

World's Largest Tractor Sculpture

Australia is home to many unusual structures that have become popular tourist attractions. Recently, the West Australian (WA) town of Carnamah added to the list of sights by unveiling the world's largest tractor sculpture.

The town of 400, located 300 km north of Perth, features an 11.5-m tall, 16-m long, 42-ton steel replica of a Chamberlain 40K tractor. The monument is built five times larger than the original tractor, down to the nuts and bolts. As the first tractor made in WA in 1949, the sculpture pays tribute to the wheatbelt region's agricultural history.

The project took four years to raise funds and complete construction. It was a collaboration between Tracmach (Vintage Tractor and Machinery Association of WA), which came up with the idea 25 years ago, and the Carnamah Big Tractor Committee.

Bob Lukins of Tracmach and John Piavani, former Tracmach president, were driving forces behind the project. Engineer Frank Kidman designed the Big Tractor.

"Frank had a 40K parked nearby and wore out the path from it to his office as he measured up every piece of the tractor and punched pages of meticulous plans and drawings of extremely high quality and accuracy into his computer," says current Chairman of the Big Tractor Committee Brendon Haeusler. "Frank donated hundreds of hours and thousands of kilometers to the project. The man was like a kid in a candy store, displaying the passion and eye for detail you rarely come across."

Mining company DIAB Engineering was contracted to fabricate each piece of the struc-

ture in the city of Geraldton. Kidman worked closely with their project manager, Xavier Sequeira, who led a team of 58 tradespeople to overcome the numerous issues while creating this world-first.

Completing the massive steel sculpture cost about \$750,000, took over 17 mos. with more than 60 people, and required 800 liters of orange paint to cover the structure.

"It was designed to look exactly like the Chamberlain 40K," Sequeira says. "It's a dead replica."

Eighteen trucks transported the individual tractor parts from Geraldton to Carnamah, and two cranes placed the pieces into position for bolting them together.

Organizers raised approximately \$600,000 through private and corporate donations, as well as awards from the Shire and local development commission, after several applications for government grants to fund the tractor build were unsuccessful. Thousands of dollars in contributions were received from across the country to keep project costs below \$1 million.

Haeusler says the Big Tractor is already increasing Carnamah's visibility to both national and international tourists.

"We'd like to add to the interpretation and improve and maintain the site over time," Haeusler says. "Who knows, maybe one day we'll add a giant plow behind the tractor."

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Monument is built five times the size of the original tractor, down to the nuts and bolts.



Bonnema hitched the auger to his Deere 3020 tractor and used the hydraulics to raise it for swinging at any height and to lower it if the winds were too strong.

Old Grain Auger Used As Pond Swing

The summer sun can make it difficult to keep kids, teens and even adults entertained, but for Dan Bonnema, his brother-in-law's nearby pond provided the perfect way for family, friends and neighbors to cool off.

"One summer, I came up with the idea to make a rope swing over the water," Bonnema says. "I borrowed my neighbor's telehandler and hooked up some rope on the loader and tines. It worked well, but of course, he needed it at his place most of the time. The kids had so much fun using it that they wanted something more permanent."

A neighbor who sells and repairs farm equipment had an ideal solution: an old, worn-out 8-in. by 60-ft. Sudenga grain auger destined for the scrap yard.

To make his project usable, Bonnema welded a pair of strap iron pieces to the auger's drop spout to attach and secure a

water ski rope and carabiner connection. He hooked the auger to his Deere 3020 tractor and used the hydraulics to raise it for swinging at any height and to lower it if the winds were too strong.

He also built a wooden platform by the water's edge for the kids to stand on and grab the triangle handle on the rope.

"They hold onto the rope and swing out over the water so they're never over the land," Bonnema says. "I raise the auger when there's supervision and put it down when not in use. It can be set at any height depending on the kids' sizes and ages. It's very stable even when adults join in the fun."

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People could vote for their favorite bale by submitting a photo online.

The oversized designs ranged from agricultural themes to those that showcased the business's personality, such as Fido the Dog, a dog-themed design for Nature's Design Pet Foods. One particularly creative design was the Pop Up Camper, a straw-bale-like pop-up tent camper made for the Shipshewana North Park Campground.

Other bales were just fun, like the Needle in a Haystack—a straw bale shaped like a spool of thread with a needle inserted. This was found at the Farmstead Inn. WillHay Nelson simply speaks for itself.

One with an ag connection was Laverne the Steer, which took four bales to complete. This was made for Country Road Fabrics. Another cow-themed find was Helena the Highlander, designed for Dutch Blessing Floral. She was crowned with and surrounded by mums.

Some, like the Yoder Toter Amish Buggy at Yoder's Shopping Center, reflected local Amish culture. LaGrange County is home to one of the largest Amish populations in



Cartoon characters were also popular among the different designs.

the U.S., with over 15,000 Amish residents.

Cartoon characters like Charlie Brown and Snoopy appeared alongside movie characters like Buzz Lightyear and Willy Wonka, making this a unique, eye-catching family activity, even for the little ones.

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Laverne the Steer, which used four bales, was part of the Straw Bale Trail.



Giant Straw Bale Fun In Indiana

By Cindy Ladage

Farmers reached a new level of creativity this fall in Shipshewana, Ind., with the Giant Straw Bale Trail. This was the first time for the free event, a self-guided trail that ran during daylight hours from Sept. 1 through Nov. 2, 2025.

There were over 35 Giant Straw Bale locations. Besides those in the Amish area of Shipshewana, straw bales could also be found in the towns of Howe, LaGrange, and Middlebury. Each straw bale was designed by a local artist, along with the business owner.