

# Group forms with 'Share Moravia' theme

**M**arge Richardson and Virginia McDonough think Moravia is a fine place to live and they, along with other merchants, want to share it.

"About a year and a half ago, we decided to open a store and got together with some other merchants to discuss what we could do help the town grow," said Richardson.

McDonough said they had been told that when Destination Park gets going, it will do big things for Moravia.

"We want to be ready," she said.

The group wrote up a Mission Statement which contains what they want to accomplish: Recruit and retain retail businesses in-

she said.

McDonough said they have set up a Web site with local businesses on it. The address is [www.moravia.ia.com](http://www.moravia.ia.com).

"We're all friends or relatives," said Richardson.

"Sometimes friends AND relatives," interjected McDonough.

"We want to welcome visitors and show what rural Iowa is like. I don't want to see Moravia grow too much because we'll lose the small-town atmosphere."

Richardson said you can buy groceries in Moravia, there are two laundromats, two hotels, a professional photographer, two beauty shops and Knapp Auto.

"My husband and I have a delivery service.

Rick Harper, owner of Fat Annie's bar, has done more for Moravia than anyone. There are many people who want to see Moravia grow," said Richardson.

"We have a unique town. It was started by people from the Moravian Church. They bought land from the Mormons - 40 acres - and came back in 1850 to lay out the town. It was

incorporated in 1851 and has the same street names now as then," said McDonough.

Richardson said she and her husband lost a grandchild in an accident in 1993. When they were in the hospital, two ministers came to be with them.

"I couldn't sleep afterwards and would walk a lot. At 2 a.m., someone would see me, get up and come walk with me. When someone gets hurt we want to know all about it - we're not being nosy. We want to know who's hurt and how we can help.

McDonough mentioned that the Moravia Fire Department is the one responsible for the Rathbun Lake area. McDonough was mayor of the town for eight years but currently Paul Mihalovich is mayor.

"In our organization we have a Visionary Committee that looks at what could happen in the future, so we can prepare," said McDonough.

"I love Moravia," said Richardson. "It's my pride and joy. I'll do whatever I can to help keep it a good place to live. We would be happy to have people visit or even move in. We'd welcome them with open arms. We want other people to enjoy it like we do."

**By Patsy Cincotta**  
Staff writer



**Marge Richardson and Virginia McDonough tell about the merchant group in Moravia.**

cluding industry, promote tourism in the area, cooperate with individuals, groups and organizations and the city council to accomplish these goals because Moravia is a good place to visit, live, work and raise families.

"In 1946 my husband and I came to Moravia to go into business. We started with this same idea. One evening women got together while the men were in a business meeting. One woman who was in business said she was going to go into that meeting - and she did," said McDonough.

"We don't want to be called a Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber of Commerce is a nationwide organization. This is our town and we don't want an organization telling us what to do. We have our own constitution and by-laws. We are the Moravia Merchants Association, an organization of business people."

"We want to help people and help the town to prosper," added Richardson, who is a nurse who works for Home Health Care and also runs Aunt Mag's in Moravia, a variety store.

"I had to cut back on my nursing because we keep the store open more hours,"

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