

## All-White AC Tractor And Trailer A Big Hit At Shows

A piece of WW II history was on display at the recent Orange Spectacular show near Hutchinson, Minn. It was an all-white Allis Chalmers M-7 Snow Tractor with an M-19 trailer, developed for use by the military to bring crashed aviators to safety. The rigs were painted dusky white to blend in with the snow.

Both the tractor and trailer are owned by Richard and Peggy Liekweg of Iowa Falls, Iowa, who enjoy traveling to farm shows with their exhibit. It's easy to spot, as everything on both units is painted white, including the tires.

The M-7 and M-19 were made in 1944 by Allis Chalmers and given to the Army. About 291 of them were made, and the Liekwegs own number 181 tractor. They rescued the tractor after finding it in Boundary, Alaska in 1999.

Both the snow tractor and trailer will run on either wheels or skis.

They bought the M-7 from a man who had used it for hunting and hauling and had

replaced the front end with one off a Chevy car. The tractor was in bad shape so they set about replacing or repairing many parts on it, in order to return it to its original condition. "We networked parts, hunted parts down through salvage yards, and created new parts," says Richard. "We received a lot of help from military collectors and from Allis Chalmers collectors. The restoration process took a lot of time."

The tractor's side panels were rusted out, torn, and in terrible shape. "Our son was in the body repair business and had access to thin sheet metal, which he used to make new side panels," says Peggy.

The tractor is powered by a Willys Jeep 4-cyl. gas engine, transmission and differential. "The government used Willys Jeep components because they had a good supply of repair parts available," says Peggy.

The Liekwegs drove to the Northwest Territories in Canada to pick up the M-19 trailer, which had come to Canada from Scotland.



All-white Allis Chalmers M-7 Snow Tractor, pulling a trailer, was developed for use by the military to bring crashed aviators in the Arctic to safety during WW II.

The M-19 is a 1-ton flat trailer with a canvas top. It's designed to carry 2 stretchers and has room for someone to tend to the injured. A heater and lights inside the trailer operate off the tractor's electrical system.

The wooden parts on the trailer were rotten, although the trailer's frame and tongue were in good shape. "We collected at least one extra of each part that was needed to complete the restoration. That way we had a pattern to

create any parts we might need to replace in the future," says Peggy.

Their son-in-law made laminated wooden skis for both rigs and even made the soaking tank and jigs to shape them.

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## A Replica Of The World's First Bulldozer Was Built In Kansas

What's claimed to be the first bulldozer is on display at a park in Morrowville, Kan. It was built in 1923 on a Kansas farm using parts from a Model T, a Deere plow, and a windmill.

The original tractor no longer exists. Duane Durst and his son, Frank, worked on the reproduction beginning late in 1984. The Fordson tractor with an oak board dozer was unveiled at a town celebration the following June. One honored guest was Earl McLeod, who designed the original machine.

Durst says he felt it was important to tell "the rest of the story" and honor McLeod, whose work had been hidden in history.

James Cummings of Morrowville gets most of the credit. When Sinclair Oil Company laid a pipeline from Wyoming to Missouri in the early 1920's, they used a WWI trencher to dig the trenches and horses with wood slips to fill them back in. The horses were on one side of the trench and a man was on the other hanging on to handles on wooden boards. The horses would pull the slip ahead and the man pulled it back until the trench was filled.

When the crew crossed Cummings' fields, he questioned if there wasn't a better way. The foreman replied that if he had an idea, they'd try it the following Monday. Cummings recruited McLeod, who was

taking correspondence drafting courses.

"The dozer they built was lifted by a spring off an air motor windmill and a lever off a John Deere plow," Durst says. "The blade was made out of oak and reinforced with iron with a metal blade on the bottom. The frame was made from Model T parts."

It fastened to the Fordson tractor with a drawbar pin in back and floating brackets on the front axle, which allowed the blade to be lifted up and down.

"The first day it filled in 1 1/6 miles of trench which was far more than the horses could do," Durst notes.

Cummings and McLeod were offered a contract to build several more dozens and eventually a metal grader blade was used instead of oak boards. The two worked in the oil business for 2 1/2 years until McLeod's wife died. He had two young children to care for, so he sold his share for \$500 and returned to Kansas. Cummings went on to come up with other pipeline inventions, and became a wealthy man.

For many years, a sign in Morrowville touted its claim to fame, but it bothered Durst that there wasn't a display.

"I just made my mind that it should be done. I decided that the whole story needed to come out," says Durst.



Durst and his son, Frank, built this reproduction in 1984. The original tractor no longer exists.

No one has challenged the "World's First" claim, he notes. "I was impressed with it, just the fact that the darn things worked and that a couple of country boys made it."

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## "Weedeater" Mini Tractor

"This tractor was built with my 10-year-old grandson Coleman in mind. It's powered by the 2-stroke motor and built-in clutch off an Echo weedeater," says Steve Wade, Gentry, Ark., about the mini tractor he made to look like a Deere.

The weedeater motor was originally cable-driven. He used a length of 14 mm keystack as a driveshaft, which connects the engine to a 50:1, 90-degree gearbox on the rear axle that's out of an old grain conveyer. The steering gear uses the 4:1 ratio gearbox out of an angle grinder.

To make the front wheels he added another wheel to the single 3-in. caster wheel off a table. He spread the wheel mounting bracket apart and welded a wheel on each side of it. The 5-in. rear wheels are off an old gate.

The original weedeater tank is under the seat. To make the hood he rolled a piece of sheet metal around an 8-in. dia. pipe. He used stainless steel tubing to make the steering wheel and stapled upholstery over plywood



Made to look like a Deere, mini tractor is powered by the 2-stroke motor and built-in clutch off an Echo weedeater.

to make the seat.

"It'll travel at about walking speed and makes a loud humming noise. You can hear it from a half mile away," says Wade.

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## World's Largest Weathervane

The world's largest weathervane is a ship-topped tower in Montague, Mich., that stands 48 ft. tall and weighs 4,300 lbs.

"It has been a good tourist attraction for the town," says Steve Schneider of the Montague Chamber of Commerce. "It's often featured in travel articles as a roadside attraction you shouldn't miss."

The weathervane was donated to the town by nearby Whitehall Products, a company that makes a wide variety of weathervanes, bird feeders and plaques (www.whitehall-products.com).

The weathervane is made from recycled aluminum. The ship topping the tower is modeled after the Ella Ellenwood, a schooner that was built in Mich. in 1869 and sailed out of the White Lake Channel at Montague. Though the ship eventually ran aground and sank near Milwaukee, the wooden nameplate washed up back at its home harbor. The weathervane sits only a few hundred feet from the ship's original dock.



At 48 ft. tall and weighing 4,300 lbs., this weathervane is said to be the world's largest. Ship on top is modeled after a schooner built in 1869.

The ship atop the weathervane is more than 14 ft. long and nearly 12 ft. tall. The arrow under the ship is more than 26 ft. long. The foundation required to hold the weathervane in place weighs more than 45,000 lbs.

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