



Loren and Lynette Winters on a self-propelled Massey-Harris 92, one of 12 combines they donated to the Pembina Museum.

Vintage Machinery Donated To Museum

Lynette Winters says, “Whenever Loren (her husband) would haul another one of those old combines home, and I’d tell the kids, they’d ask, ‘What are we going to do with those when you’re gone?’ Now I have an answer. They’re all in the Pembina County Historical Society Museum near Cavalier, N.D.”

In 2022, the Winters donated their collection of 12 vintage combines, an ear corn picker, and four tractors to the museum. Loren says he’d been looking for a suitable home for his collection when he and his wife went camping at the Icelandic State Park near Cavalier in 2021. They visited the Pembina Museum across the road, were impressed by its excellent displays, and asked the director, Zelda Hartje, whether the museum would be interested in a dozen combines and a corn picker.

“We sure would,” she said, thinking they were toy models that kids would enjoy. “They’re not toys,” Winters said. “They’re full-size, and all of them are in working condition.”

Hartje says she couldn’t believe what she was hearing.

“I was lost for words at first,” she says,

“then I said we don’t have a place to keep them inside.”

Winters then replied with an even better offer, “We’ll help you put up a building to store them.”

Hartje says the exchange has since evolved into the 60 by 158-ft. Winters Harvest Center building, which houses the 12 combines, the corn picker and four tractors that Winters donated.

“It’s a once-in-a-lifetime donation, and we’re extremely happy and honored that they chose our facility,” Hartje says. “The collection adds an entirely new dimension to the museum grounds that attracts visitors from a wide area, especially during our September harvest days.”

Winters says he and his wife searched for a “home” for the collection so future generations could learn about the history of harvesting. The combines include Case, Gleaner, International Harvester, Deere, Massey, Oliver and Minneapolis-Moline models. Half are pull-type; the others are self-propelled. The corn picker is a New Idea 2-row pull-type model. The tractors include a 1952 Massey 44, a 1962 AC D15, a 1970

Ford 6600, and a 1940 IH B.

Now retired after working as a consulting engineer and farming near Fullerton, N.D., Winters says he developed a love for combines as a youngster.

“I’d rather be harvesting than anything else,” he says. That enjoyment grew into collecting real machines in the early 1990s. “I bought a few at auctions, but only if they were stored inside and didn’t have rusty metal. People donated others to me. They didn’t all work, so I had to buy two or three of the same models to have parts.”

Over the years, he restored them all to working condition. Then it was time to retire and figure out where they’d go.

“We checked a few museums that we weren’t quite happy with, so finding the Pembina facility was a stroke of luck,” Winters says.

After the building was constructed on the Museum grounds, Winters began hauling the machines to Cavalier on his 5th-wheel trailer. Each trip took 4 1/2 hrs. one way, but Winters was glad to bring them to a new home.

“Now they’re in a place to help tell the harvesting story to hundreds of visitors,” Winters says.

They’ll also be outside and running during the Museum’s Pioneer Machinery Show and Parade each September. The pull-type models will be drawn by vintage tractors, and open-station self-propelled models will also be on the route. One of the crowd favorites is “The

Candy Combine,” a self-propelled Gleaner that augers 100 lbs. of Tootsie Rolls from its grain tank as it travels the parade route. Adults and kids alike love the excitement it provides.

The Winters will make one more combine delivery in the spring of 2026, hauling a freshly painted Minneapolis-Moline G4 machine to its new home.

“We had that one painted because it looked really tough,” Loren says. “When it warms up so the decals can go on, it’ll be on its way. There’s probably no other collection like this in the country, and we’re very pleased to have the machines where visitors can see and learn how harvesting was done after the big threshing machines and before modern-day combines.”

Winters says the museum will use the collection to focus on education and the importance of harvesting within the food supply chain.

“In the past, harvest was a very labor-intensive effort, unlike now, where one person and a support crew for hauling can harvest hundreds of acres a day. The social fabric of society rests heavily on a stable food source, which farmers and modern combines help provide.”

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Winters drives “The Candy Combine,” a self-propelled Gleaner that augers 100 lbs. of Tootsie Rolls.



Severson’s model weighs 22,000 lbs., with 8-ft., 3-in. tall and 30-in. wide rear wheel hubs.

His Big Four Builds World Famous

Al Severson fell in love with Big Four tractors for their size, beauty and innovative design. The problem was that while the big prairie tractors sold for \$2,200 new, the now-rare tractors sell for \$300,000 or more today.

“Big Four tractors are the most majestic tractors there are,” explains Severson fervently. “They’re almost like a carnival ride coming to town.”

Knowing he couldn’t afford to buy a restored one, he decided to build his own. In 2010, he acquired a 1910 Big Four 30-60 frame, wheels and differential. He built the rest. As word spread, he became part of an international network of Big Four fans, many of them builders like him.

Big Four tractors were introduced in the early 1900s by the Gas Traction

Company, which claimed to be the first and largest builder of 4-cyl. tractor engines with a vertical design. Severson’s model weighs 22,000 lbs., with 8-ft., 3-in. tall and 30-in. wide rear wheel hubs. The engine produces 30 hp at the drawbar and 60 hp on the belt. It can pull a 10-bottom plow at 2 mph.

When it came to reproducing the necessary parts, Severson had several advantages. A professional machinist, he helped rebuild an engine for one in the 1990s. In 2000, he started his own company, Countryside Manufacturing, doing short-run production and specialized in larger parts, some weighing as much as 10,000 lbs. He had the expertise, tools and vendors to apply to his own rebuild and to others. He also had the support and help of his wife, Harriet.

“She works with me in the shop, as well as

taking photos all the time and posting online,” says Severson.

When he started his Big Four, he and his wife posted the project on Smokestack, an online site for antique engine enthusiasts.

“I had tons of feedback from it,” says Severson. “Our shop became an attraction with visitors from Belgium, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.”

By 2014, he was working on the 30-60 and a Flour City Junior from the same period. An article in the February 2014 issue of Farm Collector details the process for the 30-60 and his involvement with 10 others around the world.

A growing network of Big Four fans shared information and parts. There were four in the U.S., three in Australia, and one each in South Africa and the Netherlands. In some cases, he provided parts he had learned to make for his own tractor. Meanwhile, he finished his Big Four to keep, did one to sell, and did two more for customers. At the same time, he was running his business.

“A few years ago, I fired my customers,” says Severson. “Now I just work on tractor restoration and one-off stuff for gas engines. The only problem is time,” he adds. “I have about a three-year backlog.”

In his spare time, Severson continues working on his Flour City Junior. It’s one of only two known to exist. Like his first Big Four, it’s been a nearly complete build from scratch.

“I started out with busted up gears, a frame, front axle and wheels,” says Severson. “Everything else we built. We work on



Engine produces 30 hp at the drawbar and 60 hp on the belt.

components and then walk away for a while. You have to give a project like it time.”

After more than 10 years, he recently got the engine running. He knows the time spent will be worth it in the end if he wants to sell it.

Severson continues to expand his international network.

“I recently had a call from a fellow in Argentina,” he says. “There was a Big Four he was interested in rebuilding. I shared the steps he would have to follow and the parts needed.”

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