

T&S Auction Service turns 40

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Leader-Democrat Editor

Business Name: T&S Auction Service.

Address: 7517 E. Blue River Rd., Pekin. Phone: 967-3564.



Date Established: August 1964.

Current Owner(s): Carroll Tash and Dawson Souder.

Previous Owner(s): None.

How many employees: Four auctioneers, plus a complete auction crew.

Service/Products Offered: Complete auction service.

How did the business start: From a conversation the two had while sitting on their tractors one spring.

Tash and Souder grew up on opposite sides of Blue River and were friends from childhood.

"We grew up together, played together, went to school together," said Tash. "We both milked cows, one on one side of the river and one on the other. We've always been together, except for two years when Dawsie was in the service."

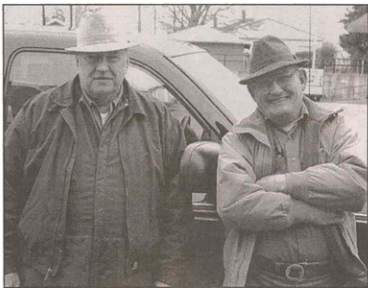
Tash recalls that first conversation about the business this way: "One April, he (Souder) was plowing with an M tractor on one side of the river and I was on the other side with my M at 10 o'clock at night," he said.

"There was a big maple tree, we pulled our tractors up under it and we were sitting there just talking. A few weeks before that the Blue River Auction Barn had burned. I asked the owner if he was going to build back and he said, 'No.'"

Tash knew Souder had purchased a garage building a mile north of Pekin and asked him what he planned to do with it. "He said, 'Just store machinery in it.' I said 'I'll make a deal with you.'"

"You sell me half interest in it and we'll open us up a sale barn. He said, 'Who'll do the selling?' and I said, 'I will,' and he said, 'Hah hah!'"

Tash wasn't deterred by his friend's reaction.



Staff Photo by Stephanie Taylor

A CONVERSATION WHILE plowing fields planted the seed for T&S Auction Service 40 years ago. Owners Carroll Tash (left) and Dawson Souder have conducted thousands of sales in the past four decades.

"I said, 'Think about it for a week before you answer me,' and we went back to plowing."

Souder pondered Tash's proposition and concluded the business idea was a good one.

He said he sold Tash half interest in the building and they began to make preparations to open, both agreeing "We're going to go in this honest and stay honest," said Souder. "We worked at night during that summer preparing for the auction barn to run."

T&S opened in August and the sale barn operated for seven years with auctions every Friday night. The two then branched out into farm and household auctions.

Tash said his dad, Jesse, had been an auctioneer at the old Blue River Auction Barn and "he helped us a whole lot. He even built the auction block which we still have."

"When his health started failing, Dawsie started auctioneering himself and the rest is history."

Tash said his mother, Estelle, was a strong supporter. In addition to attending many sales, she began keeping a history of the business, cutting out the auction ads from the newspaper.

She continued that until she was 92, when Carroll's wife, Nellie, took over. "We've had thousands of auctions over the years, and we've got scrapbooks full of every auction ad."

"We're going to look at them one day, when we get old I guess!"

Maybe they'll even sit under that same old maple tree where they had the first conversation about going into business together.

"The timber cutters wanted to cut that tree but I wouldn't let them," said Tash. "That's where our business started."

What's unique about your business? "We built our business on honesty. In the auction business, you must be fair and honest to both the buyer and the seller at all times."

Their business is unique because we sold grandma and grandpa out, then we sold mom and dad, now we're selling their sons and daughters," said Tash. "We've dealt with three generations."

What excites you most as you anticipate the future? Tash and Souder said they look forward to continuing their business and seeing the next generation come on board.

Dawson's son, Jeffery, obtained his auctioneer's license about two years ago, after helping out for many years.

Carroll's son-in-law, Billy Hagan, completed auction school last summer and is in the process of getting his license.