

# District 5

## 2024 Fall Tour Schedule

### October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024



Welcome to the 2024 WMSPA Fall Tour

The WMSPA and District 5 representatives would like to thank you for joining us today. A Special thanks to the all the helped put this tour together and allowed us to visit their place of business.

7:30 am to 8:00 am	Registration at Pioneer Village Museum
8:00 am to 8:10 am	Load Bus and Depart Pioneer Village Museum
8:30 am	Arrive at Three Pat's LLC
9:15 am	Load Bus and Depart Three Pat's LLC
9:45 am	Arrive at A&M Pure Maple Syrup
10:45 an	Load Bus and Depart A&M Pure Maple Syrup
11:00 am	Arrive at Helms Sugar Shack
11:45 am	Load Bus and Depart Helm's Sugar Shack
12:00 pm	Arrive at Norswiss Farms Inc.
1:00 pm	Load Bus and Depart Norswiss Farms Inc.
1:15 pm	Arrive back at Pioneer Village Museum
1:20 pm	Lunch is Served at Pioneer Village Museum
1:30 pm to 4:30 pm	Remainder of day to tour Pioneer Village

## **PIONEER VILLAGE MUSEUM - BCHS**

For over sixty years, the Barron County Historical Society Inc DBA Pioneer Village Museum has been preserving and interpreting the history of Northwestern Wisconsin.



Each year, thousands of people from around the world visit the Pioneer Village Museum. Hundreds of volunteers give thousands of hours a year to perform essential tasks - performing administrative duties, restoring historic buildings, and overseeing operations for guests, to name a few.

Many have provided historic artifacts, including many of the historic buildings that make up the museum. Furthermore, in addition to gate and on-site sales revenues, individuals, business and corporate donors supply significant funding every year.

Barron County provides some annual support for the operation of the Pioneer Village Museum and, importantly, the use of the land upon which the new facility will be built.

Through the years, several donors have also provided funding for the construction of buildings, housing for special collections, and other capital improvements to the site, as well as support for Museum operations. This new facility will serve as the catalyst to expand the Pioneer Village Museum from a seasonal summer attraction into a year-round resource for thousands of people to use. It will also serve as a tourist attraction, generating additional revenues for the museum as well as numerous local businesses.

## **Three Pat's LLC**

Pat Rankin Jr. started making maple syrup about 20 years ago with his Dad and Son also both named Pat. They start with 25 homemade taps and a 3 x 4 flat pan. The three kept increasing taps and eventually built a 10' x 12' shed and added a 2 x 4 evaporator.

Like all syrup makers things were starting to get out of hand and within a year or two they added a 200 gph RO and then expanded again by building a 24' x 24' pole shed to house their new 2 ½' x 8' evaporator and a new 600 gph RO. With about 1500 taps and purchased sap they continued to expand and grow.



In 2023 they decided to expand once again and added a 24' x 32' addition onto the existing 24' x 24' pole shed. The new addition afforded them 14-foot ceilings to accommodate a new 3' x 12' evaporator with steam-a-way and new 2000 Gph RO.

They are currently converting the initial 24 x 24 building into a bottling facility and have plans to install a bulk tank for cold storage before the 2025 season.

With this new expansion also came a new name – Three Pat's LLC.

# **A&M Pure Maple Syrup**

## **Our Sappy Story:**

The first time Andy and I officially met was in high school welding class. Andy's favorite joke is that (sparks flew). We became fast friends, and likely drove our shop teacher and fellow classmates nuts with our shenanigans.



After we started dating, he invited me out to the farm to help make maple syrup. I had no idea how that worked, but thought it was code to spend time together. Boy was I wrong! I hauled buckets up and down the muddy hills after dark, covered in bruises from falling and sore from all that heavy lifting. My parents were not happy I'd get home so late thinking we were up to mischief and didn't believe me when I told them Andy tricked me into hard labor. (haha) But I was hooked, we got the fever for maple and got excited for the future. We've worked so well together; after getting married 3 weeks out of high school 2014, we've nearly doubled our maple operation every year since. What had started with 50 taps is now over 18,000. What had started with a shack in the woods is now a commercial sugarhouse, equipment store, warehouse, and custom installation business that astounds me to even imagine. Thanks to the loyal support of our customers, we have come far in a very short time, and only hope to grow so we can share our success with others.

We have made a career with maple, a lifetime of goals, expanding our operation, encouraging other hobbyists, and helping the next generation get excited as we are about making sugar. March 2024 we've added to our legacy of maple with an addition to our family. Sawyer, as young as she is, is already following in our footsteps with her love of being outdoors, and her energy to "get stuff done". We are so blessed to have this little one (soon to be) running around to continue what we have started and have come leaps and bounds to reach our ambitions.

We will never meet all our goals, but that's ok, we are content feeding the addiction.

## **Helm's Sugar Shack**

As a 14-year-old boy, Mahlon Helms began tapping a few trees as a backyard hobby. The maple syrup bug bit Mahlon. By the next year he had acquired permission from



a neighbor to tap the sugar maple trees on that property. Soon he was collecting more sap than he could cook down himself, so he started selling some raw sap to another local syrup maker. In 2001 his neighbor's property suffered from a large windstorm and many of the trees went down. The owner ended up cutting many of the trees for logs. This was a hurdle for Mahlon as he tried to figure out a way to continue. He just could not give up his maple hobby. He quickly found other landowners who agreed to let him collect sap from their trees.

In 2004 Mahlon married his wife Amber and soon had her involved with the hobby. A few years later in 2007 their daughter Tori was born. At this point in time, they were making syrup on a smaller scale mostly for friends and family.

In 2009 the Helms family formed the brand "Helms Sugar Shack" as well as became FDA inspected and licensed so that they could start selling their maple products commercially to other grocery stores and miscellaneous wholesale accounts.

In 2012 their son Brendan was born into the family. He has also adapted to having the maple hobby a big part of his life.

"The hobby just slowly got out of hand," Mahlon mentioned. It turned into a full-time business for the Helms family. Their main production season only lasts 5-6 weeks at the longest each year. But there is always syrup to be bottled and delivered as well as firewood to be cut all year long.



## **Norswiss Farms Inc.**

Norswiss Farms was established by Alfred and Frieda Lee in 1953. IN 1985 Andreas and Sue partnered up and began to build a business that could survive and thrive in a changing world. Now Andreas and Sue are transitioning to farm to the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation.



Since the beginning, Norswiss Farms mission is to be willing to adapt and change to ensure the future for the farm and for everyone involved with it. Here is a list of some of the innovations to date:

### **Cow Comfort:**

- Cross Vented Barns
- Recycled and Reused Sand Bedding
- Cow Brushes
- Sprinklers

### **Sound Environmental Practices:**

- Vegetative Grass Buffer System
- Retention Pond
- Leach Ate Collection Pond
- Over 10 Miles of Pipeline: Transport Manure to Minimize Risk & Reduce Hauling
- Incorporate Solar Panels on Root Tops to Offset Some of the Electrical Needs
- Utilization of Methane Digester: Minimize Odor & Reduce the Carbon Footprint

### **Soil Conservation:**

- No Till
- Minimum Til
- Cover Crops
- Grass Bugger Strips

### **Facility Enhancements:**

- Transponders to Monitor and Manage Animal Health
- Robotic Pre and Post Dippers
- Feed Pad and Commodity Shed to Reduce Shrink and Run Off
- Using Plate Cooling Water to Water the Herd
- Incorporating a Non-Chemical System to Help Heat the Water.