

OUR TOWNS Cedar County

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Hartington Complex Turf Gets A Makeover

Different Method Used To Prepare Field For Football Season

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HARTINGTON, Neb. — By the end of last fall, the football field at the Hartington Community Complex was a muddy, sloppy mess, with a lack of grass that made easy play all but impossible.

Starting this spring, the field has undergone a process that has helped the grass grow again — and hopefully last through the end of this season.

"It's probably in the best shape it's been since it was first built," said Hartington Mayor Bill Yates. "There are no holes. They have just done an absolutely tremendous job on it."

Athletic directors from Hartington schools concur. "It looks really good right now," said Blair Kalin, athletic director of Hartington Public School. "I know there's been a lot of work that's gone into the complex. It's a good-looking facility and it always has been."

"I was out there (Wednesday) night, and the grass looks really good," said Terry Kathol, activities director at Hartington Cedar Catholic. "It seems to be in really, really good condition."

Both schools currently use the Community Complex. Kathol said issues with the grass have arisen before, but were never as bad as last year.

Precipitation played a big role, he said. "There were a lot of games played in the rain," Kathol said. "That usually doesn't happen. ... It just limited people's offense, and what they could do

defensively, too. It really had an impact on how the game was played because of its condition, especially in the last two games we played on it in the playoffs last year."

Beginning in the spring, steps were taken to make sure the same thing didn't happen this year.

According to Yates, Bruening Aeration helped to facilitate the aeration process and Gary Kuben, superintendent of the Hartington Golf Club, "took over in the supervision of it. He seeded it, mowed it, made sure it was watered properly and just did a very, very good job."

The process took all summer.

"It wasn't just a one-month deal," Yates said. In a spring interview with the Press & Dakotan, Kevin Bruening of Bruening Aeration said the field's major problem was compaction.

"The base foundation of the football field was heavy clay, and the number one problem was just compaction and lack of root depth on the turf, because it just had nowhere to go," he said.

The process of aeration was aided through the use of a tractor that pulled three- to four-inch cores out of the ground.

"As we bring that up, the dirt will decompose the thatch on top of the grass, which is too thick because of the lack of root depth," Bruening said. "Then we'll get some air and some water penetrated in there to soften the soil."

Additionally, when the field was mowed over the summer, the mower blades were set at the tallest



SHAUNA MARLETTE/P&D

Members of the Cedar Catholic Trojans and the Thayer Central Titans football teams grapple on the muddy field at the Hartington Community Complex during a play-off game last November. The field underwent a series of maintenance procedures over the summer that promise to strengthen the roots of the grass.

length so that the roots of the grass could gain strength.

"He's mowed it as high as he could mow it all summer long, to keep that moisture down where it belongs, and keep it so it's nice," Yates said.

The football teams will see just how successful this process was as they play more games and precipitation continues.

"We'll just have to see how much those roots go down," Yates said. "That was our problem. It wasn't that we didn't have good grass. We just didn't have any root base to hold the grass down. It's like if you put carpet on top of a cement deck and run over it,

and don't ever glue it down. It's just going to keep peeling up, and that's what was happening to it."

Kathol said while he doesn't expect the same issues as last year, the field could expect some damage through regular play.

"That's the nature of football fields," he said. "No football field is going to be in as good of shape in mid-October as it is the first week of September."

The Community Complex is a \$1.6 million project completed in 2004. The park spans more than 27 acres and is equipped with the football field, a track, shot and discus areas, four soccer fields, a practice football field and two baseball fields.

DEBATE

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when he said he wasn't sure whether humans were causing global warming.

"I am skeptical about the science that suggests global warming is man-caused or can be corrected by man-made efforts," Daugaard said, drawing gasps and murmurs from some in the crowd. "It's a complex world we live in."

Heidepriem said he believed scientific evidence shows that global warming is occurring and is a real threat.

"We can stick our heads in the sand and pretend like the

world isn't out there, but it is," Heidepriem said. "I think the evidence is significant. We ignore that evidence at our own peril."

The candidates also discussed state budget issues and education, but much of the debate focused on renewable energy.

Heidepriem criticized Rounds and Daugaard for failing to use enough ethanol in state government vehicles or to put enough blender pumps that can supply variable mixes of ethanol and gasoline at state Transportation Department facilities.

Daugaard said he supports



Daugaard



Heidepriem

installing more blender pumps, but said they should go to stations open to the public instead of those only available to state vehicles. The state also has a policy of buying flex-fuel

vehicles that can use varying blends of ethanol, he said. Heidepriem also said South Dakota has fallen behind Iowa and Minnesota in construction of wind farms. The Democrat noted that the Legislature this year had to override a veto issued by

Rounds so a law could take effect to continue construction tax refunds for large wind farms.

Daugaard said he wouldn't have vetoed the bill, but said other states have problems with increased utility rates because they mandated the use of wind energy. South Dakota has built wind farms only where transmission lines are available, he said.

Heidepriem said the nation needs to reduce its dependence on foreign oil, and South Dakota needs to be ready to take advantage of the growth in wind farms and ethanol production.

Daugaard agreed that the U.S.

must cut its use of foreign oil "because it's a national security problem. It's a threat to our nation."

Heidepriem criticized his opponent and the current governor for not doing enough to protect the state from possible oil spills from pipelines, such as the TransCanada line in eastern South Dakota and the planned TransCanada Keystone line in the western part of the state.

The Democrat noted that he proposed a 2-cent-a-barrel fee on oil shipped through the lines to support a fund that could be used to clean up spills. The bill

died because Rounds opposed it, he said.

"We need to protect ourselves and defend ourselves," Heidepriem said.

Daugaard said protective steps have already been taken. The state Public Utilities Commission has imposed safety conditions on the TransCanada pipelines, and the Legislature passed a law requiring the company to clean up any spill immediately, even if a leak is caused by someone other than TransCanada, he said.

"I believe the environment is being protected," the lieutenant governor said.

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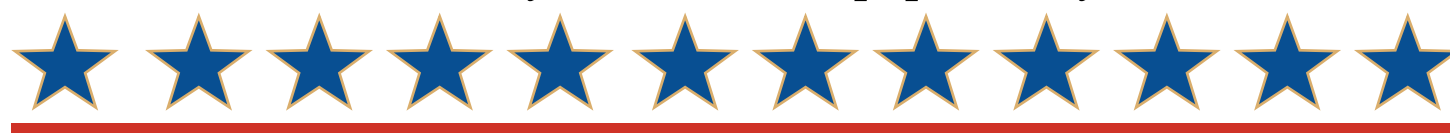
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- ✓ And 9 out of 10 South Dakotans (91.1%) who said they plan to vote in this fall's general election are newspaper readers.*

	Total adults	Newspaper website visitors
✓ Registered to vote	82%	87%
✓ Always vote in presidential elections	72%	79%
✓ Always vote in statewide elections	50%	56%
✓ Always vote in local elections	41%	43%

Source: Nationwide Scarborough Research 2009

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