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FARM SHOW



Doctor's Waiting Room Filled With Deere Collection

Joseph Oesterling grew up on an Indiana farm, and even after going to college and medical school, he never lost his love for Deere tractors. Today he has a large Deere memorabilia collection that fills every room at his medical clinic with green and yellow.

As Oesterling told Green Magazine that recently (www.greenmagazine.com), he started his incredible collection in the sixth grade with a single green tractor, one similar to his dad's on the farm. His collection grew as he did, and so did his love for anything John Deere. At his Michigan office, the Midwest Prostate and Urological Institute, he now displays everything from the smallest Christmas ornaments to a life-sized copper deer from atop the original headquarters in Moline. A couple notable favorites are an 1871 Queen Prairie steel plow and a brass bell from the front of a locomotive which carried some of the earliest Deere supplies and equipment back in 1875. He also has a fully restored one-horse open sleigh from 1899 and an original doctor's buggy and bag from 1900.

Oesterling is most proud of that doctor's buggy. He acquired it through a friend, the owner of Hansen Wheel and Wagon in South Dakota. The buggy had been used in Geddes by a local doctor and was in such good condition it didn't need restoration. Even the doctor's original instruments are still in the bag.

"The response has been overwhelmingly popular. Patients love it," says Oesterling. "Some of what we display comes from my patients, who want to display their own

unique items." His items have come from all over the country through auctions, Ebay, and other collectors who help him find the few items he doesn't own yet. He looks for items in good, original and unrestored condition. Some patients find it a fun challenge to seek out new items to add to the collection, which isn't an easy task. As for maintaining the treasures, Oesterling prefers to clean the collection himself.

The collection, as one might expect, has been a good investment. Not long after his office was fully decorated Oesterling came across an article that made him feel good about it all. It read "Collecting John Deere items is a better investment than the stock market," referencing a Wall Street Journal story in April, 2008.

In addition to his medical practice, Oesterling also raises corn, wheat, soybeans and sugar beets with Deere equipment on his nearby farm. It's here where the rest of his collection, mostly vintage tractors, large dealer signs, and horsedrawn equipment, is kept. Other unique items he owns come from an older patient who would take a full sized tractor home with him and create 1/4-scale tractors made of wood, finished with paint and matching decals. These one-of-a-kind models can be found near his collection of every kid-sized pedal tractor that John Deere has ever made, along with all the pull-behind attachments. Says Oesterling, "chances are if you can name it, it's in my collection."

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Sunnyside Lighted Farm Implement Parade in northwest Washington is a regular yearly event held the first Saturday of December.

Lighted Farm Equipment Parade Kicks Off The Christmas Season

In northwest Washington, farmers don't put their farm tractors and implements away at the end of the harvest season. They polish them up, add lights, and take them to town for the Sunnyside Lighted Farm Implement Parade the first Saturday of December.

"This year's parade on December 3 will be the 28th annual," says coordinator Deborah Estrada. "It started when a couple of Sunnyside city officials and local farmers wanted to create a winter event around agriculture."

Over the years the parade has grown, and on average there are 60 to 70 entries from individuals, businesses and civic groups. Entries portray the agriculture diversity in the area from tractors, combines and hay balers to grape picking equipment. Others show off antique cars, horse-drawn carriages and flatbed trucks with Christmas displays.

People get creative about adding lights, Estrada says, with lots of zip ties, tape and rigging. Standout entries have included a dancing metal Christmas tree with a Grinch created by the Sunnyside High School welding class and a Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer tractor.

The popular parade is part of a holiday kickoff weekend, and trophies are awarded in different categories.

For other communities considering a similar event, Estrada has some advice.

"It takes lots of planning, volunteers with a good sense of humor, and long Johns," she says.

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