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For a woman who goes camping with her family every year, designing an outdoorsinspired fabric line is a natural. Never mind that she stays at a local motel with a grandchild or two while everyone else beds down in a tent. Her family's daytime cance trips and evening campfires provide plenty of inspiration for the Northwoods line of fabrics she's designed with Lynn Hawley Bloomguist for

Minnesota-based Eileen worked in the fabric industry for 27 years but it wasn't until a year after she became a rep for Moda that she began designing fabric. On her visits to guilt shops, she realized customers were interested in the kinds of woodsy fabrics she and Lynn now create but at the time there wasn't much like it on the market.

the past 16 years.

"Minnesota is a huge quilting state," says Eileen, who notes that there are 26 quilt shops in the Twin Cities metro area alone and more than 85 shops statewide that participated in Minnesota's 2010 shop hop. Northwoods' twigs, branches, florals, and woodland creatures appeal beyond the Land of 10,000 Lakes they're also popular in forested locales like Washington state and Canada.

After nearly 40 years in the textile industry, Eileen retired this past August from her fabric rep position. Her days of designing fabric are far from over.

"Connecting with Moda has been such a blessing," says Eileen, who with Lynn has produced 52 Northwoods lines. "Working with them has been the best chapter of my career."

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