

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY FRED STABBERT III

Seminary Hill looks to September

The Seminary Hill Cidery and Event Space has risen from the ground high above Callicoon with a spectacular view of the Delaware River Valley from the outdoor wraparound deck.



September has an important meaning to farmers – the harvest. It’s a month known for warm days and cool nights, when the dog days of summer are fading into our memories and we look forward to the fall in all its splendid glory.

It also appears that farmer, entrepreneur and attorney Douglas Doetsch is looking forward to September as the projected opening date for Seminary Hill Cidery and Event Space.

“We will probably open in September,” Doug said. “But I’ve stopped making predictions.”

The Cidery, which is located on Seminary Hill in Callicoon overlooking the Upper Delaware River Valley, has been under construction for nearly a year.

The first challenge which arose was a wetter than normal January, February and March, which held up work on both the exterior and interior of the two-story structure.

“It was really wet the first part of the year and then COVID-19 hit,” Doug said. “But now we have the roof on, the doors and windows are all in and the project is coming along pretty well.”

And while Baxter Construction continues on its way to finishing the Cidery, Mark McCarthy Construction out of Grahamsville is hammering nails and working on the “Boarding House on Seminary Hill.”

Located in the former Callicoon Hospital, just 100 feet off Route 97 on Hospital Rd., the ‘Boarding House’ is being remodeled to accommodate



guests wanting to hold their wedding in Callicoon. “The reason [we bought the former Callicoon Hospital] is that when we were booking weddings we were getting turned down a lot,” Doug said. “And the main reason was that there was not enough lodging in Callicoon.”

Now, with lodging available just a two-minute drive from the Cidery, Doug is confident that the weddings and parties that went elsewhere will mark their calendars to come to Callicoon.

“When you have a destination wedding, you have to have a destination,” he said. “This project will help the situation.”

When complete, the Boarding House on Seminary Hill will have eight suites and a total of 14 bedrooms, each with its own bathroom.



Because the Cidery and Boarding House are so integral to one another, Doug said he would like to get them both open at the same time.

Interesting Project

The Cidery is going to be architecturally significant in quite a number of ways.

First and foremost, Doug said the building will be a “Passive Building,” which means its net carbon footprint will be zero.

Baxter Construction of Poughkeepsie, who is in charge of the project, is certified in just such building projects.

“My grandparents were as sustainable as possible,” Doug mused. “I know that’s where I get it from.”

Another “reusable” portion of the building will be the wood on the outside of the structure, which was reclaimed from the ‘old’ Tappan Zee Bridge.

“When they tore down the old Tappan Zee Bridge they saved the timbers that protected the pilings,” Doug said. “We purchased the Larch wood which was reclaimed and it will be used on the outside of our building.”

Larch wood is known for its tough, waterproof and durable qualities. It is often used to construct yachts, small boats and for the exterior cladding of buildings, or interior paneling.

And to top it all off, literally, Doug is using blue-stone slabs to cap the outdoor patio. The blue-stone was secured from the Bethlehem Railroad in Bethlehem, PA.



According to Site Supervisor Eric Rodriguez, the slabs, which date back to the late 1800s, will be engraved to give visitors notice of exactly where they came from.

What’s Next

Doug said the Cidery is also looking for help in both the kitchen and tasting room of the Cidery.

“We will be offering light food like sausages and burgers to go along with our cider,” Doug said. “We also have an event space capable of holding 100 people.”

And whether they are catering rehearsal dinners for 65 people or a 200-person wedding, Doug said his guests will enjoy the beautiful scenery and extensive planning that went into his project.



At left is a view of the Seminary Hill Cidery and Event Space. The two-story structure will contain a tasting room in the top floor and work areas in the bottom floor.

Above, Larch wood, reclaimed from the ‘old’ Tappan Zee Bridge, will be used on the outside of the building. The wood is tough, waterproof and durable.

Above right, with 20-foot vaulted ceilings, the event space at the Cidery will offer long views of Pennsylvania and the Upper Delaware River Valley.

At right, McCarthy Construction owner Mark McCarthy cuts some wood as he constructs a window frame at The Boarding House on Seminary Hill, which is the former Callicoon Hospital.

