

Neighbor

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BY BUD BLAKE

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New waterfall one for the record books

BY AVIAN CARRASQUILLO
acarrasquillo@dailyherald.com

The new \$3.5 million waterfall at the Prairie Park condominium development in Wheeling will be officially dedicated today — and at 20 feet high and 250 feet wide it is considered the largest man-made waterfall in Illinois.

As well, it is considered an excellent complement to the \$125 million condo development itself, at 700 N. Wolf

Road in Wheeling.

Village officials and state legislators are a few of the guests who will attend a brief reception ceremony to mark the waterfall's grand opening.

Designed by Frank and Chris Kane of Kane Brothers Inc., the natural spring waterfall pours a half million gallons of water over its edges every hour.

"The Prairie Park waterfalls create a harmony between design expertise and ecologi-

cal balance," said Frank Kane.

Matthew Doetsch, director of marketing for Smith Family Construction, said the water source is a naturally occurring spring, a fact that initially eluded the village.

Doetsch said that village inspectors came out, concerned that the waterfall was violating the village's sprinkler code.

"We had to show them it was a natural spring, and we weren't using any of the vil-

lage's water," he added.

Doetsch said the water is filtered through a bog system consisting of gravel and aquatic plants that dispose of nitrates.

The village of Wheeling initially granted the developers \$3 million for the condominium complex project in incentives from the Crossroads Tax Increment Financing District. However,

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JOE LEWNARD/jlewnard@dailyherald.com

Developers will dedicate a new 250-foot wide waterfall today in Wheeling.

Waterfall: It's already served as a photo backdrop

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an increase in construction costs last year prompted the developers to seek an additional \$1.5 million from the village in TIF dollars to complete the project, which was approved last June.

Doetsch said the money was not directed to any specific aspect of the project.

In special tax districts, tax revenue generated by a property's increasing value is diverted to a special fund that pays for improvements there, such as landscaping or sewer upgrades. Tax increment financing districts are often controversial because government agencies such as schools do not receive the

additional property tax money for up to 23 years.

Ultimately, Doetsch said, the waterfall is there for the village to enjoy.

"This easily could've been a gated community, but the developers didn't want that," Doetsch said.

"From the construction that was done on Lake-Cook Road with the Westin Hotel (to) the addition of a waterfall of this size only adds to Wheeling (becoming) a more upscale piece of the North Shore," Doetsch said.

Since the waterfall first went online, Doetsch said a number of people have used it as a backdrop for wedding or prom photos.

He said anybody can do



JOE LEWNARD/jlewnard@dailyherald.com

Natural granite boulders totaling more than 2,500 tons sit at the bottom of the 250-foot wide waterfall at the entry to Prairie Park condominium complex in Wheeling.

that as long as they call in advance, at (847) 229-0100.