

# The quiet side of the Tetons?

Teton County, Idaho, was not so long ago a quiet valley, home to old-family farmlands. Increasingly over the last few decades, a number of immigrants, many of whom came to the Teton Valley by way of Jackson Hole have opted to move a little farther west, over Teton Pass, either commuting for work or - more and more commonly - finding livelihoods in eastern Idaho.

Very recently the growth in the Teton Valley has hit such a rapid pace that many are concerned that what before could have been called a "sleeper community" to Jackson Hole - providing attainable housing, rural character, even a nice lawn - is booming into something beyond recognition. Land

speculation has driven prices up, and big development pays top dollar for the land remnants of an agricultural tradition that has all but died already.

County Planner Kurt Hibbert said Tuesday five new subdivision applications had come in the last week alone, bringing the total number of proposed developments currently in different stages of the county approval process to 87.

"I've been told there are more subdivisions in the pipe than all other eastern Idaho counties combined," Hibbert said. "If that's true, it's a very significant number."

The planner said he is concerned with infrastructural strains in a county not yet prepared to handle the land rush

and without the ordinances to alleviate footing the costs of such.

Of course, not all developments are created equally, and amid the motorized rumblings and dust swirls spinning off dirt mounds around the county, there is some good development in an area that is undergoing the rapid change facing much of the Mountain West in the new Manifest Destiny of wealth and investment.

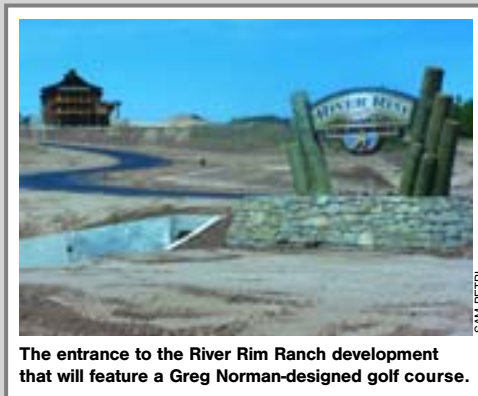
The two articles that follow describe two new developments - Huntsman Springs and River Rim Ranch - just two examples of a trend that will continue to reshape Teton Valley, Idaho, for years, and probably decades, to come.

## Greg Norman breaks ground on Tetonia golf resort

by Sam Petri

On a height of land seven miles northwest of Tetonia, Idaho, on Hwy. 33, a crowd of about 200 gathered last Wednesday around four Volvo excavators. Among the crowd was Brent and Rodger Hoopes, whose family managed the surrounding 5,300 acres as a farm for three generations; Mike Potter and Tom Clinton of Potter Clinton Development Inc., a company that over the years has been responsible for the Teton Springs golf resort near Victor, Idaho, and Teton Pines in Jackson Hole; and Greg Norman, two-time British Open champ and principal of Greg Norman Course Designs, a division of Great White Shark Enterprises.

The occasion was a groundbreaking ceremony for the new 350-acre, 18-hole, Norman-designed Teton Rim Golf Course, the crown jewel of what will be River Rim Ranch. The golf course is expected to be finished by 2010. Eventually, a total of 620 housing units will surround it.



The entrance to the River Rim Ranch development that will feature a Greg Norman-designed golf course.

Division I, which rests upon the 2.5-mile section of the Teton River known locally as The Narrows, consists of 410 residential units that rest mostly on 13-acre or greater parcels. Division II, across Hwy. 33 to the south,

consists of 210 units that will be located along the golf course in roughly 2-acre parcels. Sixty percent of the acreage will remain open space, managed mainly as hay fields in perpetuity.

"We are very delighted to be breaking the ground on the Teton Rim Golf Course," said Managing Partner and Planner Mike Potter, who was briefly interrupted when three scheduled Warbird aircraft buzzed the groundbreaking site during his speech, "We honestly believe that we will have one of the absolute best golf courses in the region that will probably be nationally recognized as we get further down," he said to the crowd - new homeowners on the resort or potential buyers.

"It is an interesting process to say the least, when you come out to design a golf course. It is a very collaborative effort," said Greg Norman, who then addressed the Hoopes brothers standing beside him. "Your environmental stewardship, by the way that you've done your agricultural process here, has helped us protect the environment. Congratulations to you."

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## Among Teton Valley's unbridled growth, a smarter big development

by Ben Cannon

In the amount of time it could take for a large development proposed in Jackson Hole to get to the early stages of the county application process, a 1,350-acre subdivision in Teton Valley, Idaho, was approved, broke ground and is moving towards building what its developers envision as something more than a subdivision.

Huntsman Springs, just off of Main Street in Driggs, is but one development underway across Teton Valley, where approved subdivisions and those likely to move ahead in the application pipeline are nearly too many to track.

That Huntsman Springs - a development very noticeable to the residents and passersby of Driggs, Teton Valley's biggest town - moved from application to groundbreaking in less than two years has as much to do with a

lack of development ordinances in historically conservative, formerly agrarian Teton County as it does with the deal-sweetening offer made by Utah's prominent Huntsman family and partner Mike Stears, a local landscaper.

Along with up to 650 residential units - single-family lots, townhouses and cabins - and a site eyed for a 300-room hotel and a David Kidd-designed 18-hole golf course, Huntsman Springs will offer commercial space anchored around the future site for a new Teton County courthouse.

The land given by the developers to Teton County for the courthouse is valued around \$1.5 million. The new courthouse will cost \$5 million and the county will swap about \$3.5 in land holdings in exchange for construction, less the difference.

"It's a win-win situation," said Teton County, Idaho, Commission Chairman Larry Young. "The county will get a big piece of infrastructure for less than half its value."

Teton County's coffers are so dry, county commissioners had to cut \$500,000 from the annual county budget to fund basic services. Meanwhile, the valley is booming with private development, but still lacks a capital improvements plan to assess the county's needs and help mitigate rapid growth that is straining sewer and water infrastructure so much that Tetonia, Victor and Driggs need new or revamped treatment facilities.

With the courthouse, Teton County benefits with a new central administrative building, and Huntsman Springs gets a commercial hub that will surely develop around the county's nucleus building.

"It can be said the benefit to the Huntsmans will exceed

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that of the county," Young said, "but our county is so strapped that people realize it's for the best."

Though a reservation program has been in place since May, Monday marked the first day buyers were able to go into contract with the Huntsman Springs group as part of the development's initial release of property. Preliminary numbers suggest sales of the first release were more than double the national average for similar developments, spokesman Bill Reid said Monday evening, adding the group was "extraordinarily pleased with interest in the commercial property."

Huntsman Springs is just west of Main Street near downtown Driggs. Its sales office is a sharply renovated farmhouse that belonged to the Curtis family, who, along with two other old-time Teton Valley families, sold the agricultural land that became the 1,350-acre spread. Of that, nearly 500 acres is preserved with a conservation easement. An elevated 1.5-mile boardwalk will allow pedestrians to take in the refuge that is home to a private bison herd now numbering 13 heads, including a white buffalo, a sacred emblem in some Native American reli-

gions. Efforts are underway to restore and reclaim wetland and grassy areas from decades of cattle grazing.

The Huntsman family - whose patriarch, billionaire Jon Huntsman Sr., founded Huntsman Chemical and is considered among the last of the great American industrialists of the 20th century - has kept up a regular presence at the Huntsman Springs development. Managing Partner David Huntsman and brother Paul are on site weekly. Jon Sr. and wife Karen have a house on the Teton River and are said to be fond of the valley. Huntsman Sr. was born in Blackfoot, about 100 miles west of Driggs.

Jon Huntsman Jr. is governor of Utah and is not involved in the family business.

"The Huntsmans are very involved in the community," said Molly Stewart, who heads marketing for Huntsman Springs. "Driggs is important to their whole family and they knew it was going to be developed and wanted to make sure it was done well."

Jon Huntsman Sr. is regarded among the top philanthropists in the U.S. He and Karen helped co-found the University of Utah's Huntsman Cancer Institute, one of the country's major centers, with a gift of

\$225 million. Huntsman Springs sales associates said part of the development's sales monies will go to the cancer center.

Contrary to the current trend of re-imagining a landscape to construct a perfect golf course, which can easily fetch upwards of \$20 million per high-end development course, the David Kidd-designed course at Huntsman Springs will keep more with its natural environment.

"It will mimic wetlands environments and marshes and high grass," Stewart said, noting three holes had been shaped. "We're not planting a lot of trees."

The course and clubhouse, complete with restaurant and health center, are scheduled to open in 2010 with groundbreaking expected for the fall.

In the meantime, contractors will continue to erect houses and paint grassy links across the Teton Valley, though Larry Young is less concerned about the one going up adjacent to Driggs, which keeps density close to services and amenities, unlike much of the rural development sprawl scattered helter skelter across the valley.

"Huntsman Springs is a big, scary looking development," he said, "but it does align with smart-growth principles."

## Knotty Pine

Wednesday, July 18

### The Itals

Roots Reggae! \$15



Thursday's 10pm  
Open Mic Night!

On sale Now!

Get your tickets in advance for  
Charlie Hunter Trio \$23  
Friday, 8/17

Great BBQ,  
Come Early  
Enjoy dinner  
on the Porch!

208-787-2866

58 S. Main Street, Victor, Idaho

## TETON county library

Teton County Library  
125 Virginian Lane  
Jackson WY 83001  
307-733-2164  
TCLib.org

**HOURS**  
Mon through Thurs  
10 am - 9 pm  
Fri 10 am - 5:30 pm  
Sat 10 am - 5 pm  
Sun 1 pm - 5 pm  
Closed Legal Holidays

Free!

### Get a Tech Tune-Up

Whether you're on your way to becoming a computer whiz or you've never touched a mouse, Teton County Library offers a wide-range of free computer classes covering everything from blogs to basic computer skills, with many classes also in Spanish.

The library's latest offering is "Excel Plus" to show patrons how to make the most of this handy spreadsheet software - good for sorting everything from finances to race results. Never heard of Excel? Don't worry. The library's Computer Center also teaches "Introduction to Excel."

For seniors still leery of the keyboard, the Computer Center offers an **Adult Learner Computer Class Series**, which begins Tuesday, August 7. This four-week class covers an array of essential computer skills, starting with how to use a mouse and navigate a

computer desktop. Topics quickly advance to getting onto the Internet, using the library's online catalog and setting up an e-mail account. Classes will be held from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., Tuesdays and Wednesdays, through August. Space is limited so advance sign-up is required. **Sign up begins July 18** at the Senior Center of Jackson Hole or by calling 733-7300.



The library also presents many evening computer classes, including "Introduction to the Computer," "Introduction to the Internet," "E-mail Class," "Basic Word Processing," and "Welcome to the Blogosphere: Beginning Blogging." Beginning Blogging teaches participants how to start an online journal - a great way to stay in touch with family and friends by sharing stories and photos online.

Stop by the Computer Center for a current class schedule or go online to [www.TCLib.org/computer](http://www.TCLib.org/computer). To sign up for classes (other than the Adult Learner series), call 733-2164 and follow the prompts for the Computer Center. Contact Patty Rocha for information about computer classes in Spanish at 733-2164 ext. 237.

## Library Events

18 July, Wednesday

**Young Adult Summer Book Club.** Noon-1 p.m. Bring current reads to share in a summer book club open to teens entering grades 6 to 12. Earn raffle tickets for summer reading prize drawings. Snacks provided. Contact: Youth Services, 733-2164 ext. 103.

20 July, Friday

**Summer Reading: Harry Potter Party.** 10 p.m. until book release at 12 a.m. Calling all muggles, wizards, aurors! Valley Bookstore and Teton County Library cosponsor a celebration for the upcoming release of the book "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows." A costume contest, Hogwarts-inspired games, wizardly activities and many-flavored foods will lead up to the midnight release of the 7th and final book in J.K. Rowling's popular series. For Harry Potter fans of all ages. Location: Valley Bookstore. Contact: Youth Services, 733-2164 ext. 103 or Valley Bookstore 733-4533.

23 July, Monday

**Teen Summer Reading Movie: Secret Agent Cinema.** Noon-4 p.m. Sneak in for this double feature of two spy movies back-to-back. Lunch, snacks and door prizes provided. Contact: Youth Services, 733-2164 ext. 103.

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