



Preheim's 14-ft. long metal railroad engine mounts on a 6-ft. long garden tractor with the help of up-front steerable support wheels.

## BUILT AROUND GARDEN TRACTOR

# Kids, Adults Enjoy This Homemade Train

"It keeps us busy in retirement," says Mylo Preheim, builder and chief engineer of Engine No. 9 — the Dakota Special, a homemade train that's become a top-notch attraction at parades, celebrations and nursing homes.

It all started several years ago when Preheim, a retired businessman in Parker, S. Dak., built a "cardboard locomotive" to enter in the town's Centennial Celebration parade. "I cut out cardboard to resemble a locomotive and hung the pieces on the sides of a garden tractor, then hitched a couple coaster wagons behind for kids to ride in. It proved so popular that I decided to build a bigger and better train for future parades and celebrations."

Preheim's "bigger and better" Engine No. 9 is made of metal and measures 8 ft. high and 14 ft. long. With a coal car and two passenger cars hitched behind, the "go anywhere" trackless train is 40 ft. long and hauls 12 adult passengers, or up to about 24 kids.

The engine is built over a 3 cyl., 18 hp hydrostatic John Deere diesel garden tractor. "The real trick in building the locomotive was to figure out how to get the 14-ft. long engine mounted on the short, 6-ft. tractor," explains Preheim. He solved the "overhang" problem with a set of steerable support wheels mounted in front of the tractor. "I had to figure out a way to get them to steer faster than the tractor's regular front wheels and still be able to turn all four steerable wheels with the tractor's regular steering wheel."

Now that he's built one, Preheim says he'd be happy to custom build trains similar to his, or to serve as a consultant to do-it-yourselfers.

The passenger cars each have two support wheels and are linked together by wide pivoting hitch plates which give the cars stability on curves and slopes. Canopies provide shade and rain protection for passengers.

"Whenever we're invited to a small town for a parade, celebration or other event, we take the train to the local nursing home to give residents free rides. They love it," notes Preheim.

He and his wife Dorothy have been in four different states with their popular train. For transport, they load the engine and two passenger cars into an enclosed van which hooks behind their pickup. They load the coal car into the bed of their pickup.

Friends Mag and Babe Hansen usually accompany the Preheims on trips to help set up and operate the train, and to help with passenger tickets. "We discovered early on that, because of long lines and rambunctious kids, handing out tickets for rides is a must," Preheim told FARM SHOW.

The train is equipped with a loud speaker for making announcements, and for playing (on tape) railroad music and whistle sounds. Seats in the passenger cars can be removed to make room for passengers in wheelchairs.

During the Christmas season, the Preheims and their train are invited to nearby towns and shopping malls to help Santa, with a trainful of toys, make his appearance.

They charge a standard \$175 fee, plus mileage, for a four-hour stint. "We charge just enough for parades and other events to cover meals, gas and other travel expenses for ourselves and our helpers, the Hansens. We're in this for fun and not the money," says Preheim. He confesses that he's having "the time of my life" entertaining kids of all ages with his popular Engine No. 9, the Dakota Special.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Mylo and Dorothy Preheim, Box 512, Parker, So. Dak. 57053 (ph 605 297-4464).



Photo courtesy Fargo Forum

Anderson gets his mail by pulling down the front wall of his look-alike mailbox.

## SONS BUILT THE LOOK-ALIKE BOX FOR DAD

# Copypat Mailbox Looks Like Farmer's Own Home

Parnell Anderson's mailbox is an almost exact duplicate of his own one-story farm home right down to the stone chips made from similar stones used on the original house.

The mailbox, which was a gift from his sons, attracts plenty of attention

from passing motorists who do a "double take" between the box and the house behind it.

The house and mailbox have the same color brown stain, and the same color shingles and stone facing in front.

## PROVIDES SAFETY AND KEEPS ANIMAL FROM WANDERING AROUND

# Woman Invents First Seat Belt For Dogs

Nancy Smith always wears her seat belt and she worries about what might happen to her dogs if they were ever in the car when she had an accident. That's the reason she invented the first seat belt for dogs.

"It protects your dog and also keeps him from jumping out the window or into your lap while driving. When you make a quick stop, it'll hold him in his seat without sliding forward, as often happens," says Smith, a teacher who owns 5 dogs, 3 horses and 6 cats.

The safety harness is made from nylon webbing that wraps around the body of the dog. The car or truck seat belt simply slips through the back of the harness to anchor it in place. Unlike a leash and collar, which just wraps around the neck of the animal, the safety harness holds the entire body of the dog.

Smith sells the Tag-A-Long safety harness for \$18.45. When ordering, specify the type of dog and its weight and chest measurements. Smith says she's also working on a safety harness for cats.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Nancy



Seat belt protects dog and also keeps him from sliding around.

Smith, Tag-A-Long Traveler, Crossroads North, Rt. 1, Box 111, Brewster, Minn. 56119 (ph 507 372-7526).