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Motorsports Park needs sound barriers

By LOIS A. HALL

At the Jan. 5 Millville City Commission meeting, I spoke regarding the proposed change of plans for the "Field of Dreams" track to be built at New Jersey Motorsports Park. Let me say I have never been nor am I now opposed to the racetrack. However, I feel I made some important points.

In the beginning of the Motorsports Park, I attended several commission meetings, as I wanted to hear the facts because we live on Cedar Street near Buckshutem Road. This puts us within a mile of the track. At the time, some of my concerns were traffic and noise. Leaving the meeting I was convinced the Motorsports Park would be a good thing for Millville based on the following information:

- Plans were made for traffic.
- Property values would increase, because those who were in racing would be looking to buy houses near the track.
- City taxes would decrease.
- Local people would be hired for construction.
- Some sort of sound barrier would be built at the racetrack.

These were all positive things, and I encouraged my neighbors that the New Jersey Motorsports Park would be a good neighbor.

Now we face reality. I do not belong to any organized group; I am a taxpayer and have owned property on Cedar Street for 40-plus years. Over the years there have been many changes, one major one was Airwork Corp. When Airwork was overhauling engines, the property owners complained, due to the noise when engines were tested. This was brought to the attention of city commissioners, and after a period of time a sound barrier was erected. Unfortunately, Airwork is now shut down so that noise is no longer a factor, but the point is a sound barrier was built. Now, since the Motorsports Park came, acres and acres of trees have been cut down. The land all around the airport has been raped of trees and some property owners lost their trees. The racetrack was not responsible for the removal of trees, but the trees do help control noise pollution.

Some say future buildings will absorb sound; but if the buildings are five years in the future that is a lot of noise pollution. Again, the "Field of Dreams" was supposed to be built on the opposite side of Buckshutem Road, but the new plan puts it in the existing racetrack and closer to private homes. This will be additional noise, and with more frequent and longer duration, making a sound barrier a necessity.

As homeowners, our homes have lost value, partly because of current economics but an additional loss of value due to the noise pollution. Our taxes have increased, again partly due to current economics, but if the Motorsports Park had paid the \$1 million for the new land maybe taxes would not have gone up.

Then you look at the deferred tax breaks the racetrack receives.

All we want is a sound barrier. Yes, the New Jersey Motorsports Park has brought jobs to the area, but it seems as though it got a lot of breaks and the property owners got a headache and higher bills.

Millville city commissioners have seen to it to bring new business to Millville, but it is time they listen to those who live, vote and pay taxes in Millville.

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Millville
