

Spring Ridge Equestrian Center



Riders can go indoors at Equestrian Center

Bellaire, MI

Riding Arena

Size 62' x 120'

Built By

AK Equipment Inc

Contact us at

800-787-1862

akfabricstructures.com

Local horse enthusiasts can now enjoy what is known as the cathedral effect of an indoor riding arena at Spring Ridge Equestrian Center.

The arena features a high ceiling with an airy interior that is softly filtered with sunlight through its fabric top. Riders at Spring Ridge have the opportunity to savor all of the outdoors within the safety, comfort, and convenience of the indoors, 365 days a year.

Spring Ridge Equestrian Center, located on Stover Road just outside of Bellaire, was founded in 1999 by Mark Gebhard, a former Bellaire resident who sold the business in January to his sister and her husband, Marlene and Kenny Billets.

The Billets relocated from Minnesota to operate the business and to "get out of the city." Malene's other brother, Mike Gebhard, also moved from Minnesota three years ago and has been involved in the equestrian center since he arrived.

"It's kind of a family affair," said Mike. "In the back barn, we've added five new stalls and have made many other changes. Marlene has received many compliments on her gardens and the personal touches she's added to the place."

We're very appreciative of the help we've received from Bruce and Terri Miles, the Tim and Kim Hocking family, and many, many others."

The new 62'-by-120' fabric covered riding arena was purchased from A.K. Equipment Inc. of Zeeland. Workers from A.K. Equipment, Inc. constructed the building on site. In just nine days, the building was finished, said Mike. "We were amazed at how quickly it went up." Known as a tensioned membrane structure, it combines layered fabrics, clever engineering, and steel frameworks.

"When we decided to build the arena, we wanted it to be something that would set us apart from others in the boarding and training business," Mike said. "We know of no other Fabric Structured buildings here in Antrim County,"

The building is made to withstand heavy snows and winds gust of 100mph.

"We've received positive reaction from visitors and from those who have ridden their horse," said Mike. "They were impressed by the openness, the use of natural light, and the acoustics. That's the response we wanted."

Spring Ridge is also in the business of boarding and training horses. These services will be available to the center's boarders and to the non-boarders (on a limited schedule). "Our boarders have access to many trails with beautiful views in addition to an outdoor riding arena," said Mike. Boarders also are invited to participate in get-togethers, barbecues, bonfires, and more.

"We're a family-friendly place. We want to make Spring Ridge a fun, safe place for people to visit," Mike said. "We also want to offer as many amenities as possible."

In the past, the equestrian center has been the host of private parties, reunions, square dances, a Hospice auction, and Halloween parties for under-privileged children, among several other events.

Though Spring Ridge is certainly a place for fun and education, Mike mentioned that it is also a working ranch. "Maintaining the ranch requires a lot of hard work and dedication from us all." He added.

By Kris Slagel
ACN Staff Writer
Antrim County News Sept. 2003

For more information about
Spring Ridge Equestrian
Center
Call 231-533-8291



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