A BIG DAY FOR DEERE

In 1960 John Deere had a completely new line of tractors to show the world. It was the most important change to the company’s products in 42 years, so John Deere decided to introduce the machines in a very big way.

On August 30, 1960, John Deere dealers from around the world converged on Dallas, Texas, for an unprecedented product showcase.

Deere Day in Dallas, as the event was called, introduced the world to the New Generation of Power, the company’s first modern four- and six-cylinder tractors, during a day packed with high-tech presentations, live demonstrations, and of course a parking lot full of brand-new green and yellow machines.

Getting Ready
The machines introduced that day were five years in the making, and the event itself took months to plan.

Deere chose Dallas to host the event partly because it was home to facilities large enough to accommodate the 6,000 guests and the equipment they were all there to see. The Dallas Memorial Auditorium, the Texas State Fairgrounds Coliseum, the Cotton Bowl, and the Cotton Bowl parking lot were each the site of part of the event.

Once the sites were selected it was time to work out the details. To ensure perfection, event planners set up shop in a building in Deere’s hometown, Moline, Illinois. There they spent months creating scale models of the Coliseum and the Cotton Bowl’s 15-acre parking lot, using tiny toy tractors and wooden figures to plan the layout of the event.

Getting There
According to information released by the company at the time of the event, John Deere dealers and key...
This brochure helped introduce customers to the 1010, 2010, 3010 and 4010 series tractors that dealers got to know at Deere Day in Dallas.
employees came to Dallas via the “largest commercial airlift of its type ever attempted.”

During the 24 hours leading up to the event, 16 airlines brought Deere employees and sales people from all over the United States and Canada to Dallas.

The Show
There wasn’t a bad seat in the Dallas Memorial Auditorium as Bill Hewitt, then chairman and CEO of Deere & Company, welcomed the dealers and introduced the new tractors. A five-sided screen hung from the center of the ceiling and projected Hewitt’s presentation to each side of the building.

Hewitt told the guests they were about to see “a line of entirely new tractors – completely modern in every respect – with outstanding features not duplicated in any other make of tractor.”

After Hewitt’s introduction the screens gave the audience a close-up look at other speakers and several movies produced for the introduction.

The videos weren’t the only high-tech part of the day. To accommodate the French-speaking dealers at the event, instantaneous translations were provided for them through headphones.

From the auditorium the dealers headed to the Texas State Fairgrounds for their first look at the new New Generation. After operators demonstrated the capabilities of the new tractors, the dealers had their chance to climb on the new equipment.

Later, the day’s events came to an end with a special fireworks display featuring the John Deere logo and images of the new tractors outlined in lights in the sky.

The machines
The videos and fireworks may have dazzled the audience, but the New Generation tractors were the stars of the show. Since entering the tractor business in 1918 Deere had focused on two-cylinder machines. The New Generation of Power introduced at Deere Day in Dallas was very different from anything Deere had carried before.

The new line of four- and six-cylinder tractors had faster engines and were capable of much more horsepower than Deere’s two-cylinder machines. The new tractors were also easier to use and more comfortable, with conveniently located controls, better visibility and improved seat suspension. Filters on the sides of tractors instead of underneath also made the tractors easier to service.
The development of the New Generation tractors was a carefully guarded company secret, but Harlen Bland, a former John Deere dealer from Durant, Iowa, says he knew something big was happening when he went to Dallas on August 29, 1960.

“We had heard lots of rumors,” says Bland. “We guessed it was going to be a new line because we had orders waiting.” He says the company stopped filling orders for two-cylinder tractors well before the new line was introduced.

Bland’s suspicions were confirmed the next day when he and all the other dealers were bused from their hotels to Dallas Memorial Auditorium. “It was a round building with huge screens hanging from the ceiling in the center,” he says. “They projected movies of the new tractors on those screens. It was pretty spectacular.”

After that introduction the dealers were taken to the Texas State Fairgrounds for a closer look at the new tractors. “Everything that Deere made in the ag business was there, and it was practically all new,” says Bland. There was a presentation explaining all the new features, and “they paraded the new line,” he says.

Later the whole group of 6,000 was served a huge barbeque dinner. Bland remembers tables set with red plaid tablecloths and kerosene lanterns in a pavilion at the fairground.

After dinner the day ended with a “fireworks presentation that was actually tractors going across a field,” says Bland. “It was a pretty full day.”

Bland says he left Dallas with mixed emotions about the new tractors that he would be selling. “I tried to get what I could in the way of new two-cylinders because that was what customers wanted,” he says.

According to Bland, those feelings were short-lived. Every dealer had a 3010 and a 4010 within a day or two of returning from Dallas, and Bland says he started giving each of his customers a good look at these new models. “I took a 4010 tractor and just drove it through the country. When I saw someone out in the field I’d stop and plow a few rounds,” he says. “It caught on pretty quick.”

**Memories of Deere Day in Dallas**

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*What did you think of the New Generation? Share your memories of Deere Day in Dallas or the tractors that were introduced there in a future issue of The Plowshare by sending them to BaustianKateR@JohnDeere.com.*
I know that we’re all busy, and February 7 probably went by unnoticed for many of you. But, I think we should take a few minutes for a belated observance of John Deere’s 205th birthday.

John Deere was born in 1804, just 28 years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Thomas Jefferson, the third president, was in office.

Before his death in 1886, Deere lived through 15 presidencies and several economic downturns. During his life, innovations like steamboats, typewriters, and postage stamps were introduced.

Things have changed since then. The United States just inaugurated its 44th president. Instead of typewriters most of us use computers or cell phones to send messages to each other, chipping away at the need for the postage stamp.

But, some things never change. The United States is now facing another economic downturn, which some say is the most significant in quite a while. Like others, this downturn comes with some uncertainty and different opinions on what should be done to deal with it—as a country, as businesses and as individuals. There’s a need to ask tough questions and make even tougher decisions. Some of the choices we’ll have to make might not be popular, but our intentions are good. And, our decisions are made after considering how we can achieve the best outcome.

Recently, we had to make a decision like this. As you may know, we’ve decided not to hold our annual auctions, tractor ride and tractor show this year.

This was a hard decision. We thought a lot about how the economy might be affecting individuals, groups and businesses in the United States and in other parts of the world. We considered whether or not people would be likely to spend the time and money on a trip to Moline this year. Ultimately we made the decision to cancel our events for this year, with the hope that 2010 will bring improved conditions for everyone, and that after this brief hiatus our events will be even better and more exciting than ever.

I’m optimistic. As a student of John Deere history, I know that the company has survived hard times before, and I think the same will be true for our events. It takes integrity, innovation and commitment to look at challenges and see opportunities to succeed and grow. So, as we mark the 205th birthday of a man whose name has become synonymous with these qualities, I think that with that kind of history we have a good chance of emerging from these challenges even stronger than before. Stay tuned and …

Keep your hand on the throttle and your plow in the ground.

Brian

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**Annual Auction Events Cancelled for 2009**

Due to the overall impact of economic conditions, John Deere has announced the cancellation of the annual antique tractor and memorabilia auctions that had been planned for June in Moline, Illinois.

Al Higley, manager of John Deere branded properties, said that the event team is optimistic that John Deere enthusiasts and guests will again be able to experience the fun and excitement of the annual auctions, tractor ride and equipment show in the near future.

John Deere continues to offer other attractions that highlight the company’s history, products and industries. Visit the John Deere Attractions site at www.JohnDeere.com for more information.

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**Forage Harvester on Display at the John Deere Pavilion**

A new John Deere 7050-series self-propelled forage harvester will be on display at the John Deere Pavilion until late this summer.

This self-propelled forage harvester offers increased capacity, faster transport speeds and great customer comfort.

This is the first time in several years that a forage harvester has been displayed at the Pavilion. For more information visit www.JohnDeereAttractions.com.
Upcoming Events

**March, 2009**

**March 21** Kids Craft Day, John Deere Pavilion, Moline, Illinois - Children who visit the Pavilion between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. can make their own paper bag pig puppets. For more information call 309-765-1000.

**April, 2009**

**April 11** Kids Craft Day, John Deere Pavilion, Moline, Illinois - Children who visit the Pavilion between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. will make egg carton chicks, and watch real baby chicks hatch. For more information call 309-765-1000.

**April 24** The Georgia Guitar Quartet, Deere-Wiman House, Moline, Illinois - A free concert at 3 p.m. will be followed by refreshments. For details, visit www.butterworthcenter.com/Fridays.html

**April 25** Grand Opening of the Kids Corner, John Deere Pavilion, Moline, Illinois - The Kid’s Corner will offer children interesting ways to see, touch and feel how elements of agriculture become part of their lives. For details, visit www.JohnDeereAttractions.com

**May, 2009**

**May 1** John Deere Historic Site opens, Grand Detour, Illinois - John Deere's house, a working replica of his blacksmith shop and an archaeological display will be open 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., Wed. - Sun. through October. Admission is $5 for ages 12 and up. For details see www.JohnDeereAttractions.com

**May 16** Kids Craft Day, John Deere Pavilion, Moline, Illinois - From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. kids can learn about bees and make a bee mobile. For details call 309-765-1000.

**June, 2009**

**June 20** Kids Craft Day, John Deere Pavilion, Moline, Illinois - From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. kids can celebrate Dairy Month with cow crafts, free milk and a real calf. For details call 309-765-1000.

**July, 2009**

**July 6-12** John Deere Classic, TPC at Deere Run, Silvis, Illinois - For more information on this annual PGA Tour event visit www.JohnDeereClassic.com.

**July 25** Kids Craft Day, John Deere Pavilion, Moline, Illinois - From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. kids can enjoy a variety of activities to celebrate the Second Annual Ag Education Day. For more information call 309-765-1000.