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Talking Points

Why would Mary Beth Nienhaus gift Winagamie, Inc. to the Appleton Education Foundation?

Mary Beth's passions in life are golf, education and giving to others. Her gift of Winagamie Golf Course to the Appleton Education Foundation accomplishes all three. In making this decision, she was looking for a way to ensure her vision would continue to be carried out long after she is no longer able. Her vision is for Winagamie Golf Course to provide hands-on learning experiences for students in the community. Areas of study that can benefit from this partnership include agriculture, hospitality, marketing, management and more.

What are the risks to AEF in owning a golf course?

A special committee of board members, volunteers and staff evaluated the risks and opportunities of this gift for two years. The conclusion is there is very little risk. Winagamie, Inc. has no debt, is financially stable and poised for growth. The course will operate independently from AEF as a taxable subsidiary; therefore not putting AEF's tax exempt status in jeopardy.

What are the benefits to AEF in owning a golf course?

The number one benefit is having Winagamie Golf Course available to provide hands-on learning opportunities for students attending the Appleton Area School District and Fox Valley Technical College. Secondary, is financial. Winagamie's administration and board of directors will ensure the corporation remains fiscally responsible and plans for future capital needs. Following the establishment of a large capital needs fund, AEF expects to receive modest dividends to support its overall mission and grant making opportunities.

What will the 2014 golf season look like?

Winagamie Golf Course already has opened 18 holes and the driving range. The remaining nine holes will open when weather permits. Golfers can expect the same service and facilities they have come accustomed to at Winagamie. Mary Beth will continue to offer her time and talents at the course. The veteran course superintendent has been working in the off season and a new lease agreement with Sandy Shot Grill has been signed. Dan McGinn has been hired as general manager and head golf pro to coordinate operations and educational opportunities. His start date is April 7, 2014. AASD and FVTC students will participate in some practicum experiences over the summer months. Additional learning experiences will be added going forward.