

IN WEEKEND EXTRA

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SPORTS | C1

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## Preserving the view in Harrison

### Pfrimmer Farm is approved for conservation program

By **Grace Schneider**  
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The Courier-Journal

**R**obert Walker stood atop a grass-covered hump that ran across the scenic hillside west of Lanesville and tapped a black leather loafer over the terraced ground.

"This has been here at least 70 years," Walker said of the berm shaped decades ago to reduce soil erosion and to funnel rain into a small farm pond.

Creating the berm was a visionary move then.

A more dramatic vision — preserving the

woods and pasture overlooking Little Indian Creek — came into focus this week when the Pfrimmer Farm, 89 acres south of Ind. 62 at New Middletown Road, became Harrison County's first property approved for a new conservation-easement program.

Harrison advocates hailed the transaction voted on by the county commissioners as an important milestone.

Four years ago, county leaders appointed a task force to explore ways to protect and preserve Harrison's fast-disappearing 100,000 acres of agricultural land. The focus was to help property owners set aside orchards, vine-

See **FARM**, A2, col. 1



Robert Walker manages the property that Samuel P. Hays, an 87-year-old Colorado resident who grew up in Corydon, donated to Harrison County's conservation-easement program. Walker is married to Hays' niece, Margaret Hays Walker.

By David Lee Hartlage, Special to The Courier-Journal

## Ky. court clears way for Chapman execution

## Auto industry rescue stalls



# FARM | Conservation easement is approved for Harrison property

Continued from A1

yards, pastures and forests in permanent conservation easements and be compensated up front.

A resolution in late 2006 established a fund to accept grant money and other donations to purchase easements. Three ordinances also were approved to create the programs allowing owners to donate land or receive money for agreeing to use property only for agriculture.

To qualify, a property must be at least 20 acres.

Not everyone — including some farmers — backed the idea. Several told the commissioners they'd oppose spending casino or property-tax revenue to purchase easements. They also worried about the impact on bordering properties.

Under the deal for the Pfrimmer farm, owner Samuel P. Hays donated the land. A \$15,000 Harrison County Community Foundation grant will pay legal fees and expenses to execute and enforce the terms of the easement.

The details are still being worked out, but a key provision would restrict dividing the land, said Eric Wise, the county's planner and a member of the conservation committee.

The county program didn't include establishment of a land trust that typically holds and maintains such an easement. Instead, Harrison landowners can choose an organization to contract with, Wise said.

Plenty of people have said they'd like to buy Hays' acreage.

"I can't count the number of people who have tried to get Sam to sell this place," said Walker, a Corydon developer who is married to Hays' niece, Margaret Hays Walker, as he hiked up a clearing that includes a rented farmhouse and a barn with a new silver roof.

Walker manages the property for Hays, 87, a Boulder, Colo., resident and former history professor who specialized in environmental policy. Hays' mother was a Pfrimmer, and the Ind. 62 property had been in her family for several years.

"I grew up in Corydon during the 1930s," Hays said in a telephone interview. "My ancestors are deeply rooted in the county."

In the early 1970s, Hays donated 160 acres south of Corydon that is now Hayswood Nature Reserve, a county-owned park. He donated 18 acres two years ago to add to the park and augment the proposed Indian Creek Trail, a footpath under development between the park and Corydon.

In 2001, he placed the Pfrimmer acreage in a reserve program that cleared the way for The Nature Conservancy to plant 34,000 saplings on the property.

Despite living out West, Hays said he has kept track of Harrison's land-conservation efforts. He met with county representatives last year during a visit.

"I've been interested in



Robert Walker stood on the bank of Little Indian Creek, which runs through the 89-acre farm that has been donated to Harrison County's conservation-easement program.

this for a long time," he said.

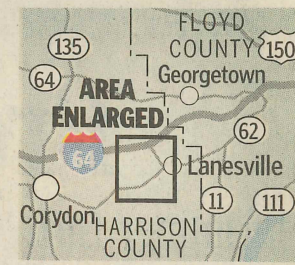
Wise and other members of the conservation committee were thrilled at Hays' latest donation because they view the property as a perfect fit for the county pro-

gram. It's a prominent feature along the Ohio River Scenic Byway.

Wise said pressure on landowners to subdivide is only going to increase. Two subdivisions across Ind. 62

are in what's considered a prime location, he said.

As Walker gazed down the rolling hillside beyond a pasture where three horses grazed, he predicted the scenery wouldn't change



By Steve Durbin, The Courier-Journal

much in years to come — except for the saplings that will shoot up in the next decade.

Hays' desire, he said, is just to see his family's land "stays the way it is."

Reporter Grace Schneider can be reached at (812) 949-4040.

## LOTTERIES

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