



City of Woodland

REPORT TO MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

DATE: April 29, 2008

SUBJECT: Presentation Regarding “The Best Show
on Tracks” Event, June 20-22, 2008

Report in Brief

The City Council will receive a presentation on an upcoming event to be held in the City of Woodland for the first time entitled “The Best Show on Tracks”.

Staff recommends that the City Council receive this presentation and express support for this event as it will bring antique equipment and visitors from throughout the world to the City.

Background

This event is to be held at the Dan Best Ranch just outside of the City from June 20 through 22, 2008 and will be the 2008 National Convention and Show for the Antique Caterpillar Machinery Owners’ Club, featuring Best, Holt and Caterpillar tractors that were built and used in California. There will be many unusual and unique pieces of equipment on display.

Recommendation for Action

Staff recommends that the City Council receive this presentation and express support for this event as it will bring antique equipment and visitors from throughout the world to the City.

Prepared by: Sue Vannucci, Director of
Administrative Services and City Clerk

Mark G. Deven
City Manager

Attachment: Press Release

January 25, 2008

Lonny Wunder
Event Coordinator
Best Show on Tracks
(530) 662-8430

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

‘BEST SHOW ON TRACKS’ TO HIGHLIGHT ANTIQUÉ TRACTORS, FARM EQUIPMENT FROM THROUGHOUT WORLD

WOODLAND, Calif. – More than 400 antique tractors, harvesters, trucks and other farm machinery from throughout the world will be brought together in Northern California in June for one of the largest antique farm shows ever in the West.

The Heidrick Ag History Center in Woodland will host the event on June 20-22 at the Dan Best Ranch, located just outside Woodland and minutes from downtown Sacramento. This one-of-a-kind three-day event, titled “The Best Show on Tracks”, will include all makes and models of farm machinery dating back more than 100 years. It also will serve as the 2008 national convention and show for the Antique Caterpillar Machinery Owners’ Club (ACMOC), and will feature Best, Holt and Caterpillar tractors that were built and used in California.

“The Best Family is honored to host this event at their family farm,” said Event Manager Lonny Wunder. There is a historical connection to the Best family: the assets of the C. L. Best Tractor Co. were combined with the assets of the Holt Manufacturing Company in 1925 to form the Caterpillar Tractor Co. that continues today. C.L. Best was Chairman of the Board of the Caterpillar Tractor Co. from 1925 until 1951. He was the grandfather of the event’s host, Dan Best, Jr.

“More than 150 acres of the Best Ranch are set aside for this event, showcasing antique farm equipment from throughout the world – including machines, horses, mules, gas and steam engines from Australia, England, Norway, Germany, New Zealand and South Africa,” Wunder said.

Many one-of-a-kind pieces will be displayed and demonstrated, including a fully operational full-scale replica of a Holt steam crawler circa 1906, and a completely restored 1905 Holt ground propelled harvester which will be pulled by a team of 26 mules. The only operational Best Harvester will be pulled by a 1905 Best Steam Traction Engine and will be demonstrated each day, along with other harvesters harvesting 30 acres of grain. Daily parades, antique engines, steam displays and live music will also enliven the event.

“This will be an event that will enthrall tractor enthusiasts, families, teachers, children – there will be something of interest for everyone,” Wunder said. “Along with live demonstrations of rare antique equipment – most of which have been restored to working order – there will be a special area just for children with a Pedal Tractor Pull contest, wooden railway, a giant sand pit with Tonka toys, an animal petting zoo, and activities with representatives from Sutter’s Fort.”

The location of the event has special significance to Caterpillar’s influence on farming.

“Best and Holt are historic to this particular area,” said Allen Harris, an antique tractor collector and ACMOC member from Australia who also serves on the Board of Directors for the Heidrick Ag History Center. “Even how Caterpillars were built is unique to Northern California. The tracks (on Caterpillars) were created because of the soil. When they were working on the levees (in the Sacramento Valley), the soil was so loose that the wheels on the tractors would sink, so (Caterpillar) ‘crawlers’ were adapted and tracks were added instead. These changes made (this area) capable of being farmed.”

Along with adaptations to fit geographic needs, history has shaped the evolution and longevity of many farm machines. Several of these influences will be visible at the Best Show on Tracks.

Massive, antique earth moving equipment used to construct modern marvels – Hoover Dam, the Alaskan Pipeline, highway systems – will be demonstrated throughout the show.

Many of these antique machines are extremely rare due to the impact of scrap metal drives which claimed most examples during World War II.

“I’ve talked to collectors that were able to come through (with pre-WW II equipment) for one reason: they hid the tractors, sometimes even burying them in the ground or in haystacks to prevent them from being used for scrap metal and melted down in the War,” Harris said.

These and other marvelous stories will be highlighted at The Best Show on Tracks. For additional information on the June 20-22 event, please visit: www.bestshowontracks.org or www.aghistory.org. Information is also available at: (530) 666-9700, or e-mail: lwunder@aghistory.org.

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