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THE FOLKS FROM TRADERS,
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SUPERSTORE, PUT THE SLAM
ON AN '04 DODGE RUMBLE
BEE HEMI RAM

SQUASHIN' THE BEE

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY BOB McCLURG

The editors of *StreetTrucks* are men of few words. Yet, they never seem to have any problem getting points across in regards to a vehicle's ride height.

"If the frame ain't notched, then it ain't low enough!"

In this particular instance the "it" they are referring to just so happened to be "Nitrous Mike" Golightly's yellow, 2004 Dodge Ram 1500 Rumble Bee Hemi street truck. The folks at Santa Fe Springs, California's Trader's ("America's Sport Truck Superstore") had just slammed it some 4 inches in front and 6 inches in the rear using one of McGaughy's Suspension Parts' (Fresno, CA) new 4-6 drop kits designed for the 2002-up Dodge 1500 Ram trucks.

"There are a total of three kits designed to fit either the 2002-04 Dodge Ram 1500-Series Single Cab, the Dodge Ram-Series Extra Cab and the Dodge Ram 1500-Series Quad Cab models," says President Mike McGaughy.

"We offer a 2-4 Economy Kit (P/N 02D-24E) which features a 1,500-pound progressive rate coil spring and a flip kit with shackle bracket in the rear.

"Then we offer a 2 to 4 1/2 drop kit (P/N 02D-24D), which features our new ductile iron CNC-machined front spindle and progressive wound (1,500-pound) coil front springs, which replace the stock units, along with a flip kit with special spring shackle bracket in the rear.

"At the moment, nobody else in the automotive aftermarket has got a dropped spindle application for the Dodge Ram 1500 truck line, patent pending!

"Our new, ductile iron, CNC-machined front spindles are a direct bolt-on replacement for the stock Dodge cast-aluminum front spindles, and don't lose any of the stock turning radius. These units are stronger than the stock part, and feature all the correct suspension geometry and factory features built in, right down to the drilling of the hole for driver's side ABS brake line mounting bracket.

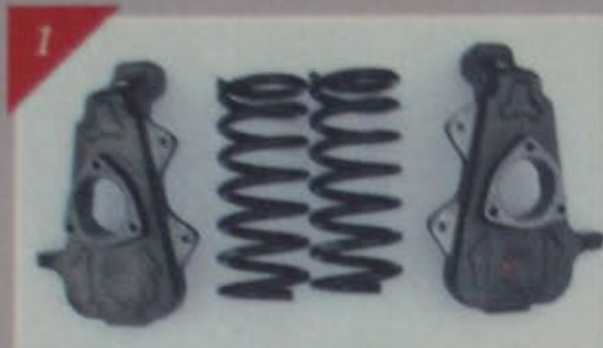
"Obviously this new spindle is also the heart and soul of our 4-6 deluxe kit (P/N 02D-46D), which also features our progressive wound, 1,500 in.-lb. coil front springs."

Out back, McGaughy's 4-6 deluxe drop flip kit features the correct pinion angle designed into the self-locating spring shackle brackets, so there's no need for shimming.

"Our rear shock extender brackets were designed to use the factory Mopar shocks, which are far superior to most aftermarket replacement units."

However, with the 4 to 6-inch deluxe version, some serious surgery, like C-notching or flame-cutting is an absolute requirement. This is definitely NOT a job for the faint of heart!

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Shown is McGaughy's Suspension Parts' 4-6 deluxe drop kit for the 2002-04 Dodge Ram 1500 light duty truck line. Included in the deluxe kit (P/N 02D-46D) is a pair of McGaughy's CNC-machined, ductile-iron dropped front spindles (patent pending); a pair of progressive wound, 1,500-pound lower front springs; a rear flip kit, which includes the correct pinion angle design spring locator brackets; rear shock extender brackets; McGaughy's design bump stops; and C-notch kit.



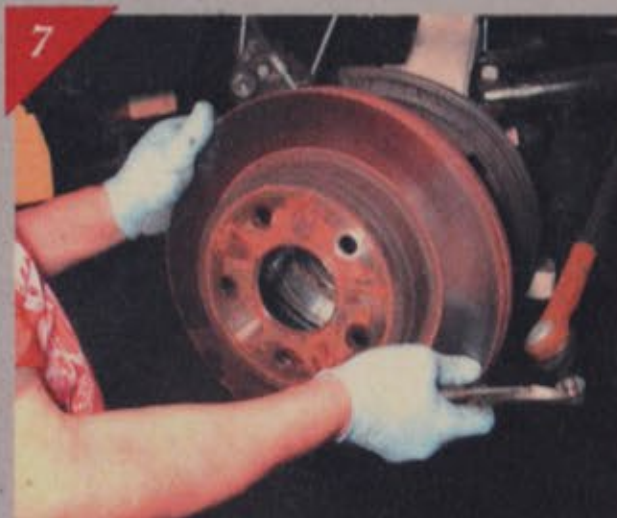
Our 4-6 drop subject was Nitrous Mike Golightly's yellow, 5.7L, 2004 Dodge Ram 1500 Rumble Bee Hemi pickup. Prior to unbolting anything, Golightly measures the ride height front and rear, and comes up with a measurement of 16 1/8 inches front and 39 inches rear.



Next, Richard uses an air impact gun to remove the passenger-side tie rod end using a 21mm socket.



From there, our installer uses an 18mm socket to remove the factory bolts which retain the front disc brake caliper, and then it is set out of the way.



After removing the safety clips, which retain the front disc brake rotors in place, the actual rotor itself is removed.



Next, Richard removes the lower ball joint retaining nut using a 24mm socket.



This procedure is followed up with the removal of the upper ball joint nut using a 21mm socket.



And out comes the actual spindle assembly itself with hub carrier still attached.



At this juncture, Richard uses an air impact gun equipped with a 15mm socket to remove the hub assembly from the Dodge factory aluminum spindle.



With this kit, it's necessary to trim the front tip of the dust shields in order to clear the revised tie rod end geometry following the illustrated instructions provided in the kit.



Reassembly begins with the installation of the Mopar factory hub carrier onto the McGaughy's dropped front spindle assembly using the OE 15mm factory mounting bolts.



Next, Richard removes the anti-sway bar end link using a 15mm socket.



Pineda removes the factory shock absorber, which will also be reused.



Out comes the stock factory Mopar spring.



This comparison photo clearly shows the difference between the factory spring on the left, and the McGaughy's spring on the right. However, the spring rate (1,500 pounds) remains the same.



Reassembly begins with the installation of the McGaughy's spring into the spring saddle using the factory rubber insulator.



This is followed with the reinstallation of the factory Mopar front shock using the 1/2-inch factory shock absorber retaining nuts.



Reinstallation of the new McGaughy's ductile iron dropped front spindle assembly comes next and is bolted into position using a 21mm socket.



With that done, the next order of business is the reinstallation of the disc brake rotor and caliper assembly using the factory 18mm bolts.



This procedure is followed with the reinstallation of the factory tie rod end using a 21mm socket.



Moving over to the driver's side, Richard begins by removing the ABS brake sensor wire from its retaining clip located at the bottom of the fender well.

25



Also shown is the location on the driver's side spindle where the ABS brake sensor line mounts up. This has to be removed before removing the actual spindle/hub carrier assembly. A new provision is drilled into the new spindle. Other than this, the changeover is the same as the passenger side.

26



Pineda kicks things off in the rear by removing the lower 21mm shock bolt from the passenger side of the truck.

27

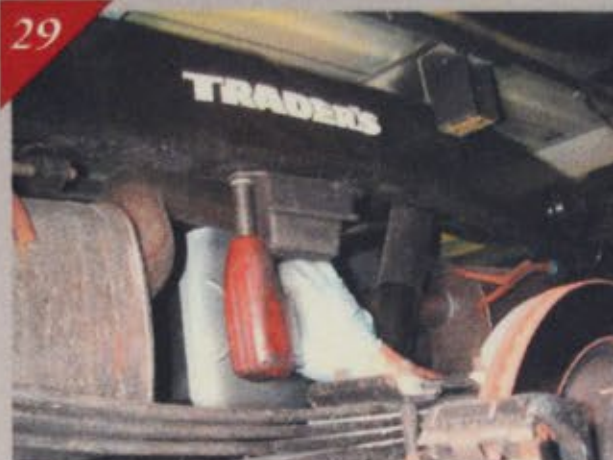


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This procedure is followed with the removal of the leaf spring bolts, which also use a 21mm bolt and nut.

29



Next comes the removal of the factory bump stops, using an air gun and a 15mm socket.

30



With U-bolts removed, Pineda removes the passenger side leaf spring from the truck, while a floor jack supports the rear end.

31



The next order of business is the removal of the Dodge brake line bracket from the rear axle using a 13mm socket.

32



Next, Pineda installs the new rear axle saddle after flipping the axle and reinstalling the passenger side rear leaf spring.

33



With saddles in place, the factory U-bolts are reinstalled with McGaughy's spring plate and 21mm U-bolt nuts.

34



Next comes the reinstallation of the factory shock onto the McGaughy's shock extender bracket using a 21mm socket.

35



In this photo, Pineda uses the opposite side C-notch bracket to make a template (using spray paint) onto the Rumble Bee's rear framerail. Since this area will be cut, Richard double and triple checks his marks.

36



Since this chassis is double wall thickness, it only makes sense to use a plasma cutter. Sure, you can use a smoke wrench. That is IF you want to take all day to do the job!

37



After cutting through the first wall, Pineda tackles the second or inner wall of the chassis.

38



With metallic obstructions summarily removed, Pineda uses a grinder to clean things up.

39



40



Satisfied with his work, Richard uses the McGaughy's outer gusset plate to make his marks. Then he drills his pilot holes in the chassis.

41



At this juncture, Pineda test-fits the inner support bracket, sliding it up inside of what remains of the Dodge Ram 1500-Series rear framerails.

42



Since there is a step in the factory frame, McGaughy's also provides a shim plate, which we see being installed here.

43



And finally, our installer bolts together the entire assembly using the 7/16-inch nuts provided. These nuts are final-torqued to 75 lb.-ft.

44



Now for a little good news/bad news. The good news is that Golightly's Rumble Bee is definitely in the weeds, lowered a total of 4 3/4 inches front and 6 inches in the rear. But the OE tires scrape the fender lip.

45




The obvious cure was a new set of P275/45 R20-inch Goodyear Eagle GTs. Now Mike's Hemi hauler looks just right!

"Our C-notch kit was designed to sandwich and support the framerail on both the outside, with its multiple bend bracket and shim plates, as well as supporting the framerails from the inside with the use of a 3/16-inch bolt-on gusset plate for extra strength. This setup also incorporates our own bump stop, and we've tested the suspension with a load of 2,000 pounds. The suspension WILL NOT bottom out!"

However, it should be noted that while either of the McGaughy's 2-4 drop kits will work just fine with the stock factory 17-inch Dodge wheels and tires, the deluxe 4-6 drop kit requires the replacement of the factory P275/60 x R20-inch tires (as used on the upscale Dodge Rumble Bee models) with a shorter P275/45 R20 tire.

These kits are reasonably priced, and are available through participating McGaughy's retailers. And best of all, all of McGaughy's suspension kits are guaranteed for life against flaws in materials and workmanship.

Now follow along with us as Trader's Technician Richard Pineda puts the 4-6 slam on Nitrous Mike's 2004 Dodge Rumble Bee Hemi. 

SOURCE

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