

MAN: If you build it, he will come.

NINA MOINI: You likely recognize that line. It took off in the American lexicon from the 1989 Iowa baseball film *Field of Dreams*. People have been coming to that Iowa baseball diamond in the middle of a cornfield for more than 30 years now, to see the movie site. And now, Major League Baseball and the town of Dyersville, Iowa, have built something new. It's a professional field alongside the film set.

And on Thursday night, the Twins and the Phillies will face off on it. And the game will stream live on Netflix. The Saint Paul Saints will play at the field tonight against the Iowa Cubs.

Jacque Rahe knows this field well. She's the Executive Director of Dyersville Economic Development Corporation, and has been helping manage the *Field of Dreams* site for years.

Welcome, Jacque.

JACQUE RAHE: Thank you.

NINA MOINI: What a cool job. What a cool job you have. It sounds like a blast.

JACQUE RAHE: --*Field of Dreams*, but that pretty much takes over, especially on summers like this.

NINA MOINI: Absolutely. And the fact that folks can stream it on Netflix, I'm sure they weren't thinking about that 30 or 40 years ago. But for someone who's never seen the movie *Field of Dreams*, would you give us just the quick version of what it's about, and why you think it's resonated with people for so long?

JACQUE RAHE: Well, it's based on the 1919 White Sox World Series players that were banned. And so, I think, a lot of the movie has to do about-- has to do with redemption and second chances. And that's played out in a father-son relationship, with Kevin Costner, as the son, and Dwier Brown, actually as the father who comes back in his younger days.

It also talks about where dreams lead you, and sometimes, things that happen that may not seem like good things at a time are really for the best, in the case of "Moonlight" Archibald Graham. If he had stayed in baseball, he would not have been able to provide the resounding impact that he did in Chisholm, Minnesota. So there's all these different themes about dreaming and sticking with it. Kevin Costner was going to lose the farm. His brother-in-law, the banker, was going to take the farm away.

So in terms of lasting all of these years, I think, one of the key things is there's so many different lessons and reasons why it does resonate with people. Somebody can identify with any one of those stories along the way--

NINA MOINI: Yeah.

JACQUE RAHE: --based on a very illogical baseball field in the middle of a cornfield.

NINA MOINI: Yeah, it's like legacy and wanting to root for people. Major League Baseball first brought a professional game to the film side, I understand, 2021, and then there was another one, 2022. But this week is a little different, right? Because now, there's this brand new professional ballpark right next door. Can you explain the difference between that stadium and the original movie field, and why it works to have this?

JACQUE RAHE: Absolutely. Actually, when MLB came on our 25th anniversary and they were touting the World Series trophy and we were having a celebration, to celebrate 25 years of the movie being filmed, and someone from Major League who was carrying this World Series trophy around, went back and said need to do this. And at that time, the owner, Denise Stillman, was relentless. I mean, we really owe the fact that Major League Baseball is here to her. Unfortunately, she never saw Major League Baseball here. She passed away of cancer before it.

However, we kind of took her torch and worked very closely with Major League. They originally wanted to build it or they wanted to play the game on the regular movie site. However, the dimensions aren't right. I mean, it wasn't able to be. So worked really hard to position it so there was a connection, yet we were able to keep the original movie site pristine.

So a lot of people come there and they just want to sit on the little, teeny bleachers that were there in the movie, wooden set of bleachers with "Ray loves Annie" carved in it. And they just want to dream. The sunsets out there are unbelievable. Most nights in the summer, you get kind of a fog that automatically appears. So we wanted to keep all that magic, and MLB did, as well.

So, they decided to build the baseball field and worked on that through, oh, 2017, '18, '19. Announced the game for 2020, August 13, actually, in 2020, and then COVID hit, so about 10 days before. And the field was there, the lights were there. Musco Lighting, wonderful partners and a great Iowa company, they put all the lights in. They also put the lights in the original movie site.

And then Major League came in month before, a couple months before and built up this huge stadium and little city around it--

NINA MOINI: Cool.

JACQUE RAHE: --for the game. Well, then with COVID, they decided that they were going to be no spectators, so they covered the stadium seating up and painted it all green to make it look like corn. And then about 10 days before, I think, at that point, it was the Saint Louis Cardinals that were going to play the White Sox, all got COVID, and so they pulled the game. Yeah.

So, it turned out to be a blessing because then in 2021, we had the absolutely most magical game between the White Sox and the New York Yankees. It was a picture perfect evening. Again, they built it all up. The stadium was temporary. All the bleachers, everything got torn down two weeks after the game.

So, we did that in '21 and '22, and that was going to be it. We started working with them in '20 to say, well, what would this look like if we built the stadium and you didn't have to rebuild that? Well, that was very enticing to them. So we started putting our heads together, putting together groups that could help the state of Iowa was--

NINA MOINI: So fast forward to today. We only have a couple minutes left, Jacque, and I just want to make sure that we're able to touch on just what this means for Dyersville. I mean, you work on economic development. I mean, there's the culture, and there's the draw of people, but what does this mean to your area?

JACQUE RAHE: I mean, it's amazing. It means about \$10.4 million annually in direct spending. So that is in 81 full-time equivalent jobs just at the stadium, tourism jobs. So there's just a lot of impact. That's the direct impact and obviously, a lot of indirect impact and construction impact.

NINA MOINI: Huge.

JACQUE RAHE: Yes. Right now, there's a full-service stadium out there. MLB is getting ready to play. MiLB is getting ready to play the game tonight. And we're looking forward to the influx of visitors from Minnesota. We've already got them coming to our community, so we love it.

NINA MOINI: And just lastly, tell us about some of the special guests, because it's more than just the teams.

JACQUE RAHE: Absolutely. There are 25 former Hall of Famers or--

NINA MOINI: Wow.

JACQUE RAHE: --25 Hall of Famers coming tonight or coming on Thursday night. We're looking forward to having them. There's always rumors of other special guests. Some that, maybe, had played in the movie.

NINA MOINI: Oh.

JACQUE RAHE: And MLB likes to surprise everybody. And we love it, as well. So yeah, there's a lot of excitement. They've taken our stadium and branded it so beautifully. And it's a lot of barn board. We try very hard to keep this very rural.

NINA MOINI: Yeah.

JACQUE RAHE: And the corn is the star of our show. Mother nature gave us a little test this morning.

NINA MOINI: That's right. A little weather warning, but everything's OK.

JACQUE RAHE: Yes, but the corn is standing.

NINA MOINI: All right. Jacques, thank you so much. And again, the Saint Paul Saints taking the field tonight, and the Twins are going to play there Thursday. And for folks who can't see it in person, you can check that out on Netflix. Pretty cool. Thanks so much to our guest, Jacques Rahe, Executive Director of the Dyersville Economic Development Corporation, in Iowa.