

Preservation Meets Innovation

As the two men sat in the visitor's area, one could listen and hear nothing but history behind their voices. A retired tractor mechanic and business owner, and a retired John Deere distributor, both having a story to tell. Some of the oldest living agriculturists of their generation sit surrounded by some of today's newest, innovative technology.

The Bayer Museum of Agriculture in Lubbock, Texas, is a museum with a rich back history that is now preserved for the public to see for years to come. The museum and legacy of production agriculture as an industry would not have been possible without the donors, staff of the museum, museum volunteers and the board of directors.

In 1967, Lubbock County Commissioner, Alton Brazell, had a vision for a collection of artifacts related to agriculture and the farming industry. With the approval of the county, Brazell started that collection.

"I'd travel all over the state looking for tractors, harvesters, most anything really," Brazell said. "We had warehouses filled with everything from hand tools to old trucks and tires."

The collection grew over time and years later, it was decided a museum would be built to display highlighted pieces of the collection. The museum started out in a warehouse beside the American Wind Power Center and Museum in Lubbock. The small warehouse had poor ventilation, making it freezing in the winter and very hot in the summer, but Brazell's vision was finally coming to life.

"We'd sit and play cards or dominoes at an old table at the old building," said museum volunteer, Red Rivers. "Me and some of the original volunteers would always be working on restoring another tractor to put in the new building."

Rivers worked for John Deere as a distributor for 30 years until he retired and settled in Lubbock with his wife. He, along with a few other volunteers, still restore equipment for the museum and maintain the museum warehouses in Lubbock and Shallowater.

The museum volunteers are a large part of what keeps the museum doors open. Many of them are retired farmers, war veterans, and mechanics all with decades of experience within the industry.

Lacey Hoelting is the director of the museum and has been an integral part of the

