

Tractor Test Times

Fall 2008 - Newsletter #35

UNL Tractor Museum Chosen for Hands-On Experiential Learning Project

Mid-America Arts Alliance, a regional arts organization serving cultural organizations in its member states of Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas, has selected the Larsen Tractor Museum of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln East Campus as one of twenty museums to participate in the Hands-On Experiential Learning Project (HELP). In Nebraska, HELP is implemented in partnership with the Nebraska Arts Council and made possible through the generosity of the Nebraska Arts Council, the Cooper Foundation, Sue Renken, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and Senator Ben Nelson. HELP provides museums with on-site, affordable learning opportunities that further skills in areas critical to successful museums today.

Jeremy Steele, Educational Communications Associate of the Tractor Test Museum commented, "The timing could not have been any better for us. For the next 12 months, we will be recipients of training needed to address challenges associated with small museums. We are

HELP is a program of Mid-America Arts Alliance's (Mid-America) Professional Development division that provides institutional advancement, capacity building and professional development opportunities for Mid-America's constituents. Other Nebraska communities selected for participation include: Albion, Aurora, Brownville, Columbus, David City, Franklin, Gering, Holdrege, Kearney, Lexington, Lincoln, Norfolk, North Platte, Ogallala, Scottsbluff, Trenton, Wahoo, Wymore. Participating museums will concentrate on improvements related to nonprofit governance. Training will be directed to museum trustees as well as museum staff, paid or unpaid, and will focus on essential components of good governance.

HELP combines workshops, on-site consultant visits, and online tutorials to assist museums in goal-setting and evaluation. Mid-America subsidizes all workshop travel and a portion of each museum's attendance at a state or regional museum conference, which will allow them to connect with peers in the field and other state-wide organizations. Mid-America wants to strengthen existing in-state networks and help participant museums build a community to share challenges and solutions.



mid-america
arts alliance

Board Meeting for Friends of the Museum 7:00pm - Monday October 20th, 2008

The third quarterly board meeting for the Friends of the Larsen Tractor Museum is scheduled for Monday October 20th at 7:00pm in the Nebraska Tractor Test Laboratory. Topics include: mission statement, goals for museum governance, nominating officers and planning for the annual meeting.

This newsletter provides information on how to become involved on the board of directors for the Friends. It is important for this organization to remain active in raising support for the museum.

The Friends organization is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization established to direct resources towards enhancing the Larsen Tractor Museum. Please contact one of the board members if you have suggestions or ideas for the Friends organization.



Dr. Ron Yoder, Department Head of Biological Systems Engineering, meets with Friends board at July meeting.

Friends Board of Directors

Contact information available through the museum

President – Russ Tooker

Vice President – Jerry Kohl

Secretary – Larry Ehlers

Treasure – Bob Kleis

Past President – Don Edwards

Advertising – Amy Struthers

Archives – Dana W. R. Boden

Events – Donelle Moormeier

Exhibits – Luis G. Vasquez

Facilities – Mike Hootman

Fleet – Brian Mariska

Membership – Bob Hollander

Outreach – Howard Raymond

Parts and Service – Doug Koozer

Restoration – Curt McConnell

Sales – Leslie Roper

Stewardship – Dave Morgan

Strategic Planning – Chris Ford



Tractors lining up for the state fair parade. Bob Devaney Sports Center in the background.

Senior Advisors

Charles Borcharding

Earl Ellington

Charles Fenster

Larry Herman

Bill Overturff

Keith Sheets

John Smith

Museum Staff

Director – Bill Splinter

Curator – Lou Leviticus

Docent – Mark Nickolaus

Mouser – Allis Chalmers

Associate – Jeremy Steele

Museum Hours

Mon – Fri

8:30 to 4:00

Saturday

10:00 to 2:00

35th and Fair Streets

UNL East Campus

Lincoln, NE 68583

402-472-8389

Involvement on Friends Board of Directors

The future of the museum depends greatly upon the involvement and strength of the Friends organization. This is the time of year when an opportunity is provided for individuals to become involved by serving on the organization's Board of Directors.

Last year, thirteen new members were asked to serve on the board by the nominating committee. Directors then drew lots to determine those having one-year, two-year, and three year terms. This process, described in the by-laws, ensures that each year one-third of the board is either re-elected or replaced with new members. This affords continuous participation and new involvement for the organization.

Below is an application for anyone interested in serving on the board of directors for the Friends. Your application will be reviewed and processed by the Friends nominating committee as defined by the by-laws.

Mail to: Friends of the Larsen Tractor Museum - Nominating Committee Chair - P.O. Box 830833 Lincoln, NE 68583

Name:

Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Why are you interested in serving on the board of directors for the Friends of the Larsen Tractor Museum?

What experience and expertise would you bring to the board of directors?

Additional information you would like to add related to serving on the board:

Tractor Museum Improvements

Throughout the past year, the museum staff, volunteers and Friends have worked together to bring upon improvements to the museum and its development. The results have enhanced museum exposure and volunteer involvement.

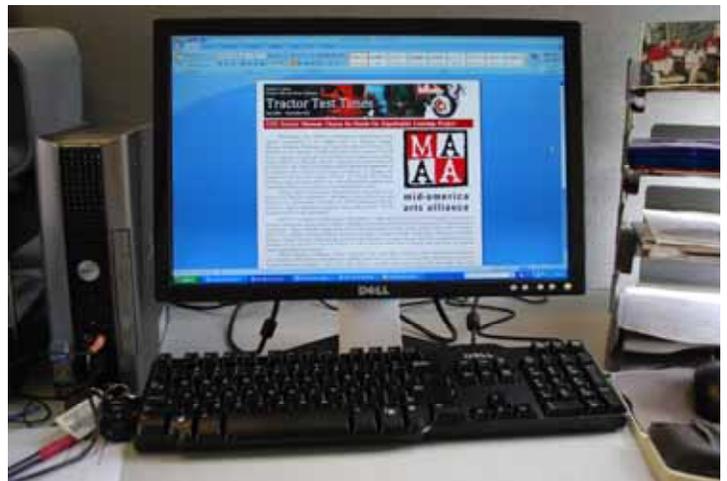
The first project was the development of portable display panels for display within the museum and at remote locations. Four panels were donated to the museum by Clarke Designs to make up the display. Board members Chris Ford and Luis Vasquez provided leadership as the panels were brought to completion. The panels have been displayed at several events including annual shows of the Sodbusters in Sterling, Cortland Fest, Platte Valley, and Camp Creek Threshers. The panels were also involved with the Nebraska State Fair and Husker Harvest Days.

The second project was acquiring new equipment for the shop. A number of tools and items have been donated throughout the years, but a need for specific equipment was relayed to the museum by the Tractor Restoration Club. The club worked with board members Curt McConnell, Doug Koozer, Jerry Kohl and volunteer Phil Dinges to develop a list of new items for the shop.

Their collective efforts resulted in the allocation of donated funds towards the purchase of an air compressor, sand blasting cabinet, drill press, engine hoist and wire wheel. Phil and Dale Dinges then donated an air ratchet and socket set for use within the shop. The new equipment will improve the efficiency of tractor repair and restoration while keeping the work environment safe for everyone involved.

The third project was purchasing new computers for the museum. Board member Donelle Moormeier worked with volunteer Robert Branting and BSE computer technician Garret Coffman to generate a proposal which resulted in the designation of funds from the museum and the Friends to purchase two new desktops for the museum and a laptop for use by Friends secretary, museum staff and volunteer archivists within the museum.

In addition to these successful projects, the museum has received a high quality scanner and camera along with a copy stand for digitizing literature. The museum was recently set up as an acquisition station for the UNL Libraries Digital Collections and is now better equipped to preserve its collections.



Funds Donated for Museum Enhancement

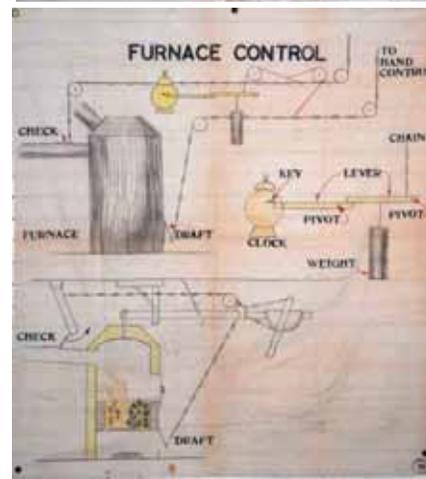
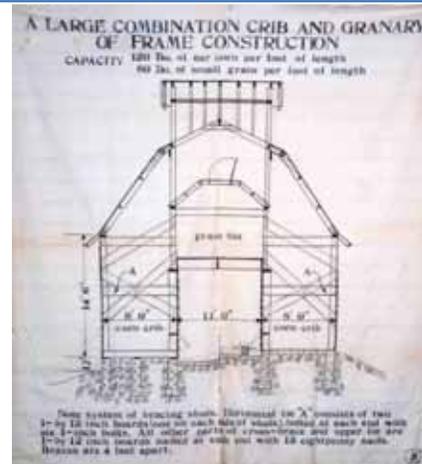
The Friends of the Museum have been instrumental in raising funds for the enhancement of the museum. The museum greatly appreciates everyone's contribution towards its ongoing operation and development. Thank you!

Bill Splinter - Director's Report

We continue to be surprised by unique and quite valuable artifacts that had been stashed away by Les Larsen. The most recent find came about purely by accident. We knew that we had a file drawer with old rags in it so we decided to use them for grease rags. Surprise, surprise—they turned out to be a series of seven lectures inscribed on 5'X5' muslin sheets covering topics related to farm building design, costs and operation. These are the predecessors of glass slides, 35 mm slides and power point. Their use did not require electricity as they were simply hung on a wall. They covered such things as design of buildings for storing shelled grain (joist size and span), corn crib design, brooder house design, house design including furnace heating plant, insulation and infiltration, building operating costs and farmstead layout for a farm in Otoe County. They were sophisticated to the point of structural analysis and psychometric charts.

We estimate that they were drawn using black India ink under the supervision of Ivan Wood, by students around 1925. We are investigating to see if they may have been used on a special train that was operated by Burlington, carrying Extension faculty from town to town to provide information to farmers and farm wives.

We now need to find a climate controlled facility to preserve these 80 year old artifacts. They have been photographed and we plan to place them on our web page. You will find them quite interesting.



Lou Leviticus - Curator's Report Nebraska Test 563: Allis-

In 1955, Harold George, the supervising engineer of the Allis-Chalmers proving grounds, helped design and do many tests on the WD45 diesel tractor. When the tractor was ready for sale, Harold personally took the WD45 diesel serial number 199022D to the test lab in Lincoln, NE for testing.

The testing went on for 7 days with only good results. The tractor performed very well with no repairs needed. Harold was very pleased with the tractor's performance. When the testing was completed, Harold has an idea. He and his wife Marie, had a family farming opportunity near Dixon, Nebraska. Harold and Marie thought the timing was right to move from Milwaukee, Wisconsin to Dixon, Nebraska to start a live on the farm. Harold contacted Allis-Chalmers manufacturing company to tell them of his plans to start farming. He also asked if he could purchase the WD45 diesel that was used at the Nebraska test site for testing.

Allis-Chalmers did not want to lose Harold as an employee, yet they still wanted to see him get a great start on farming. The company was more than willing to help Harold get started with none other than the WD45 diesel used at the test laboratory. Harold and his wife purchased the tractor and began farming just 6 miles north of Dixon, Nebraska.

Through many years of farming, Harold and Marie George raised a family and always farmed with Allis-Chalmers equipment along the way. In later years he traded the WD45 diesel at Hansen Implement in Coleridge, NE. The owner of the dealership, Clair Hansen decided to keep the tractor and use on his own farm. In 2005, the tractor was purchased by Andrew Gubbels of Randolph, NE after being stored in his machine shed for around 15 years. Andrew, his father and brothers restored the tractor just as tested in the Nebraska Tests.



Allis-Chalmers WD45 at the Nebraska Tractor Test Laboratory in 1955 from October 4th to October 11th.

Museum Educates 720 Elementary Students, Missouri Tigers Too!



Students from Lincoln Public Schools gather around a tractor for a picture during their visit to learn about the Nebraska Tractor Test .

Belmont Elementary Schools located in Lincoln, Nebraska planned a visit to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln East Campus. One of their three stops was the Larsen Tractor Museum.

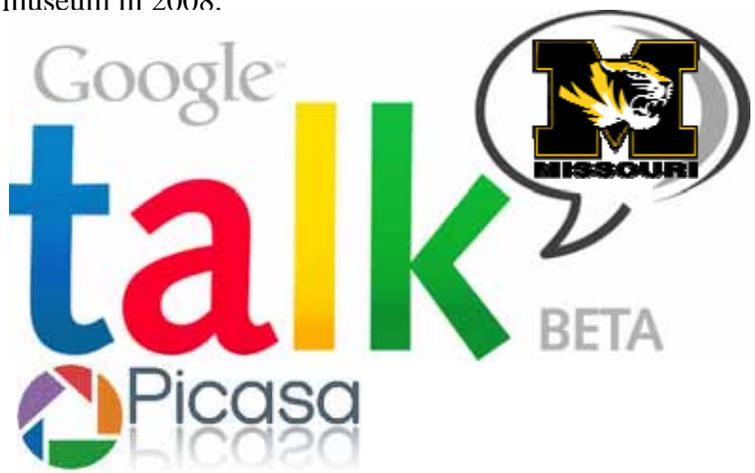
Every 30 minutes a batch of 45 students in 1st through 5th grades arrived at the museum. The two day event resulted in 720 students learning about tractors inside and tractor testing outside.

This is the museum’s second activity with Lincoln Public Schools in 2008. The first occurred in conjunction with the University of Nebraska Educational Talent Search (ETS). Eight designated stations throughout the museum, test lab and test track provided learning experiences for the students.

These activities along with the Nebraska State FFA Convention have brought over 1,000 students to the museum in 2008.

The Larsen Museum also provided education via distance for students at the University of Missouri-Columbia. The museum was contacted by a graduate student from the University of Missouri to explore the possibility of providing information about the Nebraska Tractor Test during two Agricultural Systems Management laboratories.

Using free software, Google Talk and Picasa Web Albums, Jeremy Steele and Brent Sampson provided live question and answer sessions with students in class at Columbia. It was a learning experience for everyone involved.



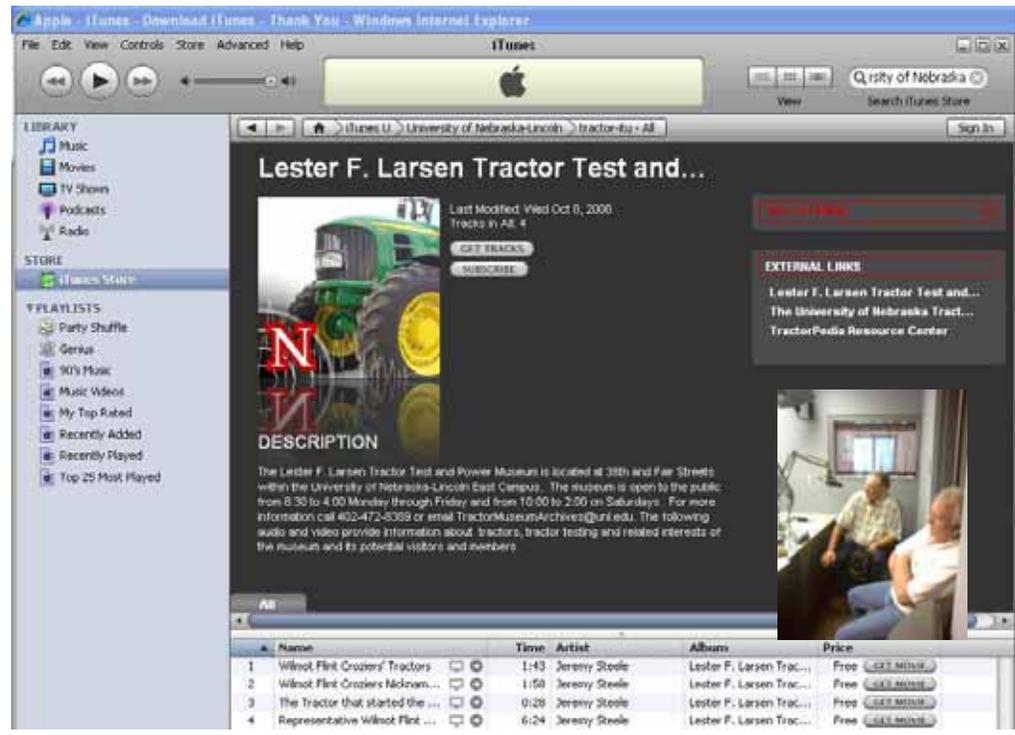
Tractor Museum Now on iTunes U

The Larsen Tractor Museum has been working with UNL Ag Communications to produce videos for education. The videos, called podcasts are available for download through iTunesU.

<http://itunes.unl.edu/?anonymous=true>

The first four podcasts were developed from oral history provided by Bill and Dennis Johansen. These two grew up with Wilmot Crozier, the Father of the Tractor Law.

The next step will be to develop a series of audios and videos to enhance the tour available at the tractor museum.



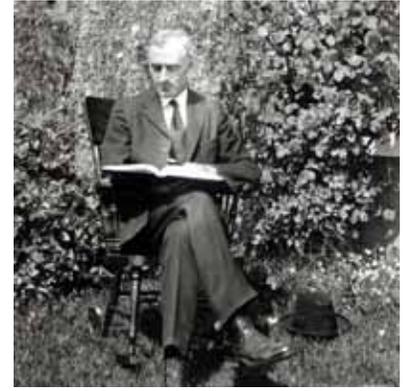
Name	Time	Artist	Album	Price
1 Wilmot Flint Crozier's Tractors...	1:43	Jeremy Steele	Lester F. Larsen Trac...	Free
2 Wilmot Flint Crozier's Nicknam...	1:50	Jeremy Steele	Lester F. Larsen Trac...	Free
3 The Tractor that started the ...	0:28	Jeremy Steele	Lester F. Larsen Trac...	Free
4 Representative Wilmot Flint ...	6:24	Jeremy Steele	Lester F. Larsen Trac...	Free

Our Story

In 1918, Nebraska farmer W. F. Crozier from Osceola in Polk County bought a tractor. When that tractor –the Ford (not made by Henry Ford Co.) didn't live up to its advertised claims, he and State Senator Charles Warner decided to ensure that all farmers would get a fair deal when buying any model of tractor sold in Nebraska.

Under their leadership, the Nebraska Tractor Test Law was passed in 1919. At the same time, the legislature established a facility for tractor testing on the campus of the University of Nebraska to ensure that tractor manufacturers met their advertised claims of tractor performance. The Nebraska Tractor Test Laboratory is known around the world as the leader in tractor testing and is the only one of its kind in the United States.

The Lester F. Larsen Tractor Test & Power Museum is housed in the original Nebraska Tractor Test facility on the East Campus of the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. The building was declared an historical landmark by the American Society of Agricultural Engineers in 1980 and dedicated as a museum in 1998. Friends of the Museum were instrumental in early renovation efforts and continue to raise funds for the museum. The museum is now part of the University of Nebraska Department of Biological Systems Engineering.



Improvements are currently being made on the exterior of the Lester Tractor Museum. The building will be 90 years old in 2009.



Friends of the UNL Tractor Test and Power Museum
P.O. Box 830833
Lincoln, NE 68583-0833