

Iowa Couple Saves 1881 Grain Elevator

It's all about saving a landmark elevator, says Bob Nelson about the project he and his wife, Janet, embarked on nearly three years ago. When they purchased their Ross, Iowa, property, the 1881 grain elevator on adjacent land was deteriorating.

"We bought it for the sole reason of keeping someone from tearing it down. It's a landmark," says Bob. "It was in really deplorable condition, but I knew that it was unique."

The task of restoring the 3 buildings – elevator, annex, and scale house – was daunting. They had been inhabited by wildlife and were full of debris, including old corn and rotting wood.

"The roofs had leaked for many years and doors and windows were missing. It had rotted sills and floors and some of the walls were rotting. There was poor drainage," Nelson says.

The Nelsons invested their own money, applied for and received a \$25,000 matching grant from the Iowa Barn Foundation, and received the use of equipment and labor support from local contractors. Contractor Bryan Olson and his brother Jake, and Larry Graves did the bulk of the restoration work.

The elevator's foundation had deteriorated,

so a house moving company lifted the 157,450 lb. building high enough to rest temporarily on steel beams so they could tear out the old foundation, pour new footers and restack the limestone base.

Boards from local barns that had been taken down were used to replace rotted wood to maintain the look of the Douglas fir used to build the elevator.

To make use of the annex, the carpenters cut in a door, and Janet powerwashed the wood to clean and bring it back to life.

Nelson notes that the construction of elevators – 2 by 8's, 2 by 6's and 2 by 4's – makes the elevator extremely sturdy. During the renovation, he found one board that had the initials of the builder, Charles Stuart and his son, and the year 1881 carved into it.

Preserving the board and the elevator is an important part of Iowa history, Nelson says. The work has attracted neighbors, who stop by to tell stories about threshing days and going to the elevator to have grain ground.

While Nelson admits there were discouraging times during the restoration, the couple is pleased with the work that has been done on the elevator and annex. The brick scale house is next. It needs to be done soon before it crumbles completely, Nelson says.



Bob and Janet Nelson are working to completely restore the elevator with help from friends, family, and contractors. A house-moving company lifted the entire building with steel beams so the foundation could be rebuilt.

There are no official plans for how to use it in the future other than posting a sign and providing written information about its history. But the Nelsons and the 27 inhabitants of Ross, Iowa, are proud to have one of the few remaining historical elevators in the state standing in their back yard.

To follow the progress of the project on Facebook, search for: Save Ross Elevator.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ross Elevator, c/o Bob Nelson, 5950 Main Street, Audubon, Iowa 50025 (ph 712 304-5809; Save.Ross.Elevator@gmail.com).



Spray painting 200-ft. long silage bags has become a fall tradition for Lynn Reischel and her daughter. Every year they use spray paint cans to create colorful pictures on the bags, which run along a highway near their Bloomer, Wis., dairy farm.

Silage Bag Art A Family Tradition

Dan and Lynn Reischel have an interesting way of sharing "family pictures." Family members paint them on 200-ft. long "canvases" - the silage bags that run along Highway F near their Bloomer, Wis., dairy farm.

It started as a fun thing to do with their young son and daughter more than 20 years ago, Lynn Reischel says. It turned into a tradition that passersby anticipate.

"Dan fills the bags and buys the paint," she explains. Then, sometime late in October, she and her daughter, Sarah, now 27, spend a couple hours with spray paint cans to create colorful pictures along the entire length of the bag. This past fall they painted two bags, so when the first silage bag is emptied as it's fed to cattle, passersby will have a new bag of paintings to view.

The women also had help last fall from a niece and her three children who are 3, 5 and 6. The youngest used an adapter to push the spray can nozzle, just as Sarah did when she was that age. The older children discovered that they could spray their hands to put handprints on the bags.

From year-to-year, pictures and themes vary, Reischel says, and her daughter's artwork has become quite good and detailed.

"Every once in a while people drop in to say thanks. One lady said, 'I've watched your kids grow up through the art,'" Reischel says.

Though her son lost interest, it is still

something she and her daughter enjoy. It's inexpensive entertainment that only takes about 10 cans of leftover or cheap spray paint, and the color holds up until the bags are emptied.

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Dale Larsen bolted swivel-type boat trailer jacks to each side of his snowblower. "Makes it much easier to move the blower around," he says.

Rolling Jacks Fitted To Snowblower

Dale Larsen of Greenville, Mich., recently sent FARM SHOW photos of how he made it easier to attach a snowblower to his lawn tractor.

"A bout with bone cancer left me with a bad back, and my wife has been helping me with the things I can't do by myself. One day she was trying to help me hook up the snowblower to our lawn tractor and said, 'You'd think they would put wheels on this

machine to make it easier to move.'

"So I got to thinking about it and came up with the idea of bolting swivel-type boat trailer jacks to each side of the snowblower. The jacks are fitted with small castoring wheels, which makes it much easier to move the snowblower around."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Dale Larsen, 9147 W. Wise Rd., Greenville, Mich. 48838.

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