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The Settlers Hospitality Group to Acquire Ehrhardt's Waterfront Resort *Two Hospitality Families Merge*

HAWLEY, PA—The Genzlinger and Ehrhardt families are proud to announce that The Settlers Hospitality Group will acquire Ehrhardt's Waterfront Resort in late October or early November 2015.

The Genzlinger family has owned and operated The Settlers Inn in Hawley, PA for more than 35 years—and more recently, along with family member John Shuman, have established a collection of local hospitality and lifestyle businesses including Ledges Hotel, the Hawley Silk Mill, Cocoon Coffee House, Mill Market and Lake Region Fitness. They will purchase Ehrhardt's Waterfront Resort, a third-generation family business on Lake Wallenpaupack, from Co-Owners Eric and Craig Ehrhardt.

"In today's world so many businesses sell because they have to. We're selling because we think this the right thing to do for our family and our staff," says Eric Ehrhardt. "This is a win-win for the local economy as it represents growth in the hospitality industry as well as more employment opportunities for local people."

Managing Partner Justin Genzlinger, whose parents, Grant and Jeanne, opened The Settlers Inn at its current location on Main Avenue in 1980, says, "We are excited to combine our families' expertise, with more than 100 years of Northern Pocono hospitality experience, to create the premier boutique lodging, wedding and restaurant group in the region."

The newly formed hospitality group will keep all of the Ehrhardt family—Craig, Sue, Ashley, Steve and Eric—in key management positions. In addition, the current staff will remain intact and have opportunities to benefit from expected growth.

The Genzlingers have long supported revitalization efforts in downtown Hawley. The acquisition of Ehrhardt's creates a bridge between Hawley and Lake Wallenpaupack, and provides a family-friendly lakefront experience to their guests. "We are doubling our lodging units and amenities, tripling our wedding and event business while expanding our restaurant group to the family friendly market," adds Justin.

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“You often see properties like ours bought by people outside the area who may not understand the business’s legacy, but the Genzlingers’ experience and understanding of our business and the local area puts them in the perfect position to continue serving our customers at the family-oriented level they’ve come to appreciate,” adds Eric.

The Genzlingers plan to invest in renovations to Ehrhardt’s original inn, motel, cottages and restaurant to position the facilities for the future. Plans include upgraded hotel amenities, landscape improvements and significant additions to the pool and lakefront activities.

The restaurant will continue to feature a family-based menu with prices that are consistent with Ehrhardt’s current menu. The restaurant will be managed by Craig Ehrhardt. “I’m looking forward to collaborating on a food and beverage concept that leverages the Genzlingers’ tradition of local, fresh ingredients with our casual menu geared toward a family friendly price point,” says Craig.

The goal is to complete all renovations by May 2016 when the property will relaunch as The Silver Birches Resort, which was its name from 1928, when George and Rachel Singer built the inn, until the late 1980s when the name was changed to Ehrhardt’s.

Until its relaunch in May as The Silver Birches Resort, the property will remain open and will operate throughout the renovation process as Ehrhardt’s Waterfront Resort.

“On behalf of my family and our investors, we’re committed to setting the stage for the next 15 to 20 years, and preparing the resort to be in our family for generations,” says Justin.

According to officials with The Honesdale National Bank, “Hometown businesses are the foundation of our local communities. We are very pleased to assist Justin and the Settlers Hospitality Group with their acquisition of Ehrhardt’s, maintaining local ownership of this well-respected family business.”

Alice Ehrhardt, a member of the second generation of Ehrhardt’s proprietors, is happy that the business is evolving as it is. “While Eric, Steve and Craig’s grandparents George and Marjorie and their father Jerry are no longer with us to see this new phase, I am sure they would be proud of all the boys have accomplished. I have the utmost confidence that the Genzlinger family will carry on our family-friendly hospitality tradition,” she says.

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“We intend to preserve the original inn, creating a vintage lakefront resort in keeping with its authentic farmhouse style,” says Grant Genzlinger.

All weddings and private events currently booked at Ehrhardt’s will be honored as well as all gift certificates. In addition, Ehrhardt’s frequent lodging guests will continue to receive the current rate during 2016.

The acquisition will create one of the largest catering businesses in Northeast PA. “The Settlers Inn has always been known for custom weddings,” says Jeanne Genzlinger. “Ehrhardt’s has an excellent lake-front wedding and events facility to which we will add our culinary expertise and uniqueness. We will offer the best special event venues in the region run by one team and covering a range of price points.” The newly combined catering business will be managed by Steve Ehrhardt.

“There is only a positive impact for our guests,” says Eric. “We are grateful to all of our friends and customers. It has been a great 72 years. Whether guests have been visiting us for generations, were married here last year, or had dinner with us last week, we thank you for allowing our family to be a part of yours.”

More information regarding The Silver Birches Resort will be released before the end of the year.

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