



From the February, 2009 issue of Rod & Custom

## **Crossmember Conversion**

*Bolt-In Transmission Crossmember For '41-'48 Chevys*

By Terry McGean

Photography by Terry McGean



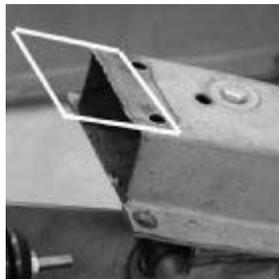
As post-war Chevys become increasingly popular hot rod projects, engine swaps are also becoming more common. Many rodders prefer to swap the Stovebolt Six for V-8 power, though some opt to trick out the inliner. Either way, updated transmissions are usually part of the program. Savvy fabricators can make the stock transmission crossmember work with newer gearboxes, but a simpler approach is now available from Walton Fabrication. By exchanging the stock member for Walton's tubular unit, you can use just about any of the transmissions that have become popular with GM drivetrains, either automatic or manual. Plus, installing the new crossmember is a bolt-in deal. The accompanying photos outline the process.



This stock crossmember is positioned in its original location (with the frame upside-down) to illustrate how it would fit in a stock vehicle, since the original trans crossmember from this particular chassis had already been removed. The diagonal frame braces leading to the crossmember from behind the front suspension have been cut, but they originally connected to the trans crossmember. The stock crossmember offers little flexibility for transmission options. It can be modified, but a simpler solution may be to replace it.



The stock member was riveted to the frame and the frame braces. After the rivets are removed, the crossmember can also be removed. The frame braces will need to be trimmed to clear the new crossmember.



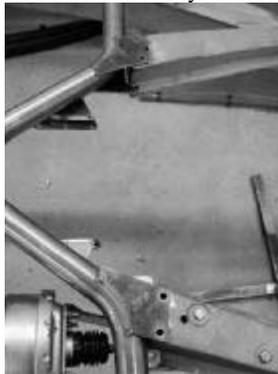
This close-up of a diagonal brace shows the cut line. Originally, the indicated surface of the brace extended forward to meet the stock transmission crossmember. This is the portion that must be trimmed to accommodate the new piece. Simply cut the tab so that it is flush with the sides.



Todd Walton sets the new crossmember in place, illustrating how the diagonal frame braces meet the new piece. Test-fitting will reveal whether further trimming of the braces is necessary.



Once the frame braces clear the new crossmember, it is lined up with the factory holes in the framersails. All five of the holes should already exist, though one hole is slotted to accommodate factory variation so that no additional drilling or cutting should be necessary.



After the crossmember is bolted to the framersails, the holes in the tabs are used as a template for drilling the new holes in the frame braces. The tabs shown are spot-welded to the crossmember as this is a prototype piece, but production crossmembers are fully welded.



Here, the frame has been turned over so that it is right-side up and the crossmember is fully installed. The trans mounting bracket is removable, which allows it to accept a number of popular transmissions. The position shown is for a 700-R4, but by using other mounting holes and/or reversing the position of the mounting bracket, the crossmember can also be used with TH350, TH400, 200-4R, and Powerglide as well as most popular GM manual transmissions.

