

Students' Passion for Craftsmanship Fuels Unique Class Project

A recently completed restoration project was a win-win for a group of Burns Jr./Sr. High School students and L&H Industrial Vice President, Jeff Wandler.

Wandler has collected vintage gas pumps, pump globes and service station signs since 1997. An ad he had placed while looking for old gas pumps led him to Chris Cooper, the industrial arts teacher at Burns Jr./Sr. High School.

Cooper, who years ago made restoring gas pumps a part of his shop classes at Burns Jr./Sr. High School, was looking for pump parts when he answered Wandler's ad. The mutual interest led to a friendship. The friendship eventually resulted in Wandler donating a gas pump to Cooper's class and the class, in turn, taking on the restoration of a rare, 1939 gas pump for Wandler.

The vintage gas pump was in rough shape, but the students were up to the challenge of restoring it.

"It was very satisfying watching them take an object that they knew nothing about and figuring out first how it worked, and then how to fix it," Cooper says. "They first disassembled the pump -- taking great care to not break anything, to account for all the parts, and keep track of how it went back together."

"They cleaned, polished, and repainted everything on the interior of the pump, even though it probably would only rarely be seen. They then sandblasted the entire exterior of the pump. Once the sandblasting was done, they started on the body work. They learned how to shrink metal to take out dents and then apply body filler to make everything straight again."





“When the bodywork was done, they primed, painted, and clear-coated all of the body skins. Reassembly of the pump was really fun. They learned some basic electrical skills by wiring up the lights inside of the pump. They also learned how to take their time and be careful, which is a very foreign concept to teenage boys.”

Wandler visited Chris Cooper’s class on Friday, March 7 for the unveiling of the students’ craftsmanship. The painstakingly restored gasoline pump looks as good as it did the day it left the factory. Cooper is understandably proud of his students’s work. “I’m very proud of the job that they did, and I’d really like to keep working on projects like that with my classes. It worked out very well that most of the boys in that class are seniors and have matured enough to understand the value in doing a quality job on whatever project it is that they choose to work on.”

As for Wandler, he deeply appreciates the considerable time, skill and effort the students invested in the latest addition to his collection. “I know it wasn’t easy for them to say goodbye to a project they’d worked on for two years. They



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Chris Cooper
Industrial Arts Teacher
Burns Jr./Sr. High School



were very protective of it as we loaded the pump into the trailer for the ride back to Gillette.”

The gas pump’s journey from factory, to service station, to storage on a farm between Worland and Greybull, Wyoming, then to Burns, and finally on to Gillette was long and circuitous, but it’s one that will ensure its preservation for decades to come.



About L&H Industrial

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