

GarveyBlog

by Ed Garvey

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Cambria wins one for all of us

It's true: citizens CAN beat the big corporations. Victory was achieved Monday night, when a proposed ethanol plant went down to defeat in Cambria, Wisconsin. Didion Milling had applied to the village to "expand" their corn processing facilities in Cambria to include an ethanol plant, even though the site was a stone's throw from Cambria's schools, dozens of homes, and an assisted-living facility.

Didion Milling had struggled since last fall to put an ethanol plant in Cambria. They held "informational meetings," distributed slick literature, hired a PR person, and brought in their Milwaukee-based attorney. But the citizens knew that schools and ethanol plants don't mix, and formed Cambrians for Thoughtful Development (CTD). (For more on CTD's position, see CTD leader Sarah Lloyd's **FightingBob.com article** from last month.) The Cambrians printed flyers, posted a superb Web site, held "salons" to discuss the issue, put up yard signs, issued press releases, and faithfully attended (and video-taped and spoke at) village meetings. Then they really got serious: When Didion threatened to build its plant just over Cambria's borders in Courtland Township, CTD got the village to pass an extraterritorial zoning ordinance to control development on the edge of town. CTD also collected enough signatures to get an advisory referendum on Cambria's April ballot with the question, "should we have ethanol in Cambria?" Voters said no, 60 percent to 40 percent.

So, congrats to Sarah Lloyd, John Mueller, Dallas Bucholz, Mitzi Duxbury, and all of the others in and around Cambria who showed us all—and Didion Milling—how grassroots activism is done. These Cambrians are in the best tradition of Fighting Bob La Follette.