KLIFE

David Boyce (right) of Aurora is pictured with a 1915 steam tractor at the Great Oregon Steam-Up in 2018. File photo

Big machines stir to life at Steam-Up event

BY HELEN CASWELL
For the Keizertimes

For a half century, a unique playground called Powerland Heritage Park near Brooks has collected and honored the machines that shaped Oregon's early development.

Its summer Great Oregon Steam-Up celebration has drawn crowds from the very beginning to admire and watch the steam tractors and gas tractors, the railroads, motorcycles, trolleys and lumber machinery that made the Willamette Valley what it is today.

The highly anticipated Steam-Up, opening this weekend, will be Powerland's 50th festival, and will be bigger than ever, said volunteer Tom Tomczyk.

"If there isn't something you find interesting at Steam-Up, you need to get to your doctor quickly and see if you still have a pulse," said Tomczyk.

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>
> **– TOM TOMCZYK**
> Great Oregon Steam-Up Volunteer

"It is one of the best entertainment opportunities in the mid-valley for young and old alike."

The Steam-Up runs 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday the next two weekends – July 24-25 and July 31-Aug. 1. Ticket information is available at www.antiquepowerland.com.

The park and the Steam-Up celebration have distinctively Oregon origins. They began as well-loved get-togethers for area farmers nearly 100 years ago, said Paul Duchateau, a Powerland volunteer and connoisseur of early steam traction engines.

"It all started with summer meet-ups in the 1930s, with farmers out in the fields celebrating steam-powered threshers that were already historical at the time," Duchateau said.

"Farmers felt nostalgic for the machinery they remembered from when Willamette Valley agriculture become mechanized in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

"They ran the old steam engines and held threshing bees," he said.

"Back then, those get-togethers were held at different locations come summertime," said Duchateau, "like at the [Harvey E.] Mikkelson farm out in Silverton, and other farms and places over by Woodburn. The old owners