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Posted: Wednesday, January 18, 2017 11:08 am

By [Kim McDarison](#) Correspondent | [0 comments](#)

With a 3-acre expansion to its already 11-acre camping and Lakeview beach and dining hotspot, the Pettit family announced recently that more dining and entertainment options have become available with the reopening of Pettit's Countryview.

The remodeled approximately 6,000-square-foot facility promises to bring a plethora of dining, banquet and entertainment opportunities, as well as provide seating and parking for overflow from an already established local favorite: Lakeview Bar and Grill. Both dining venues are open year-round.

General manager Jake Pettit described Lakeview Bar and Grill, 1901 E. State Highway 59, as providing "more of a beach atmosphere," and Countryview, 1801 E. State Highway 59, as a larger venue where one might enjoy "comfort food," and watch a Green Bay Packers game on the newly installed 180-inch projection-screen TV. Pettit said he developed a place in his heart for the Lake Koshkonong beachside campus during his youth when his family, parents Gary and Jane, and his younger sister Ginger, along with the family's two dogs, visited as campers.

"I've actually been camping here with my family since 1985," Pettit said. "We lived in Illinois, in the Cherry Valley area, and we had a seasonal spot here. We would come here because it had something for all of us. There was the lake, it's shallow, but big and spread out. We had a pontoon boat, and there is lots of entertainment close by.

"It's not like traditional camping here where you go out into the woods. Campers come here to be social; you could mingle with other people. A lot of our campers are empty-nesters."

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Kim McDarison photo

Jake Pettit

General manager Jake Pettit poses for a picture with a newly installed 180-inch projection screen in the background at Pettit's Countryview, 1801 E. State Highway 59. Pettit said the new bar/restaurant will be similar to Lakeview Bar and Grill, 1901 E. State Highway 59.



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Pettit family brings growth

In 2009, when Pettit was 28, he said Lakeview, having been hit by the Recession, closed, fell into bankruptcy and was then sold at auction. Eager to maintain their family's camping tradition while building a social and family-oriented spot for others, the Pettits purchased the Lakeview Campground and began restoring and improving the facility.

"Major projects" began immediately, Pettit said, and "by 2010, we had new sewer and electric." Today, all of the campground's 90 RV stalls have electricity, he said. Attention turned next to the former 800-square-foot structure, serving as the Lakeview bar. By 2012, a new 2,300-square-foot beach club, serving drinks and food both inside and out while hosting small bands and karaoke nights, was standing.

While the Lakeview Bar and Grill is open year-round, the campground is seasonal, he said, and over half of the RVs on site are seasonal. The facility does have a few units for rent, he added.

During the summer months in past years, parking spaces at the Lakeview site have filled quickly, Pettit said. With the new facility and its associated parking spaces, he hopes the new space will serve to accommodate some of the overflow that occurs during the summer at Lakeview. Otherwise, the two restaurants will offer some similarities: both will cater to seasonal campers, tourists and local residents who are looking for food, entertainment, and perhaps even some time on the beach.

Countryview tradition

Historically, he said Countryview was known for local bands on Saturday nights, and they supplied space for small weddings and receptions. The former establishment fell on hard times and closed in June.

Before 2005, he said, Countryview had what he described as a "huge local following," noting that he believed the building had served as an area bar since the 1960s. The building was also known for its banquet space, which, he said, is a tradition he hopes to continue.

Countryview also has volleyball and horseshoe courts (with additional courts at Lakeview), he said, adding that in the early 2000s, about 72 horseshoe teams played. This year, Pettit said, he'd like to see teams return.

"I'd like to see teams play maybe one or two nights a week and maybe have tournaments on the weekends," he said.

When the building was offered for sale by the bank, Pettit said he and his family saw it as a natural extension of what they were already building.

"I think a lot of campers will use both places," he said.

Since the purchase, the family has been renovating the Countryview space, which now includes a 4,000-square-foot, clean, updated room, with a raised stage as its centerpiece, which can serve as a dining area or banquet hall. Live bands will be featured on Saturday nights, Pettit said. An attached 2,000-square-foot space features a traditional full bar and has a sports motif, with multiple large-screen TVs located throughout the room, Pettit said.

This year's band schedule is still being prepared and will soon appear on the Countryview website (countryviewbar.com), Pettit said, with performances starting between 8 and 9 p.m. on Saturdays. The restaurant is currently open Thursday through Sunday, from 11 a.m. until 2 a.m. on Thursdays and Sundays, and to 2:30 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays, and will be open seven days a week after April 1. The kitchen closes at 10 p.m., Pettit said.

Menu options can also be found on the website. Pettit described Countryview's selection as burgers, steaks, and a smoke pit section featuring pulled pork and chicken.

"It's like Texas Roadhouse or Famous Dave's, but with a local flavor," he said. The average meal might cost between \$7.99 for a sandwich to \$21 for a rib-eye steak, he added.

Service and quality

With a new management team in place, including Pettit's aunt, Sherry Koep, as well as Chad Jahnke and Dan Eagen, Pettit said the restaurant centers on service and quality. With 10 years as a McDonald's employee, including restaurant manager, under his belt, Pettit said he developed managerial skills through company training programs, adding: "I went to training to learn how to deal with both the back and the front of the house, but the biggest takeaway was people skills."



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