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Dyersville Commercial

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Erin LaBelle • Staff Photo

Dyersville Aquatic Center gets into the game with new water features

Patrick Engler, of Dyersville, was one of many who enjoyed the new baseball-themed water features at the Dyersville Aquatic Center during their first week in place. The additions include baseball bubblers, a batter-up sprayer and baseball glove slide.

Drones are the next evolution in crop farming

Duo takes to the skies with new tech

BY DYLAN KURT
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As one of the latest agricultural innovations that promises to improve safety and reduce waste begins to pick up steam, more farmers are taking notice.

On June 16, several dozen farmers began gathering on the lawn of the Behnke family farm just outside of Durango and the curiosity was palpable.

Part of a larger series of events hosted by Dubuque County Watersheds called Farmer Field Day, presentations covered topics such as regenerative farming, relay cropping and soil testing, but one exhibition especially piqued the interest of attendees.

Cascade natives Dan Staner and Corey Johnson, of C&D Aerial, began loading up two of their drones for a demonstration — one loaded with water and the other kitty litter, which would be dropped on a nearby field, as attendees began positioning themselves to get a better look.

The duo has purchased four drones — currently, two are set up for broadcasting dry material (seeds) while the others carry liquid — to serve local producers in the area, who are looking to try something different.



Dylan Kurt • Staff Photo

Corey Johnson, left, and Dan Staner, of C&D Aerial, give attendees at the Dubuque County Watersheds called Farmer Field Day in Durango a brief overview of their drones before they take flight.

Johnson, who also works a full-time job and hobby farms on the side, said he has been utilizing cover crops and strip tilling practices for three years now.

“I like everything about it, but I would like to find a way to get a cover crop growing early in the fall to where I can use grazing feed while benefiting my crop ground,” Johnson said.

In the past, they’ve been applying the cover crop with a vertical till machine that broadcasts the seed, but that wasn’t getting him the desired result.

“I don’t get the growth that I want because I have to wait for the corn to dry down — it always seems to be too late,” Johnson said.

The solution, Johnson surmised,

would be to time the weather and drop the cover crop via drone, but he’s still trying to dial in that system.

“We have the capability of blowing cover crop over top of standing crops,” Staner explained. “That way, you’re growing window is quite a bit bigger.”

“I might try some different seeds — everything I’ve used has been cereal rye,” Johnson added. “A different species and going earlier might help.”

While moving to replace the traditional aerial application for crops, whether it be broadcasting seed or spray fungicide, done by helicopters and small planes may

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A primer on TIF: What is it? How does it work?

Rahe breaks down complex financial tool

BY DYLAN KURT
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It’s a convoluted subject that often confuses residents taking a closer look at their tax bill and newly elected public officials alike, but given its

effectiveness when it comes to economic development, it’s a tool worth understanding.

“There are just a lot of misconceptions and a lack of knowledge about this tool just because of the complicated nature of it,” Jacque Rahe, executive director of Dyersville Economic Development Corp, recently explained to a small crowd gathered at the Dyersville Social Center.

The event, sponsored by Tauke Motors, aimed to break down exactly how tax increment finance

(TIF) actually provides incentives for businesses and helps to enhance communities.

In Dyersville, these incentives typically come in the form of a tax rebate — in other words, the company is paying its full amount in taxes, only to have whatever portion defined in the contract returned to them on an annual basis.

While at its core, TIF is about providing a monetary incentive for a business, Rahe said the key phrase to remember throughout this process is

“increment.”

To make it clear, Rahe used a real-life example of a Dyersville project that utilized TIF dollars.

Prior to the new industrial park development on Dyersville’s west end, it was agricultural land. Dyersville Industries, Inc. (DII) scooped up 7.5 acres and began the process of developing it.

At this time in 2007, the land was valued at

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