

Nick Gerety – Gerety Tractor

This is Kansas Profile. I'm Ron Wilson, director of the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development at Kansas State University.

A tractor rolls across a field. That's a common sight in rural Kansas, where tractors and farm equipment are a significant part of daily life and the rural economy. Today we'll meet a rural entrepreneur whose interest in tractors is helping build an equipment-trading business – with a little help from modern technology. It's today's Kansas Profile.

Nick Gerety is the founder of Gerety Tractor and Equipment LLC. Nick has had a lifelong interest in tractors and farm equipment. “Both of my grandparents were involved in tractors,” Nick said. In fact, his great-grandfather was P. C. Weishaar, who founded Weishaar Brothers farm equipment dealership in Nortonville.

Nick's father and grandfather are professional carpenters, as is Nick, but his heart is in farming. “I've always wanted anything and everything to do with agriculture,” Nick said. “I'd do anything to be on a tractor.”

Nick grew up on a small farm on the outskirts of Nortonville, using his grandfather's 1939 Farmall H. Nick worked for neighboring farmers whenever he had the chance. He pursued carpentry but also found time to farm.

One year he bought a rough-looking, beat-up tractor. It was a 1975 model International Harvester 1066. He stripped that tractor down, removed and painted the old sheet metal, installed new accessories and got it fixed like new. When he sold that tractor for a good price, he realized this could become a business.

That was the beginning of Gerety Tractor and Equipment LLC. In fact, that IH 1066 was a special tractor.

“That tractor is the background image on our logo,” Nick said. Today, Gerety Tractor and Equipment LLC is involved in buying, selling, trading and consigning tractors and other farm equipment as well as livestock equipment. Nick recently became a dealer for the Oklahoma company, Go Bob Pipe and Steel.

“I was very impressed with their products and warranty,” Nick said. “I heard other salesmen say, ‘We’re just like Go Bob Pipe,’” Nick said. “I figured that rather than trying to be like them, I wanted to be them.” So Nick signed up as a dealer representative for Go Bob Pipe, which sells continuous fencing supplies, trailers, hay feeders, and more.

Nick has a lot along the highway at Nortonville where he displays and markets his equipment. Future plans call for construction of a shop and office there. Nortonville is a rural community with a population of 613 people. Now, that’s rural.

Nick’s specialization seems to be in the red tractors, although he also sells some in John Deere green.

“I’ve sold a lot of Internationals and Farmalls,” Nick said. He also sells a lot of consigned equipment for other sellers. Typically his consigned machinery tends to be upper quality, high end equipment. Nick will work with the seller to determine a fair price. He has been pleased with the results.

“I try to be as honest as I can with customers,” Nick said. “We don’t buy junk.” What Nick does use is modern technology.

“If it wasn’t for technology, I wouldn’t be where I am today,” Nick said. His tractor trading began on the localized online marketplace known as Craigslist. Such modern telecommunications technology makes it possible to connect with potential buyers and sellers all over. Nick has traded tractors as far away as Missouri and Texas.

This is a family business. Nick’s wife Trisha does the books and stays home with the couple’s four children, all four years old and younger.

There is one tractor which is definitely not for sale. It is that Farmall H from 1939 – the first year that H’s were built – that belonged to his grandfather. “I grew up on that tractor,” Nick said. “Everything is for sale out here except for that one.” This tractor was restored a number of years ago and still operates. Wow.

For more information, go to www.facebook.com/GeretyTractor.

The tractor. It's a significant part of the economy and the society in rural Kansas. We salute Nick and Trisha Gerety of Gerety Tractor and Equipment LLC for making a difference with entrepreneurship in the tractor trading business. For rural communities, such businesses can help to get some traction.

For the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development, this is Ron Wilson with Kansas Profile.