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PLAIN COMMUNITIES BUSINESS EXCHANGE



WEAVER WAGONS

Article on page 16

AUGUST 2023

Volume 30, No. 8

WEAVER WAGONS

Superb Craftmanship for Custom Designs

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Weaver Wagons are acclaimed for their versatility by farmers toiling in the field, to trail bosses working the mountains or as a featured parade entry. The wagons' usefulness spans the gamut from hauling firewood to sharing a joy ride with a few friends. Ervin Weaver could not have envisioned the success of this venture when he built the first wagon in 1994; a simple, but quality flatbed to haul hay.

Ervin Weaver and his family operated a medium sized dairy farm along with other livestock near Dalton, Ohio. The proximity of their farm to Pioneer Equipment allowed Ervin to work at Pioneer until his oldest sons were able to be employed. Soon after building the first wagon bed, Ervin struck a business relationship with Pioneer. Through this arrangement, Pioneer began selling Weaver Farm Wagons on Pioneer manufactured running gear. This worked well as Pioneer customers were eager to buy a completed wagon instead of building their own.

The Weaver Farm Wagon market matured because of Pioneer's expanded growth. This increased business provided the opportunity for Ervin's sons to assist in the new venture. The product line increased to include Hitch Wagons, Parade & Trail Wagons, Farm Wagons, People

Haulers and more. A popular item among their offering are church benches and wagons to haul the benches for the greater Plain Community.

In January 2014, Ervin passed the business onto his sons, Emery, and Vernon. "We were excited when Dad offered the business to Vernon and me. With this transition, we changed the name from Weaver Farm Wagons to Weaver Wagons & Custom Designs, LLC," Emery stated. Under the new ownership manufacturing facilities and restoration capabilities have expanded. In addition, new products along with complimentary services were added.

Shown is a very popular Classic Draft Horse wagon superbly built by Weaver Wagons.



Quality Workmanship

Craftsmanship is a Weaver family trademark. "Dad was in construction for fifteen years before he purchased the dairy farm. And then, he worked at Pioneer Equipment several years prior to taking over the farming operation full-time. Dad's experience in construction helped in making the first hay wagon. More importantly, he was a natural at building high quality, durable items," Emery says.

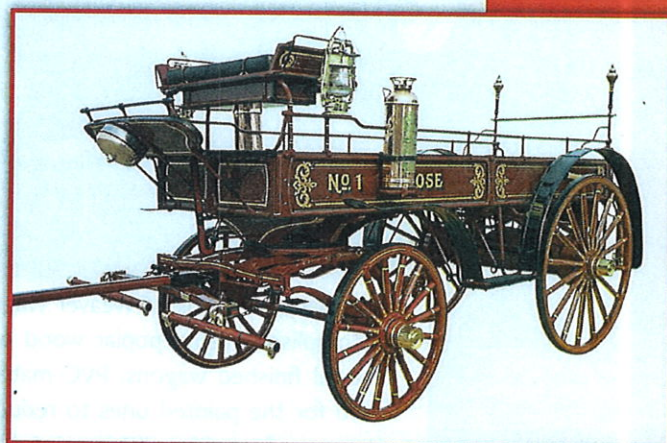
Emery noted further, "I was ten years old when Dad started the business as a sideline to farming. I grew up building wagons and it was something I always enjoyed. Working for Dad was the only full-time job I ever had. Vernon was employed full-time at Pioneer Equipment for fifteen years. He then came home to provide help in the farm shop. Vernon and I were fortunate to work alongside Dad and learn from his gifted skills," he said.

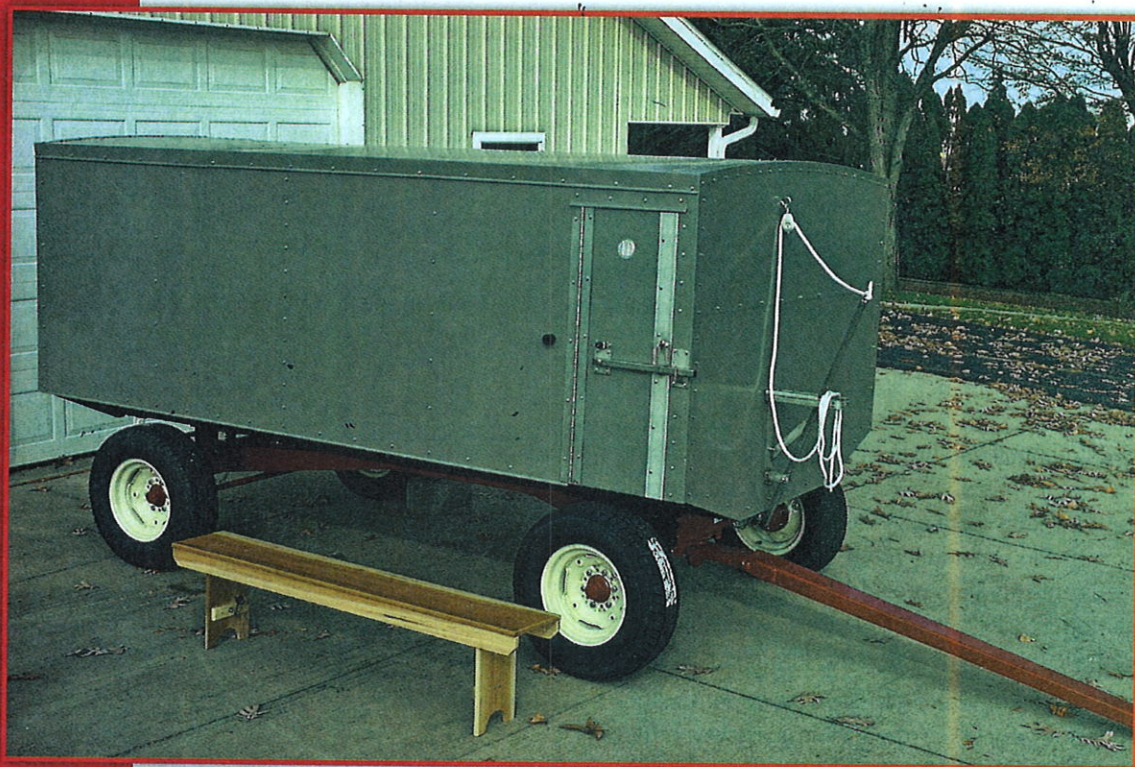
The Weaver brothers have divided responsibilities in critical aspects of the business. However, they start each day with a brief meeting to be sure everything is coordinated while maintaining the work schedule. They are fortunate to have ten employees, five full-time and five part-time.

Emery oversees the folding top building and sewing department. He also supervises the final assembly of the wagons along with the paint department. In addition, Emery handles all aspects of marketing, sales, and business administration.

Vernon is the shop foreman along with being a master metal machinist. His work and oversight includes manufacturing wagon gears and parts. Stainless steel has become an integral metal component that Vernon supervises. Equipment to polish stainless steel was installed to replace chrome plated metal. "Stainless steel eliminates rust and corrosion that often results with chrome. The appearance of polished stainless steel is every bit as good," Vernon said.

Weaver Wagons restored this piece of horse-drawn firefighting equipment for the Texas Fire Museum of Dallas, Texas. The wagon dates to the late 1800s and was used to haul hoses and nozzles to the fire. The top photo shows the terrible condition before restoration. Emery Weaver indicated it was one of the most extensive restorations they undertook. They replaced all the wood and iron that was missing or could not be used. After rebuilding, it went through their multi-step paint coating process. And then, Wayne Troyer applied extensive pinstriping and gold leaf.





Pictured is a bench wagon manufactured by Weaver Wagons. Shown in front is a foldable bench also made by Weaver Wagons.

The distinctive look of Weaver Wagons is accomplished using poplar wood on the natural finished wagons. PVC material is used for the painted ones to reduce the chances of cracking. "Our painters John Zook and David Lee Miller add a complex eight-step painting process," Emery says.

He continued, "An option is then offered for vinyl graphics that are completed in-house. Or Wayne Troyer, a freelance artist, hand-paints the pin-striping to achieve a finished product."

With the expert paint process, Weaver Wagons appear to be made from metal. These thorough applications and finished details assure the professional Weaver Wagon trademark.

Restoration Services

While horse-drawn wagons are built to last, deterioration of both wood and metal will result with age and usage. Acquiring a quality replacement wagon can be prohibitive in cost. Weaver Wagons has

achieved an enviable reputation for their expert, yet affordable restoration services.

When visiting Emery and Vernon, you quickly observe their soft spoken nature. And yet, astute businessmen. They seek customer's desires and strive to meet their expectations. Their quality of craftsmanship along with a reputation for a clean and organized shop attracts customers to their place of business.

Restoration has become an important part facet of the Weaver Wagon business. Emery explained, "We strive to provide a short turnaround time when we agree to a restoration project. We've had jobs come to us because other shops required a few years lead time. Our dedicated team of employees can complete a job in a few months, or a year depending on the associated challenges."

The qualified team at Weaver Wagons has restored numerous hitch wagons. "As with many of our restored hitch wagons, we update by adding stainless steel hardware.

In 2016, an 11,000 square foot shop was built off the farm along the main highway. Although this additional space has resulted in more efficient production, an additional building of similar size was completed in 2022. Now, both facilities are near capacity.

Product Line Expansion

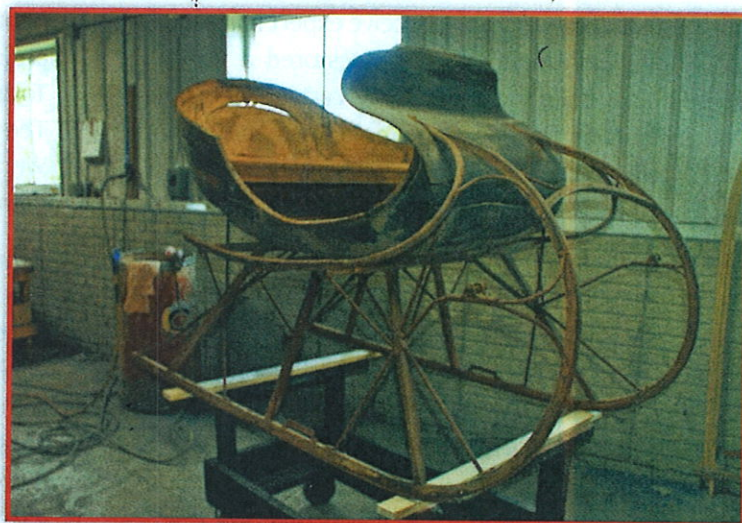
New products are always under consideration at Weaver Wagons. "When we receive repeated requests for a particular product, we test the market to determine if it's feasible. Or we simply brainstorm an idea on what we think people could use and don't know it until they see it. Once the new design is built, they are hitched, and field tested. We want to make sure everything works properly before it's made available for marketing."

An example of a new product was the Conestoga Camping Wagon. "This wagon is suitable for campgrounds and private lakes. They are often rented by campground owners like a cabin. Or they may be owned and used as a personal wagon," Emery said.

Weaver Wagons is now building wagon running gears. This product line was acquired through the Pioneer Equipment Liquidation Sale. They are equipped to stock all the sizes previously available through Pioneer.

In 2021, Weaver Wagons acquired the 1904 Singer Sewing machine Model 67-1 when Woodlyn Coach shut down. This machine was made specifically to sew fenders and dashes for cars and carriages. Emery noted, "We are fortunate to have the former employee at Woodlyn, James Miller working for us. He is familiar with the sewing machine and its capabilities. James also has extensive experience making folding tops and fine button upholstery. Consequently, we've added these special features to our line of service."

Diana Comps commissioned Weaver Wagons to restore her ornate sleigh. The top photo shows the condition before restoration. When designated ornate, you can see how Weaver Wagons restored the sleigh to that superb quality. The upholstery, pinstriping, and flower décor is beyond reproach.



Praiseworthy Addition

The Lord works in ways unbeknownst to us. Through a step of kindness, Emery and Vernon became owners of a new business selling World Class Carriages. "In 2019, I received a phone call from Texas requesting assistance in locating an inflatable tube for a carriage tire. Through a series of phone calls, I located the innertube from Bob Cook, owner of Hunter Creek Farm, a World Class Carriage dealer in North Carolina."

"This congenial eighty-year-old gentleman was very accommodating. In fact, we exchanged information about our respective businesses. Out of the blue, Bob asked if we would be interested in buying his business. Naturally, that took us by surprise. It was a product line that we had not considered. After considerable thought and prayer, we felt led to acquire the business opportunity. Through this process, I was reminded of the importance of taking time by helping someone. As a result, the Lord blessed us," Emery shared.

Emery indicated the expanded carriage business broadened Weaver Wagons customer base. With the carriage line,

they can serve the horse and pony trainers, light driving, along with competitive drivers.

"The two leading countries building classy high-end carriages are China and Poland. China's strength is fabricating carriages, but they lack expertise in design. Poland on the other hand, does design and manufacturing quite well. Both sources have proven to be good quality products," Emery says.

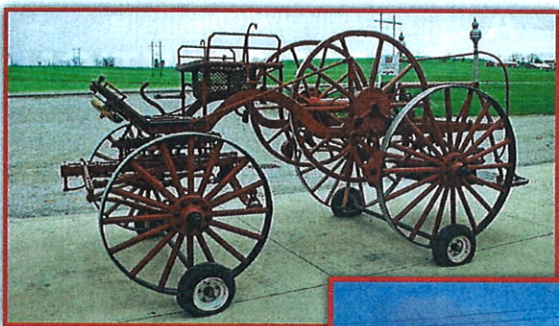
Conclusion

Emery shared his gratitude. "We are grateful for the early support we received from Pioneer Equipment. We are fortunate to experience steady growth across our product lines and services. Our diversification has been an added blessing. Our goal is to build relationships with each of our customers. It is very satisfying to see a customer express pleasure in seeing their old piece restored to a condition that is better than original."

"We are thankful for the talents that we've been blessed with. The gracious support we've received along the way from our family and friends has been wonderful," he concluded.

To learn more about Weaver Wagons, reference their website: <https://www.weaverwagons.com>, Or you may contact them by Phone: 330.857.7811 or E-Mail: sales@weaverwagons.com.

About the author: Freelance writer Fred Hendricks of Mansfield, Ohio, covers a vast array of subjects relating to agriculture. Email Fred at fwhendricks@gmail.com



Shown is a before and after restoration of a horse-drawn Cooney Hose Cart. Weaver Wagons completed this project for the Texas Fire Museum of Dallas, Texas. The late 1800s equipment could carry 1000' of hose on the reel.

