

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



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.

rebuild it himself, he may have the parts manufactured. That's the case with a \$3 relay needed for the control board in 2005 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).



These 1 1/2-in.-thick titanium parts were cut at a speed of 3/4 in. per minute with the FARM-JET cutting system. The machine can cut material up to 5 in. thick.

Waterjet Cutting System Designed For Farm Shops

If you're looking for the ultimate metal cutting tool for your farm shop, a Minnesota company just might have what you need. "The FARM-JET® is the first waterjet cutting system designed and priced for farmers," says Jude Lague, president of Jet Edge, the manufacturer. It cuts parts from virtually any type of metal, without heat, flames or noxious fumes. The secret is a 55,000 psi waterjet that can cut with needlepoint accuracy and efficiency through 5-in. thick steel or titanium. It's just as good at cutting through carpet, food and even foam rubber.

"The FARM-JET is designed especially for rural environments with limited electrical service," says Lague. "We built this because we think there's a demand for a sophisticated cutting tool by farm operations that repair and build their own equipment." Lague goes on to say that before his company introduced this model, a waterjet cutting tool required a 6-figure investment and access to 460-volt electrical power. Electricity for this machine can be supplied from a 115v 60Hz or 230v 50Hz source.

Lague says the FARM-JET is an economical and portable alternative to high-priced stationary machines. A 50-hp tractor carries the 1,800-lb. machine on a Cat. I or II 3-pt. hitch. A 540 or 1,000 rpm pto drives an Eco-Jet pump that produces 1 gpm water

flow and 55,000 psi pressure at the tip of the abrasivejet cutting head. Material lays on a 40-in. square cutting table and is cut as the head follows a computer-generated cutting path. The head is mounted on a motorized Z axis with 5 in. of up and down travel. Side-to-side and front-to-back movement is controlled by the X and Y axis.

Cutting instructions for the FARM-JET are programmed into a Windows PC computer that uses a FlashCut Pro-Series Stepper Controller and FlashCut CNC software. The system also includes IGEMS path generation software and a hand-held pendant to operate the machine.

Lague says a FARM-JET has several advantages over other cutting systems. "If you need a part fast, you can create and cut one in just minutes without having to get it from a dealer or having someone make it for you. The waterjet cuts just about any thickness metal without creating heat, case hardening, recast or molecular change to the material. The waterjet system also cuts without creating any noxious fumes." Abrasive silica is added to the cutting stream when cutting metal while water alone is used to cut other materials.

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Gary Carlson found an old Kubota cab from a compact utility tractor and mounted it on his 1999 Kubota garden tractor.

Cab Mounted On Kubota Tractor

Gary Carlson wanted to put a cab on his 1999 Kubota F2560 garden tractor to make blowing snow more comfortable. The Eau Claire, Wis., resident went looking on Craigslist and found an old Kubota cab from a compact utility tractor in good condition.

He purchased it for \$75 and, with help from son Todd, modified it to fit. They used the mower with a 52-in., 2-stage snowblower and a 6-ft. mower deck equipped with a hydraulic dump grass collection system.

"The conversion took about a month, but it looks and functions like a factory unit," says Todd. "It has a 12-volt heater, power windshield wiper, and lights facing the front and rear. There are doors on both sides so we can enter or exit from either side. Dad spends a fair amount of time removing snow, and at his age he shouldn't have to tolerate a face full of snow any more. That was our inspiration."

"People who see it for the first time are surprised to learn that it's not factory-made. Kubota does make a cab for this mower, but it costs thousands of dollars. The conversion took about a month to do, but we only spent about \$200 and that was mostly for sheet metal and a 12-volt heater."

The cab bolts onto the mower's rollover protective structure (ROPS) without the

need to remove the ROPS from the vehicle. There are doors on both sides and large glass windows on all 4 sides.

The cab was taller than necessary for the mower so they cut 10 in. off the bottom. In order to accommodate the steering column they also lengthened the cab by 6 in., welding new sheet metal onto the back side.

A diamond plate box was added on front of the cab to accommodate the mower's foot controls, including the hydrostatic foot pedal, brake pedal, and differential lock which extended in front of the steering wheel. "We fabricated some aluminum parts and attached them over a steel frame that attaches to brackets, which we mounted on the mower's chassis," explains Todd.

The box has a small glass window located just in front of the mower's headlight, and it shines through the window. A flashing yellow security light mounts on top of the cab.

They used rubber-backed carpet runner to seal the cab's floor, bolting it to the frame to provide a flexible seal against snow and wind. A 12-volt ceramic heater and fan keep the windows defrosted.

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