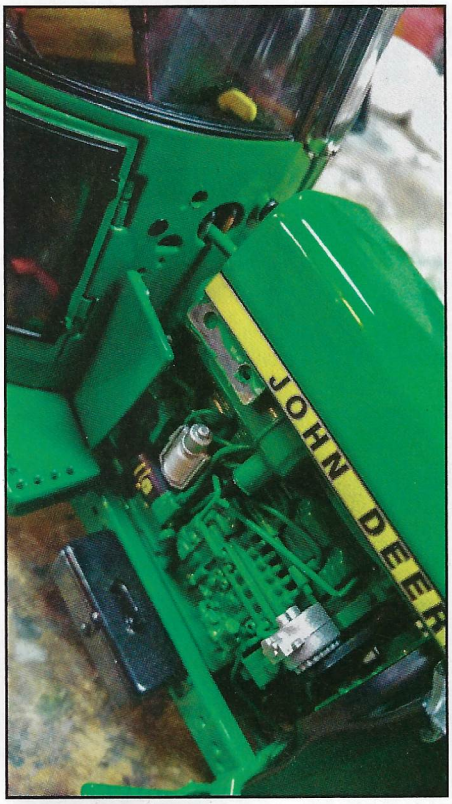
The 4840 I got in a "horse trade."

Converting a John Deere 4840, Part 1



The side panels freed from the hood, freeing the back of the hood.

The bottom side of the 4840, with the end screw removed and the frame opened out, ready for the HFWD axle to be added.

Welcome back to another month of "Down to Details." This month's project got started a little differently than most projects. I really had no plans to build this tractor, but I built it to pass the time. Seven days before the National Farm Toy Show in Dyersville, Iowa, there was a little nervousness and anticipation, as it was the first year we set up as a parts supplier/business. So, to keep my mind busy, I wandered around in my shop, the "Chuckville Salvage Yard," to see what I could build or finish. I finally grabbed this 4840 that I got in a "horse trade" a while back.

This 4840 had no front axle or rear wheels, but was otherwise in new-in-the-box condition, so there was some potential there. But what do I do with it? First, I pondered adding one of the replacement GenII wide-front axles I produce, but that wasn't really lighting my fire. Then I found an HFWD axle sitting on a shelf with nothing to do. Aha! A 4840 hydraulic front-wheel-assist!

To get this 4840 project started, I first have to remove the hood. On the 4840, the hoods are easy to remove. There will be two screws located under the front weight bracket that will have to come out. The rear of the hood is attached using pins on the side panels that are glued to the hood. To free the back of the hood, I pry apart the side panel and the hood, and the hood will lift off.

The next step will be to remove the screw that is located on the very front of the tractor holding the two frame halves together. With the screw removed, the frame rails can be widened slightly, which will open the mounting pivot where the original 4840 axle was located.

With the pivot open, I begin by giving the HFWD a test fit and you won't believe this, but it is a perfect fit. That never happens.

With the HFWD axle installed, I need to build a steering shaft so the axle and the steering wheel work together. I look for some kind of steering rod that will work. After some searching, I find one that is close, but which will require a little work. I install the new steering rod back into the tractor and see that it will be another near perfect fit. It's just too long. Well, that works. I use this extra length to make the proper two 90-degree bends that will have this

4840 steering again.

We have the 4840 back on two of its four wheels, so I grab a set of John Deere Power Hub rims and a set of my 20.8x42 tires and do a little test fitting. Using a piece of 3/16 steel rod, I have the 4840 back on all four and I realize those front tires are way too small. Something will have to change, so it's back to the salvage yard!

After some searching, I find a damaged 1566 MFWD axle with a good set of wheels. I think these would be a perfect match for the 4840, so we go to the workbench with them. Looking at the 1566 front axle, I see that there are the common three pins on the back side of the rim that hold the center cap. With a little help from my trusty spring-loaded center punch, the center caps are off and I can now remove the screw and the wheels are off.

Back to the 4840. Looking at the front wheels of the HFWD, I notice that these rims have the same three pins holding the center caps. Soon, they are off, followed by the wheel being removed. This is where I run into the first challenge. Things have been fitting so good on this project, I knew sooner or later something would come up. The 1566 rim has a smaller diameter hole than the 4840's HFWD mounting pin, but it's an easy fix. I just drill the hole out and the rims are on and the tractor is setting much better.

With both front rims drilled and installed, the 4840 is back on all four and now it comes to those center caps. I could just reuse the center caps that were on the 1566, but they are not correct. I test fit the center caps from the HFWD and realize the diameter is too large to fit into the rim correctly. I could have easily used a file or the Dremel to correct the diameter, but I just bought myself a new lathe, so I used it to cut these caps down to size. After a quick trip to the lathe, those center caps now fit perfectly and we are getting real close to paint. One last thing, the tractor is still sitting too high in the rear, so I change out those 20.8x42 with 20.8x38s and, yes, we are off to paint.

I take out the rims and give them a shot of epoxy primer, followed by two coats of John Deere Yellow and, finally, one coat of automotive clear coat and final assembly is on its way.

This tractor is a prime example of what a person can do with a few parts laying around and a little time on his hands. I could easily say this tractor is finished, but I have more plans for it. The next time we meet, we are going to add another accessory and really bring this tractor to life.

Until next time, please check out our site, www.chuckysprecisionspullersandparts.com, for many of the parts used in my article as well as many more from past "Down to Details" articles.

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Here is a comparison of the wheels that were on the axle and the wheels from the 1566.

The tractor back on all four wheels.

The finished tractor.

Living just northwest of Dyersville, Iowa, in the heart of farm country and farm toy replica country, Chuck Steffens has found a niche in the toy world, building high-detailed replicas in his spare time. He shares his experiences with Toy Farmer *readers, hoping to lead other collectors to personalize one of their own tractors. Comments or suggestions can be directed to csteffens@wildblue.net.*