

# Kinnett plans festive Fourth at Anchor Inn

## Good weather key to meeting goal

By Jeff Brown  
Reporter staff

It looked like the end for the Anchor Inn last Aug. 4, when an early morning fire that began in the kitchen turned the venerable Newville tavern into a charred and teetering hulk. Nine months later, however, the Anchor Inn is rising along the north shore of the Rock River, bigger and better than ever.

### Million dollar baby?

On Monday afternoon the sun glinted off the steel girders and warmed the tall wooden frame as men in hard hats pounded nails and guided prefabricated roof sections into place using a crane.

Workers finished pouring the new tavern's foundation three weeks ago, Kinnett told the *Janesville Gazette* earlier this month he'd planned to spend about \$800,000 on the project but now expects costs to come in higher than that amount.

The new Anchor Inn will be nearly three times the size of the old one. The side of the new two-story structure facing the river will be made almost completely of glass, offering patrons an expansive view of the water and the floating

music stage.

The inn will also feature separate bar and dining areas, a 4,000-square foot banquet hall where a tent once covered a patio on the building's west side, and an upstairs with two private rooms and a balcony.

### More men laid on

I found Kinnett standing inside the sandy-floored area where the banquet hall will soon stand, helping a construction worker saw a panel of blueboard insulation on a table saw. I waved to him and he stepped outside for an impromptu interview.

Kinnett said he still plans to have the new tavern open by the Fourth of July and plans to have the outdoor bar on the building's east side open by Memorial Day weekend.

"We've got extra guys coming in and if the weather's good we should be open the 22nd [of May]," Kinnett said. "The patios'll be open too."

### Bigger is better

Kinnett said the idea for the expanded inn came after he and his family realized that the new building would have to sit higher off the ground than the old one to comply with flood plain regulations. That meant



John Kinnett hopes that extra workers and a run of nice weather will allow him to put the finishing touches on the new Anchor Inn by the Fourth of July. Workers used a crane last week to move sections of the tavern's walls into place.

(Edgerton Reporter photo/David Esau)

### New chapter for Newville

The old Anchor Inn had stood at least since the 1920s, when the building housed a grocery store. In the 1930s the store became Simon's Magic Bar and had been operated as a tavern ever since.

Newville residents were intimately aware of that history.

the tent-covered patio would sit lower than the building.

"It just felt kind of out of place—it didn't have the same feel to it," Kinnett said. "And we've always wanted to have a banquet hall—there's really nothing big around here. That's how it got to the size that it's at."

Many who had gathered to share food and drink inside the tavern over the years stood behind yellow police tape on the morning of the fire last summer with sad faces, wondering if there was a future for the Anchor Inn.

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Thanks to Kinnett's decision to rebuild, there is a future indeed—one that Kinnett said he still hopes to christen no later than July 4.

"It's really weather-dependent. We've got a lot of really

good contractors working for us and they all know what we're shooting for.

"I think it's doable—it's just going to take a lot of long hours. I think we can get it done."