

New Anchor Inn coming to Newville

By Jake Magee

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NEWVILLE—Eight months after the Anchor Inn burned, the owners are building a new restaurant and bar that will be twice as big.

They hope to open by July 4.

Owner John Kinnett wasted no time planning a new bar and restaurant on the same site at the southern end of Lake Koshkonong.

Kinnett is acting as general contractor for the project and already is familiar with the delays common in construction.

While digging in early winter, subcontractors found inferior soil and giant chunks of buried concrete that had to be removed before the foundation could be laid.

Then cold weather set in.

“It's been rough this year. We were ready to go back in February, and we got all that cold weather, which delayed us a month because you couldn't pour concrete,” Kinnett said. “Now Mother Nature is giving us a break.”

Finishing touches were being put on the foundation Monday. Next week, the building's steel structure will go in.

In a few weeks, cranes will drop in pre-built walls. It's more expensive to have panels built offsite, but it saves time and labor, Kinnett said.

Kinnett had expected the project to total about \$800,000, but unexpected problems have boosted that amount.

“Everything seems to end up a little higher than what you anticipate,” he said. “The nice thing is, everything's done right.”

The final building will have a wall of windows facing the river. A patio will give customers inside and out a clear view of the water.

The old Anchor Inn was 3,800 square feet. It was a total loss after it sustained \$500,000 to \$1 million in damage from an August fire. The cause of the fire remains undetermined.

The new building will be almost 10,000 square feet. It will include a 4,000-square-foot banquet hall on the west side where a huge tent once housed outdoor events in summertime, Kinnett said.

“When this disaster hit, we made the decision to take the tent away and incorporated it into the building design,” Kinnett said.

The bar and dining sections will be separate. The second floor will have two private rooms with a capacity of 50 people each and a removable wall to convert them into one room.

The kitchen will be bigger and more organized.

“The flow is a lot better for us,” Kinnett said.

The new Anchor Inn will feature a mix of woodland and modern design. Kinnett plans to incorporate recovered pieces—wood, steel, stone and signs—from the old building into the new Anchor Inn.

“It's hard when you do a new building. It's clean,” he said. “The old building had a lot of character. We're trying to preserve some of that character.”

Regardless of whether the Anchor Inn is officially open by Independence Day, Kinnett will still rent boats—including six new ones—starting in May, and he'll open the Naughty Mermaid outdoor bar by Memorial Day.

“Rebuilding, there's a lot of hoops you gotta jump through, but in the end, we know it's definitely worth it,” he said. “You work hard for something, and there should be a nice outcome in the end.”