

## IN THE LOOP

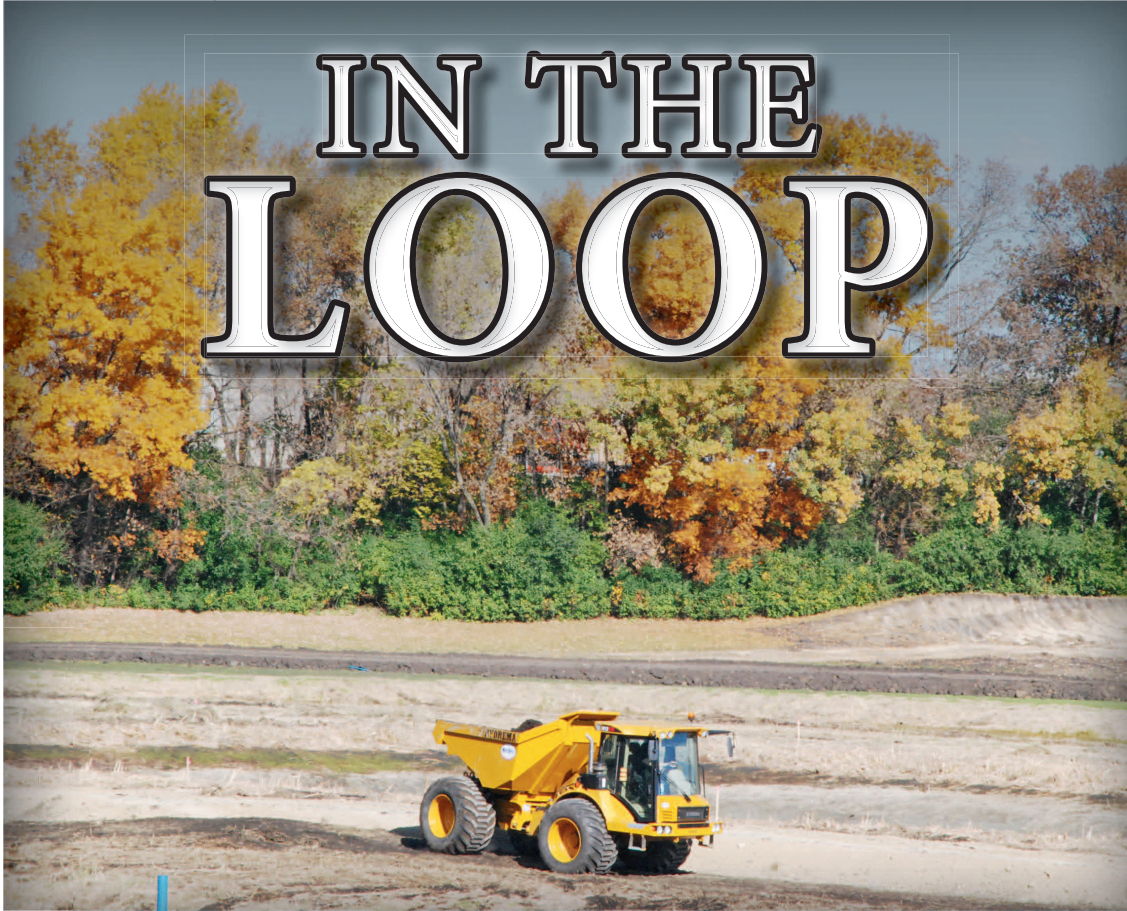


PHOTO BY MARK W. OLSON

Crews were at work moving earth at the city's nine-hole golf course earlier this month, transforming the Chaska Par 30 into The Loop at Chaska.

### Work begins on accessible golf course

BY MARK W. OLSON  
 editor@chaska Herald.com

**H**azeltine National Golf Club in Chaska attracts fans and professional athletes from around the globe.

Now, just down the street, the city of Chaska is preparing to expand on the town's golf legacy.

A city owned nine-hole golf course along Hazeltine Boulevard has begun its transformation from the "Chaska Par 30" into "The Loop at Chaska."

The idea is to create a golf course that is "welcoming to everyone," said Susan Neuville, incoming chair at Learning Links of Chaska (soon to be renamed Barrier Free Golf).

The group is partnering with the city to pay for the \$2,447,060.72 project and has raised \$775,000, leaving the city with \$1,672,060.72 of the costs.

As officials held an Oct. 13 groundbreaking, construction crews were already busy at work rebuilding the course.

Construction is slated to continue through next year, with an opening scheduled for summer 2022.

#### ACCESS

"The main design feature was disability access," said John Kellin, head golf pro at the Chaska Town Course.



ILLUSTRATION COURTESY CITY OF CHASKA

An illustration of "The Loop at Chaska," slated for opening in summer 2022.

The course will be designed for anyone to play, including those with a physical or mental disability, according to those involved with the project.

However Kellin stresses, the course won't be "another flat boring golf course." The course will be played in a circle (thus the name "The Loop," Neuville said) around a central wetland area.

Someone strapped into a single-rider golf cart will be able to access the entire course, Neuville said. "The playing surface will be

#### More information

To learn more about "The Loop at Chaska," get involved or make a donation, visit [barrierfreegolf.org](http://barrierfreegolf.org).

durable enough to support carts that will roll over it."

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# LOOP

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There won't be bunkers on the course.

"The challenge is going to come from having undulating greens with a lot of character," Kellin said.

A player who can't take a full swing, and instead putts the entire course, can still have a lot of fun, he said.

Kellin said that now, many of the Par 30's regulars include seniors and beginning juniors.

"They will continue to be a core clientele. What will change is the accessibility part for everyone else," he said. "I think the seniors are going to love it."

Another primary feature of The Loop will be a putting green, styled after the popular Himalayas course at St. Andrews in Scotland. The putting green will be free of charge to golfers, Kellin said.

"I see a lot of families, no matter what age or ability, taking advantage of the putting green," he said.

"It will be an unimpeachable first step into the game where you don't have to pay anything. You can sit and enjoy watching, you can play a little bit and approach the game slowly and casually," Neuville said.

Learning Links is also committed to keeping the course affordable, and worked with the city to designate 2,000 free rounds of golf, Neuville said.

The free rounds of golf will be used with various programming, said City Administrator Matt Podhradsky.

"We're trying to be strategic about going out and finding groups where we can program events and get kids introduced to golf who maybe couldn't afford to do it in the past."

## CHALLENGES

The Chaska Par 30 was designed by renowned golf course architect Robert Trent Jones, who designed the original nearby Hazeltine course.

However, the Par 30 has had its challenges over the years.

"For 20 years, I had people say 'I didn't even know it was there.' We put up signs, we marketed it more in the past," Kellin said. "It wasn't a high-quality facility."

The course faced increasing challenges for players, as other golf facilities opened in the area.

The number of rounds at the Par 30 continued to decrease, from 30,000 a decade ago to 17,000 annually by 2019.

In 2015, the city promoted the new game of "footgolf" at the course, a cross between soccer and golf.

The idea for a new course began with Learning Links founder Tim Andersen about six years ago, Neuville said.

"Tim and some of his friends wanted to find a way to make golf more welcoming and fun for more people," she said.

The city began discussing



Susan Neuville, incoming chair at Learning Links of Chaska (soon to be renamed Barrier Free Golf), talks about The Loop at Chaska during an Oct. 13 groundbreaking.

PHOTOS BY MARK W. OLSON

the project with Learning Links in 2018, and approved a concept plan in March 2020.

Finally, this past June, the irrigation system broke down at the Par 30, requiring crews to hand-water the course.

The city would have needed to replace the irrigation system and wellhead. It had also planned to add parking at the site, to avoid paying annual rent for 30 parking spaces from the owner of the nearby office building. Those costs would have added up to \$1.2 million.

"And the council would not have noticed one change in the golf course. It would have been the same golf course," Kellin said, of the cost.

"It was definitely a time that the council had to make

a decision on the Par 30," Podhradsky said.

So on Sept. 21, the Chaska City Council went ahead and approved the new project on a 5-0 vote.

The annual debt service on the project, financed for 20 years, is \$107,000, and will be paid for from revenue at the course, as well as profits from the city's municipal electric service.

Fundraising is also underway for a new clubhouse for The Loop, which wasn't included in the first phase of construction.

## 'IT WILL BE A WINNER'

Kellin said he was excited when the Chaska Town Course was built, and when the Chaska Curling Center

opened. However, he said. "I'm probably more excited about this project."

"We did a lot of research and I'm confident it's being done right and I'm confident it will be a winner when it's all done," Kellin said.

"I'm just excited to see groups of people who you might not expect to see playing together and be enjoying themselves," Neuville said.



"I'm confident it will be a winner when it's all done," said John Kellin, head golf pro at the Chaska Town Course, pictured at The Loop at Chaska groundbreaking.



Officials dig in during a groundbreaking Oct. 13 for The Loop at Chaska.

# PUBLICNOTICES

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**CITY OF CARVER  
NOTICE OF PUBLIC  
HEARING  
CERTIFICATION OF  
DELINQUENT UTILITIES/  
MUNICIPAL FEES**  
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that the City Council of the City of Carver, Minnesota, will hold a public hearing on Monday, November 16, 2020, at 7:00 P.M. at the City Council Chambers at Carver City Hall, 316 Broadway, Carver, MN, 55315, to consider certification of delinquent utility fees. Approval by the City Council of the proposed certification may occur at this meeting. The proposed delinquent utilities roll is on file for public inspection at the City Clerk's office.

The City intends to proceed according to Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 444. All persons interested may appear and be heard at said time and place. Alternatively, due to COVID-19, all persons may appear remotely. Please call City Hall at (952) 448-8727 to obtain details on attending via telephone or electronic means. By Order of the Carver City Council  
(Published in the Chaska Herald on Thursday, October 29, 2020; No. 6944)

**The Public  
Notice  
deadline for  
the Chaska  
Herald is  
at Noon  
Thursday  
for the  
following  
week's issue.  
Faxes are not  
accepted.**



## 13th ANNUAL Ladies Fair

Join us for a

Night Out

Friday Nov. 6th • 6-9pm

OR

Morning Out

Saturday Nov. 7th • 10-2pm

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- ◆ Spruce Top Planter Workshops
- ◆ Light Refreshments
- ◆ Door Prizes



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