Wagons Ho!

Improving the Utility of a Utility Vehicle

By Darren Davis

The phrase, "Give credit where credit is due," was instilled in me at an early age and I have always tried to live by that rule. Unfortunately, in the case of this Super Tip, I am unable to credit the originator of this idea that increases the utility capacity of a Toro Workman vehicle.

The idea of converting the Workman into a stake-bed "wagon" originated more than five years ago when my local Toro distributor, Wesco Turf, delivered a piece of equipment that I had ordered. I noticed that the driver also had a Workman utility vehicle on his truck. The Workman caught my eye because of the high wooden sides that someone had constructed on the bed of the vehicle. I took a few pictures of the contraption and stored them away for future use. Recently, I came across those pictures and I was reminded of the idea.

Creating a high-sided wagon accessory for the Toro Workman cost less than $100. Photo by Darren Davis.

This view shows the tailgate assembly and the "tension" chain that keeps the back and sides from rattling during transport. Photo by Darren Davis.

The task of recreating the Workman wagon was subsequently assigned to my long-time equipment manager, Guillermo Gomez. Guillermo, or "Memo" as we refer to him, accepted the assignment, analyzed the pictures, and went to work on the task. As you will see in the pictures, it is not an overly complicated piece of equipment and Memo completed the construction of two wagon accessories in less than eight hours.

The wagon rails can be installed in or removed from our Workman 3200 full-bed utility vehicles in less than five minutes. Tools that were used on the project include a measuring tape, a circular saw to cut the boards, a table saw with a blade capable of cutting steel, a paint brush, and two socket wrenches to attach the boards to the metal supports.

The sides, back, and tailgate are four boards high, extending 23 inches above the Workman bed. The side boards measure 64 inches in length, the back boards measure 51 inches in length, and the tailgate boards are 53 inches in length. The wood planks that we used are 5-5/8 inch high by 1/2-inch wide.

Both the side- and back boards are bolted to a 2 by 1-inch piece of channel iron that is cut to a length of 34 inches. The channel is attached to the boards (open side out) so that the channel can slide into the 2-1/4-inch square holes on the back and sides of the Workman bed. To add stability to the side and back pieces, a piece of 2-inch-wide, flat metal stock (23 inches in length) was bolted to the boards in the middle of each section.

When the two side rails and the back section are placed in the Workman bed there is a little play, which can create a rattle, and be annoying to the operator and/or distracting to golfers. For ease of storage when not in use, and for ease of installation onto the Workman bed, we did not want to permanently affix the side rails to the back. Therefore, to stabilize the sides and back when the wagon is in use, a bolt with a "hook" end was placed on both sides at the top, back of both side pieces. Between the two hooks, a 43-inch piece of chain is attached, and when the bolts are tightened it pulls the chain tight which squeezes the back of the wagon snugly into the sides.

The tailgate was constructed to the same height as the sides (23 inches) and the width is 53 inches. A 23-inch piece of metal plate was bolted to the boards in three locations to secure the tailgate. When the tailgate is desired, it easily slides into a groove created by a 23-inch piece of 2-inch "L" steel that was bolted on both side pieces. When installed, the base of the wooden tailgate rests on top of the Workman tailgate. Two 6-inch handles were also attached to the wagon tailgate for easier installation and removal.

The final step in construction was to apply a coat of Kilz primer, and then the following day a coat of "rust-stopper" black enamel was applied. Excluding labor, the cost of each wagon accessory was under $100.

Obviously, the engineers at Toro have a designed load capacity for the Workman that should not be exceeded. However, we have found the wagons very useful when we are hauling bales of pine straw, picking up palm fronds, or other light debris. We have also found the wagon beneficial when we are transporting walk-behind spreaders. The high sides decrease the likelihood of the spreaders tipping over or falling out.