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Ohio News Watch

Ohio couple treks across 'Mighty Mac'

BY JENNIFER KIEL

A CHANCE meeting at the Florida Flywheelers Show last winter brought about a conversation about antique tractors between Jim Timmons of Burton and Dan Yeck of Michigan. "We got to talking about this antique tractor ride over the Mackinac Bridge," Timmons recalls. "I said it sounded like fun."

That's all it took.

Yeck invited Timmons to join his Michigan club, called the Kalamazoo Valley Antique Engine & Machinery Club, making Timmons eligible to register to ride over the "Mighty Mac," a 5-mile suspension bridge connecting Michigan's upper and lower peninsulas.

Both Yeck and Timmons were part of history as the 8th Annual Mackinac Bridge Antique Tractor Crossing broke a record Sept. 11, with 1,091 tractors crossing the bridge from Mackinaw City to St. Ignace.

Timmons and his wife, Penny, trailered their 1969 John Deere 2510 diesel for 485 miles before unloading at a staging area just outside of Mackinaw City. They bought the tractor four years ago, and it was repainted by their son. A buddy seat, which allows another person to ride in the parade, was installed in the back. It's from a reclaimed picnic table.

"Being on the bridge was monumental — very exciting," Penny says of the ride. "It was a lot of good fun and something to mark off the bucket list. But we're not done. We'll be back next year and maybe plan a week of it and bring the family for a vacation."

The Timmonses were not the lone Ohio representation in the parade; the Buckeye Allis Club from Jeffersonville had 10 cross the bridge.

Memorable

It's not the first record-breaking antique tractor parade Jim has ridden in. He was also in the world's largest parade of classic tractors at the Nebraska State Fair in 2012. That parade was certified as a Guinness World Record.

Even though the Mackinac Bridge crossing had more tractors and was about 8 miles longer than the 2-mile Nebraska parade around a racetrack, it does not qualify for the record because of distance between tractors and other stipulations.

"The Nebraska parade was fun, but it wasn't nearly as exciting as the bridge crossing," Jim adds.

Antique tractors provide a reprieve from the farm for the Timmonses. They grow about 1,100 acres of corn, soybeans and hay on their award-winning, conservation-focused farm. They also have 3,200 taps for maple syrup, which produced 1,300 gallons this year.

"We milked cows on the farm for 27 years," Jim says. "We've been out for 10 years now and are enjoying life. The dairy barns are now starting to fill up with antique tractors."

The Mackinac Bridge parade was founded and is produced by Owosso Tractor Parts owner Bob Baumgras. Learn more at mackinacbridgecrossing.com. You can also visit the Facebook page, "Mackinac Bridge Antique Tractor Crossing."



GOOD FUN: Jim and Penny Timmons were part of the record-breaking antique tractor crossing of the Mackinac Bridge on Sept. 11.