

JOURNAL

www.JournalTrib.com

Wednesday, June 17, 2020

Crosby, ND

Vol. 119, No. 25 -- Price \$1.25



Threshing bee is cancelled

By Cecile Wehrman

The 2020 Divide County Threshing Show is cancelled, but a threshing reunion is planned on the traditional third weekend of July.

Members of the historical society met Wednesday last week, deciding there are too many obstacles to mount a full-scale show this year in the wake of COVID-19 concerns.

However, said President John Tysse, there are still tractor operators and collectors intending to make their annual trek to Crosby, regardless of COVID-19.

"We're going to start up tractors and have a good time," he said.

But a big crowd would be hard to handle.

Due to social distancing and disinfection requirements, it would be difficult to ensure the safety of kitchen help, many of whom are among the 60-plus age group most at risk from coronavirus.

That means there will be no lunch counter, but the board will try to attract a variety of food vendors. Bathrooms will be sanitized every two hours, per state health department guidelines, and someone will be hired solely for those cleanings.

Events will be all word-of-mouth and possibly spur of the moment, depending on who shows up and what anyone wants to do.

"We're not going to get too technical about it. If people want to come they can come. If they want to wear a mask, they can wear a mask," said Tysse.

Masked or not, it's unlikely anyone from Canada will attend, and that was another big factor in deciding to cancel.

"They're going to keep the Canadian line closed 'til the end of July," Tysse said, prohibiting nonessential travel.

That will severely limit the number of visitors who could

partake in the show. Though the Rollag, Minnesota show has also been cancelled, Tysse said Makoti's show is still on, to be held a week before Divide's.

Historical society member Doug Graupe expects many people will decide "I'll skip it this year," rather than risk infection.

Tysse expects to fire up at least three steam engines and up to a dozen gas tractors. There will be some plowing, and perhaps, threshing.

Members struggled with the idea of a cancelled show while still welcoming people to the grounds, leading member Rod Gillund to suggest the term "postponed" instead.

"The threshing bee has built a fabulous reputation," he said, from food service to entertainment.

He worries people could get the wrong idea if they come and find many of the usual amenities missing.

Nevertheless, members determined cancelling the show is the more appropriate action, since it more clearly draws the line between the annual show and the event being held this year.

"The show and the reunion are two different things," said Gillund.

He suggested local cafes be advised of the potential for increased traffic since food service on-site will be limited.

Members also noted the event could draw people from three different class reunions that weekend along with people planning to attend a Fortuna air base reunion.

David Gjovig said the Borderline Auto Club is considering a car show on the grounds on Saturday.

The Crosby Area Chamber talked at their own meeting last week about the possibility of doing a summer event the same weekend, possibly with a street dance.

Wind farm approved for Burke County

By Brad Nygaard

Wind turbines could be generating electricity in western Burke County by the end of this year.

That's according to Conlan Kennedy, NextEra Energy spokesman, following the North Dakota Public Service Commission's approval last week of the company's plan to build a wind farm there.

"We are finalizing the construction start date and will notify Burke County and our landowners once that timeline is confirmed," Kennedy said.

The Northern Divide Wind Project will consist of up to 74 wind turbines and associated facilities across four townships in Burke County. It also includes a 41-mile-long, 345-kilovolt transmission line from the facility to Basin Electric's Tinde substation in Mountrail County. The farm is expected to generate 200 megawatts at peak capacity.

Total project costs are estimated at \$330 million.

From an economic perspective, KayCee Lindsey, Divide County developer, said news of the project's go-ahead is good for Divide County next door.

"I'm excited to potentially host some construction workers," Lindsey said, referring to the housing and food needs of temporary workers.

"Hopefully we'll be hosting some of the permanent jobs, too, once it's finished. We need some positive economic growth at this time, considering what's going on with oil and the pandemic."

Northern Divide is NextEra's second attempt to establish a wind energy generating facility in Burke County.

A previous application was denied last year by the PSC after objections from U.S. Fish and



Brad Nygaard -- The Journal

A banner for NextEra recently went up inside a Main Street office space.

Wildlife and North Dakota Game and Fish. Those objections centered around the original application's siting near Lostwood Wildlife Refuge, and potential negative impacts on native prairie grasses and wetlands.

As a result, NextEra regrouped and redesigned the project, moving it north and west, away from Lostwood, while at the same time reducing the project's footprint.

"NextEra worked closely with the North Dakota Game and Fish and U.S. Fish and Wildlife to address the concerns identified by these expert agencies in the first permitting process. As a result, Northern Divide Wind is significantly different in its impacts to wetlands and wildlife than the Burke Wind project was," PSC Commissioner Julie Fedorchak said.

The lack of objection from wildlife agencies, Fedorchak went on to say, allowed the project to meet the legal standard of minimal impact necessary for a permit.

Earlier this year, the PSC approved NextEra's application for a 123-turbine, 298-megawatt facility in Logan-Emmons counties.

Upon completion, Northern Divide Wind will be NextEra's eighth facility in North Dakota.

Digging the sand

Crosby Kids Daycare staff and children enjoy their first day in a new sandbox constructed with funds from the John & Elaine Andrist Charitable Trust, with labor donated by volunteers.

The grant also paid for some decorative planters.

Brad Nygaard -- The Journal



Public notice for store project has little detail

By Brad Nygaard

A notice of a public hearing relating to construction of a Dollar General store does not conform with previous notices the city of Crosby has issued for zoning changes and subdivision plats.

According to the city attorney, it doesn't have to.

An ad first published in the Journal last week contained the wrong property description for the parcel in question.

After receiving the city's corrected notice last week, The Journal raised questions about the lack of detail in the notice.

Scheduled at Crosby City Hall at 4:30 p.m., June 29, the notice says the hearing relates to an application by Dollar General for a new "commercial build." It invites citizens to make comments either at the meeting or by mail.

The notice does not inform

the public the hearing relates to a proposed change from agricultural to commercial zoning, or that it will involve approval of a plat, or subdivision, of the property.

Documents provided on May 28 to the city by Interstate Engineering, Crosby's engineering firm, documenting a preapplication meeting with the applicant, outlined the need to hear a zoning change, subdivision and annexation.

Minutes of the July 2019 City Council meeting reveal the property was, in fact, annexed into the city in 2019, however the annexation, as of last week, has not been recorded.

The notice does not indicate the scope or size of the project, indicated by engineers as the intention for construction of a 9,100-square-foot retail store.

Though the notice invites

comment, it doesn't advise citizens they have the right to view the application or request copies of it.

This type of information has been included in zoning hearing notices in the past on behalf of the cities of Crosby, Tioga and Ray, according to The Journal's review of hearing notices published over the past 10 years.

Troy Vassen, chairman of the Planning and Zoning Commission, expressed concern when asked about the wording of the current notice.

"Yeah, that doesn't sound right," he said. "It should make mention of the rezoning and subdivision of the parcel, and as far as I'm concerned, Dollar General shouldn't even be listed on there."

That's because, as Vassen said, the property would, if the application progresses, actually be developed by a

separate company and leased to the retailer.

The Journal contacted city attorney Seymour Jordan by email last week making him aware of the apparent deficiencies in the hearing notice, but no further corrections or additions had been received as of press time.

In a reply Thursday, Jordan responded, "Anyone that has any concerns can contact me directly, Please let the people know."

In a separate reply Friday, Jordan defended the notice, saying "I do not disagree that the City has advertised a certain way in the past, but that does not create a legal requirement because the City of Crosby has gone above and beyond the legal requirements in the past."

Mayor Bert Anderson did not return a call seeking comment on the matter last week.



Brad Nygaard -- The Journal

Weeds may be the bane of homeowners but this neighbor appreciates the munchies on a lawn in Crosby.

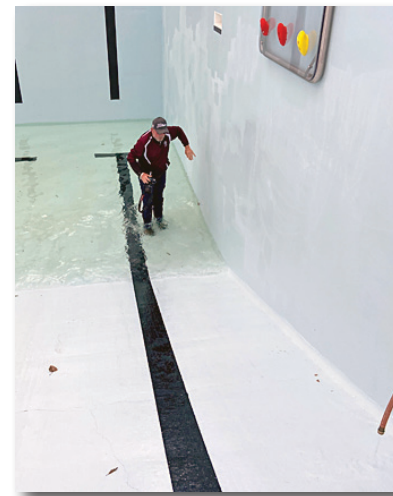
Chamber members express concerns about Dollar General

Members of the Crosby Area Chamber at their meeting last week discussed the potential competition that might be posed by the arrival of a Dollar General store in Crosby, with a couple expressing the belief it will hurt Main Street.

Community Developer KayCee Lindsey said she has heard from a developer in Bowman of that town's experience with the chain. The Bowman chamber has been unsuccessful in getting Dollar General to participate in their organization.

On the other hand, she said, the retailer could increase employment, property and sales taxes.

Lindsey suggested members with concerns about the project attend a planning and zoning hearing scheduled for 4:30 p.m., Monday, June 29.



Brock Harward photo

First swim

The Journal's Brad Nygaard can claim to have taken the first swim in Crosby's new pool, even if it was unintentional. While photographing the fill last week, the slippery surface encouraged him to get in the water, rather than just photograph it. Neither the camera or cell phone was harmed, just pride.