

# THE TICKER

09-10.22



# 36

© NIC ANTAYA

## FAIRWAY TO HEAVEN

Workers from LaBar Golf work to transform the three nine-hole golf courses at St. John's Resort into an 18-hole championship course named The Cardinal.

**p. 36**

Divine Calling

Power Up

Small Potatoes

**p. 38**

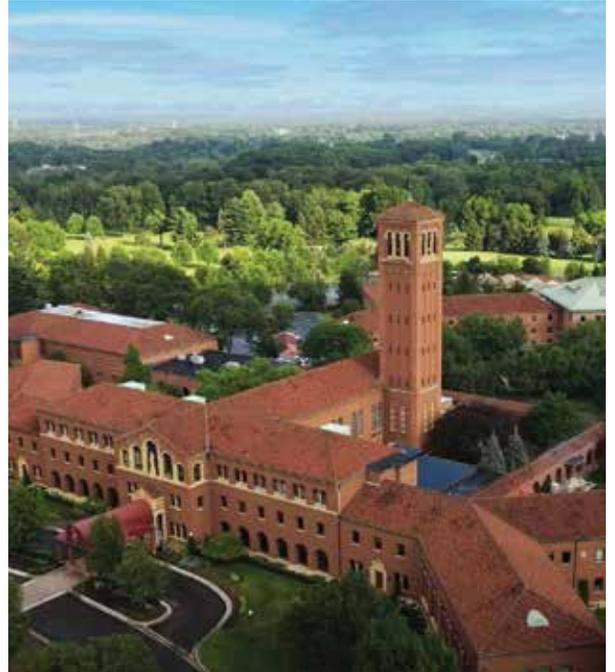
Nose Job

PDA Q&A

**p. 40**

Paint Job

Go to the Replay



# Divine Calling

Metro Detroit native Ray Hearn is transforming a former seminary golf course into a championship resort track.

BY TIM KEENAN | NIC ANTAYA

**W**hen Ray Hearn was in high school in the 1970s, he told a classmate that he wanted to be a golf course architect. Decades later, he's one of the nation's most sought-after links designers, and today he's working on transforming the 27 holes at the former St. John's Provincial Seminary in Plymouth Township — recently renamed St. John's Resort — into an 18-hole championship course.

Hearn's handiwork, which will include a seven-hole par-3 course and a putting course, will add to the renovations being done to St. John's brick and mortar structures. That project includes a one-of-a-kind 15,000-square-foot indoor/outdoor ballroom space for up to 2,000 people, as well as the development of a

6,200-square-foot outdoor garden pavilion. In addition, there's a 10- to 15-acre section in a corner of the property that's designated for a future housing development.

Located near the southeast corner of Five Mile and Sheldon roads, St. John's Resort was established in 1948 as a Roman Catholic seminary to provide graduate-level theological education and spiritual formation for diocesan priesthood candidates from the dioceses of Detroit, Lansing, Grand Rapids, Saginaw, Gaylord, Kalamazoo, and Marquette.

St. John's golf course began with nine holes designed by the late Edward Cardinal Mooney in the property's earliest years, and grew to 18 when the course opened to the public in 1979.

The seminary closed in 1988 and the site became a resource for diocesan youth and families. Nine more holes were added during the property's redevelopment in the 1990s. The new course is expected to be ready to play by August or September 2023.

Pulte Family Management SJ acquired The Inn at St. John's from the Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit in August 2021. Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

Enter Hearn, who got into the golf course design business by bothering the legendary course architect Robert Trent Jones Sr. as a high schooler until the latter gave him an eight-year path of education and apprenticeship to help him achieve his dream.

Raymond Hearn Golf Course Designs, now based in Holland, celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2021 and has completed projects in several states and many countries around the world.

"This place really screams for a championship 18 (holes)," Hearn says of the St. John's property. "With a five-tee system, it can be something for everyone to play. The original three nines were really short nines. Now, St. John's can aspire to some nice state and regional tournaments, or a national amateur." **DB**

### LIVING THE DREAM

Ray Hearn always wanted to be a golf course architect. Now he's working on making the course at the former St. John's Provincial Seminary into a destination course.

## DBUSINESS DIRECT

### Rocket Cos. Debuts Fintech Platform Rocket Money

Truebill, a personal finance app and part of Detroit's Rocket Cos. family of companies, has officially changed its name to Rocket Money to bring it closer to the other businesses on the platform.

### Detroit Officials Break Ground On Park Near Train Station

The City of Detroit has started a \$6 million transformation of Roosevelt Park in front of Michigan Central Station at Michigan Avenue and 14th Street that will remove the roadway that splits the park.

### Stellantis' Free2move Division Expands with Acquisition

Free2move, the mobility division of Auburn Hills' Stellantis, has acquired Berlin-based Share Now, a European free-floating car-sharing pioneer. The move supports Free2move's global growth plan.

### Stefanini Group Launches Employee Work Portal

Stefanini Group in Southfield has launched Chameleon, a custom-configured portal with a centralized interface containing all things pertaining to an employee's work life. The new offering allows for improved internal technology services.

### Mick Fleetwood, Birmingham Investors Start Coffee Firm

Mick Fleetwood, co-founder of Fleetwood Mac, along with Gerard Marti, owner of the Robert Kidd Gallery in downtown Birmingham, and three other local investors, have launched Mick Fleetwood Coffee Co.

© COURTESY INN AT ST. JOHN'S

**POWER UP****THE RACE TO INTRODUCE**

electric vehicles on a massive scale due to government regulations has caused shortages, given long production times for batteries. But Intecells, a company in Troy, hopes to speed up the process by reinventing lithium-ion battery manufacturing.

“The biggest factor in introducing vehicles, consumer electronics, power tools, and wearables that run on batteries is the weight, high costs, and rigidity,” says Xiaohong “Shawn” Gayden, co-founder and CEO of Intecells, who spent 24 years at General Motors Co. in Detroit.

The company’s cold-plasma-based printing process can create batteries with 3-D topologies that offer flexible battery cell shapes and configurations.

“Our technology doubles the energy and power density of battery cells, offers a tenfold increase in electrode coating adhesion, and reduces manufacturing costs by 93 percent,” says Gayden, who leads eight employees. “Overall, we can reduce battery costs by 40 percent.”

In turn, the company states its manufacturing process doesn’t use toxic solvents and can lower carbon emissions by 50 percent. “We plan to roll out our technology in 2023,” Gayden says. “There’s no textbook for what we’re doing. We’re writing the textbook.” ■

—By R.J. King

# Small Potatoes

Growing quality seed potatoes has been a long-standing tradition at Sklarczyk Seed Farm.

BY TIM KEENAN

**O**ne might think that growing seeds for tubers amounts to small potatoes, but that’s the farthest thing from the case at Sklarczyk Seed Farm in Johannesburg, east of Gaylord.

The operation brings in between \$2.5 million and \$5 million annually selling grape-sized seed stock for more than 125 different varieties of potatoes to customers all over the world.

The farm was founded in 1942 and sold its full-grown product at Eastern Market in Detroit. Over the years it transitioned to selling potato seeds and now sells 6.5 million seeds per year, 40 percent of which are exported to Canada, the Middle East, South America, Chile, and Asia.

One might visualize potato farming as a dirty job worthy of a Mike Rowe TV episode. But the Sklarczyk Seed Farm grows its seeds using hydroponics, which is a method of growing plants sans soil.

“It’s just water, and the plants sit on a tray that has a 5 percent slope to it,” explains Ben Sklarczyk, the third generation of his family to run the farm. “There’s a capillary mat, like a thin blanket the plants sit on, that helps spread the water across the tray. This allows them to have both wet and dry periods. Otherwise, the potato would stay submerged in water and would break down and not be usable.”

The potato seeds are created using a technique called isolated tissue culture. Sklarczyk’s wife, Alison, and her five-person team cut plants into sections at the growing point, just below the leaves, and put the sections into a growing medium that looks like clear gelatin. In four weeks, an identical plant is produced.

“It keeps the plants clean and healthy,” Sklarczyk says. “Everything we produce and grow is free from all potato pathogens. The industry has very strict standards for clean seeds.”

Sklarczyk Seed Farm customers then plant the seeds (as many as 20,000 per acre at 50 cents per seed) and begin a four-year process to produce potatoes, potato chips, and French fries. Potato farmers plant, harvest, and store, replant, harvest, and store their crops four times before they’re large enough to sell.

“For every 25 potatoes that leave our operation, four years down the road, 50,000 pounds — or a semi-trailer full — of raw product ends up

**HIGH-TECH YIELD**

Ben and Alison Sklarczyk (below) use advanced growing techniques to maintain and enhance their 80-year-old business.



at Better Made to be made into chips,” Sklarczyk says. “It starts with good, clean material that we supply our customers with and that, in turn, helps drive the yield and quality for the customers for years to come.” **DB**

© COURTESY OF SKLARCZYK SEED FARM

**GM Ramps Up EV Education With EV Live Experience**

General Motors Co. has launched EV Live, an immersive, virtual, and free service that allows participants to interact one-on-one with EV specialists and learn about electric vehicles.

**Cadillac Evolves its Design With Reveal of Celestiq**

The Cadillac brand of General Motors Co. unveiled the Celestiq show car, a concept that previews that brand’s future handcrafted and all-electric flagship sedan. It will serve as a touchstone for future design and engineering teams.

**Lansing’s Neogen Begins Work on \$70M Expansion**

Neogen Corp., a developer of food and animal safety solutions, has started a \$70 million, 175,000-square-foot expansion of its food safety facility in Lansing. The project will include new equipment for product testing.

**Ford Adds Capacity, Material Sourcing to Boost EV Sales**

Ford Motor Co. announced a series of initiatives for sourcing battery capacity and raw materials that will move the automaker closer to its targeted annual run rate of 600,000 electric vehicles by late 2023.

**Amazon’s Rivian EV Delivery Vehicles Hit the Road**

Amazon has started using custom electric delivery vehicles made by Rivian to deliver packages, with the electric vehicles hitting the road in Baltimore, Chicago, Dallas, Detroit, Kansas City, and Seattle, among other cities.

For full stories and more, visit [dbusiness.com/daily-news](https://dbusiness.com/daily-news) to get daily news sent directly to your email.