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by Larry A. Quinn



**CHANCE CELEBRITY
ENCOUNTER POSITIVELY
INFLUENCES ALLMER'S CAREER**

— It was a chance encounter with a celebrity: **Pete Smythe**, the recognizable voice in Colorado on the radio and — later — television, who was known for his broadcasts from the fictional town of East Tincup, where he elected himself mayor. During a school field trip to First Federal Savings Bank in Denver in the early 1970s, Pete Smythe, one of Colorado's most recognizable voices and one of the state's truly original characters, visited with students from Briggsdale

Elementary, signed copies of his latest album, and gave a copy to each of the students on that field trip. A future broadcaster was in that audience and a recipient of one of those signed albums. **Brian Allmer** never suspected the impact and impression Pete Smythe would make in his career.

Allmer (Brian Allmer Radio Network, Briggsdale, Colorado) came into broadcasting by accident, literally. Raised as a farmer/rancher in northeastern Colorado, he eventually took over the family's operation. He was involved in a fatality traffic accident that left him restricted from being involved in the day-to-day operations for an extended period.

“You’re laid up, bedridden, watching TV until you get sick of it. Then, I flipped on the radio and just happened to land on Farm Radio 1010 KSIR. I thought, with my 4-H and FFA background, I should be able to do that,” Allmer said.

Allmer was concerned about the misinformation he was hearing on television at that time and felt he could be a voice advocating for agriculture.

“I didn’t have any radio experience, but I had plenty of agriculture knowledge.”

Allmer’s broadcast career began at KSIR Radio in Fort Morgan, Colorado, where he worked for nearly five years as News Director and Assistant Ag Director, under former NAFB President **Lorrie Boyer**. It was during this time he developed his broadcasting skills and grew his connections in the agriculture community. After leaving broadcast for a short time, the opportunity arose to start a radio network; and in 2007, the BARN began providing broadcasts to radio stations and offering coverage of events across the state.



Today, the BARN has programming on more than 15 radio stations, offering seven weekday programs. Three of those are agriculture market-based, and the other four concentrate on agriculture news. In addition to weekday programming, the BARN also offers two weekend radio shows, “This Week Inside The BARN” and “FarmCast Radio,” which are 30 minutes and one hour in length, respectively. Allmer says it is a great way to showcase interviews and other content that time restraints prohibit him from using during the week.

His coverage of agriculture events and organizations is broad, ranging from the Colorado 4-H State Conference to coverage of the Governor’s Forum on Colorado Agriculture. He also has provided coverage of the Colorado State Fair’s livestock shows, showmanship, Touchstone Energy Cooperatives Junior Livestock Sale, the Colorado State FFA Convention, no-till workshops, and reports from the National Association of Conservation Districts annual meeting.



“We want to show what agriculture is doing,” Allmer added.

The BARN’s coverage of agricultural events extends beyond the airwaves to the internet with listeners tuning in to reports streaming live online. These reports are available for listeners after the events are completed, as well. Allmer’s coverage this month will include live streaming the 2021 Farm Credit Colorado Agriculture Hall of Fame, which is hosted by the Colorado FFA Foundation.

Allmer has dedicated a lot of his volunteer time helping the Colorado FFA as well as the Colorado 4-H and Colorado Extension.

“Extension agents don’t get the coverage they deserve; they play a key role in developing our young folks, and they really shaped me. 4-H and FFA mean a great deal to me; I bleed blue and gold out of one arm for FFA and green and white out the other arm for 4-H!”

Allmer has been recognized for his commitment to both organizations. In 2007, he was awarded the Honorary Colorado State FFA Degree; and earlier this year, the Colorado Association of Extension 4-H Agents presented him and the BARN with the Friend of Colorado 4-H award, an award he has received in the past. Allmer says he has proudly displayed the plaques in the BARN’s studio at the Allmer Farm and Ranch.



Allmer continues to live on a working family farm and ranch in northeastern Colorado with his wife, **Connie**. The farm has been owned by the same family for more than 100 years and was recognized as a Colorado Centennial Farm in 2016.

And...the Pete Smythe album is still in Allmer’s possession today. He says each time he looks at it or listens to it, he is reminded of the unforeseen influence Smythe had on him in his early years that led to a career in farm broadcasting. In fact, Allmer’s former soils instructor at Northeastern Junior College, **Don Hagstrom**, paid him with the ultimate compliment recently, saying that The BARN should be located at “Northeast Tincup, Colorado,” not just Briggsdale.

MACHINERY PETE JOINS NAFB — **Greg Peterson** (Rochester, Minnesota) is excited and honored to be a new NAFB member.

“No, my mother did not name me ‘Machinery.’ The ‘Machinery Pete’ name/brand just naturally evolved arcing back over my 31-plus years to when I started in November 1989,” Peterson said.



“The mission of my little biz was simple — compile auction sale-price data on all types of farm and construction equipment sold. Of course, there was no internet back in 1989. No cell phones either. The term ‘Big Data’ — nope, not coined yet. But ‘Big Data’ is what I was compiling. Over time, I established a network of more than 1,100 auction firms throughout North America reporting sale prices to us,” Peterson said.

“I began writing a monthly column on auction sale prices and trends with used farm equipment values in 1992. From 1993 to 2000, my column was with *Farm Progress* publications, then from 2000 to 2013 with *Successful Farming* magazine, and since July 2013 with *Farm Journal*. This monthly Machinery Pete column on auction price trends has been a trusted conversation with the farm audience for 29 years,” Peterson said.

TV and radio came later.

“From 2007 into 2013, I did a weekly Machinery Pete segment on the Machinery Show by *Successful Farming* on RFD-TV. I knew the farm audience wanted and needed more; so in 2013, I launched our own Machinery Pete TV show, which now airs on RFD-TV and on 51 regional TV stations around the country and is seen in 200 thousand farm households weekly. The show wholistically covers the world of farm machinery with emphasis on telling stories and, of course, the latest pricing info and trends. The show can be viewed online at our website www.MachineryPete.com/mptv,” Peterson said.

In 2009, Peterson began pushing his growing Machinery Pete brand/biz out into the new emerging world of social media as once again he sensed the farm audience wanted and needed more on all things farm equipment.

“Stubborn Scandinavian that I am, I had our then 18-year-old daughter **Meghan** teach this old dog a new trick...how to edit video,” Peterson said.

“Dad, it’s super easy, just sit down and give me five minutes,” she said.

He sat down, listened, and learned.



Since then, he has posted more than 1,700 Machinery Pete YouTube videos with more than 27 million views (www.Youtube.com/machinerypete). His Machinery Pete social media footprint now reaches more than 250,000 users daily via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn.

“In 2014, I partnered my growing Machinery Pete biz with *Farm Journal*, and we set about reimagining our www.MachineryPete.com website from what it had been from 2000 to 2013 (a place to view auction sale price data) into something much more, something bigger,” Peterson said. “MachineryPete.com now is the second leading farm equipment marketplace in the world, with more than 110,000 equipment listings from farm-equipment dealers, private sellers, and auction firms throughout North America. Currently, we are doing 6.2 million page views per month, and growing.”

“Through the Machinery Pete affiliation with *Farm Journal*, I have been doing weekly Monday Machinery Pete segments on AgriTalk Radio show since July 2013 as well as weekly Monday Machinery Pete segments on Ag Day TV show. In 2019, we launched the Machinery Pete podcast (www.MachineryPete.com/podcasts). I also blog frequently about auctions, sale prices, trends, tractors, farm folks, and farm equipment news on our website (www.discuss.MachineryPete.com),” Peterson said.

“It has been a most interesting ride for this painfully shy kid from Benson, Minnesota, son of a third-generation farm equipment dealer,” Peterson said. “I was an accounting major in college. I graduated in 1988 knowing I didn’t want to be an accountant all my life. I took my father’s advice to heart: ‘Keep your head on a swivel.’ Opportunities abound. Everywhere. Every day.”



“Along my interesting Machinery Pete path these past three-plus decades, the number-one most powerful thing I’ve learned is the power of listening. What a joy it has been pushing forward every day, week, month, year. I am excited for the future. Finding new ways to connect with the farm audience, to help them better buy, sell, trade, and appraise farm equipment. And to tell their stories. Our stories. Also, I am excited, and humbled to be joining the NAFB, an organization with true heart for agriculture and a history for always pushing forward, to tell the story of agriculture. I greatly look forward to connecting with NAFB members,” Peterson concluded.

HOOSIER AG TODAY COLLABORATES ON FARM EQUIPMENT SAFETY VIDEO — As spring arrives and temperatures rise, farmers across Indiana begin to plant the state’s 15 million acres of crops. To keep motorists and farmers safe this planting season, several state agencies have partnered to encourage Hoosiers to be alert, slow down, and share the road with farm equipment.

Gary Truitt (pictured; Zionsville, Indiana) announced Hoosier Ag Today has partnered with these agencies to produce public service announcements (PSAs) urging motorists to be aware of farm equipment on the road. According to the most recent data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, farm vehicles (other than trucks) were involved in 98 crashes across the U.S., with two of those accidents occurring in Indiana. The video and audio PSAs present things drivers can do to avoid these accidents.



Indiana State Department of Agriculture Director **Bruce Kettler** says farmers want to move their equipment as quickly and safely as possible.

“Normally people don’t think of roadway accidents when they think of one of the dangers of farming,” Kettler said. “But, each year, lives are lost due to accidents on our rural roads and highways. That is why we are encouraging motorists and farmers to be cautious this spring. Please be alert, slow down, and share the road.”

While the term “farm equipment” encompasses a wide range of vehicles, the most common types that motorists

will encounter during planting season include sprayers, tractors pulling planters or tillage equipment, and large trucks hauling agricultural products. These vehicles are wide, sometimes taking up most of the roadway, and often travel at speeds no greater than 25 mph.

The audio PSA has been distributed to all Hoosier Ag Today (HAT) stations around the state for airplay during April, May, and June. The video PSA, produced by Farm Broadcaster **Andy Eubank** in cooperation with local farmers, is being shared on social media by HAT and the cooperating state agencies as well as by a variety of farm organizations and agribusinesses in Indiana.

The video can be viewed at <https://hoosieragtoday.com/once-again-time-for-heightened-awareness-on-rural-roads/>

HAT was founded in 2006 for the specific purpose of serving the informational needs of the Hoosier agricultural community. HAT currently has 75 radio stations broadcasting its programs. In addition, HAT operates a multimedia website and publishes a daily email newsletter. In 2008, 2010, 2012, 2016, 2018, and 2020, HAT was rated the most listened to farm radio network in Indiana by Ag Media Research. In 2019, the network purchased Michigan Ag Today, a 25-station farm network serving the Michigan agricultural community. HAT is also part owner of the Indiana Farm Equipment and Technology Expo, held each December. HAT is represented nationally by J. L. Farmakis, Inc.

ALL IS WELL WITH RETIRED GUSTIN

— “All is well here. Still ranching with my brother. Our registered Gelbvieh cattle operation has evolved into a multi-family, multi-generation, two location operation. My brother and I keep saying we need to phase out and let the next generation take over... which is happening, gradually. We’re about finished calving and it has gone well,” Gustin said.

“I’m still writing a monthly column for the *North Dakota Living* magazine, the publication of the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives. I’ve been doing that since 1974. Also, I continue to send reports to ‘This Week in Agribusiness’ on a somewhat-infrequent basis. I still enjoy telling a good TV story.”

Gustin announced he and his wife, **Peggy**, have just funded a scholarship at North Dakota State University. The “Al Gustin Agricultural Communications Scholarship” will be awarded annually to a student with a major or minor in ag communications. Gustin was named NAFB Farm Broadcaster of the Year in 2012.





KETELSEN AWARDED HONORARY IOWA FFA DEGREE

— Veteran Iowa Farm Broadcaster **Von Ketelsen** was presented the Honorary Iowa FFA Degree at the 2021 Iowa FFA Leadership Conference in Des Moines.

“Von Ketelsen has been a great promoter and supporter of FFA,” said Iowa FFA Foundation Executive Director **Joshua Remington**. “Iowa FFA appreciates all he has done.” Ketelsen was born and raised on a grain and livestock farm in Iowa.

“Like my four brothers and one sister, I was in 4-H. Unfortunately, the school we attended didn’t offer FFA at the time. But they do now, so I’m glad about that,” Ketelsen said.

Ketelsen has been a fixture in Iowa farm radio, having served as a farm broadcaster at such Iowa farm radio stations as KOEL, WMT, KWMT, and currently at Carroll Broadcasting in Carroll, Iowa.

Ketelsen produces a radio program called “FFA Today.” The weekly feature spotlights current FFA students as well as prominent FFA alumni.

WE WANT YOUR NEWS — Send us your stories and photos for future newsletter issues.

Contact Larry Quinn at larryquinn@outlook.com or phone at **703-819-6532**. *Airing on the Side of Agriculture* is included in the blog section of NAFB.com. For an archive copy of any past issues, go to **Membership** and click on ***Airing on the Side of Agriculture***.

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