

Fair gets praise for tractor pull

By Sharon Corcoran

The Goodland Star-News
Engines roared, dust and smoke flew, equipment broke, but tractor pullers say that's the way it's supposed to be.

The Colorado Truck and Tractor Puller's Association gave the Northwest Kansas District Free Fair board an award for "Pull of the Year" for the modified tractor pull here Saturday, Aug. 6. And a Goodland puller got a plaque for sportsmanship.



Zelfer



Duell

Fair board member Sam Zelfer and Stan Meissinger, a tractor puller and a member of the association's board of directors, both from Goodland, went to the association's annual awards banquet Saturday, Nov. 5, in Denver. About 60 pullers and their wives were there, Zelfer said.

Meissinger got a plaque for sportsmanship. He said he got the same award last year. Meissinger is a member of the truck and tractor pullers association, which has 42 members, and of its nine-member board of directors. The association has members from Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado and New Mexico,

Pullers have eight classes

truck and Tractor Puller's Association holds about 15 tractor pulls each year, and next year may have a few more. Each pull has entries in eight classes.

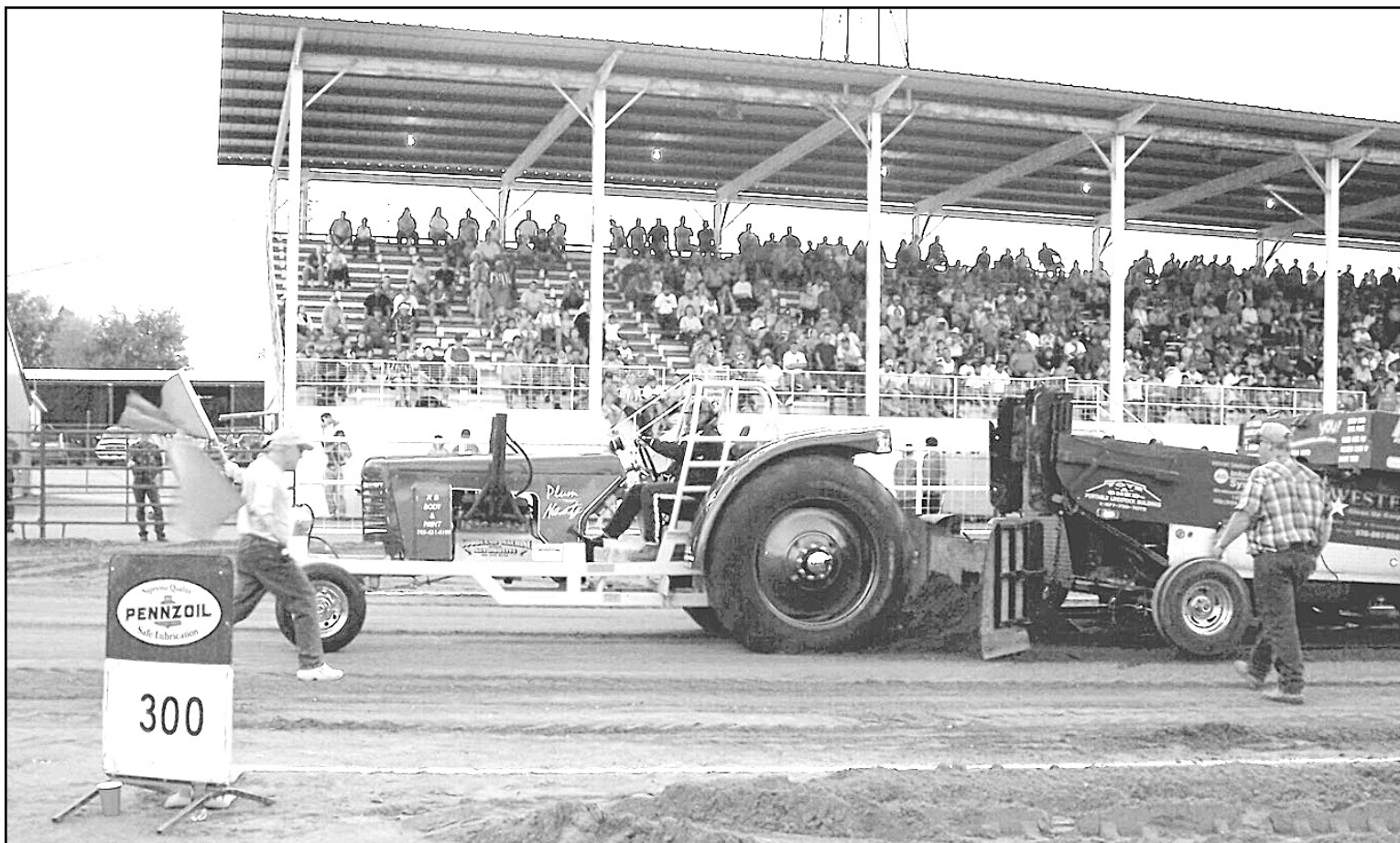
Stan Meissinger of Goodland, a member of the association, said it holds pulls in Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska and New Mexico and may have one in Wyoming next year.

There are 15 pulls scheduled so far, Meissinger said, and three more towns are interested. The association may have a pull at the Wyoming State Fair in Douglas.

Pulling is a motor sport, Meissinger said, with eight classes. Each pull has entries in Econo-Modified Small Block Tractors, Econo-Modified Big Block Tractors, Pro-Stock 4X4 Pickups, Modified 4X4 Pickups, Limited Diesel Tractor, Super Stock Tractor, Two-Wheel Drive Pickups and Modified Tractor.

he said.

The "Pull of the Year" award is based on the track and how smoothly things run, Zelfer said, and pullers vote at their annual meeting. Out of 14 truck and tractor pulls in New Mexico, Colorado, Nebraska and Kansas, he said,



Stan Meissinger of Goodland competed in the tractor pull at the Northwest Kansas District Free Fair in August. The event was named "Pull of the Year" by the Colorado Truck and Tractor Puller's

Association this month. Meissinger received an award for sportsmanship from the association.

Photo by Karla Meissinger

Goodland's was No. 1.

The fair board and antique tractor pullers get the track ready, Fair board member Steve Duell said, and this year had help from the Sherman County Road and Bridge Department.

The winning pull was the fifth for the fair, Duell said, though other places have been pulling a lot longer.

The fair board decided to start having pulls because there was some interest, he said, and the fair needed an activity for Saturday night that was a little different.

Though it doesn't make a profit, he said, the pull has broken even or

has at least been close each year. It's not a money-maker, he said, but it brings people into the fair; people come who might not otherwise.

"Everybody likes the noise and smoke and hopes something breaks," Duell said.

A lot of people like to come to the pull at Goodland, Zelfer said; this track will tear something up.

Most of those pulling here are from out of town.

Usually 35 trucks and tractors pull here, he said, even though only three from Goodland usually enter. Meissinger, John Topliff and Jerry Bauman or his son Brian usually pull, Zelfer said, adding that he

has pulled here before.

Next year, Duell said, there's a possibility of having a couple more guys from this area involved.

Some are building trucks. There are different classes, he said, and some are cheaper to build for, though none is actually cheap. Meissinger is on the association's board, Zelfer said, and if anyone wants to build a truck or tractor for the event, he has the rules.

The track is made ready, Duell said, the association runs the event and handles the measurements using the latest technology.

The group mounts an infrared laser on the sled that is set at the point

where it starts and tells instantly how far it was pulled.

Judges used to have to go out and use a tape measure, Duell said, and this saves time.

At next year's pull, Zelfer said, they'll have a new sled.

The fair board wants to have the tractor pull on Saturday, Aug. 5, Duell said, but is not sure that date will work for the association, so it's tentative.

Other fair board members are Lori Leonard, Brad Cowan, Neil Schritter, Dave Dorn, Mike Vandiver, Greg Sederstrom, Doug Sederstrom, Darold Schuster, John Dautel, Terry Taylor and Jeff Fisher.

Roughnecks, companies compete for leases

By Jan Katz Ackerman

Colby Free Press

The rush to find oil in northwest Kansas has roughnecks, lease hounds and oil companies in a frenzy.

For the past two years, says Andy Anderson, owner of a drilling company in Hill City, he's had a steady stream of orders cross his desk. And there's no sign of the oil rush slowing down.

"I hope to stay busy for at least 10 years," Anderson said. "There's no way to tell how long this will last, because it's all market driven. As long as the price of oil on the New York market stays above \$30 a barrel, we'll be fine."

Anderson said he has drilling crews, commonly called roughnecks, working in a 90-mile radius of Hill City and he's booked solid for the next year.

An oil rigger since the 1980s, Anderson said he weathered the sudden downturn the industry took when the price crashed to \$8 a barrel.

Anderson said when crude oil reached the \$65 a barrel mark, the push to drill new oil wells and open

What will the hunt for oil do to county land values?

By Jan Katz Ackerman

Colby Free Press

What the hunt for oil will do to a county's land values is months away from being known.

"Around Sheridan County, it is very insignificant," said Appraiser David Stithem. "We only had about 60 leases, but since the research has been going on, we've seen three more leases drilled. There's several intent to drills, but we won't know until April for property tax purposes how many have actually been drilled."

Stithem said since Aug. 1, there have been 14 intent to drill

documents filed with the Kansas Corporation Commission by Sheridan County landowners.

"Just think if every one of those (wells) hit," he said. "It would be almost a 25 percent increase in the number of leases now. If they are low producers, though, they may end up paying for equipment value only."

Sheridan County Register of Deeds Kari Weis said since Aug. 1, 65 new leases have been filed for oil exploration purposes.

Thomas County Register of Deeds Maybelle Moore said she's recorded 139 oil leases since Aug. 1. She said the cost for filing a lease is consistent throughout Kansas, \$8

dollars for the first page and \$4 for each additional page, with the average running about \$12 per lease.

"They are our bread and butter right now," Moore said.

Thomas County Appraiser Mary Cech said there are 67 leases used for oil production in the county. She said it's too early to tell how property values will be affected by oil rush.

"Until there's production, I don't get involved," she said.

There are five intent to drill documents on file with the Kansas Corporation Commission in the county.

Logan County has four intent to drills filed.

Appraiser Donna Cox said oil

tent to drill" documents filed in the six-county region.

Finding oil involves an intricate network of petroleum land men, commonly referred to as lease hounds; oil companies, landowners and drilling companies.

Once a site is under lease, an oil company will look for investors with money to hire a drilling rig.

"On average, it costs \$100,000 to drill a well and another \$100,000 to complete it and get oil pumping into tanks," Anderson said.

exploration appears to be slow in the county.

"Honestly, I haven't seen anything at this point," Cox said. "I won't see anything until after January when oil companies certify (leases) with me."

But Logan County Register of Deeds Joyce Bosserman said since Aug. 1 there have been 71 new oil leases filed in her office.

"The lease hounds were here a lot this summer," she said, "but it's tapered off now. I don't know if they'll be back next spring or not."

For the corporation commission web site, see www.kcc.state.ks.us/trans/index.htm

about 200 feet.

"Northwest Kansas is hitting oil at about 4,000 feet deep," he said.

Anderson said crude oil in northwest Kansas is the same as oil found throughout the United States and differs only by its weight. The weight of oil tells the thickness, or viscosity. A thin oil has a lower number and flows more easily, while thick oil has a higher number and doesn't flow as well.

"It's like buying oil off the shelf in a store. Most of our oil around here is 30 to 40 weight and in places it's down to between 25 and 27," he said.

Once a drilling rig is set, roughnecks work around the clock.

"It takes at least six months to get 3-D mapping done, and once a drill it set, we can drill a well in seven days. It takes another two weeks before the well can have a pump put on it," Anderson said.

Anderson said he hopes next year is equal to last year.

"We drill between 30 and 40 wells a year," he said, "and we hope to have about 20 of those hit again next year."

matters of record

District Traffic

The following fines were paid in the Sherman County District Court:

Aug. 14 — Domingo Perez Jr. III was fined \$160 for unlawful acts with vehicle and dismissed for driving while suspended; 1st conviction. Joe R. Stand was fined \$108 for speeding and \$10 for not wearing a seat belt.

Aug. 15 — Tyler J. Henderson was dismissed for driving while suspended; 1st conviction and fined \$120 for improper parking.

Aug. 19 — Pakawat Chillananda was fined \$204 for speeding.

Aug. 20 — Larry D. Coley Jr. was fined \$138 for speeding.

Rene Garcia was fined \$210 for motor carrier safety rules and regulations.

Salvador Garcia was fined \$144

for speeding.

Steven D. Haas was fined \$177 for speeding.

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