

# Down to Details

By Chuck Steffens

This month in the "Down to Details" section of *Toy Farmer*, I am going to go down a road that isn't by any means my favorite. I know there are a few people who have gone down this road before and have had great success, but it has been a rough road for me. What I am talking about is the Precision two-cylinder.



Garage sale 730 and new-in-box 720.

I have not had much luck working on these tractors. I have always been able to build the tractor I was wanting to build, but for some reason it never went as easy as planned.

The project I am going to show you is kind of personal for me, so that gives me the incentive to build it: a John Deere 730 wide front. This just happens to be a tractor my grandfather farmed with and his favorite until the 4430 came around, that cab kind of spoiled him!!

To get the project started I found a 730 at a garage sale during the 2012 National Farm Toy Show for \$50. I couldn't pass that up. With a new-in-box 720 wide front I had all of the parts I needed to build the 730 wide front, and parts to build a 720 narrow front. I know there are plenty of 720s, but I wanted to give this 720 a twist so it isn't like the rest.

First things first—tear down. To get the wide front off of the 720 I removed the radiator cap. With a little heat and a small flat-tipped screwdriver, I was able



Radiator cap removed from 720.



Nose cone removed from 720 exposing two screws holding casting halves together.



Casting halves spread and wide front removed from 720.

to remove the radiator cap saving it for later. Under the radiator cap there is a screw that has to be removed. With this screw out, the front hood/nose cone lifts right off. With the nose cone out of the way, there are two screws holding the casting halves together. Remove those two screws. Then using a medium-sized flat screwdriver, get between the casting halves and pry them apart. You will have to pry the halves a good 1/4-inch apart.

With the casting halves spread, the wide front assembly will come out the front. Be careful spreading the casting halves, because the fuel filter assembly will want to fall out between the frame rails. I had the master of Precision two-cylinders tell me that if you apply a small amount of Super Glue to the fuel filter assembly on one side—gluing it to the frame rail leaving the other side to move free of the

hood to the frame. Remove these two screws and gently lift the hood up. It will be tight but the hood will raise enough to give you the room needed to remove the narrow front from the 730. With the hood lifted the same two screws that Ertl used to hold the 720 frame halves together are used on the 730. Remove these screws and gently pry the frame halves apart and remove the narrow front.

With both front ends removed there will have to be one small modification to the 730 for the wide front to fit. Ertl added an extra notch in the frame where the 730's narrow front was mounted. Lucky enough this is an easy fix. I used a square file and filed the corner clean making a nice square hole. Once that job is finished spread the frame rails again and install the wide front on the 730 and reassemble.

rail—it makes the job a lot easier. I still haven't taken his advice, but someday I am going to learn.

Now with the 720 wide front out of the way it is time to tackle the 730. The front nose cone comes off completely different then the one on the 720. Under the bottom of the 730 frame there will be two screws holding the nose cone/

Now to add the narrow front to the 720, which is just as simple as adding the wide front to the 730...no it is easier because no modifications are required to the 720's chassis. I spread the frame rails and began installing the narrow front on the 720 when I felt something funny in my hand. I opened my hand to see why I was able to buy that 730 for \$50. Sometime prior in its life the 730 had a front wheel busted off and then had it repaired with some epoxy. So of course while I was handling the narrow front axle, it broke loose—so now this story becomes about more than a front-end swap. It will also include a front-end repair.

What I did now was remove the



Bottom of the 730's chassis, showing the two screws holding the nose cone and hood on.



The 730's hood lifted up to get at the two screws holding the casting halves together.



Both front ends removed. Notice the extra notch in the 730's chassis that will need to be removed.

narrow front from the 720 again and see what it was going to take to fix the broken narrow front. The first thing that would need to be done was to remove the wheels. To remove the wheel off of the narrow front I go back to my favorite small flat tip and get between the rim and the axle, or in this case broken axle. If you gently pry out on the rim in a few different locations the axle cap will pop off. I would definitely recommend not prying on the cap itself due to the fact you could easily scratch the rim. But if you press out on the rim the cap comes off just as easy. With the wheels off of the Roll-O-Matic I removed the screw that held the one Roll-O-Matic arm on and used a pliers to remove the rest of the broken knee.

Now off to the parts bin I go...and if you can believe this I had another broken Roll-O-Matic, but this one had the opposite knee broke! What are the odds? Now it's just a matter of building one good narrow front out of the two broken ones and back onto the tractor. So here we go again prying the frame rails open and installing the narrow front on the 720. Once the narrow front is installed, make sure the fuel filter assembly is in place and everything is free and steers freely. Reinstall the two screws holding the frame halves together, install the nose cone and screw in place, then glue the radiator cap back on and reinstall the front rims on the Roll-O-Matic. Glue the axle cap back on—voilà—a 730 wide front and a 720 narrow front. But with there being many different versions of the 720 with a narrow front already out

there, I decided to add some weight brackets, wheelie bars and a chrome pipe making this one a farm stock/antique puller.

I hope some of you learned a thing or two about these two tractors and will be willing to tackle one on your own. This same tactic can be used on the Precision John Deere 70 as well if anyone wanted to build a 70 wide front for your collection. Also don't be afraid to contact me at [csteffens@wildblue.net](mailto:csteffens@wildblue.net) with questions or suggestions on future projects.

'Til next go around,  
Chucky.

TF

Broken Roll-O-Matic.



Roll-O-Matic with wheels removed.



Knee removed from Roll-O-Matic.



Finished tractors.