

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

John Owens: Speeches & Appearances

Agriculture and Natural Resources, Institute of
(IANR)

2007

Tractor Test Laboratory Track Dedication

John Owens

University of Nebraska - Lincoln, jowens2@unl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/owenspeech>



Part of the [Agriculture Commons](#)

Owens, John, "Tractor Test Laboratory Track Dedication" (2007). *John Owens: Speeches & Appearances*. 166.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/owenspeech/166>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Agriculture and Natural Resources, Institute of (IANR) at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in John Owens: Speeches & Appearances by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

Leonard Barbyford

Tractor Test Laboratory Track Dedication
3 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 11, 2007
Tractor Test Track Site
John C. Owens, NU Vice President and Harlan Vice
Chancellor, IANR

It is my very great pleasure to be part of welcoming
you here today as we dedicate our new Tractor Test
Laboratory track.

It seems this is "something" we do every 50 years or so -
- the old concrete track was built in 1956, and we expect
this new track to last about 50 years, ~~also~~ ALSO.

So. Let's make a date for ~~2057~~ ^{OCTOBER} 2057 to meet here
again on a lovely fall afternoon and see how ~~well~~ ^{well this} track
lasted, and ^{decade} if it's time to do this again!

When we think of the changes in tractors in the last 50
years - changes I doubt few could envision in 1957 - it
makes you wonder ^{just} what the next 50 years will bring, doesn't
it?

For instance, when the old track was built, it provided
plenty of room for the tractors that ~~chugged around~~ ^{were tested on} it. But

with all the changes in equipment, large tractors with triple tires are as wide as our ^{entire} old track was. This new track is 7 feet wider and 2 inches thicker than its predecessor. Its cost of \$700,000 was funded from test fees, off-season testing income, and the lab's operating budget. No taxpayer dollars were used to fund this improvement project. That's always a good-thing for everyone to know.

Opened in 1920, our Tractor Test Laboratory has great history. I am a history buff myself; those who know me don't have to know me long before it's apparent I am a great admirer of Justin Smith Morrill, whose Morrill Act brought land-grant universities into being, and President Abraham Lincoln, who signed the Morrill Act into law ^{on July 2, 1862.} It's the Morrill Act that brought the University of Nebraska into being.

I am a firm believer in land-grant universities, and here in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources we take our land-grant responsibilities very seriously. One of those responsibilities – indeed, our mission – is to take the

the citizens of

resources of the university to our state. We do that through research, teaching, and extension education, all three of which are closely entwined in the Institute.

An independent study of the Institute, which we call the At Work for Nebraska report, was released earlier this year. The study "reports" Nebraskans receive a "conservative" 15-to-1 return on state tax dollars invested with us. We are a "primary engine" for economic and social sustainability and growth in our state, at work for Nebraska in "a myriad" of ways. It is "our heritage" to be of benefit to our state, helping it grow.

Our Nebraska Tractor Test Laboratory has nearly 90 years of being "at work" for Nebraska. Its history dates to 1920, and we have a Nebraska farmer "to thank" for helping get the laboratory started.

I understand that "early" in the 1900s W.F. Crozier, a Polk County farmer, bought a tractor that didn't work well. It broke down a lot. Mr. Crozier, knowing that wasn't right,

was determined to see it didn't happen again, not to him and not to others.

Now, Mr. Crozier, in addition to being a farmer, also was a state senator. Both roles, I'm sure, made him a man "who knew" how to get things done. In 1919 he helped pass the "Tractor Test" Bill in Nebraska. The Nebraska Tractor Test Laboratory was founded in 1920, requiring any tractor model "sold in Nebraska" be tested to prove the manufacturer's claims.

Over the years the laboratory's importance and prominence has grown. Nebraskans saw tractors made in other countries, as well as this one, also begin to be tested here.

In the 1980s, the laboratory became an official testing station for the ^{European-based} Paris-based, international, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, or OECD. ~~THE~~ Nebraska Tractor Test Laboratory is the only **OECD-approved tractor-test-laboratory in the Western Hemisphere.**

We are proud many provisions in the OECD tractor test codes, provisions that today are accepted worldwide, originally were developed ^{right here} at our Nebraska Tractor Test Laboratory.

So we have much reason to thank Mr. Crozier for positively channeling his exasperation in a frustrating situation into the determination needed to see it didn't happen again. In working to right a wrong, he helped make Nebraska history. We thank, too, the people who worked and voted with him to get the bill passed.

Today the Nebraska Tractor Test Laboratory is known for its honest-evaluation, for "measuring everyone with the same yardstick," if you will, showing no favoritism to any company or model.

Fair and honest – that's a Nebraska tradition we're proud to continue! And we're pleased to see the Tractor Test Laboratory bring recognition both to the university and to Nebraska. It is one of the myriad ways in which the Institute is at work for Nebraska. And our world.

As I end my remarks today I thank each of you for coming. My thanks, too, "to everyone" in the Nebraska Tractor Test Laboratory and Department of Biological Systems Engineering who is "part" of hosting this dedication ceremony for the "new track" that will allow us to "better test" today's larger, faster, heavier tractors and other equipment, including graders, loaders, bulldozers, crawlers, and even a military Humvee, "as well as" biofuel mixes and propane irrigation engines.

Meeting a need as it arises – that's "how" the Nebraska Tractor Test Laboratory and all of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources is at work for Nebraska.

Thank you.

###

"Photo"

TEST MY SUBURBAN

Roger Hog
Leonard Barlford