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Balancing work, recreation

BY GENE STOWE | TRIBUNE CORRESPONDENT

For part of his career, Bryan Baker tried to balance his work life and recreation by making the recreation more intense — primitive camping in Canada, muzzle-loader hunting — as his telecommunications job became more abstract and intangible.

These days, rather than rushing across the widening divide, he's found ways to bring them together — bringing customers out to his North Liberty farm "to get a little mud between their toes," doing a little laptop work on vacation and earning an extra day or two away.

BRYAN BAKER 37
Com Control Inc. Partner

"It happens together in a nice balance," Baker says. "It's harmony now."

Work accelerates at the speed of sound, and sometimes light, for Baker, a Hobart, Ind., native who went to work in telecommunications after he graduated in business management from IU Northwest in Merrillville in 1991.

He worked for one company for five years, then went to another for about five more in the late 1990s.

"That was right as the Internet came into play," Baker says. "It was really wonderful times. We were doing thousands of connections a year all around the region."

In September 2000, he and two partners started their own company, BBK, mostly auditing phone bills. Two years ago, he started Com Control to provide an outsource telecom department for companies.

He and his wife, T...

their children, Archer, 8, and 6, live in North Liberty farm house on eight acres next to a large wetland. They have a pond and a chicken coop, and last year the family raised a cow, which they later grilled.

The family is also active in the North Liberty Church of Christ.

In addition to hunting, fishing, and other outdoor activities, Baker, who played golf and worked in high school, coaches golf for ages 6 to 12 with Walker Parks, coaches wrestling at John Glenn school system, and coaches baseball and soccer teams Archer's age with Walker Parks.

For two years, Com Control has hosted 100 to 150 children from such agencies as the Homeless and Hopeless Mission with Santa Claus Race near the Commerce Center at Christmastime.

"We've supported a number of different charities, but this one was created," Baker says.