



## Project Spotlight

# ERIC TONNER

Residential Multifunctional Hobby Building • 3,264 Square Feet • Bluffton, Indiana

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THE  
VIDEO



Eric Tonner believes that working the land should feel “more like a garden than a factory.” His property, *Life Joy Acres*, had to accommodate light and heavy-duty use but still feel warm enough for people to gather there. Eric planned to finish the interior himself, so Meyer Building focused on delivering a shell and structure he could build on. Together, we brought his vision to life.

## The Challenge

Eric needed a building that could handle woodworking, a vehicle lift, and personal butchering and canning without feeling purely utilitarian. The site was wooded with no driveway access or pad, which required significant groundwork before framing could begin. Inside, the structure had to support heavy equipment and loft storage while staying open enough to shift from a shop to a social space.

## Our Approach

Eric brought us ideas on paper and a clear vision for how the property should feel and function. We offered several options and worked through them until the design came together. We then translated those ideas into drawings so Eric could evaluate the building from every angle before locking in on a plan. Throughout the process, our team managed all aspects of the project, giving Eric the freedom to focus on what he wanted to build inside it.

## The Outcome

Not long after the building was finished, Eric and his wife stood back and watched 17 young men fill the space, talking about their day, asking questions, building something together. That moment was the measure of whether the building was doing its job. It is. *Life Joy Acres* now has a place where work happens, people connect, and skills are learned and passed down.

*"The first time we sat down, I think they walked away with an idea of what I was wanting. Then the Meyer Building team was great at giving me multiple options of the same building, and then we could start blending those ideas together ... I appreciated that they could think outside the box and also keep things moving forward."*

**Eric Tonner**, Property Owner

## Construction Techniques

Post-frame construction with a Perma-Column foundation system keeps wood out of the ground and delivers a wide-open floor plan. Scissor trusses on both the main building and pavilion create vaulted ceilings that make each space feel open and bright. A partition wall divides the main floor into distinct work zones, and cedar-wrapped posts tie the pavilion into the main structure.



## Coordination and Project Management

Eric's project extended well beyond the building shell. Our team handled site clearing, pad preparation, the driveway, concrete, framing, electrical, plumbing rough-ins, and tube heating. When a freak windstorm hit during truss-setting, the crew handled it without disruption. The process was clear and collaborative from start to finish, and when Eric was ready for another project on the property, Meyer Building was his first call.

## Project Impact

*Life Joy Acres* now has a dedicated destination that supports the sense of community Eric wanted. The building with its pavilion gives him room to move between projects. It's a place where people can learn, create, and spend time together in a setting that feels more like nature than a shop floor. The skills and memories built here are ones Eric hopes will carry forward for generations.



*"Eric came to us with a vision that wasn't one-dimensional. We helped shape the layout, the shell, and the structure so the building felt open, useful, and clean from day one, then handed him a strong platform to make it his own."*

**Matthew Gerber**, Owner, Meyer Building



## PROJECT FEATURES

### Size & Layout:

A 40'x56'x14' insulated main building pairs with a 32'x32'x10' covered pavilion to support work, hosting, and flexible everyday use.

### Roof Structure:

Both roof systems use a 6/12 pitch with scissor trusses to create vaulted ceilings that make the space feel taller, brighter, and more open.

### Pavilion Design:

Wide 12' openings and cedar-wrapped posts give the pavilion a finished, welcoming feel.

### Foundation & Durability:

Perma-Column foundations and perimeter skirting give the building a long-lasting base while keeping the structure ready for clean concrete integration.

### Overhead Access:

12' x 10' and 12' x 14' doors with full window-lite panels bring in daylight and support easy access for vehicles, equipment, and larger hobby projects.

### Walk Doors & Windows:

Four insulated steel walk doors and five thermopane horizontal sliders create practical access points and connect the building to the woods around it.

### Concrete Package:

Reinforced concrete floors, grade beams, and aprons give the main building and pavilion the durability needed for heavy use while keeping transitions clean at doors and entries.

### Loft & Interior Framing:

16'x40' loft with tongue-and-groove sheathing, closed-riser stairs, and removable safety rails add valuable upper-level storage without crowding the main floor below.

### Interior Finish Strategy:

Insulated T1-11 lower walls and a white steel liner above create warmth and soften the interior without sacrificing durability.

### Electrical & Lighting:

A 200A service-ready electrical package with high-bay lights, can lights, wall packs, patio lighting, ceiling fans, and overhead door circuits supports the building's many uses from day one.

### Plumbing & Heat:

Rough plumbing for a bathroom, kitchen sink, shop sink, trench drain, wall hydrant, and future vac system, along with tube heat, helps the building function comfortably year-round.

### Site Work & Access:

Tree and stump removal, pad prep, and driveway construction brought the project to life deep into the property while helping the finished building feel tucked naturally into its wooded setting.