

Hold the snow! Old idea revived

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When Mayor Marian Haakenson looks west from the bluffs above the Missouri River, he envisions a chalet overlooking snow-covered runs dotted with skiers.

His is a new vision. When Bismarck Junior College President Kermit Lidstrom looks west from those same bluffs, he envisions parking lots and access roads surrounding what could be one of the state's finest football and track and field facilities.

His is a vision that's been shared for the Community Bowl at BJC by many community leaders since the 1960s.

At issue here are 80 acres of rolling land between the Grant Marsh Bridge to the north and the railroad trestle to the south.

Now that ski promoters are look-

ing seriously at turning the bluffs into a ski area, these men and their visions could be on a collision course.

Haakenson and Lidstrom will make their stands clear at Tuesday's Bismarck City Commission meeting.

"I just want to share with the community some of the things that are possible for that area in the future," Lidstrom said of his request to be on the meeting's agenda.

In other words, just because BJC has dropped its football program doesn't mean Lidstrom is going to let the Bowl's turf be taken over by prairie weeds.

The future of Bismarck's Hughes

Ski area, sports arena vie for bluffs

Field — right now the city's major track and field and football facility — is limited by residential development, Lidstrom said. In the future he would like to see an electronic, all-seasons track and field and football arena in the bowl capable of hosting AAU track meets and state football championships.

Expansion of the facility would require adequate access and parking areas.

"We have to think long range for the community," the college president said. "I'm just worried that we might get too enthusiastic about a new project and abandon our plans for the future. An awful lot of money and effort was put into that project long before I came here,

and I just wouldn't want to see all that go to waste."

But Lidstrom hints that he and Haakenson might find a middle ground, so to speak, and that their visions might not necessarily be incompatible.

"I think the ski thing is a neat idea, but I don't think we've looked at all the possibilities yet," Lidstrom said.

And Haakenson stands ready to assure Lidstrom that BJC and a ski hill could be a perfect marriage.

"I guess maybe they don't know what's being planned at all," Haakenson said, adding that college officials have been invited to take part in planning for a ski hill. "When you don't have communica-

tion sometimes wrong ideas get in people's minds."

"We can definitely work together," the mayor said. "A ski area will only enhance BJC. There will be students who want to come here just so they can be located three blocks from a ski hill. Ski classes can even be offered with the athletic program."

Parking and access issues, Haakenson said, are best left to engineers.

Craig Larson, general manager of Bolineau's Winter Park, and partner Terry Callies will be in Bismarck this weekend with engineer reports on the ski hill, which Haakenson believes can be created by stacking one hill from the north side of the Bowl on top of another to the southwest side.

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