

TRAACA Tech Day: 1926 Model T Coupe Engine Installation  
By Craig Brown

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About sixteen club members assembled despite pre-Easter chores to install the rebuilt engine in Norm's 1926 Ford Model T Coupe. Some will remember a previous tech. day when the engine was removed because the magneto required attention and it was time for an engine re-build. The engine and transmission were pulled together and would be installed the same way.

This is the engine right after it was removed for the rebuild:



Rebuilt engine ready to be installed:





The first step in engine installation is to ensure everyone is at full strength by having a good breakfast. Kathy and Norm laid out a spread of caffeinated beverages, donuts, muffins and other tasty treats to give the members something to do with their mouths other than spew new insults bashing each other's Fords and Chevys.





Norm had everything well organized and ready to get started. The 91-year-old coupe had waited patiently to be re-united with her engine.





The crew had the advantage of several members who had been through this very evolution before. Norm, Bob, Dan, John, Lori and Eric handled the majority of the engine hoist chores with help from others to make position changes.



Rueben & Don were inside the car to guide the transmission and pedals past the firewall.









Norm got under the Model T to direct the final alignment adjustments while Reuben installed the drive shaft bolts. There were plenty of members present and willing to help out, but not enough assigned jobs for everyone. Some took turns at the project manager role by grazing at the breakfast table and periodically strolling over to the work area to ask for a status report.

Nothing could stop this determined crew. We were prepared for the difficulty of how to tilt and angle the engine to clear the firewall, but the alignment of the drive shaft to the transmission was a small challenge. The Model T has a square drive shaft end instead of drive shaft splines like a modern car. Some engine hoist shifting, transmission jacking and gentle back and forth movement of the car was required to get the square peg into the square hole.



Tech. day always produces valuable lessons learned:

1. RTV Silicone is a great invention and much better at keeping fluids inside the engine than cup grease, spit or dirt.
2. Don't be afraid to augment appropriate gaskets with a thin layer of RTV even though this "isn't the way Henry did it!"
3. Model T side engine mounts sit directly on the frame rails and the blocks of wood go between the frame rails to prevent frame compression when the engine is bolted down. Noise, vibration and harshness (NVR) was invented long after 1926.
4. Much like flying, the Model T engine and transmission combination needs to experience pitch, roll and yaw to arrive safely back in the car.





The engine installation went smoothly and was complete before lunchtime. Soon the Model T will be ready for many more years of happy motoring.