

# BREAKING GROUND

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FALL 2014



*A commanding structure, the 18,000-square-foot Farmhouse Restaurant complex features a 190-seat restaurant, private dining area, conference center and bakery. In classic red, the Farmhouse Restaurant is the latest and best attraction at this nationally famous farm.*

## Fresh Food At Farmhouse Came After Frozen Fingers

*Hamstra Group weathers worst winter to finish Fair Oaks restaurant by deadline*

**N**one of the visitors to Fair Oaks Farms could imagine that the warm, cozy, exquisitely designed Farmhouse Restaurant they're dining in came by dint of extraordinary effort.

But that's the way it happened. The recent winter in northwest Indiana hobbled many a project, leading to missed deadlines and cost overruns. So many way-below-zero days that crews could not work. So much ice and snow and freezing weather that schools in the region logged more non-school days than anytime in history.

But The Hamstra Group pledged the Farmhouse Restaurant, a new attraction at the popular Fair Oaks working farm, dairy house and tourist attraction par excellence, would open as planned and on time.

The Farmhouse Restaurant is a thing of beauty. From the dark wood and signature stone fireplace interior to the classic red barn wood exterior, it exudes Old World charm and harkens back to the farmsteads of yesteryear. At the table, visitors are treated to an a la carte menu featuring locally grown produce; grain-fed beef, pork and chicken; a bakery with delectable fresh breads and pastries; and a lively pub showcasing local craft beers and American wines. The facility also features a banquet room and conference

center. It's truly farm-to-table cuisine, served to the thousands who visit Fair Oaks weekly.

"We are extremely pleased," says Carl Bruggemeier, a managing partner of the restaurant. "The Hamstra Group exceeded all our expectations. The restaurant is gorgeous. And, amazingly, considering our winter, we opened on time."

It came at a cost. Hamstra Group workers, according to job supervisor Bill Dykstra, often worked for an hour or so in -30°, -40° or -50° wind chill temperatures, then had to come inside to warm up so that they could go back out again.

"Frozen fingers? Yes, we had those, to be sure," Dykstra recalls. "But to get the job done, we had no other option. I'm pretty darned pleased with my crew."

That crew included Dykstra, Shane Hartley (electrical), Derek Bahnerth (HVAC/plumbing), Brian Hanewich (lead concrete), Ryon Klemp (who completed the

*continued on page 4*

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# Farmhouse... *from page 1*

complicated roofing system within a shortened time frame to get the project back on schedule), Terry Turner (lead painter) and Kevin Vandermolen (assistant project manager). The team was headed by Curt Albertson, with design services provided by The Hamstra Group's Betty Lamp.

Today, visitors enjoy the warm weather, the farm atmosphere, the steaming plates of farmhouse foods. The cold is but a memory—but not for those who labored against the wind and cold to ensure the Farmhouse Restaurant would open as planned.

It's perhaps best summed up by owner representative Kyle Collins, who called it "nothing short of a miracle."

"I can't believe what The Hamstra Group pulled off," Collins says. "That company did an amazing thing."

"The Hamstra Group wants to thank all its employees—and they're too numerous to name—who went to extraordinary lengths to make sure this project was completed on schedule," Albertson says. "It was one of those winters, but they conquered every challenge and we're proud of them."



*A highlight of the Fair Oaks Farm Farmhouse Restaurant is the massive stone fireplace in the central dining room.*



*Left: The warm, cozy interior is a perfect setting for the fresh, farm-raised foods served in the Farmhouse Restaurant. Center: An outdoor porch allows visitors to feel right at home. Right: Every little detail—including the entry doors festooned with antique farm tools—underscores the farm motif.*



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