

April 17, 2005



Record-Eagle/Douglas Tesner

Jeff Hayes, left, and brother Jim prepare a barbecue at Hayes Manufacturing for a spring cookout.

## Brothers recognized for their community commitment

### Hayes brothers give back to Fife Lake

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FIFE LAKE - In the late 1800s, Fife Lake was just a short stop on the railroad line, remarkable for its natural lake of glacial origin. Although its population remains under 500, the village in the southeast corner of Grand Traverse County has sprouted up more in the last 10 years than at almost any other time in its history - thanks largely to brothers Jim and Jeff Hayes.

Owners of Hayes Manufacturing, a family-run business that designs and manufactures power transmission products sold all over the world, the Hayes brothers are synonymous in these parts with community development. Since 1990, their projects have included the development of an industrial park, the construction of a credit union and a new village market, and the remodeling of the local hardware store.

In December, the brothers received the Edgar A. Guest Award from Manton Lodge 347 for their exemplary service to the community and to their fellow man.

"They just are very, very community-minded," said Julie Gray, director of the Fife Lake Public Library, which is currently campaigning for a new building on 1.2 acres donated by Jim Hayes and his wife, Marilyn. "They not only donated the land, but Jim offered to be the project manager for the new building at no cost, so we're going to be saving at least \$10,000 or \$15,000 just on that."

Gray said the current library, housed in a 127-year-old former frame schoolhouse, has three times the inventory that library standards recommend for the current space.

"In the last 10 years we've tripled our circulation and increased our inventory by 40 percent," she said. "We knew we needed more space for many years but that (donation) began the search in earnest for funds for a new building."

Books aren't the only soft spot for the Hayes brothers. The long-time video buffs also produced a DVD called "Historical Fife Lake," which they donated to the local historical society for use in fundraising. The video, which captures the history of the village from its beginnings in 1872, includes interviews with Fife Lake old-timers and a soundtrack by local music groups. It aired several times on TCTV-2 and WCMU Public Television and won a 2004 Philo T. Farnsworth award for documentary profile presented by the Alliance for Community Media's Central States Region.

"It's been very well-received," said Fel Brunett, curator of the Fife Lake Historical Museum, which sends the video to donors as a premium. "I would say that probably the encouragement has met with several thousand dollars to the historical society."

Jim Hayes, 50, sits on the Fife Lake Zoning Board of Appeals and is developing a new subdivision - the first in the village in a century - called Lakeview Woods. He said his commitment to the Fife Lake area is simple.

"I have a hard time saying no," he said.

But Jeff, 62, said the brothers' community involvement is a matter of hometown pride.

"We love Fife Lake. Our families have kind of grown up here," he added.

The brothers' journey to northern Michigan began in 1973, when they took over their father's small machine shop in an Auburn Hills garage and moved it to three acres they bought for \$800 in Manton. In 1990, after outgrowing the space, they developed an industrial park in nearby Fife Lake and moved the business there, lock, stock and barrel.

Now the company has more than 30 employees, including the Hayes wives, three of the five Hayes children, and even "Mom" Hayes, who comes in every morning to make coffee, wash dishes and help with the mail.

Although its growth has been slow in coming, Jeff believes Fife Lake has a lot to offer besides all-season recreation.

"It's the first community to welcome people from the south off the expressway, so I think Fife Lake has the potential to service people in northern Michigan," he said. "It's just in its infancy of being recognized here. I'd like to see it grow properly."