



# Meadowdale Raceway Potential Disneyland for Area Residents?

Written by Bob Balgemann

"We want to turn Meadowdale Raceway into a Disneyland for area adults."

These were the words of James W. Holmes, one of five Chicago businessmen who recently became co-owners of the track, concerning proposed plans to rejuvenate the well known track located on Route 31 near Elgin.

In the offing for next summer are a Grand Prix 500 Club and year-around sporting activities including racing, skiing, tobogganing and swimming.

"We want to build a country club around a race track rather than a golf course," Holmes said. He pointed out area residents may join the 500 Club now although activities won't get underway on a full scale until next spring.

Originally built in 1958, activities at the track gradually diminished until 1966 when all races were eliminated. Holmes said he

and his co-investors wanted to build racing interest in the area once more.

"This track has more potential than any other in the country, he said. We have 10 million persons living within an hour and a half of the track and no others have this."

Holmes stressed the fact that racing activities on a limited scale would be held this summer and would be open to the public. Motorcycle hill climbs and go-kart races have already been held and more are being scheduled.

July 15 and 16, the Grand Prix of Karting will be held here. "It's an endurance race for juniors (ages 12 through 17) and adults," he said. Holmes said go-karts currently hold the course speed record of 135 miles per hour and would utilize the entire 3.27 mile track.

Other activities lined up this

summer include the Salt Creek and M. G. Sports Car Club races July 23; Chicagoland Kart Club races August 5 and 6, and September 9 and 10; Salt Creek Club again on September 24; the Chicagoland Sports Car Club races October 8 and Chicagoland Kart Club again October 14 and 15.

"These are the confirmed dates and there are a dozen or so more that contracts are out on," he added.

Negotiations for 1968 include a national sports car road race, probably 300 miles in length; a special race featuring cars which compete at the famous Indianapolis 500 and NASCAR stock car races.

## Television?

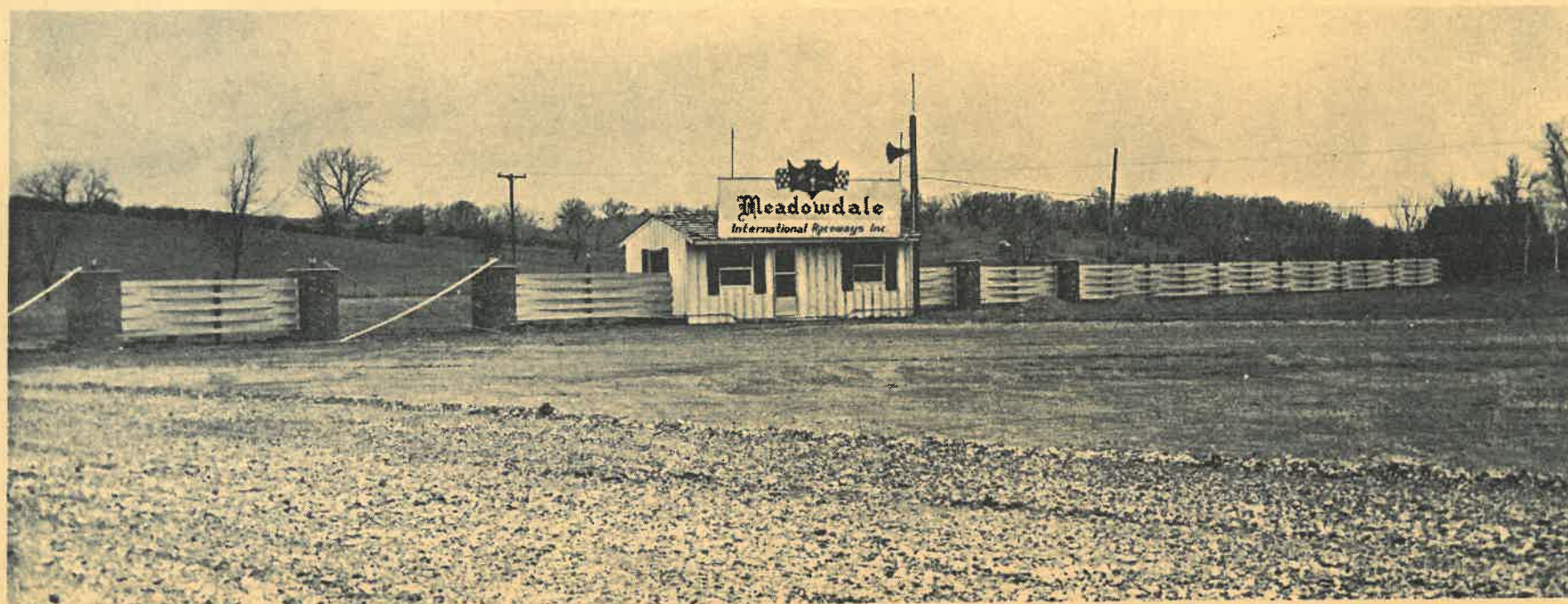
"A Chicago television station is interested in carrying one race a week from the track, he said. This is also currently under discussion."

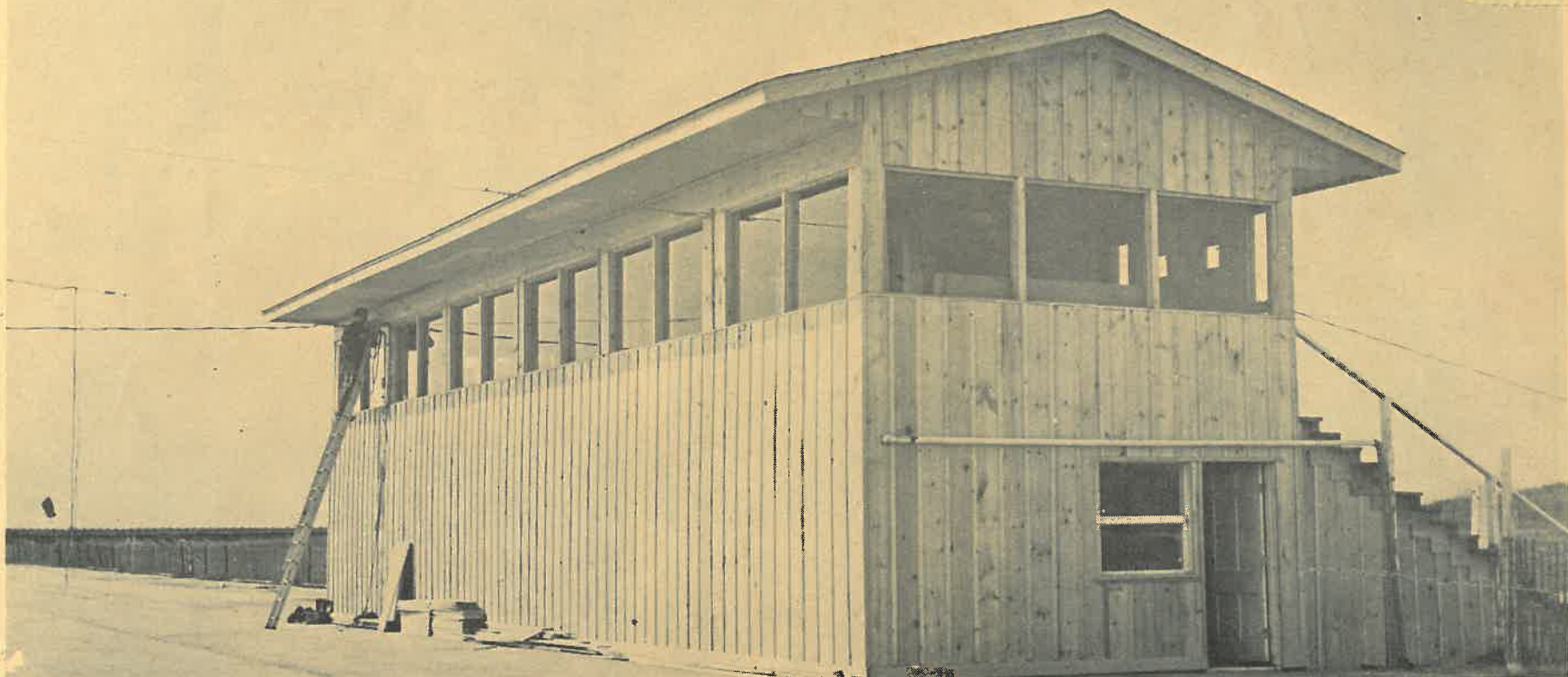
Several company picnics are scheduled on the raceway's spacious grounds this summer and this type of activity is also encouraged according to Holmes.

Future races at Meadowdale are not just limited to the big cars.

"We'll have everything from bicycles to formula one cars," Holmes said. It was pointed out that 14 variations of the track can be utilized by just about anything.

Vehicles that will race include stock cars on a mile and one-eighth track; stock dragsters on a one-fifth mile track; midgets on a three-eighth mile track; motorcycles (hill climbs mainly); road cars; trans-am sedans including Mustangs, Cougars and Chargers; bicycles; championship cars from Indianapolis; go-karts and formula one cars.





Shown above is the newly renovated entrance to the raceway area. Snowmobile races (left), one of many winter activities.

"Meadowdale is only one of four tracks in the country where the formula one cars can run," Holmes said. The others are Daytona Riverside (Calif.) and Watkins Glen (N. Y.).

**Not Just Racing**

Racing will not be the only feature of the new Meadowdale Raceway.

Holmes and his associates are planning a program which will include year-around sporting activities for all members. Ski slides, toboggan runs, snow vehicles and ice skating are all in the plans for coming years here.

High above the new stands being built at Meadowdale Raceway, from a vantage point which will allow persons to see almost three-fourths of the track, will be the "Grand Prix 500" lounge.

On the 240 acres will be ample room for picnicking, a playground for children, picnic benches and tables and lawn areas for games and sports of all types.

A swimming pool for Grand Prix 500 Club members is planned for in back of the stands.

"Why should golf clubs have

these type of facilities exclusively?" Holmes queried. "Racing enthusiasts should have a country club of their own."

A health club complete with showers and sauna steam bath is also proposed. Gymnasium equipment will be furnished for all members and is another exclusive feature of the club.

**Current Progress**

"There is 150,000 yards of dirt that has to be moved from the infield this fall, Holmes said. "We plan to let it settle over the winter and began laying the track in the early spring." He said the first race in 1968 should be sometime around the middle of May.

Holmes concluded by pointing out, "Since the inception of automobile racing, it has been relegated to those few who were willing to put up with inadequate facilities, scorn from friends and families, and inherent hardships of eating hot dogs and drinking beer standing up next to a refreshment stand. The Grand Prix 500 Club intends to change this."

And, perhaps it will. ■

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