



Giant bulldozer is 40 ft. wide by 70 ft. long and 2 1/2 stories tall. It looks authentic in nearly every detail.



Visitors are often surprised to discover the machine actually serves as a 1,700 sq. ft. office building. Photo shows back side of structure.

Giant Bulldozer Stops Travelers In Their Tracks

By Lorn Manthey

I was driving to the World Ag Expo on busy highway 99 near Turlock, California when I spotted a sight that makes motorists pull to the side of the road, and grab their cameras. To an untrained eye, it looks like the world's largest bulldozer, ready for major dirt-moving action. On closer inspection, visitors are truly surprised to discover that the 40 by 70-ft. long machine is actually a 1,700 sq. ft. office building.

"My grandfather got this idea after seeing a huge tractor perched on a tower in Japan," says Dustin Logsdon, the third generation of his family to work for United Equipment. His

father Mitch owns the business, which sells and rents heavy equipment.

The oversize bulldozer replica looks authentic in nearly every detail. It's built to scale, two-and-a-half times larger than a D8 Cat. The tracks, made of 3-in. thick planks, are 48 ft. long, nearly 12 ft. tall and 9 ft. wide. The 38 by 18-ft. tall dozer blade is a wooden frame covered in stucco. Hydraulic lift and tilt arms are made from large well casings. An air cleaner, exhaust pipe, the seat and lever controls are metal pieces painted black. The large heap of rocks and rubble piled in front of the dozer blade are real.

Dustin Logsdon says the structure, which is 2 1/2 stories tall, took about seven months to build. Carpenters had to spend many hours jig-sawing pieces into replica sizes to complete the building exterior. Inside, the main level is devoted to a reception area and three offices. There's an entry door at the rear of the machine and a large patio door on the side.

The second level 'engine compartment' is a conference room with a large picture window that looks out to the main highway. Space beneath the operator's seat is a separate office. The exterior foot well is an open deck

that continues across the back side of the second story, screened from the road.

"People all over know us by this building," says Logsdon, "and that's been a real selling point. We get visitors all the time just stopping in and we don't mind that at all."

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Pat Michels wanted a barn quilt with personal meaning. So he had a photo of his grandfather's family, taken about 1930, turned into a barn-sized portrait.

"Barn Quilt" Features Family Portrait

In preparing for a large family reunion, Joe and Pat Michels spent months residing their barn and remodeling the second floor of their 1908 farmhouse. But the unique "barn quilt" they installed at the last minute was the biggest hit at the reunion.

"It was my idea," Joe Michels says. He didn't want an ordinary barn quilt that didn't have any personal meaning. The picture he chose has a photo of his grandfather, Nick Goeser, and Nick's four daughters, including Michels' mother, Marcella. Nick's wife died when Marcella, the youngest, was 11. Goeser bought the Panama, Iowa, farm in 1900, built the barn in 1910, and the photo was likely taken around 1930.

Michels' daughter, Dana De Roin, researched companies who could turn an ordinary photo into a barn-sized portrait. She chose FASTSIGNS, a franchise with a location in nearby Omaha, Neb. They ordered an 8 by 8-ft. vinyl sign.

Michels purchased aluminum panels designed for barn quilts (\$200). He used

about 20 screws to attach it to 2 by 6-in. boards on the inside of the barn. He says exterior plywood would have also worked instead of the special aluminum panels. The picture could also be covered with plexiglass, if desired.

Michels has been impressed with how well the sign has held up through its first Iowa winter. The trick is to make sure it stays flat to avoid wind damage, he says. He adds that the \$360 price (including fast delivery shipping) was reasonable and that he would be willing to replace the banner in the future if it starts deteriorating.

The barn quilt portrait attracted local media attention and was appreciated by the 136 descendants who attended the reunion.

"It was like our ancestors were looking out over us at the whole event," De Roin adds.

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"Barn quilt" family portrait was a big hit at a large family reunion.

Homemade Cannon Shoots Mini Balls

Don Ramberg's family and friends get a big kick out of his homemade cannon. Bored out of an old railroad boxcar axle, the cannon's 1-in. bore is amazingly accurate.

"I can hit a 16-in. tire from 220 yds. with a 1-in. dia., 200-gram, mini cannonball," says Ramberg. "We shoot it 10 to 12 times each Fourth of July."

Ramberg has been building and shooting muzzle-loading rifles for nearly 50 years. The cannon has the biggest barrel he ever made. A friend initially drilled a hole in the barrel, leaving a "blind bottom" for an end.

"Then I put it in a lathe and drilled it out to get it smoother and then lathed the outside," explains Ramberg.

Once he had the classic cannon shape, he went to work on the carriage, making it out of oak from a century old bobsled. Wheels came from an old garden cultivator. Ramberg turned the ends of the axles to fit the wheel hub casting and used a wooden peg to hold the wheels in place.



"It's amazingly accurate and can hit a 16-in. tire from 220 yards," says Don

"I drilled a touch hole in the blind bottom end for a 2-in. piece of cannon fuse," says Ramberg. "I put in about 300 grains of black powder and pack it real hard with 2 in. of newspaper. When I set it off, it jumps about a foot in the air."

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