

# “Custom Boulder” Business Growing Across The Country

“Our business is up despite the economy because companies are looking for a unique way to stand out from the competition,” says Eldean Bergman of Boulder Designs®, an Illinois company that came up with a method of making “sign boulders” from scratch. They’re now offering potential franchise owners the opportunity to secure their own protected territory.

“It’s a great sideline business for farmers because you can make a complete boulder in a matter of a few hours. It’s easy to squeeze the work in around crop or livestock work, and most farmers already have a facility to work in. The process of building a boulder is uncomplicated and we provide a total turnkey business that nearly anyone can operate,” says Bergman, who has already signed up 32 independent franchises across the U.S.

“We provide everything you need to get started, including all equipment, a trailer, and even a website. Complete support is provided and we even create a marketing plan based on your goals to help you get started off on the right foot.

“Our method uses proprietary enhanced concrete and equipment to build boulders in any size, shape or color with a logo, pic or writing of any kind on it. One person can easily build, load, deliver and set a custom boulder in place for the customer using our specialized trailer,” says Bergman.

“We build custom boulders for restaurant chains, schools, parks, farmsteads, and homeowners. Recently we made a boulder sign



Eldean and Vicki Bergman, owners of Boulder Designs, personally delivered Loretta Lynn’s boulder sign to her at her place in Nashville.

for country music star Loretta Lynn. The market is endless; often zoning requirements will allow a boulder where conventional signage would not be allowed. People can’t believe these boulders are not real.

“The demand for our boulders has been so tremendous, right now we’re offering franchises at a very attractive price. It’s a great opportunity for farm families looking for a new source of income to get in on the ground floor at an introductory price for less than \$50,000.”

A small boulder with an address starts at \$150.00, and up to several thousand for a large commercial boulder. The company now uses a computer program that lets you see how the boulder will look and allows you to change colors or printing of the boulders so your clients can choose exactly what they want.

They make great gifts for the person who



After three years of use outside FARM SHOW’s headquarters in Minnesota, the boulder sign built by Bergman for the magazine shows no sign of wear or deterioration, says Mark Newhall, Editor. “We love it and almost everyone who sees it compliments us on it.”

has everything, Bergman notes.

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**Reader Inquiry No. 174**

## Old Combine Turned Into Playground

An old Deere combine has been retired to a rather pleasant job. Instead of ending up at a salvage yard, happy, screaming kids now climb all over it and come sliding out the back. The combine playground is part of the entertainment package at Round Hill Farm in Culpeper, Va., where the Faulconer family holds a Pumpkin Festival in October. They sell pumpkins and offer hayrides, corn mazes and a petting zoo.

The combine playground was introduced in 2009. Eric Faulconer explains that his family regularly adds new features to their operation. When they were offered a free combine, they bought a \$4,500 slide to fit the combine’s angles and dimensions — and to match the Deere yellow paint.

Faulconer and three farm employees cut out the augers and shellers and other parts to make room for the slide. They built solid

stairs and picket-style railings with support posts mounted on concrete pads. They removed part of the cornhead to create a bench, where visitors can have their photos taken.

“We disconnected all the gears and pinched the hydraulic steering line. We staked blocks with rebar behind and in front of the tires so it can’t roll,” Faulconer notes.

When they are open for business the cab door is chained open so kids won’t pinch their fingers and can climb in and out freely.

By the time it was finished and professionally painted, it cost just under \$9,000, but it should be around for years.

So far it’s been a hit. The kids love playing on it and it looks so good some adults asked



if Deere made it. Faulconer says photos of the combine have been showing up on internet photo pages. His family is already thinking about another big attraction — possibly something using an old truck.

Check out the Round Hill Farm website, which will be available later this summer.

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