



Goertzen's wheelchair lift uses a 12-volt ATV winch with steel cable to do the lifting. Operator pulls an overcentered lever to lock hinged ramp in upright position.

“Made It Myself” Wheelchair Lift

Henry Goertzen of Echo Bay, Ontario, recently sent FARM SHOW photos of a wheelchair lift he built for his wife for only about \$350.

“When my wife became handicapped, I thought I had no choice but to build an unsightly 46-ft. long wheelchair ramp leading up to the porch on our house. It would have cost more than \$1,000, plus it would have required a lot of wheelchair pushing and time spent clearing snow off the ramp,” says the 90-year-old Goertzen.

After considering several options he decided to build the wheelchair lift instead, using 4 by 4 cedar posts to build the frame. A 12-volt ATV winch with steel cable does the lifting. The frame is held together by gussets made from 3 1/2-in. wide, 1/8-in. thick steel plate.

The lift frame is about 10 ft. high and 4 ft. wide with a 3/4-in. thick plywood floor supported by 2 by 4's, which are tapered toward the front to keep the floor flush with the ground. Plywood sides are nailed to cross members on both sides of the frame. A short enter and exit ramp is attached to the front of

the lift platform with 3 hinges. “The ramp is controlled by an over-center lever that locks the ramp in an upright position and keeps the wheelchair from rolling off the lift,” says Goertzen.

Once the wheelchair is rolled onto the floor, the operator pulls on an overcentered lever to lock the ramp in an upright position that holds the wheelchair in place. He then uses a switch to raise the lift 42 in. up to porch level. A limit switch keeps the lift from going too high.

“The porch is surrounded by a wooden railing on all sides except for an opening where the wheelchair enters it. I installed a gate in front of the opening on the porch railing to prevent children from falling off when the lift is in the down position.

“My total cost was about \$350 which included the winch, lumber, steel gussets, 12-volt battery, and a solar charger for it.”

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“It’s a great attention getter anywhere I take it,” says Bill Westover about his home-built mobile tractor “soda cooler”.

Mobile Tractor “Soda Cooler”

“It holds up to 200 lbs. of icy cold refreshments and also has space for dry storage. It’s a great attention getter anywhere I take it,” says Bill Westover about his home-built tractor “soda cooler”. “It works great for parties, concerts, picnics, tractor shows, and going to the race track.”

He started out with a 200-lb. military ice chest and custom built a frame with a Case tractor theme, using the front hood, fenders

and seat off a Case garden tractor. The unit rides on lugged tires. The hood contains pop can holders and is hinged at the bottom, allowing it to be tipped forward for access to a storage compartment in front of the cooler. A removable handle attaches to the unit’s front end.

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The propeller-driven Helicron car is just one of many quirky and rare European automobiles housed at the Lane Motor Museum in Nashville, Tenn.

Propeller-Powered Antique Car

Flip the calendar back to 1932 and picture yourself driving through the French countryside in a roadster powered by an airplane propeller. The name of the quirky inventor who built the vehicle has been lost over time, but the vehicle itself hasn’t. The propeller-driven Helicron, along with many other quirky and rare European automobiles, are housed at the Lane Motor Museum in Nashville, Tenn.

The Helicron sat unnoticed in a French barn until 2000. It was rebuilt using many of the original mechanical components, including the frame, wire wheels, dashboard, steering gear, brake pedal, light switch and headlights. The wood frame, covered in dust and dirt, was sandblasted and treated. The vehicle steers with its spring-mounted rear wheels. The front wheels have no springs.

After restoration, the Helicron was certified for driving in France. It was purchased by the Lane Museum in 2004. At the front of the torpedo-shaped body is a 4-cyl. air-cooled Citroen GS engine with a 3-ft. dia. double shaft propeller coupled directly to its crankshaft. Archivists say the original engine was probably a horizontally opposed 2 cylinder 4 stroke known as an ABC Scorpion.

Even with such an unusual design, the Helicron was not the first, nor the only, propeller-driven car ever built. Frenchman Marcel Leyat was probably the largest proponent of such designs and built about 30 of them from 1913 to 1926. Two are known to exist almost a century later. Another vehicle was the 1929 Wind Wagon.

Jeff Lane, who owns the museum, says the vehicle is noisy and not very good at climbing hills. It is, however, fun to drive, although a bit quirky. Even though it has a cruising speed of 30 to 40 mph, and traction isn’t an issue because it’s powered by air, stopping on a hill creates a problem.

Lane says the unknown builder turned the chassis front to back so the rear wheels steered. It has 4-wheel mechanical brakes that stop it adequately. Don’t plan on backing up as it doesn’t have reverse.

The Helicron is among 30 French vehicles on display at the Lane Museum through early April, 2016.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Lane Motor Museum, 702 Murfreesboro Pike, Nashville, Tenn. 37210 (ph 615 742-7445; www.lanemotormuseum.org).



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