



TRACTOR PULLING TEAM OF FIRST FARMERS' PRESIDENT TIM PETTUS WINS NATIONAL TITLE

COLUMBIA, Tenn. – (September 3, 2009) – In addition to his position as President for First Farmers & Merchants Bank, Tim Pettus now has a new title courtesy of his favorite hobby. National Champion.

On Tuesday, August 25th, Pettus' Lawrenceburg-based Dixie Deere tractor pulling team pulled down the number one spot in the Super Farm category of the National Tractor Pulling Association (NTPA) Grand National standings. A pull of 301.69 feet at the Great Darke County Fair Pull in Greenville, Ohio, helped Pettus' team reach its current 352 points total and their place atop the heap of Super Farm tractors across the nation.

“This was a great win for our team, for the Mid South Pullers and for Lawrenceburg,” Pettus said. “While Russell (Counce, the team's co-driver) was in the driver's seat, there are a lot of folks behind the scenes who deserve a lot of credit for this accomplishment. We wouldn't have won without them and their skills and support. It was consistency, equipment performance and, simply, a lot of luck that won this championship for us.”

The win marks a rare time that a southern tractor has won the NTPA Grand National championship, Pettus said. It comes on the heels of a consistent winning record over the last several years for the John Deere 4255 Dixie Deere team, having seen 16 wins in 2006, 22 wins in 2007, 30 wins in 2008 and, now, the Grand Champion title in 2009.

His team has been pulling for ten years and won the NTPA MidSouth Super Farm points championship in both 2007 and 2008. Pettus compared the 2009 win to winning the NASCAR points championship.

“What helped us this year was our strategy to stay in and around the top five of our class throughout the season,” Pettus continued. “It’s a very competitive sport, with some tough competition that can be very unforgiving. And, of course, luck can play a role in whether or not you win. But, everything just fell into place for us this year.”

The team, which consists of Counce as co-driver, Pettus’ son Jed, as co-driver and wrench along with John Patillo, Darren Long, Jeff Allen, Gerry Lambert, Keith Sanders and Stan Threet, does a lot of traveling throughout the pulling season, which can start as early as January and last through early October. Sometimes the rig is on the road for 2-3 weeks at a time. After traveling more than 7,000 miles this year, Pettus’ team will see its last pull October 2nd and will then go through a period of refurbishment before starting all over again in January.

He’s also expecting two of the team’s events to be shown next year on RFD-TV.

Pettus has been at First Farmers for seven years, having arrived at the bank following a 29-year stint at the Lawrenceburg operation of Bank of America. In addition to his role as president, he is also a director of First Farmers & Merchants Bank and Corporation. Additionally, he’s the treasurer of the Crossroads of the Dixie Tractor Club (www.crossroadsofdixie.com) in Lawrenceburg.

“I’m fortunate that First Farmers allows me the opportunity to pursue this tractor pulling hobby alongside my day job at the bank,” Pettus said. “When you win it can be a lot of fun, and it’s such a natural extension of what many of our customers do on the farm every day. Only with not quite so much power!”

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About First Farmers & Merchants Bank

Founded in 1909, First Farmers & Merchants Bank (Member FDIC) is one of the most successful independent banks in Tennessee, with total assets of approximately \$917 million and deposits in excess of \$758 million. An additional \$2.7 billion in assets is held by its Trust & Financial Management Department. Headquartered in Columbia, Tenn., the bank operates 17 offices in a seven county area in Middle Tennessee that includes Maury, Lawrence, Marshall, Hickman, Giles, Dickson and Williamson counties. It is distinguished by its commitment to traditional, personal banking relationships that incorporate state-of-the-art technology to provide the highest possible level of service. For additional information, visit www.fandmbank.com or call the main office at 931.388.3145.