

Kenworth Model 751



When Paul Cross first saw the 1951 Kenworth Model 751 fire engine he now owns, all he could do was stare in awe. The massive pumper that had originally belonged to the Portland (Oregon) Fire Bureau (now Portland Fire & Rescue) was on display at the Pacific Northwest Truck Museum annual truck show near Brooks, Oregon, that memorable August day in 2009.

Cross had always liked Kenworths and already owned a 1949 Kenworth logging truck given to him by his uncle, so he had a sense of scale. "You didn't really realize, until you walked around it and stood in front of it, how tall and huge it was," Cross said.

It was everything he could possibly want—a 1950s Kenworth with four-wheel drive, only 43,000 original miles on the odometer, original paint and lettering, and a Hall-Scott Model 400 engine. On top of all that, it was a fire engine. A brass tag identified the builder of the fire body—"Wentworth & Irwin, Inc. Commercial Body and Trailer Builders Since 1903, Portland, Oregon. No. 1793."

Lettering showed its designation as Apparatus 82 and Engine 12. What really impressed Cross, however, was the "for sale" sign. Unfortunately, he and his wife Kelly had just bought a new home and did not have the funds. He could do no more than admire the engine at the time, but he would not forget it.

Later on, the Crosses purchased the famed All American Toy Co., a business selling model trucks since 1947. They proudly carry on its great heritage of quality. One of their best customers, Ben Tulloch, lives in Southern California and also collects much larger toys—full-sized vintage Kenworth fire engines. During a conversation with Tulloch one day, Cross asked him if he'd seen the four-wheel-drive Kenworth fire truck at Brooks.

"Oh yeah, I've seen it," Tulloch replied. "I actually bought that truck."

The way Tulloch came to own the Kenworth is a story of its own too long to tell here. He wanted this apparatus because he believed at the time that he already possessed two of a group of four 1951 four-wheel-drive Kenworths purchased new together by Portland. Only Apparatus 82 still had its original paint and lettering, but he knew the other two that he owned were Apparatus 83 and 84. Tulloch usually refers to them by their serial numbers—60046 and 60047, respectively. This third one—now owned by Cross—is serial no. 60045. The first two that Tulloch owned have not only consecutive vehicle serial numbers, but also consecutive Hall-Scott engine serial numbers.

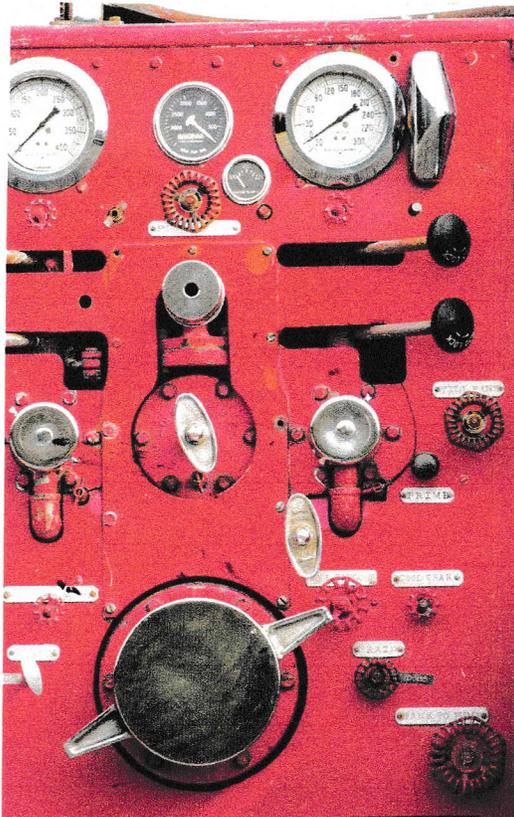
Like Cross, Tulloch first spotted Apparatus 82 at the 2009 museum show at Antique Powerland (now Powerland Heritage Park). When he saw it again at

the same place in 2015, he bought it. Tulloch was pleased to have the three Kenworth Model 751s together again. He enjoyed them, but soon realized the inconvenience of getting them to shows from Southern California.

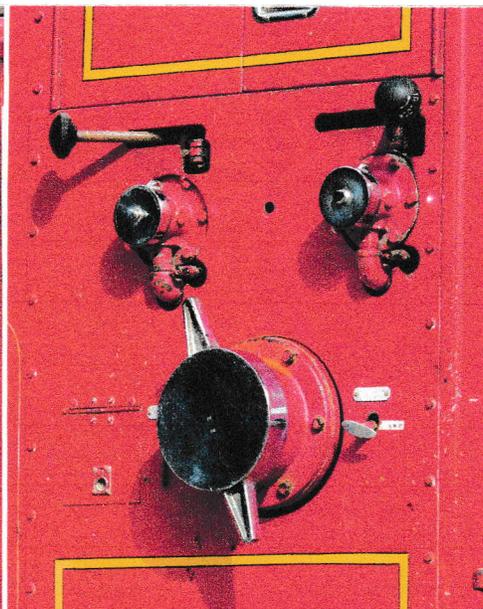
"Paul knew that I had the three of them and that I had the one he'd seen at the show in Brooks but couldn't buy at the time," Tulloch said. "He and I got to talking about it. My belief is that these old trucks should be out where people can see and enjoy them. So, I made the decision to go ahead and sell that one to him, knowing he would take it where people could appreciate it."

When the Pacific Northwest Truck Museum held its show in late August 2017, Paul and Kelly Cross and their five-year-old son, Henry, could hardly wait to see the Kenworth, knowing it would soon be





The pump panel still looks great. Chromed lights on each side of the top illuminate the gauges at night.

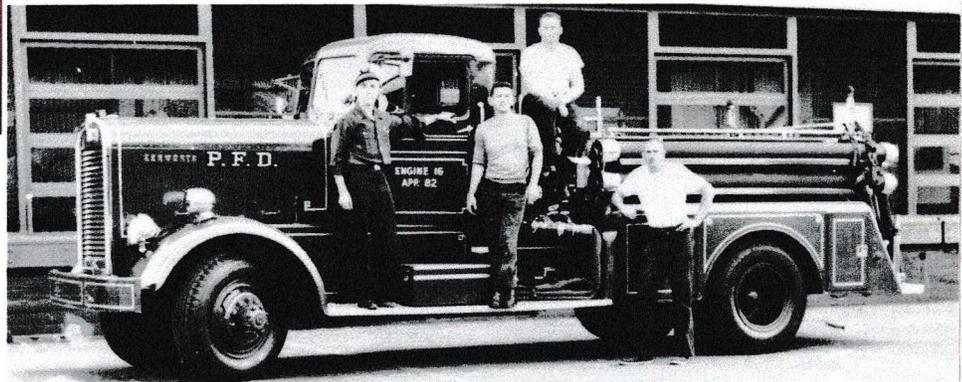


A 1,500gpm pump saw plenty of use during Apparatus 82's time in the fire service.



Well-worn, the cab shows it saw plenty of action back in the day.

This historical photo shows Apparatus 82 in its younger days. Photo courtesy Portland Fire & Rescue Archives



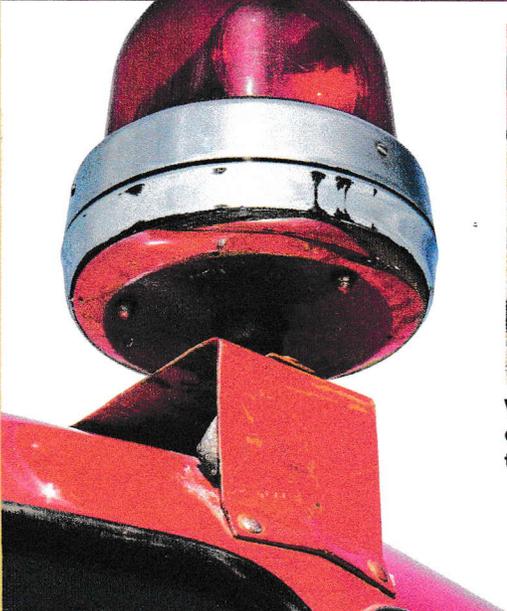
This tall but well-proportioned fire engine has a wheelbase of 186 inches.



Kelly, Henry, and Paul Cross enjoy their fire engine immensely.



Cross cannot confirm the originality of the ladder, but it is period-correct.



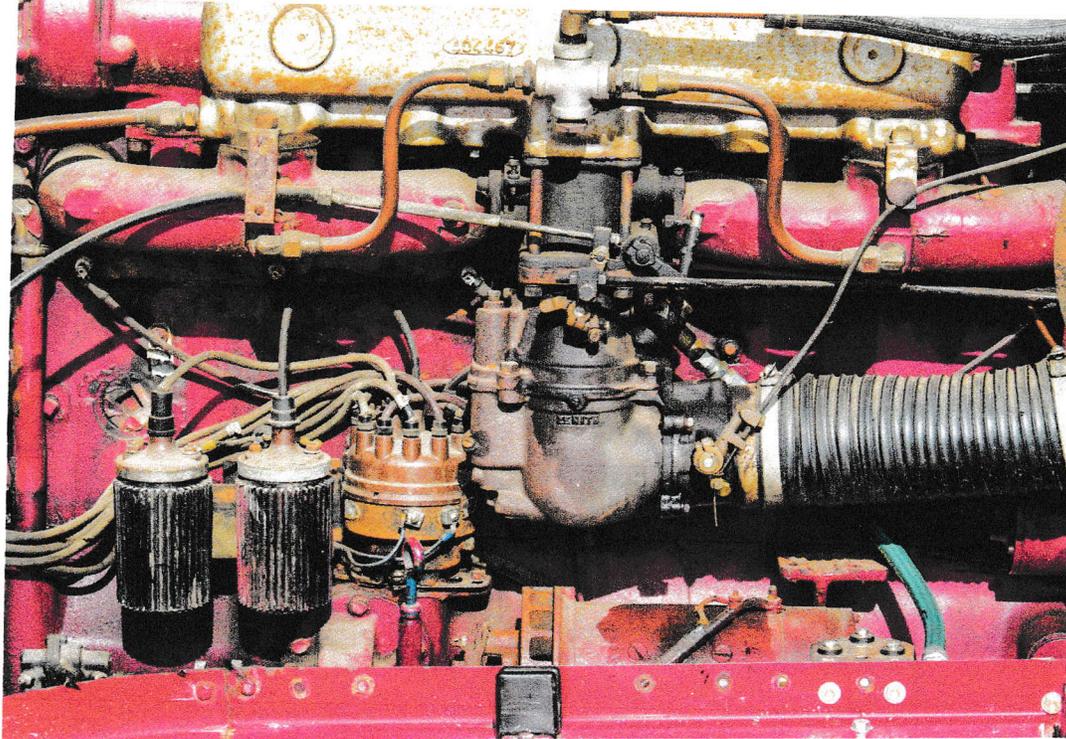
When Apparatus 82 went into four-wheel drive, its front wheels provided added traction to keep the behemoth rolling to its call.

theirs at last. When interviewed, Tulloch chuckled over his memory of Henry's elation. One can imagine how a little boy would feel about having a fire truck come to his house to stay. His parents' decision to buy the pumper was exciting, but also came after some serious consideration.

"I told Kelly, 'It's not very often you get a second chance to buy something so unique,'" Cross said. She agreed. "We went ahead and pulled the trigger and made it work, and it's in our shop." They brought it home Aug. 26, 2017.

The only thing that did not work perfectly on the big pumper was the rotary light. Cross thinks that taking the light apart and cleaning the contacts will fix it. Everything else was "ready to roll," he said.

The story of Apparatus 82 could have ended there, but it did not. Questions about the engine's early days remained unanswered, although many assumptions were offered. The facts, however, remained elusive until Josef Kuenast, a current Portland Fire & Rescue department member, provided a connection with Don Porth. Because he has a greater body of

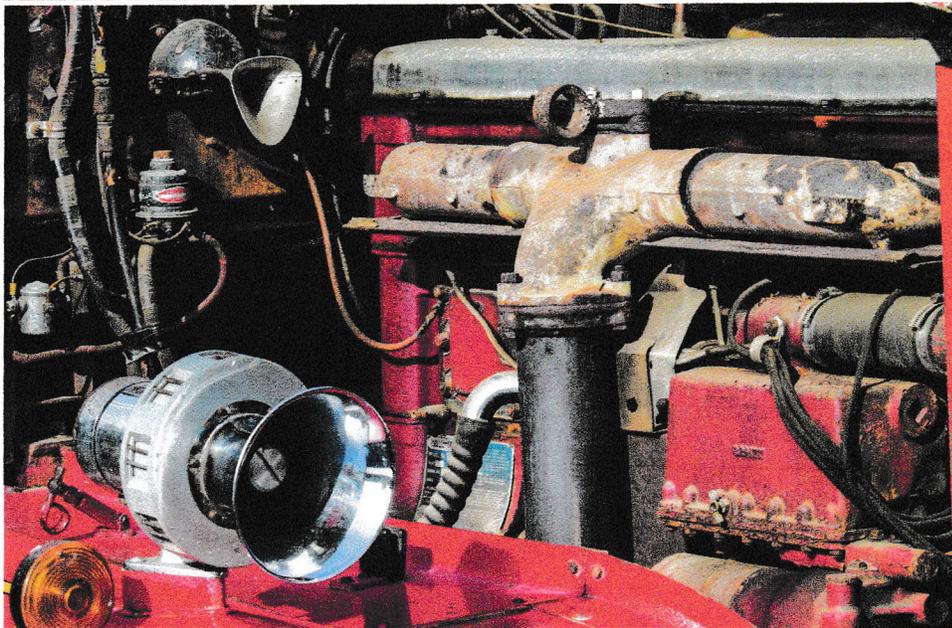


The 6-cylinder engine used a dual ignition. "The distributor has 12 wires, one to go out to each spark plug," Cross said. "If one ignition failed, the other one would still pick up and the truck would still run."

knowledge about the department than anyone else, Porth has, by default, become its historian.

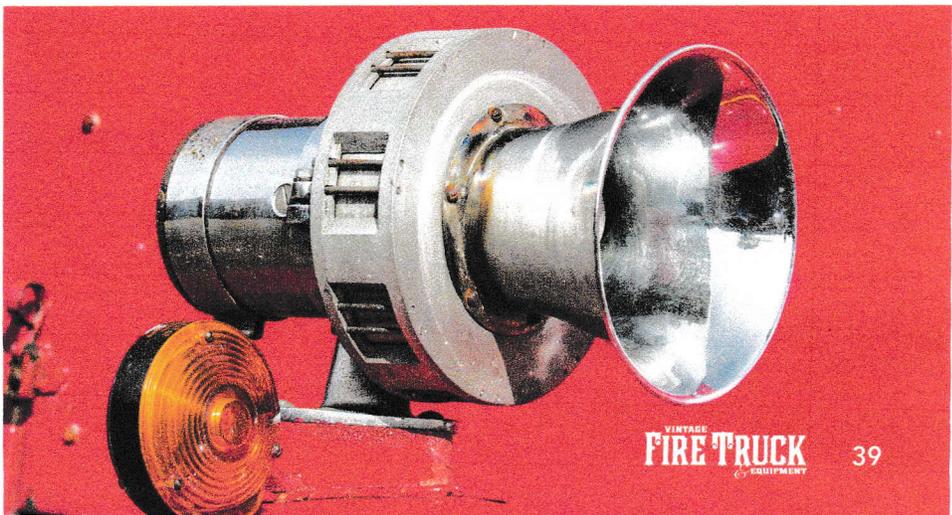
During most of his career, Porth was assigned to public education. He retired in 2011 after 37 years in the fire service, 27 of them in Portland. Portland's fire department goes back to 1893, and Porth's efforts have preserved countless photos and documents previously scattered, unorganized, and vulnerable to loss. With his gracious help, the history of Apparatus 82 and its mates began to unfold.

Porth started digging, and within a few days, he created a list of the 10 Kenworth fire apparatus Portland had purchased, beginning in 1938. They included, in addition to pumpers, a unique enclosed ladder truck that carried ladders on the inside, a specialty "disaster car" used as a mobile hospital or emergency relief vehicle, and another Kenworth used as a hose tender for a fire boat. At the end of the list were not four, but five 1951 Kenworth pumpers, with apparatus numbers 82 through 86. A large department, Portland has always needed plenty of rigs, and uncovering an order of five engines at one time did not



The Hall-Scott 400 inline 6-cylinder engine develops 300 horsepower and has 925 foot-pounds of torque.

Cross believes the siren is original.



surprise Porth. Buying in quantity, in fact, was more normal than single purchases.

Cross had been told his four-wheel-drive pumper was ordered to serve the hilly terrain on Portland's west side, but Porth thought otherwise. "One can speculate that it would be done due to the geography of the response area, but if all of the 1951s listed were four-wheel drive

and purchased for a specific reason, their assignments to stations don't really support that idea well," Porth said.

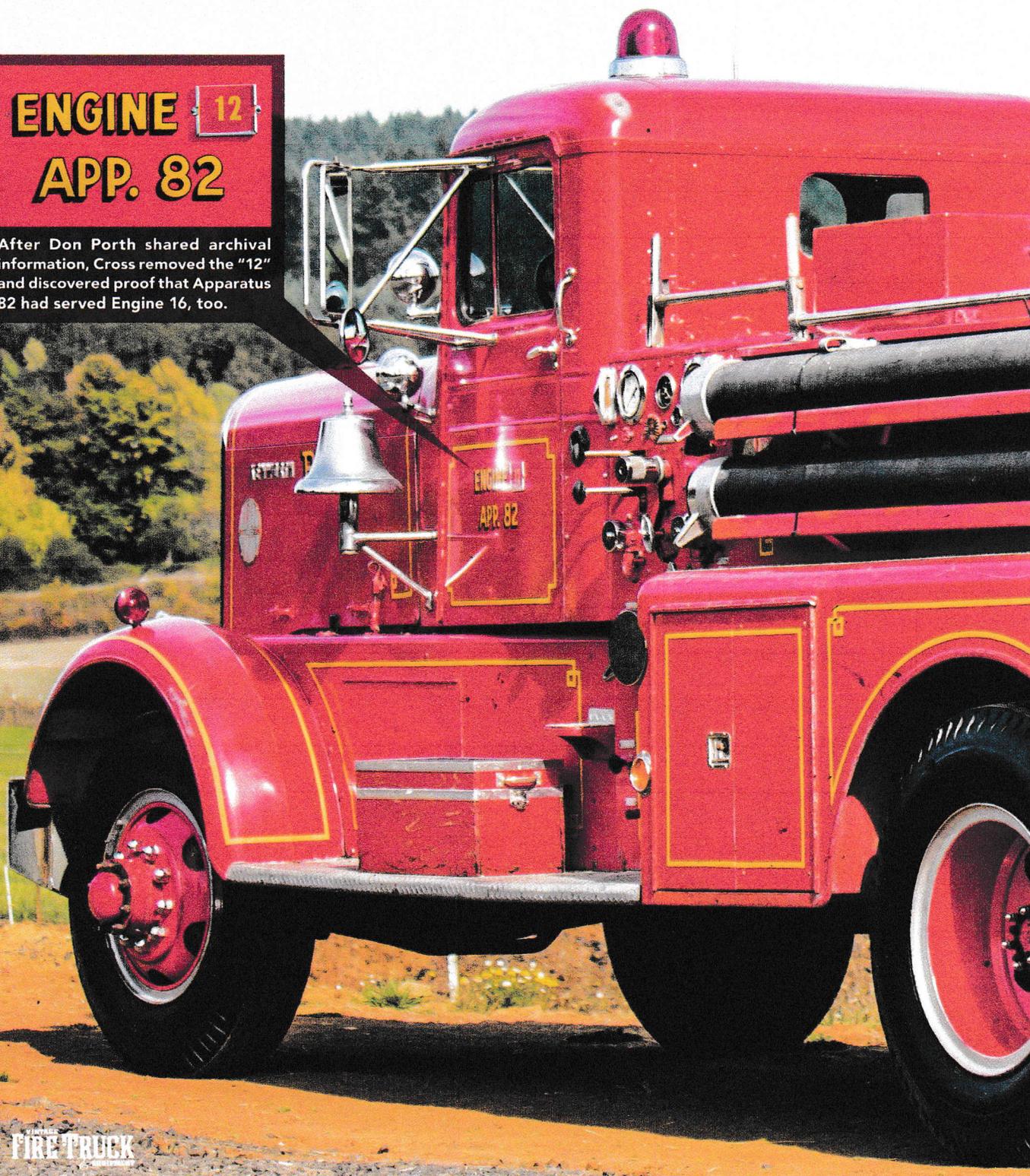
As for the "Engine 12" station designation, Apparatus 82 was certainly assigned there at one time, but not for the duration of its career. Station names changed and apparatus moved around, but the apparatus number always stayed the

same. In his comments accompanying his list of Portland's Kenworths, Porth wrote, "Apparatus 82 was assigned as Engine 16 at 4465 NW Yeon Street. The station operated at that location from 1944 to 1985."

On learning this information, Cross removed the plate on his pumper with the painted-on numeral "12" and discovered "16" hidden beneath.

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After Don Porth shared archival information, Cross removed the "12" and discovered proof that Apparatus 82 had served Engine 16, too.



Things soon got more exciting. Porth sent an early black and white photo of Apparatus 82. "Wow!" Cross exclaimed when he saw it. "That's our truck, brand new, before lights were put on it! How cool is that?"

Since this apparatus is a pumper, Cross believes it saw plenty of action in spite of having only 43,000 miles on the odometer. The tall Kenworth that caused him to

look up and up when he first saw it is now parked next to his Kenworth logging truck. He plans to display the Model 751 in public often, for people to enjoy. He already took it to Henry's school, thrilling his classmates.

"It's just kind of a cool novelty item," Cross said. "It has everything going for it—the rarity of the truck, the shape it's in, the low miles, and having the 400 Hall-Scott."

The whole family loves owning this Kenworth, but Henry has claimed it as his own. He can hardly wait to come home from school and climb up in the cab.

"After I'm gone, he'll have it for another 50 years," Cross said. "Then it might end up in a museum or, hopefully, just keep passing down." 🚒



The hard suction hoses are original. A battery box on the running board also functions as a step. Henry Cross noted, "It's hard to get down because of how high it is."