



Steinhatchee River Inn & Marina **Not Your Typical Ribbon Cutting**

By: Rhonda Rogers-Bardsley

Aerial photo of the River Haven Marina and Motel.

When Rob and Barb Lewis purchased the former River Haven Marina and Motel, they did so in the most unpredictable of times. With COVID running rampant and businesses closing at an alarming rate, they felt compelled to purchase the Marina across the street that would enlarge their own properties, joining the River Inn and the Marina as one. Barb has said of the purchase many times, "Rob and I decided that we were either crazy or blessed to buy the Marina. We knew it had been sporadically for sale for 3 years and felt a divine tugging to act now. We prayerfully considered the purchase and thought if God allowed everything to fall into place, it would be ours." Everything did fall into place and the Steinhatchee River Inn has now added "& Marina" to its name.

Having been successful in the purchase, the Lewis' knew they must honor God by placing it all into his hands. Although traditionally a new business (or new ownership) will have a ribbon cutting ceremony, in typical out-of-the-box Lewis fashion, Rob and Barb began to orchestrate a blessing of the fleet. On January 1, 2021, Pastor Tommy Peterson from the Community Presbyterian Church of Live Oak, came to dedicate and offer a blessing of the of business. Many of the marina's Captains and their families attended the ceremony, as did numerous locals and friends of the family. In his opening remarks, Pastor Peterson said, "We are not here on this earth to merely show up, do a bunch of things, and then die and leave it to another person. We are here to accomplish that which God has for us—which is, in part, to make the world a better place---because we were there. And so, it is to that end that we dedicate the people and the possessions and the time that will be invested in this business."

The Pastor offered three short prayers, one for the owners and managers, one for the employees and partners and lastly, a prayer for the facility and operations of the Marina. He gave the following blessing over the fleet:

May your nets be filled and your compass true.

May the wind and the waves be your friend.

**May you stand the storm, and the hand of the Lord,
bring you safely to harbor again.**



Pastor Tommy Peterson from the Community Presbyterian Church of Live Oak during the blessing.

The dedication reads "May the favor of the Lord rest upon us and establish the work of our hands."

The business began operations under new ownership on December 3rd, 2020 and has not missed a beat! It offers the same great service with an expanded selection of accommodations, and a new web site: www.riverinnandmarina.com. The new owners retained all the employees so you can expect to see the same friendly faces and a few new ones, as the businesses merge more solidly. Perhaps one of the biggest administrative changes is the online reservation system. No longer do anglers need to call for lodging, RV spots or boat rentals accommodation but they can now go online and pick out their room type, length of stay and travel dates.

Rob and Barb are excited to be in the marina business and look forward to meeting all the new and former marina customers. The marina store has been updated and rearranged just a little bit, as room is made for new inventory and the owners' personal style in furnishings and space. They invite you to drop by for a visit and urge you to enjoy a little "Back Porch" sitting. The "Blessed Vessel" decal (shown above and die cut and weather resistant) is available for sale in the marina store.