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Nuts and Bolts: Newsletter 45 - Issue 1 - Spring 2012

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Many changes have taken place at the Larsen Tractor Museum. In February, 2012, Jeremy Steele resigned as the Manager of the Larsen Tractor Museum. Collections Specialist Luis Vasquez has been retained as a Consultant to assist with the operations of the Museum.

A major change in the operations of the Museum has occurred during the past year: The Museum has been under the management of the Friends of the Larsen Tractor Museum organization. During 2011, the management of the Museum was moved from the State Museum to the Department of Biological Systems Engineering of the University of Nebraska. This has been an excellent arrangement, which allows the Friends to focus on being supporters of the Museum. Our Friends role is to be supportive of the programs and operation of the Museum through financial and volunteer support.

To implement this transition, a new manager of the Museum will be hired. The position will be filled through the operations of the University and will soon be advertised. The current Board of Directors of the Friends is being asked to continue for one additional year to assist with the transition so that a refocus of the thrust of the Museum may occur. Friends will be called upon during this time and with the future programs of the Museum.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

Larsen Tractor Museum Open House
Saturday, April 14, 2012 from Noon to 5:00 p.m.

Friends of the Larsen Tractor Museum Annual Meeting
Tuesday, June 5, 2012 at 7:00 p.m.
Dinner, meeting & program; location to be determined
Details of the meeting will be sent out later

Thank you for your continued support. You are encouraged to send in your 2012 Membership dues.
Chinese tractor

One day, Bruce Ribblett from Fresno, California decided to import Chinese tractors. He did not know too much about the technical requirements of developed agriculture, but he had heard about the Nebraska Tractor Test. He contacted me, as Director of the Nebraska Tractor Test Lab, about testing, and I went to see one of their larger models, a four-cylinder diesel. I found a number of problems, which, at my suggestion, deterred him from bringing them to the Test Lab for even an unofficial test. He didn’t have this small model, but he assured me that he’d instructed the Chinese manufacturer to modify the unit so it could be tested.

When the tractor arrived here it turned out that they had just used the engine from the two-wheel unit and replaced the open sump cooler with a radiator, but omitted to provide a rear PTO, leaving the poor thing with an inaccessible side PTO, which also was not standard size. There were a few other problems, such as cylinder-head studs that were placed too far apart so that the head gaskets would pop every time max power was required from the engine. So the tractor was not much use and a waste of money to test.

Ribblett’s company decided to leave the tractor here, and after our own Phil Dinges volunteered to fix it up (with quite some difficulty getting the head gasket from China), we have it now as part of our collection. I might stress that THIS IS THE ONLY CHINESE TRACTOR IN THE MUSEUM as far as we have been able to ascertain.