

Deteriorating Barn Gets New Life as Event Space



Prairie Bells Barn, a new event venue northeast of Grand Rapids, before and after renovation.

Prairie Bells Barn in Belding, Mich. stood in shambles when Jim and Julia DeYoung decided to save the more than 100-year-old barn they had owned for 20 years. In 2018, they hired Chad Stitt of American Heritage Barn Preservation to undertake the restoration so they could turn it into an event space.

The exterior walls were replaced with cedar planks and all new battens. The original monitor-shaped, shake roof was roofed over with a new metal roof and a new cupola and lightning rod were added.



The interior, with its logs, 8x8 timbers and great daylight windows, required extensive cleaning. All rotten beams of the timber framing were removed and replaced with timber consistent with the original structure.

A new wood floor was installed as well as new windows and doors. Basement walls were repaired and patched.

The finished space can accommodate up to 300 guests.

Prairie Bells Barn is now ready to serve the greater Grand Rapids area and nearby communities of Belding, Greenville and Ionia. The DeYongs are taking bookings for weddings, showers, reunions and other special events at <https://prairiebellsbarn.com/>.

“This barn was sad to look at, and one could see it gradually, year-by-year, literally falling apart. It now stands tall and proud. People stop by to look and take and a picture.”

-- Jim DeYoung, Owner
