

Barn restoration at Southern Exposure is going as planned.

A passion for barns

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The Enquirer

Some people work on old cars.

Others work on old houses.

Terry Stitt's passion is old barns.

Stitt's company, Three Rivers-based Terry's Barn Restoration, has been working on moving and rebuilding the "new" 162-year-old barn at Southern Exposure, 11269 N Drive N, since January.

Southern Exposure lost its previous 161-year-old barn to a fire in September. The Pennfield Township business acquired the replacement barn

For a look at the restoration, see pages 4C and 5C.

over the winter.

"It's a lot of fun for me," Stitt said. "It's challenging, but we have four experienced men out here and nobody has to be told what to do."

Barn restoration has been in Stitt's family for three generations and it's all he has ever done except drive semis, he said.

The gleam in his eyes peering from under the brim of his Harley-Davidson baseball cap

as he talks about the modifications that had to be done to the barn makes it clear he'd rather do nothing else.

"My wife says I'm crazy," Stitt said. "She says she's never known anybody that's excited about getting up and coming to work every day."

Stitt's work at Southern Exposure should be done by the end of the month, but there always is another barn restoration on the horizon, he said.

"The number of barns we do every year varies," he said. "It depends on the weather and the size of the barn. We did three big ones last year."

There have been no unexpected problems in putting up Southern Exposure's barn, but pieces of two other barns were used to rebuild the barn after it was moved from its original location, Stitt said.

"I'm pleased. We're doing good," Stitt said. "But the most important thing is that the owners are happy."

Neither Scott Stokes nor Curtis Whitaker, the owners of Southern Exposure, could be

reached for comment.

Stitt will keep his business going as long as he's able to, but he's not concerned that barn restoration could become a lost art.

"It is very much an art form," Stitt said. "You never know what somebody else is going to do, but there will always be someone out there that does this."



Clockwise, from top left, Phil Payne drills a hole for one of the wooden plugs used in the construction of the barn.

Brian Norcross, front, and Phil Payne assemble the floor braces for barn.

Pat Stitt makes a brace for the barn.

Terry Stitt uses a strap to line up one of the exterior walls.

Pat Stitt uses a chainsaw to cut a piece of timber to fit on the floor braces.

Phil Payne hammers one of the wooden plugs into a beam during the barn reconstruction.

Pat Stitt watches as workers attach one of the exterior walls that he maneuvered into place.

Brian Norcross winches one of the cross beams tight.

Mark Stitt lines up one of the cross beams for the second floor of the barn.

Brian Norcross, left, and Dan Mead, tighten one of the beams with a hand winch.

Crews from Terry's Barn Restoration erect the walls of the barn.



Crews from Terry's Barn Restoration of Three Rivers have been erecting a 162-year-old barn at Southern Exposure, the Pennfield Township business that lost its 161-year-old barn in a fire in September. The crew members, who have been working on the project since January, are expected to complete it by the end of the month.