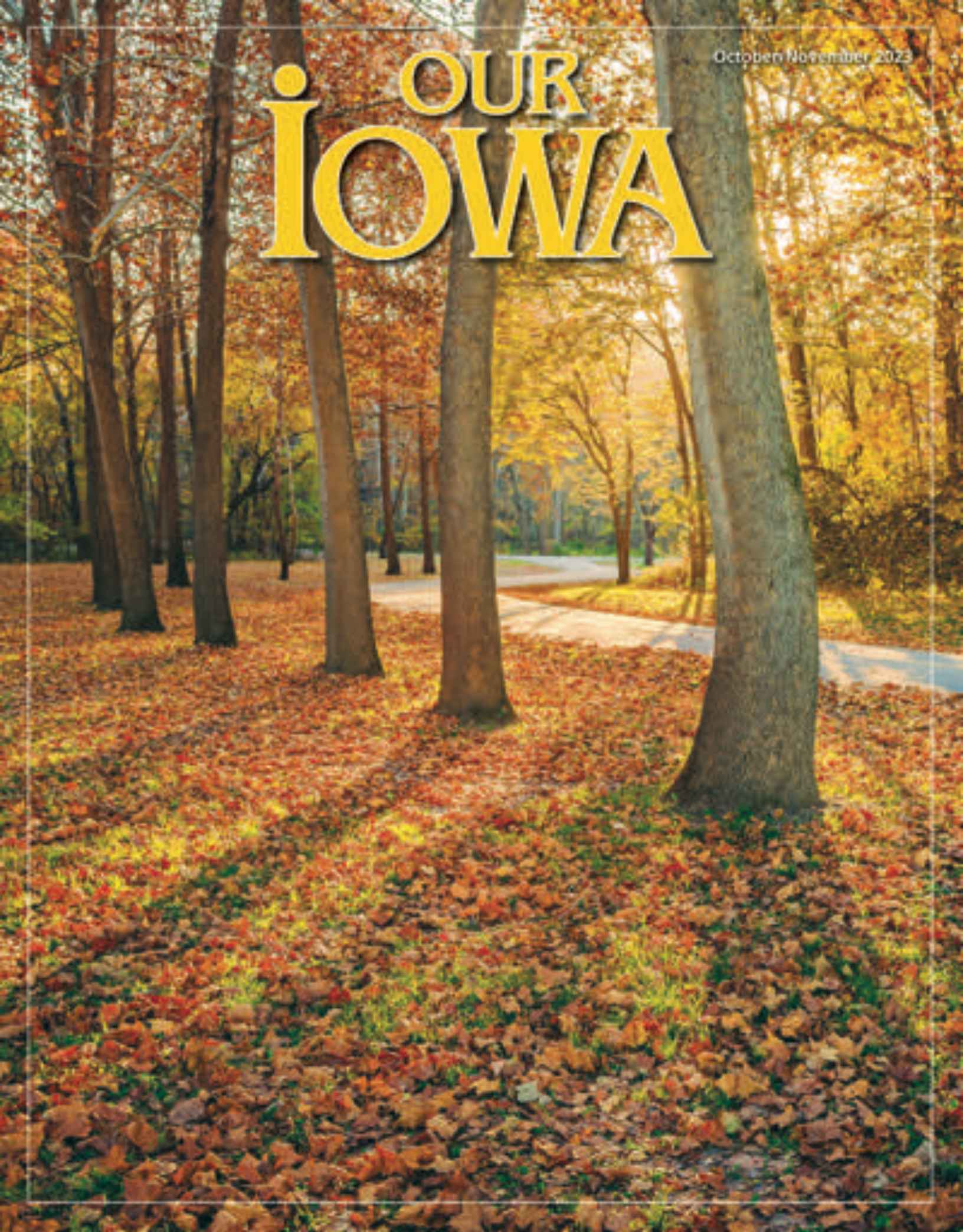


October/November 2023

# OUR iOWA





# Feels Good To Be Back Home

*Careers led them away from Iowa, but they've returned to give back to the state in a unique way.*

"FOR SOME, like us, it takes getting out of Iowa to really appreciate Iowa."

This sage observation comes from Beth Henderson, a native Iowan with an entrepreneurial spirit, while visiting inside the spacious and honey lodge at Honey Creek Resort on Rathbun Lake in Meravia.

Back in mid-April, Beth and husband Terry, through their company, Achieva Inc., took over as concessionaire of all lodging, recreational and hospitality operations at Honey Creek Resort.

"I had always planned to remain in Iowa to live and work," says Beth. "Then, shortly after we married in December of 1989, Terry was asked by his employer, Dow Chemical, to transfer to Indiana."

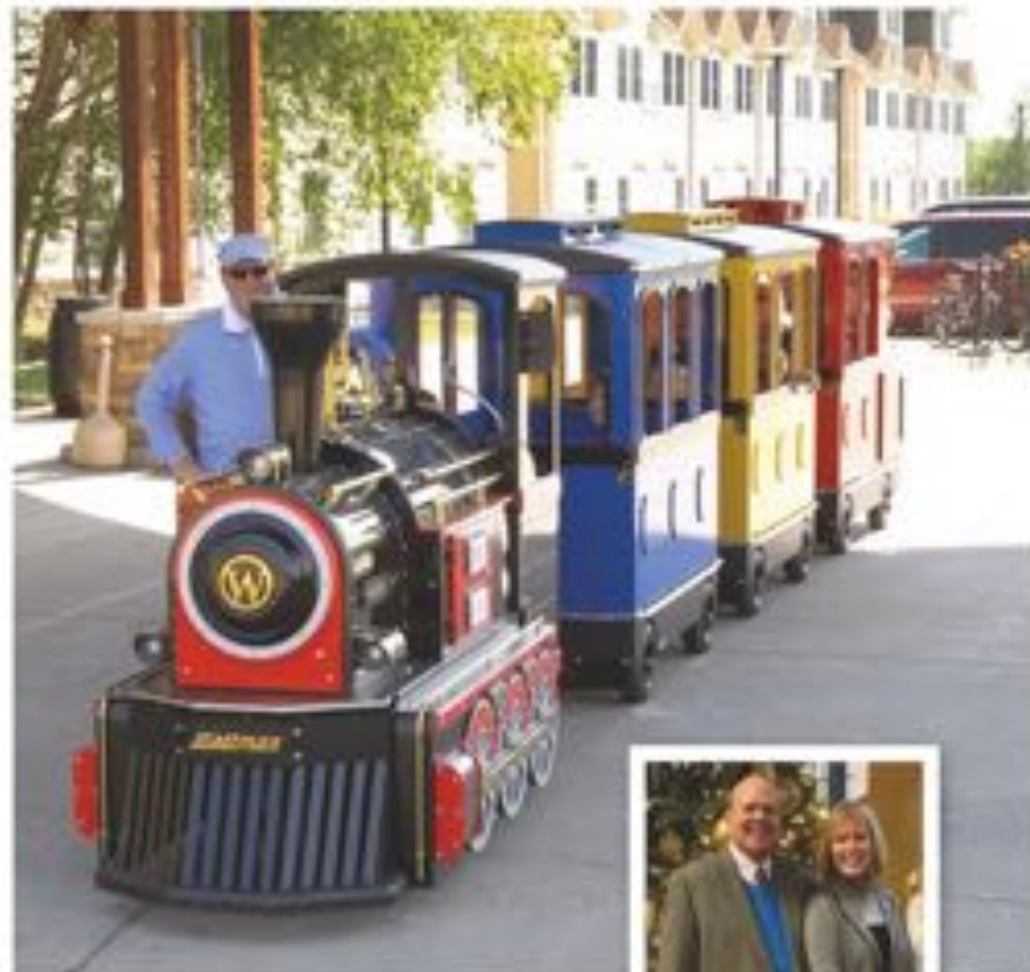
"Terry promised to bring me back to Iowa someday...but it took 30 years for him to do it! Our years in Indiana were good to us, though, as we raised a family and began businesses there."

## Moved Back to Family Roots

In 2019, the couple bought 170 acres near Centerville that's become their Iowa home. White Stag Farms is in the neck of the woods where Beth's grandfather E.O. Fenton grew up.



**AS A SALUTE** to all agriculture and southern Iowa's cattle industry, Honey Creek's new logo has the feel of an old-time cattle brand.



**DESTINATION, HONEY CREEK!** Terry and Beth Henderson (right) are "all aboard" with changes they have in mind to make Honey Creek Resort at Rathbun Lake a year-round attraction.



"Grandpa Fenton founded American Institute of Business (AIB) in Des Moines in the 1920s," Beth explains. "My dad, Ronald Fenton, was a banker; when I was in ninth grade, we moved from Des Moines to Marshalltown, where he took over as president of Security Savings Bank."

After graduating from high school and

*"Why not showcase the beautiful woodlands when color is at its finest?"*

attending Iowa State University, Beth had her heart set on becoming a nurse. She acquired her RN degree from a small college in Colorado Springs.

"I lived in Colorado for 6 years but wanted to get back to Iowa, so I moved to Des Moines in 1987," Beth recalls. "That's where I met Terry."

More recently, as the Hendersons began driving out from Indiana to their farm near Centerville, their trips would often take them past Honey Creek Resort.

"This is such a beautiful area, but we

often noticed that the resort wasn't very busy," comments Beth. "In fact, we discovered that it closed over the winter, one of the prettiest times of the year here."

## Sweet Ideas for Honey Creek

When the couple learned the state of Iowa was looking to sell and privatize Honey Creek, their wheels began spinning over its untapped potential.

"For starters, the business I started in Indiana provides technical training for agricultural companies and their employees," says Terry. "I've always wanted to have a location in Iowa, and I envisioned this resort as being ideal for hosting clients and company gatherings."

Honey Creek Resort was built by the state of Iowa and opened in 2008. The resort has never fully become the busy destination for conferences, weddings and family vacations that state planners had hoped for. The Hendersons have ambitious goals to change that.

"Since Rathbun Lake was created through an Army Corps of Engineering flood control project, Honey Creek Resort and Honey Creek State Park are located on a combination of federal and state land," explains Beth.

"From our experience, a beautiful



resort like this really needs to be privatized to operate successfully, and Terry and I hope to work toward that."

While the couple pursues their dream of acquiring ownership of the resort, they've embraced the aura and rustic beauty of its setting and see no reason why the facility shouldn't be open for guests year-round.

#### Planning Seasonal Activities

When making their concessionaire management proposal to the state of Iowa, they shared thoughts on how Honey Creek can become an all-seasons facility.

"We have plans for creating autumn festivals—why not showcase the beautiful woodlands of this area when color is at its finest?" says Beth.

"We're also planning holiday events centered around Thanksgiving and Christmas—you can be sure plenty of Christmas

*"I had always planned to remain in Iowa to live and work..."*

trees, lighting and sleigh rides will be featured! Additional activities will continue throughout the winter."

Terry continues: "For a resort to attract guests, and for those guests to be encouraged to return season after season, you need to have activities they enjoy. And that's what we intend to offer."

#### Tributes to All of Iowa

One of the first things Beth and Terry did was rebrand Honey Creek Resort with a new "HCR" logo, one that has the look and feel of an old-time cattle brand.

"This is our salute to the hardworking farmers and ranchers of southern Iowa, and to all of Iowa agriculture. We want our efforts to help bring about an economic boon to the folks living in this part of the state."

The couple is offering another tribute to Iowa with their renovation of the 105 guest rooms in the lodge.

"We're naming 99 of them after each county in Iowa," notes Beth. "We're contacting chambers and groups for photographs and information they'd like us to feature in their county's room."

"The more we become familiar with Honey Creek Resort and its grounds, the more ideas we come up with for making this a resort all Iowans will be proud of."

"This is our way of giving back to the state and the people who mean so much to us." 🍷

## IOWA'S CHRISTMAS CITY



### Albia's Victorian Stroll

DECEMBER 1-2, 2023 | HISTORIC SQUARE | ALBIA, IOWA

- 30+ LIVE VINTAGE WINDOW SCENES
- FESTIVAL OF TREES | CAROLERS
- HORSE-DRAWN CARRIAGE RIDES
- ROASTING CHESTNUTS | BREAKFAST WITH SANTA
- CIVIL WAR ENCAMPMENT | ALBIA TEA PARLOR
- OHG GAUGE ACTIVE TRAIN DISPLAY
- AUTHENTIC BLACKSMITH
- EULENSPIEGEL PUPPET SHOW
- SHOPPING & RESTAURANTS



[ALBIACHAMBERMAINSTREET.ORG](http://ALBIACHAMBERMAINSTREET.ORG) OR  
[ALBIA CHAMBER MAIN STREET ON FACEBOOK](https://www.facebook.com/AlbiaChamberMainStreet)

Side Note: Hometown's Festival of Lights—windrow displays, lighted parade, horse-drawn carriage rides and visits with Santa—Nov. 24 ([mss.festivaloflights.com](http://mss.festivaloflights.com))