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Newsletter 41 Issue 1 - Spring 2010 - Nuts and Bolts

Larsen Tractor Museum

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, TractorMuseumArchives@unl.edu

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Museum Hours:
Monday-Friday 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM
Saturday 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM
Closed Sundays and Major Holidays

Phone: 402-472-8389
Email: TractorMuseumArchives@unl.edu
Web Site: http://tractormuseum.unl.edu

2010 Open House Sat May 1 / Celebrating 90 Years of the Nebraska Tractor Test 10:00 - 4:00

Larsen Tractor Museum
Mission Statement
To be the premier steward of advancements in agricultural technology through the development of collections, exhibits, and programs for public benefit.

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Jeremy Steele, Editor
Luis Vasquez, Creative Director
Call 402-472-8389

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Nuts and Bolts
A publication of the
Larsen Tractor Museum

Museum gearing up for May 1 open house event
by Jeremy Steele

The Larsen Tractor Museum is gearing up for its 12th annual open house on Saturday, May 1. The activities committee has a great day planned for everyone. The event, sponsored in part by TractorHouse®, with food available from Hy-Vee, will officially begin with a parade of power around the historic Nebraska Tractor Test Track at 10:00am. There will be plenty of seating available with portable bleachers provided by the UNL Athletic Department.

We are excited to have Eric Rasmussen as our parade announcer. He will provide a lot of history and a little humor. Eric promises “Case” and “Ford” to be the only four letter words that he will say. If you can’t make the 10:00 parade, another one will take place at 2:00. Museum tractors will be featured along with any others brought in and registered before the parades begin.

Throughout the day, tractors participating in the parades will be parked on the Nebraska Tractor Test Track alongside a number of new John Deere model tractors. These late model tractors are scheduled to undergo testing at the Nebraska Tractor Test Laboratory this spring. For those interested in learning more about the new models and the 90 year history of the Nebraska Test, Trent Wiles from John Deere, will provide a presentation at 1:00 just across the street from the museum in Chase Hall. Trent worked at the Nebraska Tractor Test Laboratory and graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1977.

In addition to the standard tractor models, Thermal Thunder, a unique custom built modified pulling tractor is scheduled to be on display. The tractor is powered by a 4200 horsepower helicopter turbine engine. Thermal Thunder was the Outlaw Truck and Tractor Pulling Association Modified Tractor Points Champion in 2009.

Lawrence and Ann Reimer have generously made a donation and the arrangements for a unique ice cream experience at this year’s open house. See Open House on page 7

Governor Tiemann dropped in during the 70’s.

Thousands gathered around the Nebraska Tractor Test Track for Tractor Power and Safety Days in the 50’s.
Splinter and Ford recovering
by Jeremy Steele

Museum Director Bill Splinter and Friends President Chris Ford have had a tough winter. Snow and slippery conditions are to blame. Bill slipped on a patch of ice near the UNL East Campus Union and suffered a broken hip on Saturday, March 20. He has been recovering at Tabitha Health Care Services in Lincoln. Bill is pushing to be at the May 1 open house. If he keeps working hard and gives his nurses a tough enough time, he will be sent home before the end of April.

Earlier this winter, Chris Ford broke his ankle after slipping on some ice as well. Chris has been on crutches while wearing a special boot during his recovery. Chris is ready to be crutch free for the summer.

We greatly appreciate the leadership that has been provided through Bill and Chris. Through their service and dedication, they each demonstrate to others how they are invested in the museum and its future. We are looking forward to having them back to full strength.

Henry Ford’s repairman
from Lou Leviticus, Curator

One of the most important tinkerers spoken of in the automotive industry worked at least one day for Henry Ford. Ford used Thomas Edison’s DC electric power in his factory. Edison’s dynamo used a gasoline engine to power a generator to charge a large bank of batteries from which power was distributed to the shop. The story has it that one day the dynamo stopped working. Ford called in a repairman to solve the problem. The man came in and spent an hour or so working on the engine to get it to run properly. When he left, he handed Ford a bill for $50. Henry about had a fit. He reportedly said to the repairman, “Your bill is outrageously high. Why, I pay my men a dollar a day for a full day’s work. You were here only about an hour tinkering around with that machine. I think you should adjust your bill.” The repairman reportedly revised the bill as follows: $1 for 1 hour of tinkering; $49 for knowing where to tinker. The man’s name is not part of the lore, but his story is.

In 1925, the Ford Model T Runabout with a pickup body was introduced. The museum exhibits one that was donated to the University of Nebraska State Museum by Oscar E. Hans.

Open House
from page 1

New this year at the Open House, Crawford Country Creamery will be available to crank out some homemade ice cream the old fashioned way. Tracy Crawford makes ice cream without elbow grease thanks to a John Deere single cylinder engine.

Inside the museum during the event, the collections committee will officially open new and improved exhibits. These exhibits feature the tractor testing instruments used by engineers for measuring tractors’ power, fuel consumption, and sound levels. Dedicated volunteers have created platforms, signs and installed some lighting. These things are just a taste of more things to come.

Also inside the museum during the open house, the Lewis & Clark Pulley Museum will have an exhibit on display. This museum, based in Crofton, Neb., is dedicated to preserving the history and fostering appreciation of early hay farming practices.

If farming permits, the rope makers will be back. The Lyndon Ochsner Family Rope Makers encourage children to pick their favorite colors of rope strands. These strands are twisted and turned into a colorful rope for kids.

The annual open has something for everyone. Be sure to help us spread the word. We are looking forward to seeing you on Saturday May 1.

Museum selected as hidden treasure
by Jeremy Steele

The Larsen Tractor Museum has been selected as one of Nebraska’s Hidden Treasures by Heritage Nebraska. The official announcement will be coming out later in May. Heritage Nebraska has been making headlines lately through their efforts to save the Industrial Arts building located on the former State Fair Park.

Friends board members and museum staff were encouraged to submit nominations to Nebraska Heritage. We would like to thank everyone who submitted applications and helped make this possible.

Watch for more details on this story in our next newsletter.
Smithsonian calls museum for images
by Jeremy Steele

The Smithsonian called and requested images from the archives. They are developing an exhibit for their traveling exhibit program. The Smithsonian creates quality, one-of-a-kind exhibitions that explore our national story and purposefully serve as catalysts for local venues to tell their own stories and history.

Smithsonian Affiliations Program

In the future, the Larsen Tractor Museum hopes to have a collaborative partnership with the Smithsonian through their Affiliates Program. Through this program, affiliated museums help bring the Smithsonian to local communities to create lasting experiences that broaden perspectives on science, history, world cultures and arts.

Smithsonian Affiliations create broader opportunities than those found in standard museum loan programs. In addition to artifact loans, Smithsonian Affiliations helps member organizations identify appropriate resources within the Smithsonian to accompany exhibit loans: education and performing arts programs, expert speakers, teacher workshops, and technical assistance. These may also serve as standalone activities developed specifically for Affiliate members. Smithsonian Affiliations also offers career development workshops for museum professionals, internships for Affiliate-based students, and research opportunities for Affiliate-based visiting professionals.

Any 501(c)(3) nonprofit or public-operated museum, arts/culture/science center, or educational organization, interested in obtaining Smithsonian collections on a long-term basis can apply to become a Smithsonian Affiliate. The Smithsonian considers proposals from institutions whose missions are parallel to the Smithsonian’s and who demonstrate a strong commitment to serving their communities.

Cultural or educational organizations interested in participating in the program need to submit a proposal to the Smithsonian Affiliations office. The proposal should include documentation verifying the organization’s nonprofit status, a mission statement, organization chart, collections management policy and a facilities report that follows the American Association of Museums format.

Three seconds of fame
by Jeremy Steele

Want five minutes of fame? How about 3 seconds worth? Thanks to the some American Pickers, a museum image ended up on the History Channel. American Pickers is a show on the History Channel that follows the adventures of Mike Wolfe and Frank Fritz, two professional pickers who travel the back roads of the nation in search of Americana gold. Part sleuths, part antiques experts, and part cultural historians, Mike and Frank have a knack for finding hidden treasures in the most unusual places. They scour the backwoods and dirt tracks of the US to unearth collectible relics with historical and pop culture value.

In one particular episode, the two discover a tractor umbrella and refer to our image illustrating how it was used back in the day.

We are looking forward to more opportunities to work with the History Channel. Every second counts when it comes to getting our name out there as a reputable resource for historical information.

There’s no place like the neighborhood
by Jeremy Steele

Four 20” x 30” framed photos from the Larsen Tractor Museum Collections are on display at a Lincoln, NE Applebee’s restaurant. A dozen images were requested of the museum to create more of a local neighborhood atmosphere within the restaurant located near 40th and Old Cheney.

The restaurant takes pride in having a friendly, welcoming, neighborhood environment for both staff and guests that makes everyone enjoy their experience. Applebee’s is the largest casual dining chain in the world, with locations throughout the U.S. and many countries worldwide.
Enhancing tractor testing exhibits
by Jeremy Steele

Luis Vasquez and a team of volunteers are excited for everyone to see the museum’s progress concerning exhibits on May 1. The team has been working with museum staff to create new platforms and signage for a number of items found on display.

Both Bill Splinter and Lou Leviticus have a wealth of knowledge about the engineering instruments within the collections that have spanned the decades. The team is drawing from their expertise and experiences and hoping to engage with current and past engineers from the test lab as well.

Luis Vasquez draws up construction plans for Phil Dinges and Richard Sposato. These two are doing a tremendous job of utilizing the resources we have to bring Luis plans into fruition.

Initial signage, or labels, serve the objective of providing technical information about the instrumentation used to test tractors. These will be enhanced with engaging signs providing interpretation for a variety of museums audiences.

Chris Ford and Paul North will be presenting plans and designs for museum exhibits as well. Paul has been working specifically on the southeast room that holds the Model T and the International Autowagon. Generated plans will be presented to enhance visitor flow throughout the museum.

Progress on Co-Op E3
by Jeremy Steele

Doug, George, Mark and UNL students are continuing to progress on the Co-Op E3. Through the generosity of many Friends of the Larsen Tractor Museum and members of the International Cockshutt Club, the tractor which now runs, is sporting new tires, paint and a number of other parts.

For several years, the Co-Op E3 sat out side the museum.

The tractor was sandblasted and received a new set of tires from the International Cockshutt Club.

The tractor is running and coming back together.

UNL students are learning and having fun along the way.

Thank you!

We are almost finished!
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Oscar Hans used this vehicle in his explorations for oil deposits across Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas. He was quite successful in identifying and opening a number of significant oil fields throughout that region.

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