

Don't Toss That Defective Digital Display; He'll Fix It!

If you've got a digital display that goes bad, it can cost you thousands of dollars. Instead, you can call Dwayne Ditz, who will repair and reprogram defective instrument clusters that dealers would normally replace. The difference can mean thousands of dollars out of pocket.

"I've had clients who've spent more than \$50,000 on a new vehicle and the instrument cluster fails in the first year," says Ditz, whose company is called Prospeedo. "The warranty may cover replacement, but the dealer can only put a new one in with zero time/miles. Sell it, and it will be red-flagged and legally must be sold as TMU (true mileage unknown) and THU (true hours unknown). This isn't about 'rollback'; it's about the owner having a right to the information that is stored there."

Instruments repaired by Prospeedo have their mileage and other information restored. Ditz notes that most dealers don't have the tools or knowledge to retrieve true hours and restore them in new or repaired instrument clusters. A growing number of dealers now send new clusters to Prospeedo for restoration of data before they install them.

Even without considering resale value, Ditz says most instruments or instrument clusters can be repaired for far less than the replacement cost. He offers a complete warranty on the repaired part for the life of the

vehicle. With 24 years of experience fixing digital speedometers and other equipment, Ditz has seen it all. He works on everything from cars and trucks to snowmobiles, quads, motorcycles, tractors and heavy equipment.

"I got started in 1998 offering digital speedometer and hour meter repair," says Ditz. "Farmer customers told me they were having serious issues with gauges not working, displays not lighting up and the tractor not moving."

Ditz was able to fix about 98 percent of the problems. He found a common problem was a corrupted EPROM or flash file caused by a battery boost to a dead battery. Other problems include failure of cold solder joints and ribbons to bad chips, microprocessors failing, or defective plastic stepper motors that drive the gauges.

"There are a multitude of reasons why a digital hour meter or speedometer instrument cluster can fail," says Ditz. "Although I can't fix all the problems, I can repair most problems found in the industry."

"Before you have a display or a cluster replaced, give me a call and tell me what the problems are," says Ditz. "I don't charge for anything I can't fix, beyond shipping."

If he can't find a replacement part or rebuild it himself, he may have the parts manufactured. That's the case with a \$3 relay needed for the control board in 2005



Before (top 2 photos) and after (bottom photo) repair of White 8510 tractor gauges. Gauges would sometimes not work or missing pixels would appear on the display.

to 2007 F-250 Ford trucks.

"The defective relay system is built into the board, but the company that made them is no longer in business," says Ditz. "I am now in the process of having relays made that will fit the same socket."

Difficulty with finding parts for older vehicles is the reason Ditz doesn't work with vehicles made prior to 1992. He says that even parts for 1992 to 1996 are becoming hard to find.

"I keep 500 to 600 instrument boards on hand at all times," says Ditz. "There are thousands of circuit boards with digital displays built into them. Every week I see something new."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Prospeedo, 3829 12 St. N.E., Calgary, Alta., Canada T2E 6M5 (ph 403 809-3903; toll free 800 277-9269; prospeedo@telus.net; www.prospeedo.com).

Reader Inquiry No. 45

His Silver Saddles Shine At Shows, Parades

Back in the 1940's and 50's, when Hollywood stars rode horses decked out with sterling silver saddles and tack, a saddle-maker named Ted Flowers in Indiana decided to make his own silver saddles. But he used German silver (nickel silver) that looked the same but cost a lot less.

About 15 years ago, leather-worker Bob Glessner discovered and purchased Flowers' old dies and started making silver saddles. "When I build a full clad silver saddle, not a lot of leather shows through," Glessner says, explaining that it's like building two saddles because everything has to be backed with leather.

It takes about three months to complete a saddle and tack.

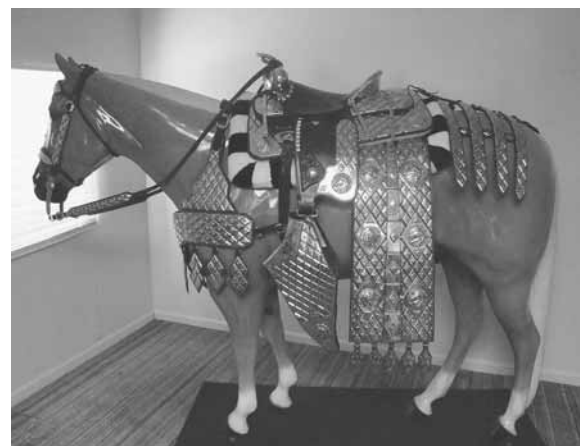
"I also do a lot of restoration work," Glessner says. Because he has the dies, he

can make parts for people who own Flowers' saddles.

Following Flowers' style, Glessner offers six full-clad styles that include diamonds, horse heads, Indian heads and other designs. He customizes them with initials and other items at the customer's request. He also offers custom saddles with varying amounts of silver.

Cost for the full-clad silver saddles starts at just over \$11,000, averaging about \$15,000.

Glessner's customers have show horses and ride in parades, and his saddles appear at the Rose Bowl. With more interest in developing new parade classes for horses, he's seeing renewed interest in silver saddles.



Leather-worker Bob Glessner makes silver saddles, as well as saddles in a variety of styles.

Contact Glessner for a catalog of saddle styles or about saddle restoration.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Loon Creek Leather, LLC, Huntington, Ind. (ph 260 356-0726; www.looncreekleather.com).

Reader Inquiry No. 46