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Friends of the Larsen Tractor Museum

Tractor Test and Power Museum, The Lester F.  
Larsen

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2013

## Nuts & Bolts, Volume 1, Issue 2

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## Volunteer Opportunities

The Larsen Tractor Test & Power Museum is currently seeking individuals who would like to be a volunteer tour guides. No prior knowledge of tractors or tractor testing is needed, all you need is willingness to learn and a desire to interact with our guests. Hours are flexible during the week, some Saturday availability will be required.

Please contact us for more information about becoming a volunteer.

Join us and become part of something BIG.

### Museum Hours:

Tuesday - Friday 9AM - 4PM  
Saturday 10AM - 2PM

East Campus, 35th & Fair  
Lincoln, Nebraska  
402.472.8389  
tractormuseum.unl.edu



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## 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.

Already the museum has plans for a new display that will feature the collection's Model "T" Ford and Fordson tractor. This will briefly tell the story of Henry Ford and his American Dream. In addition, long range planning is taking place which will allow museum staff to arrange for fundraising opportunities.

Plans include moving the museum entrance from the south to the north side of the building, adding a

new giftshop, renovating the small exhibit gallery, and creating a small art gallery to be named in memory of Bill Splinter who recently passed away. The Splinter Gallery will allow the museum to display agricultural student and staff artwork, as well as exhibits from local and regional art galleries.

## 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, ltodd6@unl.edu.



## Get Involved

Become a corporate partner of the Larsen Tractor Test & Power Museum. With a donation of \$1,000 or greater you and your company will be recognized on our partners' board as well as any exhibit or event you sponsor.

For more information on how to become a corporate partner, contact Lance Todd at 402.472.8389 or by email at ltodd6@unl.edu.



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Rural Buffalo County  
Lance Todd

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## 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.

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LARSEN TRACTOR TEST  
& POWER MUSEUM



## 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 counter part. 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.

## 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.



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**Museum Hours:**

Tuesday-Friday 9AM-4PM  
Saturday 10AM-2PM

**Closed:**

Sundays, Mondays & University Holidays



The University of Nebraska-Lincoln is an equal opportunity educator and employer.

**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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**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



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