brown, along with their partner Marilyn Kruse. They bought the bar from the Kinnetts in September of last year. The new owners plan to keep favorite events and amenities going, as well as expand on the bar's activities in a big way. John Kinnett, the old owner, is still running the boat launch.

"We're going to keep it going in the direction it has been going in," said Kevin Brown. "Our goal is to continue the events that they're having and add to them. Since John rebuilt the facility with the upstairs banquet hall and the balcony, there's different activities that we can bring into the building, like the comedy shows, dueling pianos and a hypnotist comedy show we've brought in already. There's just a lot of activities that we can do on this property. That was always the direction John was going."

After a fire in 2014, the bar was rebuilt to be three times the size it once was and now contains 10,000 square feet. The rebuild added a small and large banquet hall and a larger bar area.

Brown also plans to build up the administra-

tion of Anchor to handle all of the activities that are going on now and in the future. Brown says that the building itself has a capacity of more than 600 people and during certain events they could have more than 1,000 people on the premises.

In regards to operations, Brown said, "Right now we have bookings where there are three or four things going on throughout the day. We have to break down areas and set them back up for something else, and you need to have an administration, staff and management that is able to handle it. That's probably been the biggest change. Things started out here years ago as a little bar. And then the previous owners rebuilt this place, and we have to utilize it."

Brown said building up management could take a couple of years. He's a large proponent of promoting from within, and, as Brown puts it, "You never know who that person is going to be."

Looking to boost the Newville area

Brown also has big plans for bringing people into the area from the surrounding communities. With a roughly 30-minute distance from the west of Madison, and being right

off the interstate from Rockford and Madison, Brown sees Anchor as a destination that could compete with events that you'd normally have to go to Milwaukee, Madison or Chicago for.

And with that comes the opportunity to bring people into Newville.

Brown said, "We want to be part of the growth of Newville. We want to bring people here who are staying in hotel rooms and going around to the other bars and restaurants. We want to promote the area and the other businesses because Anchor's always kind of been the hub of Newville. It's grown now, and we don't want to compete with anyone else. We want to have people come here for dinner and activities like larger entertainment, bigger bands and shows. In turn, people are going to go to all the other bars and restaurants in the area."

A long background in restaurant and hospitality work

Brown was born and raised in the area. He started work at Richardson Marine pumping gas and putting boats in the water.

From there he worked in some of the most glamorous vacation spots, including working in the hospitality industry in Miami and Fort Lauderdale, Fla. areas, at a boating operation that operated out of Disney in Orlando and eventually working with restaurants in Puerto Rico.

Kevin and Debbie decided to move back here to raise their kids. They were looking for the next stage in their lives when Kinnett approached them about buying the bar, and they were able to get a deal together.

And Brown is happy

maid bar, working with the regulations and getting the gears together to get that accomplished would be difficult."

It also worked well buying the bar from the Kinnetts while John is still around running the boat launch.

"It was nice to have them to ask questions of because there was just a lot of information with events they had done in the past and things. We want to make sure we're doing things the way they did and were successful," Brown said.



Inside and outside Anchor in Newville. (Photos by Toni Turnquist)



Above: Anchor is located on the picturesque Rock River. Below: The new Anchor bar. (Photos by Toni Turnquist)



An inventive welcome sign at Anchor. (Photo by Toni Turnquist)



Anchor was at one time a grocery store, tavern and gas station. (Photo courtesy of Tom Sherman)



Don, Bill and John Sherman with Clarence Nicks at what was then called Anchor Inn, May 1964. (Photo courtesy of Tom Sherman)

