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Another successful Town & Country Days!

The 22nd version of Kerkhoven Town & Country Days was pulled off without a hitch this past weekend, aided by wonderful weather. Always a big hit is the Saturday parade, evidenced above by the crowd of onlookers and hopeful children. See pages 6 and 7 for more photos of the fun.

Tangled golf development web dividing family, community

by Cormac Dodd

When 35 folks filed into the Lake Andrew Township Hall last week Tuesday, some were shoring up opposition. Others awaited answers on the scope of the development intended for the quietude of their region -- a destination golf course on the Minnesota prairie -- in these remote, scenic hills.

Tepetonka Club LLC will not open its gates to limited access until 2024, if a course is chiseled out of the land at all, and almost never can developers be beholden to strict plans so early in the game.

Township hall meetings are not usually high-attendance affairs, but a palatial development project has come into focus in the New London-Spicer area, one stoking both excitement and fear.

ment and fear.

Nor was this a public forum. It was a session where the Tepetonka Club could explain their impacts of the proposed development on nearby roads -- minimal, in their telling -- the very subject township boards deal with most directly. Still, members of the public hoped their questions might go answered, their concerns addressed. Not so.

As the address hit its 15 minute mark, locals turned more and more against the proposal that would bring a moneyed few from outside the community for games of golf on an expanse of land that may not be, in a character, a great place to put a golf course. Tepetonka Club believe they have proceeded soundly. Both parties believe they are on the right side of the white-hot ordeal.

The of collision of perspectives takes place at the intersection of a century farm, an embattled legal dilemma between three siblings, and the alluring possibility of destination golf in a tale of developers and those who will not sell.

Mark Haugejorde first toured the 187 acres of CRP farmland in question in May of last year, mesmerized by the beauty of the landscape, the prized native prairie grassland seven miles from the hall at which he appeared more than a year later.

He envisioned a fairway, a run astride a Shakopee Creek that surges in size during spring months. His specialty: golf courses... shaping their design to complement topography. To put it plainly in a case where nothing is simple, Tepetonka a Club is an ambitious development proposal to the tune of \$20 million seeking to bring luxury golf to the Minnesota prairie, specifically amongst the groves of two-leaf grasses blanketing steep changes in elevation.

And Tepetonka fits into wider trends within the world of golf: These would be the scattering of luxury courses that wear rugged looks and make use of undulating native habit for runs and tee-offs in reflection of the televised play on the Scottish heathland. Destination golf courses began to crop up around the country 25 years ago. Many premier fairways are coastal but these -- found in Wisconsin's ancient glacial lakes, found in Nebraska's sand hills -- are not.

A legal battle runs contemporaneous to Tepetonka's plans for the clubhouse. Two of the siblings who own the land agreed to sell what they would have recognized growing up as a thriving dairy farm. One,



Laurie and Dean Thorson say they were left out of the family decision to sell farm which has been in Dean's family name for better than a century. They are trying to stop the development of Tepetonka Club.

the youngest of Thorsons and the one whose son still lives on the site, refuses. Dean Thorson has managed Cedar Hills Family Farm since 1987, mowing noxious weeds.

In lockstep with the 18 holes would come new channels for mon-

ey to flow into the local economy through, proponents of the Tepetonka Club say. At least 60 seasonal jobs would come as a local windfall.

Haugejorde has worked with some of the most familiar names in

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Shakopee Creek meanders through the Lake Andrew acreage where a developer wants to build an exclusive 'destination golf course.'

Fun Days are this weekend in Pennock

Pennock 'Fun Days' kick off this Friday and run to Sunday.

The organizers have again put together a full slate of events for young and old. See their ad in this week's issue for full details, but following are highlights of the activities planned.

- Sidewalk chalk art contest at 3 p.m.
- St. Johns Lutheran hog roast at 5:30 p.m.
- Classic car cruise 5:30-8 p.m.
- Antique tractor cruise 5:30-7:30 p.m.
- Beer garden 5:15-9 p.m.
- Bean bag tournament 6:30 p.m.
- Junior royalty coronation

- 6:30 p.m.
- Free ice cream sundaes 7 p.m.
- Succulent planting 7 p.m.
- Kids' coins scavenger hunt 7:15 p.m.
- Antique tractor parade 7:30 p.m.
- Fire Department demonstration 7:45 p.m.

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Monson Lake Opry Festival returns

by Cormac Dodd

the sprawling farmland.



The hydraulic overhead door of what was once a hog barn opens, rising to form a roof over a stage where the musicians hang steel pedal in the air and look out on

The Monson Lake Opry Festival returns for its second year September 10, with shows jogging from 1 p.m. to well into the night, according to the billing.

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