New Exhibit Opens

The Larsen Tractor Test & Power Museum has opened their new exhibit featuring the history of the Nebraska Test Law. The display features the collection’s Minneapolis Ford that prompted Wilmont Crozier to pursue the Nebraska Tractor Test Law which was passed in 1919.

Also included in the display is the Rumely Oil Pull. Crozier purchased a used Oil Pull that performed well above what it was said it could do. The display features a 12-foot tall wallpaper of a corn field and new signage. The display was made possible by the Friends of the Larsen Tractor Museum. This is just one of the many new exhibits making their way to the museum.

Bill Splinter Memorial

The museum is constructing an art gallery to be named for Bill Splinter. The Splinter Gallery will cost the museum $25,000. Currently, we have raised a little less than half of this total. If you would like to donate to the Bill Splinter Memorial, please send your donations to the Larsen Tractor Museum.

Museum Needs

From time to time we will be listing certain items the museum is seeking for new exhibits and special projects. For this edition we are looking for a set of rear steel wheels for the Allis WC tractor.

If you have or know someone who has a set of steel wheels for the museum, please contact us as soon as possible. 402.472.8389, ltoedd6@unl.edu.
Fun Facts...
and other non-sense

Lamborghini began life as an agricultural company in Northern Italy after WWII. Tractors were one of their specialties until 1958 when Ferruccio Lamborghini bought a Ferrari that he felt was too loud. When the clutch failed, Lamborghini told the dealer what needed fixing and their reply was that he knew nothing of cars, he was a tractor builder. And the rest is history.

From Lou’s Desk
by Lou Leviticus

I was told that I had to come up with a story “or else.” For a story, things have to happen, and we did have several happenings.

The first one is a sad loss to us all, to the Museum and to the University as a whole, and that is that Bill Splinter passed away. Most people didn’t realize how much the Museum was part of his life and that without him there would have been no Larsen Museum.

The second thing was the arrival of an energetic and capable new director with a lot of experience and vision for the future of the Museum.

So, what have I done to justify my existence here? In the past, I’ve had questions on the fate of the tractor industries from foreign countries. So I have been collecting material on most of the existing tractor manufacturers in the world as well as short histories. That material will all be available for anyone that is interested. It is also available by searching on the internet, but it does take some work.

It seems that nearly all of the developing countries have had at some time, or still have, some tractor industry. Many of the models are not sold or cannot be sold in the West. They are mainly for local use.

Flipping A Fordson

The Fordson Model F (1917-1922) was the first tractor to be equipped and marketed with a form of what has since been called “roll over protection.” Initially Fordsons had short fenders designed to keep mud off and to protect the operator’s anatomy from the wheel lugs.

Those Fordsons had a tendency to rear up and in some instances roll right over backwards, with disastrous consequences for an operator jerking on a load. There were a number of deaths from back-flips. One Indiana farmer wrote to a rural press that such a dangerous machine should be banned by law. The Eastern Implement Dealer claimed that Fordsons killed 36 drivers in 1918, while Pipp’s Weekly insisted the tractor had killed 136 men prior to August 1922. One suggestion was that the Fordsons should come out of the factory with a plate on it stating “Prepare to meet thy God.”

Fordson spokesmen sidestepped responsibility for the accidents by blaming inexperienced drivers. Their line was that any tractor could be dangerous if improperly handled. Truth is, the relative proportion of back-flips by Fordsons were hardly any worse than any other tractor. It was just that Fordson was by far the most popular selling tractor at that time. 750,000 Model F’s were sold from 1917 through 1927. By 1923 Ford had three-quarters of all tractor sales in North America.

Taken from an internet article published on mytractorforum.com.

A Fordson tractor with the “roll over protection” is on display now at the Larsen Tractor Test & Power Museum. Come out and see it.
What I’ve Learned
notes from the manager

Recently, I had a visitor come to me and ask why (or if) rubber tires were better than steel wheels on tractors. I knew rubber was better, otherwise all our new tractors would have steel wheels, but I didn’t know exactly why that was the case.

Later that day, I was working in the Museum library, and I came across a small pamphlet from 1934. The title, A Comparative Study of Pneumatic Tires and Steel Wheels on Farm Tractors. Weird. This was published by C. W. Smith and Lloyd W. Hurlbut of the Agricultural Engineering Department at the University of Nebraska. Go figure.

Normally I wouldn’t read such a technical article, but since the question was still fresh in my mind I began to read this study. Tests were done on tractors in 24 different situations. Each study used one tractor with rubber tires and a nearly identical tractor with steel wheels. The tractors each pulled the same implements. Tests ranged from mowing a meadow to picking corn to cultivating.

Fuel consumption and the amount of ground covered during a period of time was studied. In almost all of the tests, the rubber tired tractors used less fuel, in some cases considerably less, and covered more ground than the steel-wheeled counterpart. In addition to raw performance, the rubber tired tractors rode smoother and were easier to handle than the steel wheeled tractors.

After reading this report, I had an idea for a new display; we have an Allis WC that was one of the first tractors to be certified on both steel and rubber tires. This tractor on steel wheels and an identical tractor on rubber tires will be displayed together.

The one problem we have is locating a set of steel wheels for our current WC. It is set up with rubber tires, and a restored WC on it’s original rubber tires is being donated. Anyone who has, or knows where we can acquire these steel wheels for this project is encouraged to give us a call.

Well, that’s a bit of what I’ve learned thus far. We are continually creating new exhibits and planning building renovations, so be sure to stop by and take a look.

Museum Updates

The Museum has received a new south door and a new handicap accessible door on the north side of the building. We are also in the process of upgrading all of our museum signage for exhibits.

A new museum logo will be announced after the first of the year which will allow us to brand the Museum and sell items in our giftshop. We are also continuing to build new display pedestals from recycled barn wood; if you know someone who would like to donate their building materials for this please let us know.

Facebook Givaway

Like the Larsen Tractor Museum on facebook and you will be automatically entered for a prize giveaway. As soon as we hit 125 likes we will give out a prize to one of our random fans!

Scan the qr code with any smart device to go to our facebook page.

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Restoration Notes

Currently our Fordson tractor is in the shop. It will be getting a full cosmetic makeover and will be painted, polished, and dressed to be featured in our new Model “T” and Fordson display that will be completed this winter.

If you would like to make a contribution to this project, please contact Lance Todd at 402.472.8389 or by email at ltodd6@unl.edu.
Museum Hours:
Tuesday-Friday 9AM-4PM
Saturday 10AM-2PM
Closed:
Sundays, Mondays & University Holidays

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

Nuts & Bolts Staff:
Lance Todd ltodd6@unl.edu
Julie Thomson jthomson2@unl.edu
Lou Leviticus lleviticus1@unl.edu

Museum Guidance Committee:
Lance Todd Museum Manager
Dr. Mark Riley Department Head & Museum Director
Dr. Roger Hoy Director, Nebraska Tractor Test Lab
John Hay Associate Extension Educator
Lou Leviticus Emeriti Faculty Retired 1998 & Museum Curator
Don Edwards President of Larsen Museum Friends