

# Doddridge County Man's Idea Eases Post Removal

By CYNTHIA McCLOUD

For The State Journal

A Doddridge County man has patented and is producing a tool that will give a hand to farmers and other laborers.

Matthew Baldwin of West Union, president of Ground Break LLC, did all the research and development and prototyping on his simple machine that hoists posts and shrubs out of the ground using a chain and a lever resting on a fulcrum.

"It's a hand tool," Baldwin said. "Everything on the market is not as good as this one. It's all manual. There's no hydraulics. It's cheaper and the way it's used is very ergonomic. It's all in the leverage and the design. It takes most of the strain off the user's back and puts it into the machine. It does a lot of work with a little bit of effort on the human side."

The BullPull fence post and shrub puller has already been featured on the cover of Farm Show Magazine. The current issue features ideas that have been born in farm shops, like Baldwin's.

He built the BullPull to fill a need he saw when he owned a small hobby farm in Doddridge County. He has



Photo courtesy of Ground Break LLC

**The BullPull uses a lever and chain to ergonomically remove old posts, shrubs and other partially buried objects.**

used the BullPull to extract a section of telephone pole sunk 40 inches in the ground 30 years ago to hold a gate.

"Pulling out posts on farmland, especially on a hillside, is a pretty difficult process," Baldwin said.

"It doesn't mess up the fence line or existing hole," Baldwin said. "You can put another post down in and reattach the wire."

He sees applications for the BullPull in other industries.

"We have also showed to it to state Departments of Transportation, and a crew in Tampa, Fla., is using one of the prototypes," Baldwin said. "I have improved the model now from the feedback they've given us."

A DOT user was concerned about the chain slipping on a road-sign post. Baldwin ensures a good grip on any diameter post — wood, metal or concrete — by using a chain of high-grade square-edged links made in Germany.

Baldwin has a mechanical and engineering background and worked in the aerospace industry for many years. He said he drew up the plans in 1992 and got the patent approved in 2009.

A Morgantown manufacturer, Industrial Maintenance Solutions, is making the BullPull.

Baldwin got assistance from The INNOVA Commercialization Group, an initiative of the West Virginia High Technology Consortium Foundation. INNOVA is a nonprofit, statewide commercialization initiative designed to advance economic growth by increasing the number of new products introduced into the marketplace by West Virginia innovators.



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