

2014 GMC Sierra - McGaughys Suspension - Gaining A New Perspective

McGaughy's Suspension Gives GMC's Sierra An Off-Road Attitude

Harley Camilleri - Jan 26, 2014

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After touring the GMC Sierra assembly line and spending plenty of time behind the wheel of the 2014 Sierra on- and off-road, we can assure you that the extensive engineering changes have created a uniquely different grade of truck. As expected, we're not the only ones taking notice. Every major aftermarket truck accessory manufacturer has been clamoring to bring to market new products to dress the GM trucks for any occasion.

McGaughys Suspension was one of the first companies to show us its new line of lift accessories that give the platform a new attitude by altering its altitude. McGaughys can accommodate nearly any desire for owners of '14 GM trucks, with lifts that range from a sedate 2-inch leveling kit to a more usable 4-inch system, and finally the 7-inch arrangement we are highlighting here. For those of you that want a little something extra, McGaughys has optional components to make the 7-inch into an 8- or even 9-inch should you desire.

With a fully loaded Onyx black GMC Sierra Z71 4x4 at the ready, we were excited to see what a 7-inch lift kit with new 20-inch BMF F.I.T.E. wheels and 35-inch Nitto Trail Grappler M/T tires would do for the GMC's upscale and aggressive exterior appearance. We were even more impressed that Ed Dena's Auto Center in Dinuba, California, was loading up not just this one Sierra, but also a whole line of Sierras and Silverados at its dealership with similar modifications to offer its customers customized trucks with financing to match. Fully dressed trucks, with none of the hassles. Get yours while you can.



1. With its new skin and underpinnings, the 14 GMC Sierra is sure to be a customizing dream come true.



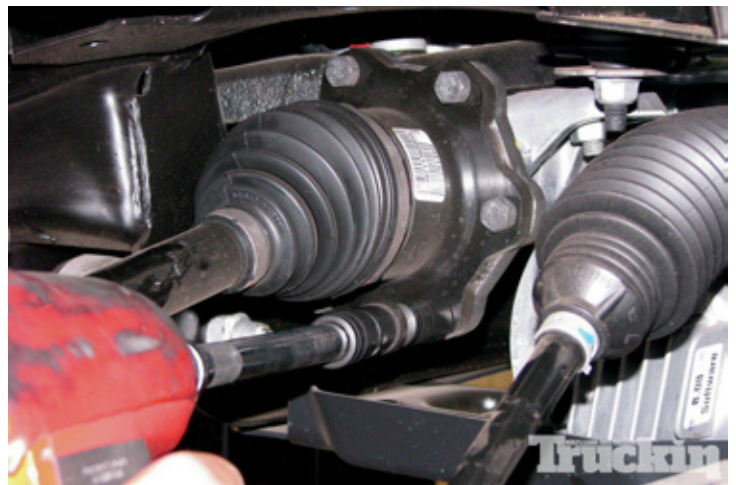
2. McGaughy's created a thorough 7-inch kit with plenty of strength to take the rigors of off-road use. We opted for a couple upgrade options not shown here, including the boxed compression struts, new adjustable front struts, and new large-diameter gas-charged rear shocks.



3. Working on the new suspension should be familiar to anyone who has wrenched on at least one of the 07 and newer half-ton trucks. Not all the trucks (Crew Cabs only) will be equipped like this one, which had aluminum control arms and spindles.

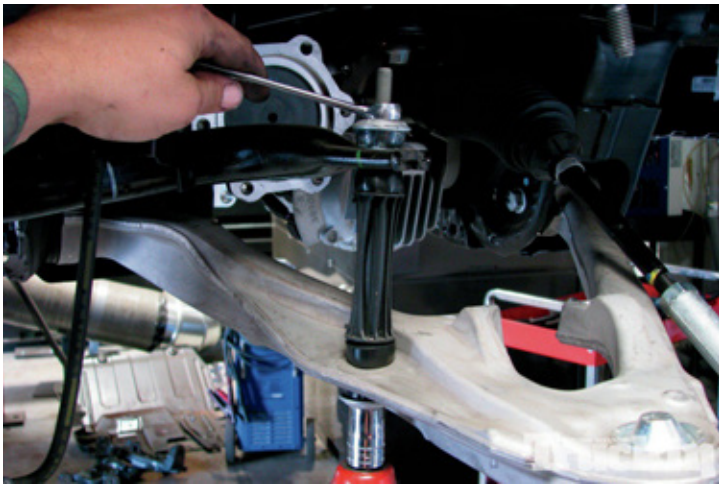


4. Everything but the upper control arms needed to be removed. We started by hanging the brake calipers out of the way, pulling the brake rotors, and dropping the struts from the chassis.

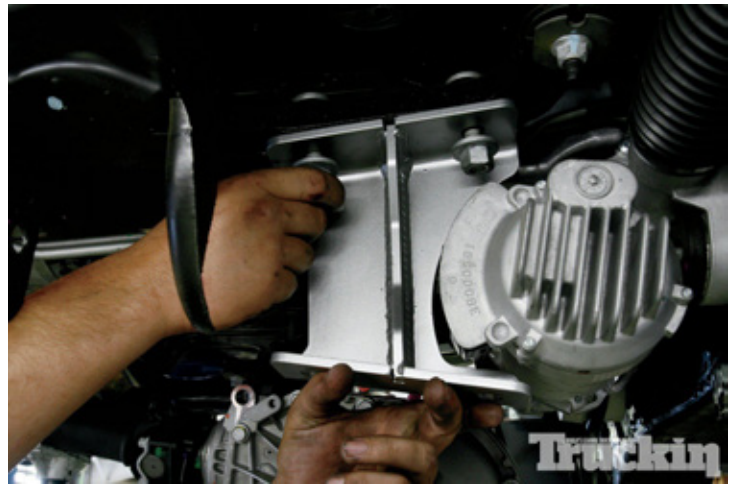


5. Both front half shafts were unbolted from the axle and set aside.





7. Our 7-inch lift system reused the sway bar and its end links, but the pieces needed to be pulled from the chassis to allow for new mounts to be installed.



10. Lopping off the frame mounts also provided clearance to lower the front axle and mount it in its new position with the powdercoated brackets from the McGaughys kit.



8. We zipped the GMC's lower control arm bolts loose and wiggled the arms off the frame. Thanks to the aluminum construction, they weren't a back breaker to muscle around.



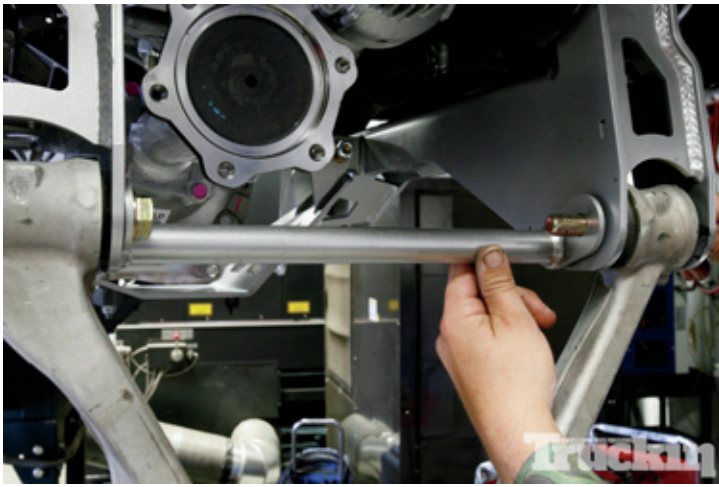
11. As for the rear control arm bracing, the fully boxed replacement was larger and stronger to accommodate not only the lift, but to also address the rigors of off-road driving with oversized tires



9. This part was not for the faint at heart. The rear control arm crossmember was removed and the mounting ears on the frame were cut back three inches to make room for the beefy McGaughys replacement.



12. The matching front crossmember bolted into the factory control arm sockets with stock hardware. Its arch was designed to maximize ground clearance.



13. These support bars bolted between the lower control arm pivots to prevent the added leverage from the dropped crossmembers being transferred to the control arms themselves.



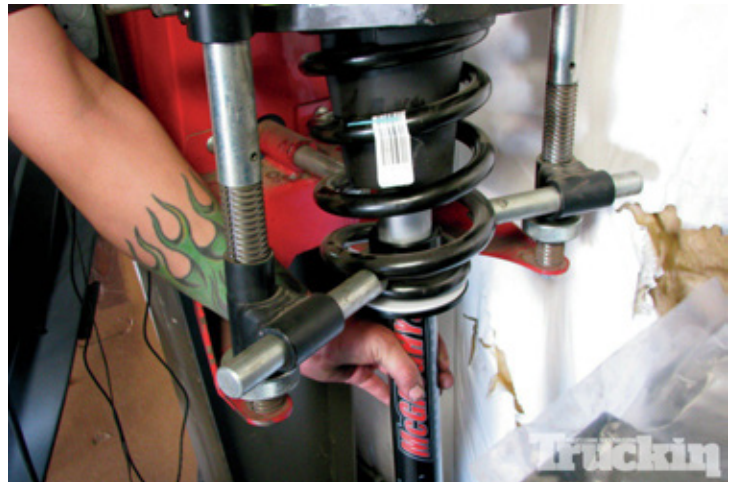
14. McGaughys designed taller spindles to fit its lifted suspension. They are designed to properly pivot a ten-inch wide wheel without scrubbing the tire.



15. Keeping the driveline geometry in proper alignment was the job of aluminum spacers that bolted in behind the front half shafts.



16. One of the optional upgrades we chose was the tuned McGaughys front struts. Combining the McGaughys spring cup, or the original spring cup, with different seat spacers allowed the front suspension height to be altered. We chose eight inches.



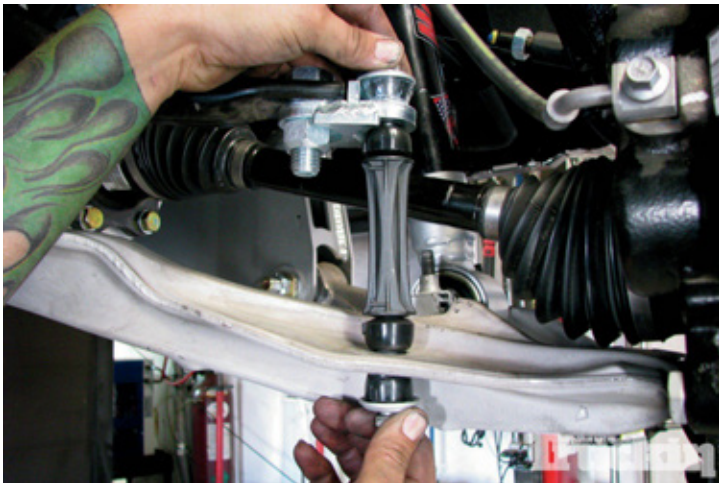
18. Placed side by side, the longer body to accommodate the lift was apparent, but the upgrade in ride characteristics would not be realized until later.



19. Using the original hardware, included spacing brackets were mounted to the frame so the original sway bar could function properly with the lift.



22. Shorter tie rods were supplied in the kit to simplify the swap and remain fully functional with zero steering issues.



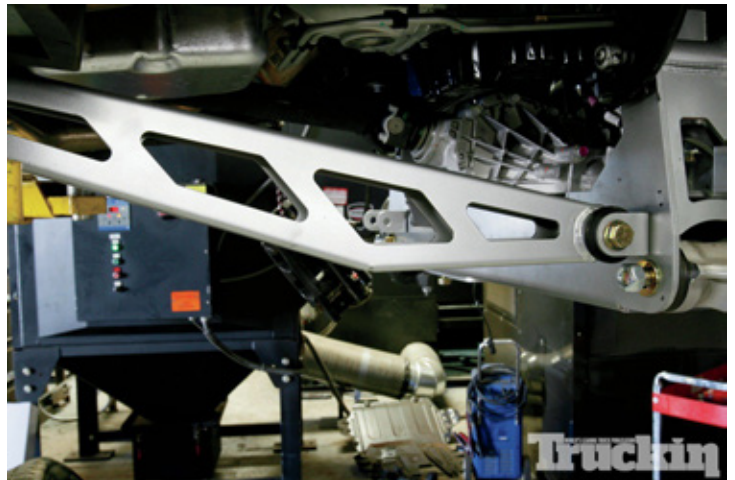
20. Original end links were reused with the help of ingenious spacers that bolted to the end of the sway bar.



23. To mount the compression struts, the hardware holding the transmission crossmember was loosened. McGaughys designed its rear mounts with slotted holes so that they slipped in place without having to support the transmission.



21. To make its new spindles work properly with the electronic power steering and still allow clearance for wider wheels, McGaughys moved the steering arm inward. The original tie-rod ends were too long so they were taken off.



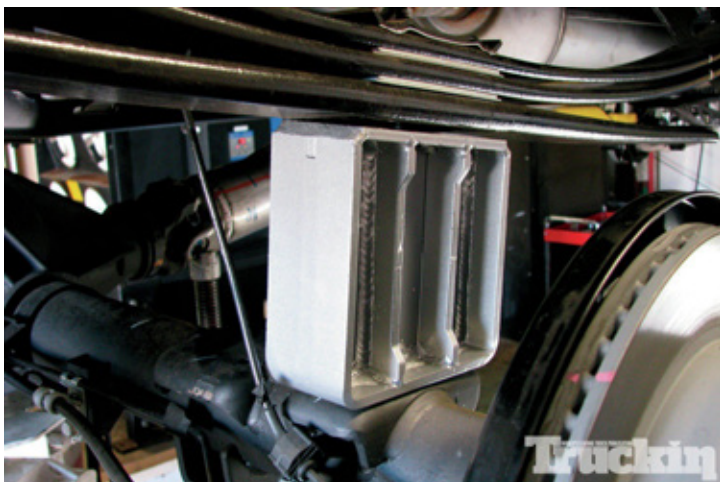
24. Our second optional upgrade was compression struts that matched the rest of the suspension. We felt the tubular ones included in the kit were too plain.



25. Out back, the original Z71 shocks were unbolted and removed.



28. Gas-charged shocks not only matched the kits silver color, but also rode great during our extended testing.



26. From the factory, the Sierra was equipped with 1-inch blocks. Those were tossed in favor of the fully fabricated 6-inch blocks from McGaughys.



27. Longer U-bolts were used to keep the rear end together using the original cast U-bolt plate that is new for this year.



29. With eight total inches of front lift and five inches under the bed, we had great clearance for the 20x9-inch BMF F.I.T.E. wheels encased in burly 35x12.50R20LT Nitto Trail Grappler M/T tires. The new aggressive yet upscale appearance perfectly complements the 2014 Sierras sculpted body lines.