

A Better Box For Classic Trucks

No More Secondhand Steering Boxes

Some of the biggest complaints from any truck owner still utilizing the stock suspension components are likely to stem from the steering system. The old worm and sector boxes under many an old truck are especially susceptible to poor performance given their requirement for regular maintenance and adjustment over the years, which was seldom performed. This results in a box with a ton of play, tight spots, and an overall unsafe situation. Over the years, the options were few and far between. Either you replaced the box completely with another used box or you did what a number of other truck owners had done and simply lived with it. Neither option was really a solution as the replacement box was likely just as bad as the original and that's if you could even find one as the sources dried up over the years.

At some point in the not so distant past, some industrious fellow realized that the steering box in an early Toyota Land Cruiser was strikingly similar in size to the early Ford unit and could be adapted to mount in the Ford frame where the stock box once resided. The recirculating ball design yielded a smoother, more precise box while the option for power steering was definitely an added bonus in a truck where a manual box was the only factory option.

Unfortunately, the Toyota conversion comes with its share of caveats as well. Clearance issues, pitman arm woes, column alignment problems, and lack of donor boxes has since made this conversion a kind of Band-Aid fix in the bigger picture.

The guys over at Classic Performance Products saw the writing on the wall recently and decided to have a go at solving the problem directly by designing a brand-new power steering box to fit a variety

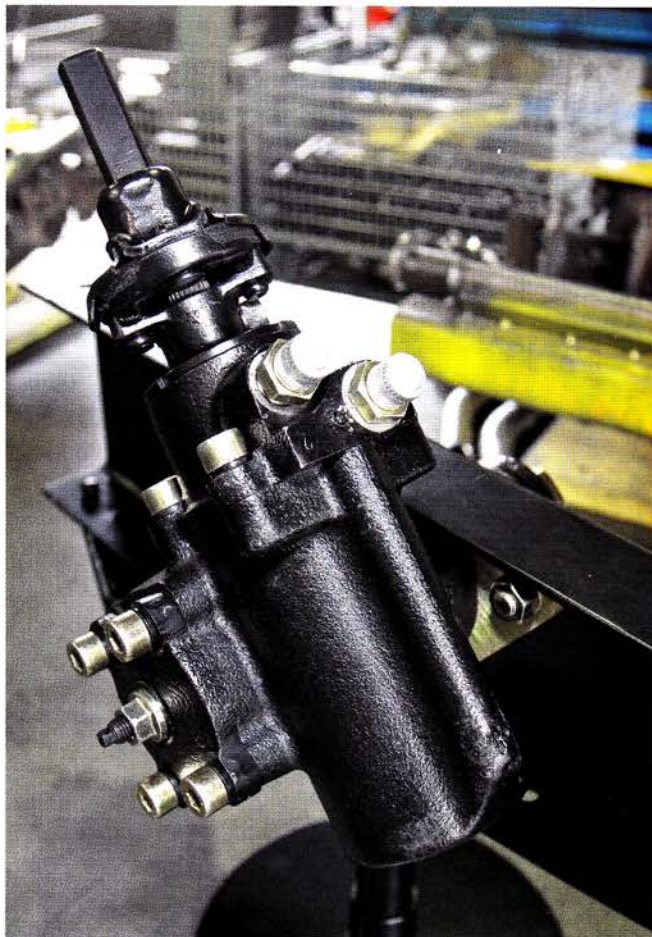
of old trucks without the need to modify the factory mounting points. Using an adapter plate and a handful of spacers, their new box bolts directly to the factory steering box mounting points, retaining the stock column location in the process. A brand-new forged pitman arm replaces the need to run a fabricated arm, like many of the Toyota kits used in the past, which results in a safer kit.

Designed by CPP, their new power steering box features a modern type valve and torsion bar, which results in a quicker, more responsive feel than the sluggish, slow-ratio Toyota box with excellent high-speed feedback and behavior. The small footprint was a purposeful design done in order to bolt into a number of applications, while still providing plenty of room for headers and clutch linkage, all the while remaining strong enough to steer the heaviest of Detroit's iron V-8 engines. Lock to lock is a quick three-and-a-half turns aided by the popular $\frac{5}{8}$ - and $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch inverted flare fittings that couple the box to standard power steering pumps. Metric O-ring, AN, and JIC fittings can also be attached via adapters available from CPP.

While the Toyota kits have definitely filled a void over the years, never was there an end-all solution regarding stock-suspended early Fords. The boxes have been getting harder and

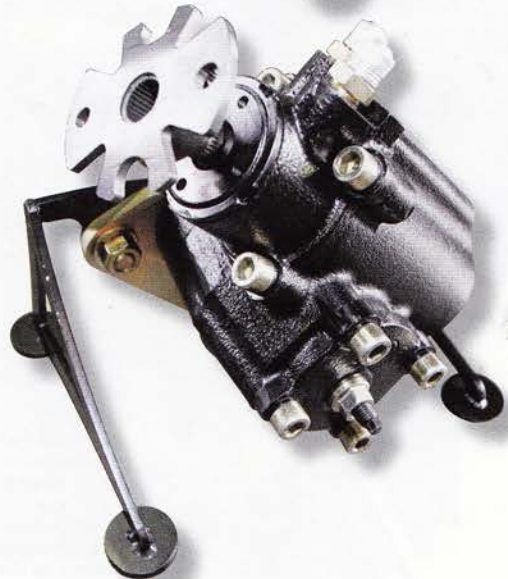
harder to find over the years and the quality of what could be found was oftentimes unacceptable. Now, with the option of bolting in a brand-new power steering box without making any modifications to the stock components save the steering column, it finally looks like the Blue Oval crowd got what they've always deserved.

At the moment, CPP offers a direct, bolt-on kit for not only the '53-60 Ford F-100 crowd, but for the '55-59 Chevy guys as well, filling a large hole in the market in one fell swoop. But with such a variety of features packaged as small as most original manual steering boxes, we're sure there are a number of bolt-in applications still to come. **CCT**

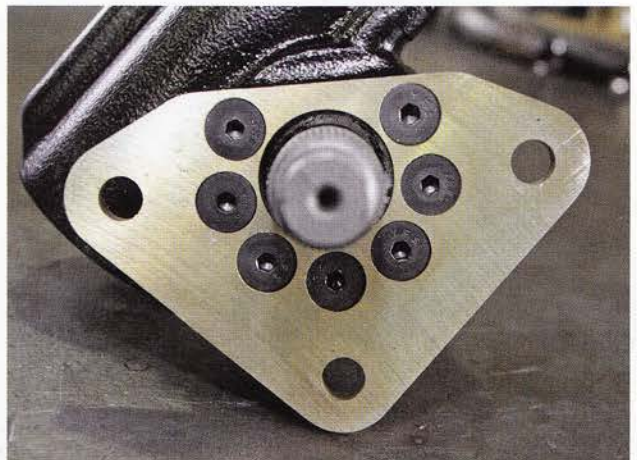
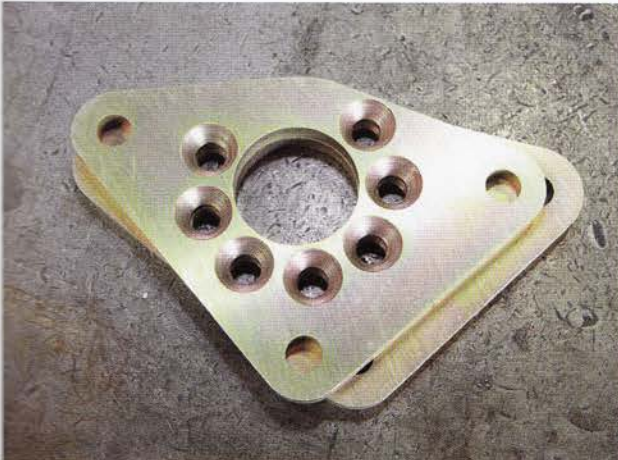


SOURCES

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11-4. A 360-degree look at CPP's new power steering box shows a number of features that make it a great upgrade for old trucks.



11-6. The core of the box's versatility lies in the mounting design. Seven clocked attachment points make for easy fitment on a variety of applications by simply swapping out mounting brackets, like the one seen here for early F-100s.

17. A trio of spacers allows the box to attach to the stock frame points, while retaining the necessary clearance between the framerail, while retaining the proper relationship to the steering column.



18-9. A rag joint atop the box mates to a hollow DD shaft on the bottom of an aftermarket column, making hookup a breeze. For stock column applications, a bit of custom fabrication is necessary to mate the column to the box, a common occurrence when using an early, original column as the shaft was one piece from the steering wheel to the box.



110. Compare the size of the new CPP box on the right, with its simple bracket, and the larger Toyota box and its rather crude attaching feature.

11. CPP has offered a forged pitman arm with the Toyota tapered spline for years and it truly complements their new box when compared to a welded arm that was in the Toyota kits of the past.



112. A view through the back window of a '60 Ford shows the angle of the steering column necessary when using a Toyota steering box. Note that not only is it off center, but that the bottom is angled to the right as well, resulting in an off-perpendicular steering wheel arrangement.



113. When it comes to retrofitting an F-100 equipped with a Toyota steering box with one of CPP's new power boxes, there are a few items that need to be fixed. The first is to relocate the steering column dash mount to get it back to center.



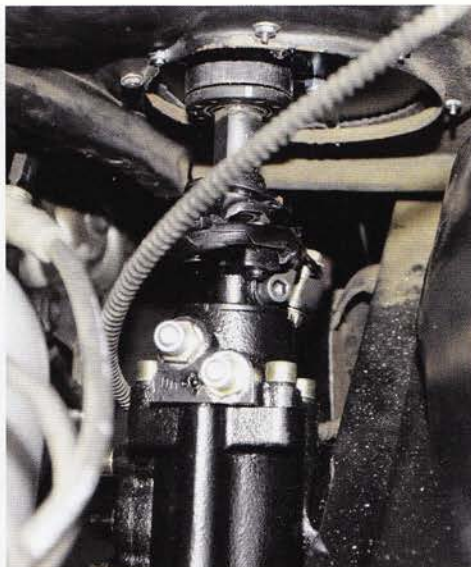
14. A new plate may be needed if the previous one was adapted for the offset column location. Here, a new plate has been installed; note the relationship of the steering shaft with the column opening.



15. From there, the column can be slid into place...



16. ...and bolted down.



17. The simple mating of the column to the box is achieved via a rag joint and DD shaft.



18. The new pitman arm is clocked and attached before being mated to the original drag link.



19. Power steering hoses are then attached to the new box, the system is bled, and in an afternoon, you've got 21st century steering under your classic Ford.