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Family-owned real estate company celebrates 100 years of business

By Jayme Lozano

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A passion for farms and ranches led to the creation of a Lubbock real estate company in 1920 that is now celebrating 100 years and four generations of business.

Chas. S Middleton and Son is a real estate specialty firm that focuses on farms and ranches. In the 100 years the company has been in business, it has had several high-profile listings, including Patrick Swayze's ranch in Las Vegas, New Mexico, and the Boone Pickens' Mesa Vista Ranch in Pampa.

Charles Middleton rode into Lubbock on horseback in 1898 and was appointed the first chief of police as the city was still forming. It wasn't what he was passionate about, however, so he started selling properties.

"His love was in the cattle business and ranching, which led to ranch sales," said Sam Middleton, who runs the company now with his son Charles.

The transition for each generation into the business was natural, said Sam and Charles, and they have all shared the same goal in mind.

"I worked with my dad for 25 years before he retired, and we never had a disagreement on anything," said Sam. "We looked at the big picture and focused on making the company successful."

The company has grown over time and is licensed to sell farms and ranches in Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Kansas and Colorado, and it handles appraisals too.

The biggest selling point on the market has changed in the last 30 years too, Sam explained, as more of their clientele is looking for recreational enjoyment rather than ranch business.

“Recreation is the most important factor,” said Sam. “The romance of owning a ranch and the pride in that ownership seems to be the biggest focus on the market.”

Charles has been able to create his own customer base since he has joined the company and is proud of how he has become part of the Middleton family legacy.

“It’s great to know you’re contributing,” said Charles, “and the people you’re working with have got enough faith and trust in you that they want you to handle their business for them.”

As for whether the company will stay in the family later down the road, Charles does have young sons who they hope could continue with the tradition one day.

“We hope it keeps going,” said Charles. “We have family ranch land and they enjoy getting out on it, so the seeds have been planted.”