



PHOTO BY ERIC MULL

A Mark to Remember

The Certified Angus Beef® brand's 40th Anniversary celebration campaign shares the iconic logo across the country.

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“Turn right at the big red barn and then follow the dirt road north for two miles.”

People who travel off the blacktop often hear those kinds of directions.

Barns on family farms and ranches across the country are a forceful image of small town vitality. Landmarks, they represent tradition anchoring these businesses to their communities; but more, they are part of the American identity, icons of the rural spirit.

You could come up with a long list of adjectives and metaphors to describe these farm staples, but one that might feel unfamiliar is “canvas.”

For the brand that changed beef, unconventional isn’t unusual. In discussions about how to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the *Certified Angus Beef®* (CAB®) brand, painting

tradition, it seemed a fitting way to commemorate the milestone.

CAB has grown from a niche program launched in 1978 to represent one-fifth of the nation’s fed cattle supply and market more than a billion pounds of beef annually. It’s evolved into an Angus family legacy and thriving entity paying owner-producers more than \$75 million each year. So the barn painting campaign would be an old-school marketing approach to celebrate this evolution — the perfect combination of nostalgia and innovation.

The search for barn locations began in late 2017. Angus producers had the opportunity to nominate



40 barns with the logo was an off-the-wall idea. However, for a company deeply rooted in rural



themselves and others to become home to one of 40 barns adorned with the CAB logo. Painting began in January 2018 in Ocala, Fla., where Baldwin Angus became first of the 40 to gain a CAB logo.

Their red barn located just off of Interstate 75 launched the 10-month celebration. Family patriarch, the late Leroy Baldwin was a past CAB board member and American Angus Association board president. His legacy and intertwined history with the brand provided the ideal foundation for a campaign honoring the past.

From there, the barn journey took CAB staff from coast to coast, hosting the barn paintings in 25 states before wrapping up near brand headquarters in Wooster, Ohio, at Atterholt Farms.

Packed between these campaign bookends are an infinite number of stories.

Each logo's landing spot includes its unique tale, canvas and connection to the best Angus beef.

Canvas campaign across the country

At Mulhall, Okla., the logo found

a home at Pfeiffer Angus, where past CAB board chairman and current American Angus Association vice chairman John Pfeiffer's herd has been influenced by the type of cattle its 10 science-based specifications require.

"The brand has had a major impact on how this cow herd looks today," Pfeiffer says. "To be a part of it, to have the chance to continue to work with the brand, restaurateurs and retailers — it's a dream come true."

In Kansas, Chris and Sharee Sankey shared their passion for the Angus



American Angus Association CEO Alan Moczygemba and Certified Angus Beef LLC President John Stika joined the celebration event at barn No. 4 in Lavaca, Ark., where the logo'd barn earned its own name. Julie McMahon French dubbed the mural the 'King of Steers' as it sits across the highway from the Belle Point Ranch famous (King of Beers) Budweiser silo.

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breed and CAB that is second to none. Their Angus roots run deep and while their program focus is on the show ring, family history aligns with quality beef.

"We are honored to have been selected for a barn painting, as 1978 was a special year for us," says Chris Sankey.

The couple graduated from Kansas State University (K-State), married and started their Angus herd near Council Grove the same year the brand began.

The distance between producer and consumer dissolved at barn No. 23, near Mandan, N.D. The Boehm family at Interstate Angus Ranch care for a herd of 100 registered Angus cows while operating Roby's Supper Club, a local restaurant proudly serving CAB beef.

Second-generation rancher and restaurant owner Robert Boehm is dedicated to the brand that now embellishes his barn. In the early days at Roby's when there were no local CAB distributors, Boehm would drive 600 miles round-trip to purchase the brand he believes is best to serve in his restaurant.

"If I could not serve my customers



"I was a sophomore in high school when the Certified Angus Beef® brand started," says Doug Schroeder, owner of Schroeder Angus in Clarence, Iowa, and home to barn No. 14. "In 40 years, it has created a premium product for a quality eating experience. It's created a grade of cattle and beef people enjoy. We've made the overall quality of cattle better."

Certified Angus Beef brand steaks, I would not serve them steaks at all," he says.

At each event, lines blurred between urban and rural. The gatherings opened doors for a food blogger and rancher, a state Secretary of Agriculture and chef to connect at the gate and around the plate.

At any one barn a packer, rancher,

foodservice distributor and CAB licensee might be seen sitting around the dinner table enjoying beef at the place where each pound of CAB originates. School teachers, extension agents, politicians and media assembled to enjoy a meal and the spectacle that was so much more than "watching paint dry." At these tables, conversations began, friendships were kindled and people learned a bit more about where their food comes from.

The individuality of each barn, event and family are examples of what helped the CAB brand grow and thrive for 40 years. People from across all sectors of the beef industry who attended are part of it and continue to drive that success, thus increasing demand for registered Angus bulls.

To some, the CAB logo is another label. It's a piece of artwork that gets lost in the sea of marketing messages we're exposed to daily. In reality, it's a symbol that sparked thousands of story lines on ranches across North America, in kitchens and on family dinner tables around the world.

The painting of the logo is secondary, it's more than 40 billboards left behind. The people,



Rainmaker

Troy Freeman from Springfield, Ill., had no idea what he was getting into when he accepted the contract position of barn painter for the Certified Angus Beef® barn painting campaign.

Freeman now has enough tales to fill a thousand pages. There was the time a dust storm drove him indoors, the day his lift stopped working while he was hoisted mid-air and the countless times he handed his paintbrush to an aspiring artist and let them take a turn at a small part of the logo.

He endured travel delays and tornado warnings, experienced turtle races and the special bonds formed over dinner at a farm table.

Although hired for his artistic skills, the talent most favored by farmers turned out to be his ability to bring the rain.

"It's amazing how clouds suddenly begin to form as soon as I show up with paint brushes," says Freeman. At one stop in Texas, the Bradley 3 Ranch hadn't seen rain in 175 days. Freeman waited for a half inch to fall before he could finish the logo on their barn. In Kansas, he listened attentively as Debbie Lyons-Blythe of Blythe Angus shared with her food blogger guests about the harsh drought she was battling.

"Pray for rain," she told them as the group enjoyed lunch. Pray Freeman did.

That night, a thunderstorm blew through White City, Kan., and Freeman had to pack up early due to lightning.

"They keep telling me about this thing they call drought, but I haven't seen it," he jokes.

It happened again in Minnesota, then Illinois. Time after time, rain followed Freeman throughout his travels and earned him the nickname 'Rainmaker.'



PHOTO BY MATT SHOUPI

experiences and memories generated through the painting created new brand loyalists, and made passions for better beef burn brighter.

"This campaign was and continues to be an opportunity to capitalize on the rich history of the brand's roots and an initiative that will take us into the future," says Tracey Erickson, vice

president of marketing at CAB. "These barns will be around for years to come, inspiring a new generation of beef producers and consumers. We're excited to see them enjoyed and leveraged to tell our brand story."


Barn artist Troy Freeman from Springfield, Ill., used paint he says will last 30 years, so few touch-ups will be necessary and the barns will be seen for decades to come.

Pull out a map ... the barns that now dot the landscape represent 40 parts of a greater whole.

"You see, I don't look at the Certified Angus Beef®

brand as an individual unit but rather ranchers, consumers, distributors — people — all intertwined and working

as one," says Sharon Baldwin in Florida.

To learn more about the campaign and read each barn's story, visit www.certifiedangusbeef.com/brandthebarn. 

"These barns will be around for years to come, inspiring a new generation of beef producers and consumers."

— Tracey Erickson



PHOTO BY BRIANNA GWIRTZ

