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**LETS HIM DO MAJOR TRACTOR AND
COMBINE REPAIRS ON THE FARM**

Mechanic Makes "House Calls" In Old Ambulance

"Customers never forget me once they've seen my truck," says Grant Hanson, a traveling farm mechanic who makes on-farm service calls with a converted medical ambulance that he says makes the perfect on-farm service vehicle.

Hanson got the idea for his traveling farm shop from a neighbor who buys and sells ambulances. The more he looked at them the more he liked the idea of using one of them for making on-farm service calls.

The ambulance has a number of features that make it an ideal service truck. It's got extra headroom in the top so he can stand up inside the van, and there are storage compartments made out of fiberglass (easy to clean) all around the inside of the van for tools, parts and miscellaneous equipment. He puts his oxygen and acetylene tanks into holders that previously held medical oxygen tanks. One of the best features are the floodlights all around the outside edge of the van which he uses, along with directional spotlights, to light up jobs at night. The ambulance is fitted with dual batteries equipped with individual shut-off switches so he can use one battery to run the lights for a couple hours and then start the engine with the other battery.

The ambulance is outfitted with a full range of hand and power tools to perform most any repair job on the farm, as well as a hydraulic press, gas and electric welders, a 5-hp. air compressor, equipment to check diesel injectors, hydraulic flow rate checkers, a parts washer, and a high-pressure washer. He also carries enough electrical wire and fittings to build an entire wiring harness for a tractor or combine, as well as rebuild kits for many parts, such as alternators.

One of the unique features of the ambulance-service truck is the 50-gal. hot water reservoir Hanson rigged up. Water in the reservoir is heated by engine coolant which circulates through copper coils inside the tank. The hot water is used to wash dirty equipment before he starts working on it. "It gives me about 20 min. of spray with my high pressure washer," says Hanson. He also has a parts washer built onto a portable

bench that is the first thing he takes out of the truck to set up when he gets to a job.

During summer Hanson does almost all his service work on farms. "It's easier for me to go to the farm than it is to bring big combines and tractors into town. Many farmers have their own well-equipped shops and want to do some of the work themselves, and then have me out to do the work they can't handle. During harvest or other busy times of the year, I work on equipment right in the field. Farmers really appreciate my on-farm calls," says Hanson.

One additional piece of equipment he takes with him is his unique home-built portable crane that he pulls on a trailer behind the ambulance. He designed it specifically for work on tractors and combines, and it's big enough to pull engines, lift off cabs, and remove dual wheels together with rear axle assembly. "All the cranes on the market are built for automotive or truck work. I designed this crane with an adjustable base to work on small tractors right up to the biggest tractors and combines."

Another unique feature on the ambulance is Hanson's swing-out tool chest which hinges on a post just inside the side doors of the van. When he's got the door open, the chest swings out for easy access, then swings back inside again for transport.

Hanson says he feels he can handle more in-field service jobs than any other portable repair service he's heard of. There's virtually nothing he can't do in the field, except for things like major engine rebuilds, when he pulls the engine with the crane and takes it back to his shop in town.

Hanson works within a 40 to 50 mile radius of Glenwood, advertising in local publications. He prides himself on teaching farmers how to do their own repair jobs when he's on their farms. Every farmer differs in his mechanical ability but he says most appreciate the advice he offers. "It's like a dentist showing people how to take of their teeth. It doesn't create more business but it's very satisfying," he says.

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Ag World

Editor's Note: Most of what goes into Ag World stems from story ideas sent to us by readers. This special section of FARM SHOW touches on the lighter side of farming and ranching - everything from human interest stories, to unusual hobbies, to unique things farm families are doing for fun or profit. If you've read or heard a good Ag World type story you'd like to share with others, send it to: FARM SHOW, Box 1029, Lakeville, Minn. 55044.



Mules are strapped into a harness that pulls against rails on either side of animals. Clark uses two sets of reins to control the team right from the cab of the cut-down car.

IT'S ONLY GOT 2 HP BUT IT REALLY GOES!

Horse-Powered "Pickup"

People don't believe their eyes when they see this horse-powered "pickup" coming down the highway at them. It's only got a 2-hp. "engine" but Reese Clark says it drives down the road just like any other vehicle on the highway. Only slower.

The Elmwood, Okla., farmer takes the truck to antique engine shows and runs it in parades. He says it's legal to drive down the highway so he sometimes drives it into town. There's a slow-moving vehicle sign on back.

The steering and brakes work normally in the cut-down car but the motor and transmission are gone. A team of horses or mules are strapped into a harness that pulls against rails on either side of the animals. Clark uses two sets of reins to control the team. The reins run through pulleys back to pulleys behind the animals. One set of reins,

painted red, is used for forward. The other set, painted blue, is used for reverse. He uses the wheel for steering, and both the reins and brakes to stop.

"A good team gets used to it real quick. I've been using a big team of mules that learned how to push it in one training session," says Clark. The mini truck was made from a small French car with the back end cut off. He says it's important to leave plenty of room for the animals' heads.

Clark says he has talked with a state highway patrolman who told him he could legally take the vehicle on the road because the transmission and engine have been removed.

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