



Artists were commissioned to paint 400-pound cement pigs in Martin County, Minn., to promote local hog producers.

Bacon Capital Celebrates With Clever Hog Statues

Hog producers around Fairmont in Martin County, Minn., raise about 1.5 million hogs annually, making them the state's largest hog-producing county and number five nationwide. The county is often referred to as Bacon Capital USA.

Several years ago, local businessman Jeff Rouse organized a committee to promote Martin County businesses. They came up with what he calls a no-brainer idea, creating life-sized painted hog statues and placing them throughout Fairmont. Businesses embraced the concept, and 21 local artists were commissioned to paint 400-pound cement pigs with bright colors and unique designs.

The result was a collection of colorful pig statues with clever names such as David Hasselhog, Paisley Pork, Hamilton, Sir Loin, Zierke Jerkie and the local co-op's contribution, David Cooperative Field.

Rouse says that after 36 statues, businesses from across the county began calling, eager to participate. Within three years, the number

of pigs grew to 102 across the county. Some notable statues include "Bacon It Happen" outside Fairmont's Profinium Bank, "Chevy Porkette" at the local Chevrolet dealership, and "Chuleta" in front of El Agave, a Mexican restaurant in downtown Fairmont. In Spanish, "chuleta" means pork chop or cutlet.

More than 20 other statues are around Fairmont, including "Cris P. Bacon" by a trophy and embroidery shop. At the Best Western near the I-90 freeway stands "Torge," painted with 43 images representing iconic Minnesota products like Spam, Hamm's beer and Green Giant. The colorful hog stands between 5-ft. tall letters M and N, with a sign describing all the images. It has become a frequent "selfie station" for visitors.

Fairmont K-6 art teacher Ashley Jensen Haake is one of those who's gone hog wild with the idea. She's painted 13 statues, earning her the moniker "Pig Lady." Haake says each business that sponsors a painted pig meets with the artist to brainstorm ideas on what their statue should look like. The artists

then spend 200 or more hours bringing the ideas to life.

Haake says a dentist and his son decided to paint their own pig and did fantastic work. A grandmother and a newspaper editor also created colorful pigs. Each pig statue is unveiled in a special community celebration. The porker on a pedestal showcases the painted pig, its clever name, the business that sponsored it and the artist who painted it.

Artists start their work on a plain concrete pig produced by SVJ Designs of Kellogg, Minn. SVJ is known nationwide for its hundreds of customized concrete products

and has a three-acre show site at its plant. A local hog farmer says that all concrete pigs have been produced from the same mold, so there's no favoritism for size, shape or breed.

Haake and Rouse say they've paused the pig painting project to consider producing a giant hog or have kids paint piglets. They say the ideas and names are endless, just like the smiles on people's faces as they stop at statues for pictures and often go inside the sponsoring business to buy something.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Imagine Martin (www.imagemartin.com/going-hog-wild-project).



Norton spent four years restoring a vintage Leyland double-decker bus.



Double-Decker Buses Still Working Worldwide

Home Front Bus in England (www.whichmuseum.co.uk) has a classic double-decker outfitted for a traveling WWII wartime experience. Inside are displays, artifacts, sights and sounds of buses used during the war. The bus is accompanied by personnel dressed in period costumes to provide an engaging educational experience. The Beaulieu Estate in England houses a National Motor Museum of several hundred vehicles and uses double-decker busses to shuttle visitors around its scenic grounds.

Two ongoing bus renovations prove that restoring old double-deckers is a tedious and expensive undertaking.

A 1950s model Citroen U55 Cityrama is the world's rarest and most unusual double-decker. People call it a cross between a submarine and a Jetson's family car. For years, it toured the streets of Paris, then, facing mechanical difficulties, it was parked. Now, it's being restored by Tim Dunn, who hopes to bring it back to service in Paris, although now it's in more than 100 pieces. Dunn says that dismantling, repairing and renovating the vehicle built on a Citroen 55 truck chassis will be a three to four-year project.

Lorie Norton fundraises for charity in Australia by serving coffee from his traveling café in a restored Leyland double-decker bus. Since 2019, Norton has clocked more

than 30,000 miles in the bus driving along Australia's coastline. He spotted the relic abandoned in an old quarry while working on powerlines in 2004 and bought it for \$950.

Norton says when he slid into the driver's seat and turned the key, it fired up in a cloud of smoke, then settled down and ran smoothly. Over the next three years, Norton stripped the bus to its bones, then rebuilt the upper inside cavity with discarded lumber that he found in Melbourne. The lower quarters have an efficiency kitchen and barista bar that serves as his traveling café. It's also home to a gallery for his artwork. He sells coffee and art and donates funds to various charities. In three years, he's raised more than \$70,000.

Norton's double-decker once served riders in a dedicated route from Sydney to Abbotsford. These days, Norton says he often doesn't know where he's going or where he'll end up, but his travels are all for the good of charity.

Showbus in England (www.showbus.com) operates restored vintage buses for various events. The Omnibus Society (www.omnibus-society.org) is an online forum for double-decker enthusiasts.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Beaulieu National Motor Museum, New Forest, Hampshire, UK S042 7ZN (www.beaulieu.co.uk).



S.T.E.A.M.'d Up for Kids event at Oregon's Powerland Heritage Park gives kids and families a hands-on experience for learning and rides behind an authentic steam engine.

Oregon's Powerland Museum Hosts Multiple Events

About 700 volunteers helped organize and operate the fifth annual S.T.E.A.M.'d Up for Kids event in 2025, which drew hundreds of families and kids for hands-on learning, fun and photo opportunities. Highlights included trailer rides behind a huge steam traction engine, steam tractors and engine displays, as well as a toy truck play area and hands-on STEM activities, such as making rope and ice cream, shelling corn and more.

APMA President Michelle Duchateau says the event has grown larger every year, with more learning and more fun activities that encompass the park's 14 amazing museums. The kid-friendly program was inspired by the Great Oregon Steam-Up, an annual extravaganza held in late July and early August for 55 years.

The facility also hosts Father's Day Firehouse Fun, a huge swap meet, the Brooks Historical Depot Day and a Train and Trolley Fest in June. August shows include the OBS Ford Truck Show and the Brooks Truck Show. September has the Heritage Auto Show, followed by Powerland Halloween in October and Holiday Sparkles in December. The Park is open from April to September, Wednesday through Sunday, and on other days for special events.

Heritage Park is a 62-acre facility featuring

14 different museums that showcase antique implements, CAT equipment, vintage automobiles, motorcycles, steam tractors and railroad, logging and fire equipment. Each is housed in a separate building and maintained by volunteers. The Willow Creek Railroad Museum features steam-powered trains offering rides on its 5,500 ft. of 1:8 scale track, complete with scale model sidings, car barns, a roundhouse, signal bridges and stations.

The Great Oregon Steam-Up, held the last weekend in July and the first weekend in August, draws hundreds of old engine devotees from across the region and the country. The car and truck shows are a great draw, supplemented recently by a swap meet and a bike show.

Duchateau says there's no shortage of ideas and events to bring visitors to Heritage Park. They have an army of volunteers that make it all happen. For many visitors, it's a destination of fun, an appreciation of Oregon's rich heritage and an opportunity to learn.

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