



Classic Performance Products 378 E Orangethorpe Ave., Placentia CA 92870



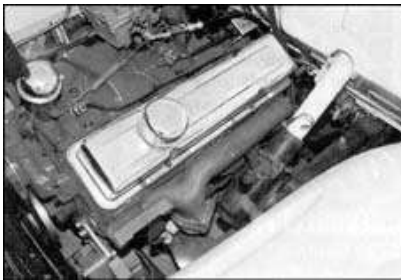
Classic Performance Products Power Steering For Early-To Mid '50s GM Trucks

By Troy Stephens

Old Chevy/GMC trucks are plentiful and catch a good amount of public attention. Their biggest drawback is the slow and often stiff recirculating ball-screw steering. Classic Performance Products has several power steering kits designed for '47-'59 Chevy/GMC pickups and panel trucks. The newer kit we selected to install has a late-model Saginaw power steering box, pitman arm,

and adjustable drag centerlink, to be connected to a newer model steering column or in our case, hooked up by modifying the recirculating ball-screw end of the original column. This installation begins with disconnecting and removing the old steering box from the end of the column and locating the new Saginaw box on the driver side by use of a mounting bracket welded to the framerail.

It's also necessary to relocate the top of the shock mounts to provide clearance for the steering column. We'll also modify the bottom end of the original steering column to accept some modern universal joints from Borgeson. Then we'll add a pulley to the front of the engine to power the unit. Follow along as the crew at Wheeler's Speed Shop smoothes out the steering on our ice cream truck.



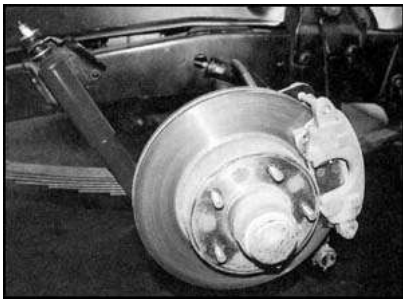
1. Our early-'50s ice cream truck is low but slow to steer. Here's the original steering column that runs into the recirculating ball-screw steering box. It takes a lot of muscle to turn the wheels, especially at a stop, even with the large steering wheel. We'll fix it to turn as smooth as melted ice cream.



9. Here's a good shot looking straight down on the Saginaw box. Notice the



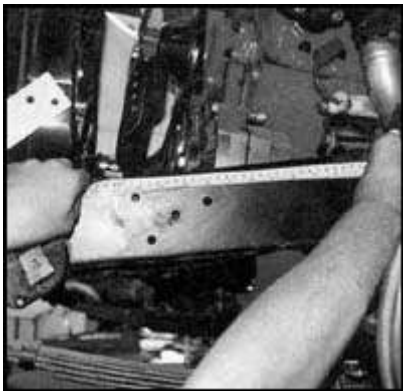
15. Here's how the bottom end of the column looks with the Teflon spacer located inside the column tubing. The steel inner shaft was now connected to a Borgeson universal unit and a locking collar was located in between to keep the Teflon spacer in place.



2. Our ice cream truck already has a Classic Performance Products disc brake conversion kit and is low enough to suit our tastes. It just needs to steer smoother and easier, and it will soon. Note the position of the front shock. We planned to relocate the top mount rearward for clearance.



3. It was interesting to pull the old steering box off the end of the column to see how the small steel recirculating balls were packed in grease inside the box.

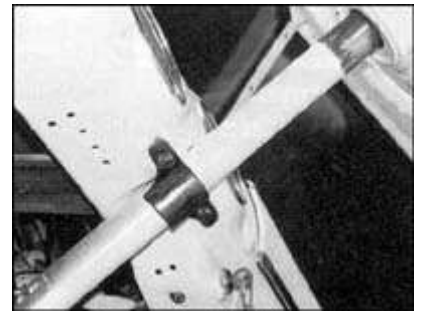


4. The old box was removed and the driver-side shock mount was also removed. It was now time to locate the new Saginaw box. From the center-line of the front axle, we

welded triangle and the spacer on the bolt that goes through it. The steering shaft gets installed to the Borgeson universal joint shortly.



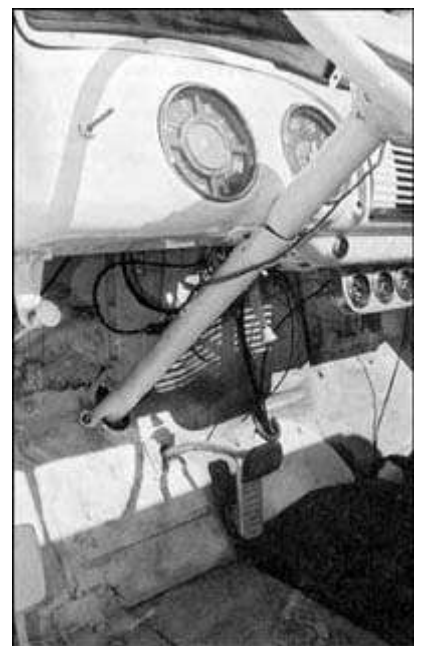
10. As we mentioned earlier, the top shock mount has to be relocated to the rear of the axle. We used an angle finder to duplicate the angle of the shock in its new position, drilled holes, and bolted it in place.



16. Just a couple of little details and this install will look like it came from the factory. One of Wheeler's Shop staff made a nifty column drop that later allowed the column to be bolted to the underside of the dash.

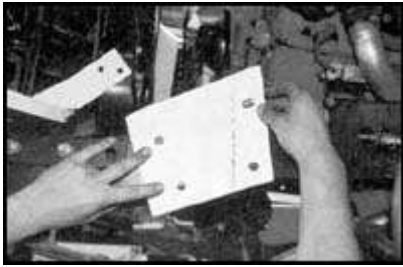


17. After removing the original steering box, the bottom of the steering column needed some additional support on the toeboard. We made a small angle-brace with a bolthole and welded it to the outer tube.

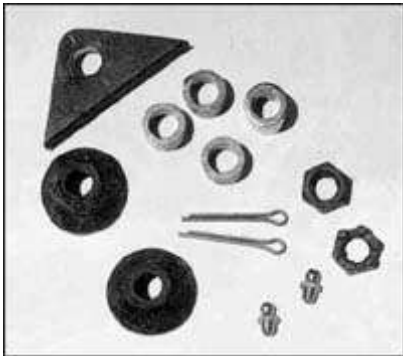


18. With the column drop and the angle-brace painted and in place, everything looked as if it were originally designed this way. Now we'll hook up the steering at the bottom end of the column.

measured 12-1/2 inches forward on the framerail.



5. To mount the new box, we needed to use the two existing holes in the framerail, with one new hole drilled in the framerail sidewall. We also planned to weld a small triangular tab with a mounting hole to the top surface of the framerail near the edge. This paper template helps us locate the new hole precisely where it needs to be.



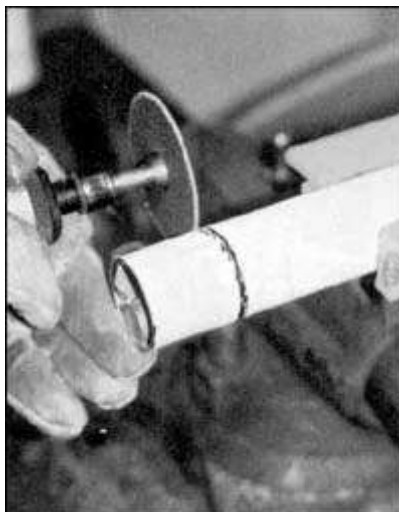
6. The Classic Performance Products kit supplies the hardware to mount the new Saginaw steering box. The small triangle was welded to the top surface of the framerail on the driver side. There are four aluminum spacers; one is slightly larger and is used with the welded triangle tab bolt.



11. To make the original steering column work with the new Saginaw box, it was necessary to modify the bottom end of the column. The first order of business was to cut off the old, worn gear end.



12. We planned to modify the bottom end of the original column by adding this Teflon spacer to the inside of the column housing and around the outside of the inner steering shaft. But first there were a couple of custom operations to be performed.



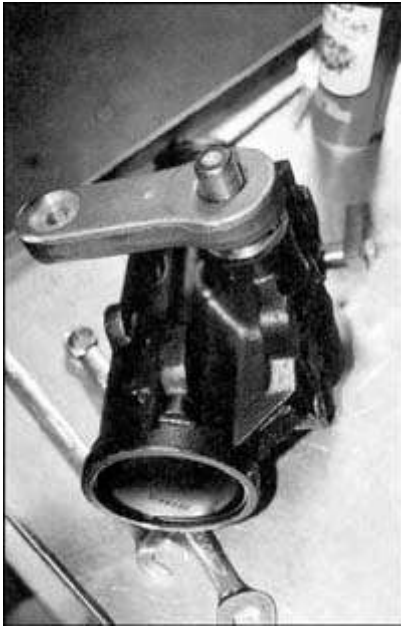
19. We used a section of steel D-shaft between two Borgeson universal joints to connect the original column with the Saginaw box. A little trimming of the inner fender panel was required to clear the D-shaft.



20. One more little custom modification was required, none of the double pulleys for Chevrolet allowed the power steering belt to align properly with the pump. We added a single pulley to the original pulley to arrive at the proper position for the new power-steering pump belt. The reservoir was bolted to the front of the small-block and all the steering hoses were attached. Soon we were ready for a test drive.



21. Hey, it works great! Here's the crew at Wheeler's enjoying a taste of ice cream and the smooth Classic Performance power steering of our vintage Chevy ice cream truck.



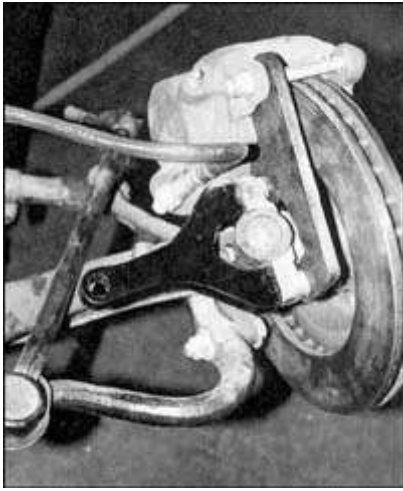
7. Classic Performance Products also supplies a new pitman arm and steering arm with this kit, as well as an adjustable drag centerlink. We tried to maintain the alignment by keeping everything in place.



13. We first needed to trim 2 inches off the outer tubing to expose the round steel inner shaft.



14. Just a little lathe work was needed to reduce the diameter of the Teflon spacer to match the inner diameter of the outer tube. We wanted a press-fit, so we checked it carefully to make sure it didn't get too small. Yeah, it would have been somewhat easier to install a more modern column, but we wanted to retain the original steering wheel and small-diameter column to keep a vintage appearance.



8. The new steering arm needed just a little bit of grinding of a corner to clear the disc brake caliper. After a little grinding, it was mounted to the spindle. Notice that we cut off the old steering arm just below the new steering arm. We had to shape and paint the raw end to look nice and neat.



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