

A beautiful day for a drive!

We were blessed with a picture-perfect day on August 27 as thirty-five drivers from seven counties hit the roads of northwest Illinois for a 36-mile cruise on our second Classic Tractor Drive. Departing from the Stephenson Service Company location in Lena, the group headed east on Cedarville Road, north on Flansburg Road, and east on Orangeville Road where we made a pit stop at the BOCO station in Orangeville for public viewing of the classic rigs. We then headed west on Winslow Road through Winslow, turning onto Christian Hollow Road where the group enjoyed a delicious lunch at the farm of Gary and Troy Mahon and their families (Gary even went up in his plane and took some aerial photos of the procession, which will be on our website eventually). The group dispersed after lunch with most returning to Lena via Stagecoach Trail, while others took off in different directions home.

I want to thank the Stephenson County Sheriff's Reserve officers - Tracy Becker, Jim Hayunga, Richard Fuchs, Jon Kasten and Henry Saavedra – for their outstanding traffic control support. I also want to thank the Mahon family for providing a great lunch setting and promoting the event, our Summer Program Assistant Jamie Schlachter for her help in lunch preparations, and Stephenson Service Company for the use of their property and for the offer of free coffee for the drivers. We're planning our third event for Saturday August 25, 2012 so mark your calendar now!

The rush continues!

Another surge of signups last week now has us with only 6 seats remaining as of September 1 for our summer 2012 Door County Adventure bus trip. The extreme popularity of the first two trips has fueled interest in our next outing, scheduled for July 30-August 2, and it looks like this one could be full before Halloween. We'll again be staying at the wonderful Landmark Resort, with its spectacular views of Green Bay and the relaxing hospitality rooms and deck offering a great atmosphere for socializing, cards and more. We'll again be enjoying a terrific Harbor Lady boat tour (this time on Green Bay), a return visit to the American Folklore Theatre for another original performance under the stars, superb dinners at Greenwood Supper Club and Nightingale's Supper Club, and great shopping opportunities. New this year will be the ferry ride to Washington Island and the Cherry Train island tour, an expanded trolley tour, more flex time, a possible tour on the way up, and other options still being explored.

A basic trip outline should be posted soon at www.stephensoncfb.org, and I encourage anyone considering this fun excursion to call us today to get your name on the list – 56 people is our limit, and we're nearly there! Call (815) 232-3186 to find out more.

Livestock show success

Stephenson County and northwest Illinois boast a number of successful livestock families on the show circuit every year, far too many to name. It was brought to my attention recently that one of our SCFB board members, dairyman Brian Dinderman and his wife Kristi from Orangeville, exhibited the Grand Champion and Land of Lincoln Champion in the Illinois State Fair Guernsey Show on August 19 with their 3-year-old cow. Another Dinderman-bred animal, a 2-year-old Ayrshire cow shown by Jordon Oellerich, was the Grand Champion and Land of Lincoln Champion of the Ayrshire Junior Show. Jordon, daughter of Curt & Lisa Oellerich of Lena, also claimed second place in the Guernsey Showmanship Contest and competed in the Showman of Showman Contest. Congratulations on these accolades and to all who have achieved success in the show ring this summer (I know that two other SCFB directors' families, Donald Graybill and Wendell DeVries, are often in the winner's circle).

Branson reminder

The November 7-11 Branson trip is still taking reservations, so give us a call today to get on board for this fun and entertaining trip. Big-name shows including Shoji Tabuchi and Daniel O'Donnell highlight this trip, along with great food and accommodations. See the details at www.stephensoncfb.org or call (815) 232-3186.

Another MVP discount added

We welcome Tri-State Seamless Gutters to our Membership Value Program as owner Joe Bach has offered SCFB members a 5% discount off of any gutter work installed. We're anticipating at least two more discounts next week as we update our brochures with the new additions; in the meantime, visit www.stephensoncfb.org under the "Membership – Local Benefits" tab to see the details of all of our Farm Bureau member discounts. You'll quickly see why we say "Farm Bureau – Where Membership Means Value".

Supporting the Pec

At our Freeport Noon Rotary Club weekly meeting on August 29, I enjoyed a presentation by Roger Shamberger of the Friends of the Pecatonica River Foundation. Roger highlighted the successes of that group in maintaining and upgrading this 200-mile-long waterway dubbed "Illinois' Friendliest Paddle". Roger and a host of other dedicated volunteers have made this cause their own, and they should be proud of all they've accomplished. In the midst of the beauty and splendor of northwest Illinois and the extended region, here's to this committed group of advocates for preserving our natural treasures. If you'd like to help them out, visit www.pecriver.org, e-mail pecriver@hotmail.com, or call (815) 238-7888.

Bruce Johnson is the manager of the Stephenson County Farm Bureau.