

Holy cow!

Green Acres to host Foundation event

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Life in the Prairie

Eden Prairie's city newsletter

Inside



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THURSDAY, APRIL 18, 2013

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EDEN PRAIRIE NEWS



And you'll find more than 30 crystal chandeliers in the historic Eden Prairie barn.



The wine room in the silo at Green Acres. "The wine cellar's pretty incredible because it's actually in a James Bond movie" and an antique cigar store Indian "electronically, magically, goes up in the air," Steve Schussler said.



An approximately 3,000-pound, antique "cigar store Indian" statue stands against a wall and with a push of a button lifts up to reveal a secret wine room in the silo.

Holy cow! Landmark Eden Prairie barn to host EP Gives

Eden Prairie Community Foundation event to award grants to organizations

BY KARLA WENNERSTROM
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Have you been wanting to take a peek inside the Goodrich-Ramus Barn on Pioneer Trail in Eden Prairie?

The one with the cows? And the chandeliers?

You'll get your chance if you attend the Eden Prairie Community Foundation's EP Gives event on May 4.

Steve Schussler, of Schussler Creative, is the creator of the Rainforest Café, T-Rex and Galaxy Drive In restaurants.

He's also the creator of Green Acres, An Enchanting Event Center in a Historic Barn, which is what the Goodrich-Ramus Barn he bought in 2010 has been transformed into.

"We were going to use it for storage, then I put a white picket fence on the outside and bought 22 cows that were lovingly themed and painted so I could make people smile on the way to work every day," Schussler said.

"I never anticipated the community reacting the way it did. We had people write us letters who have never written letters before telling us how we made them smile and made their day.

"It's turned into literally a masterpiece. It's like a painting from da Vinci," said Schussler.

When asked what might surprise those attending the

event, he said, "They're going to be amazed by the investment that's been made to save that barn."

WHY THE BARN?

Schussler attended last year's Foundation Ball and wondered why it wasn't held in Eden Prairie.

"We were just absolutely amazed at all the good things that the charity did for the community," Schussler said.

When this year's event took on a less formal tone, he volunteered his Event Center.

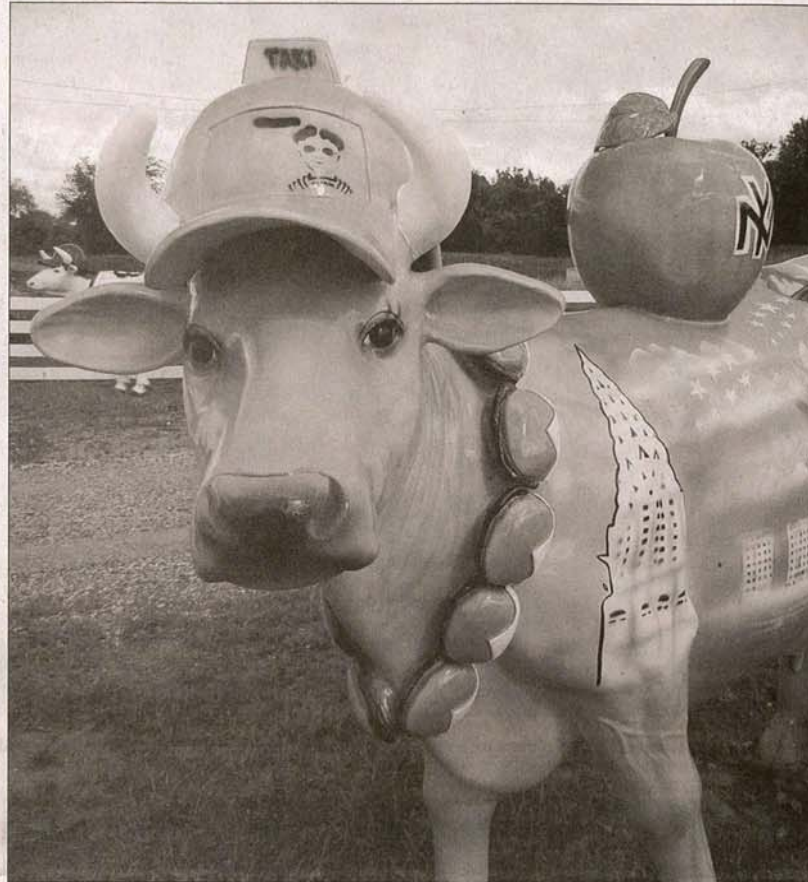
"Their team decided to honor the past, but with an eye toward the future," Schussler said, as they came up with the event.

The Community Foundation is celebrating 32 years of giving and will be awarding grants to deserving local organizations at the event. Heavy appetizers, craft beers and wine, the awarding of grants and a live auction, desserts, coffee and music by the Mark Miller Band are planned, according to a news release.

"You can attend it and make a difference at the same time that you're having a great evening," said Foundation supporter Kathie Case.

FOLLOW THE LIGHTS

"Lighting is a very important part of what we create so there's many, many different kinds of lighting that will make this event a fiesta beyond belief," Schussler said in describing the distinctive chandeliers and jukeboxes in the restored barn.



SUBMITTED PHOTOS BY RICK PEARSON

The Green Acres Event Center is home to 22 "lovingly themed" cows.

"People will come and think that the Martians landed, because we have specialty lighting that goes around the entire barn that basically makes the entire barn glow for any event," he said.

And as if the donation of the facility for use by the Foundation wasn't enough, Schussler, who is never at a loss for words, will also serve as emcee.

"When I asked him whether he would be willing to flex his Brooklyn-born charm and power of persuasion at our live auction, he immediately said yes," according to Mary Mackmiller of the Foundation.

"I'm going to emcee the event, which should be very funny since I laugh at myself all the time," Schussler

pointed out.

Schussler's fiancé Sunhi Ryan calls it a barn with bling.

And they both hope the event raises a lot of "moo-lah."

"I hope that it becomes a record breaker in terms of a record-breaking moneymaking event, but also leaving Eden Prairie residents with a feeling like 'Wow, we're having

'EP Gives'

What: The Eden Prairie Community Foundation's EP Gives event is May 4 at Green Acres Event Center. EP Gives will celebrate 32 years of local giving with grants awarded to deserving organizations.

When: 6-11:30 p.m.
Saturday, May 4

Where: Green Acres, 14150 Pioneer Trail (park at Grace Church and you'll be shuttled to the site by the SouthWest Transit Trolley)

Cost: \$100 (\$80 is tax deductible), deadline is April 30

Info: Laura Hookom at (952) 210-2798.

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this foundation gala, this fun event, in a barn that was built in 1922, and was going to be torn down," he said.

"It really is the No. 1 coming out party for us," Schussler said. "I will do anything to make this a record-breaking event. ... I will put myself on the auction block to raise money for this great event."

"Anybody that hasn't bought their tickets yet, I would suggest that they jump on it," Schussler said.

And bring tissues.

"There will be a lot of tears shed of joy when they see the grant recipients, when they see where the money went for the tickets that they bought for that evening."