

# Center's destiny unknown

## Developers miss state funding deadline

LAURELTON — The future of Laurelton Center is up in the air because developers have missed a deadline required to secure state funding.

Plans are to turn the former state center — located in Hartley Township — into a resort complex complete with 18-hole golf course. However, developers have failed to secure state money vital to the land's development.

Hickernell Springs Resort Inc., a partnership made up of David Iddings, Ted Cresswell, and Bill Seigel, is asking state officials for an extension on the deadline. The group recently met with representatives of the governor's office and state representatives, Russell Fairchild (R-85), and Merle Phillips (R-108) and state Sen. Edward Helfrick (R-27), to ask for more time.

Seigel estimated that a decision would be reached by the end of the month, and that if everything goes according to plan Hickernell would close on the property by the end of November, and removal of the timber on land for the golf course will start next spring. He said hopes are the facility will be open as early as

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spring 2004.

The \$31 million project is being funded with approximately \$16 million from private investors, \$5 million in conventional loans, and if approved, the \$10 million from the state grant. Seigel said the real estate investment firm of Legg Mason of Bethesda, Md., has been retained to market the \$16 million in stocks to private investors.

If the project is completed as planned, it will include an Arnold Palmer golf course, upscale hotel and conference center, complete with restaurants; would employ 350 people; and generate \$1.5 million a year in tax revenue that would go to the county, school district and state. The buildings and grounds will be placed on the National Register of Historic Places.