

The Fighting Fargo 1946 Engine

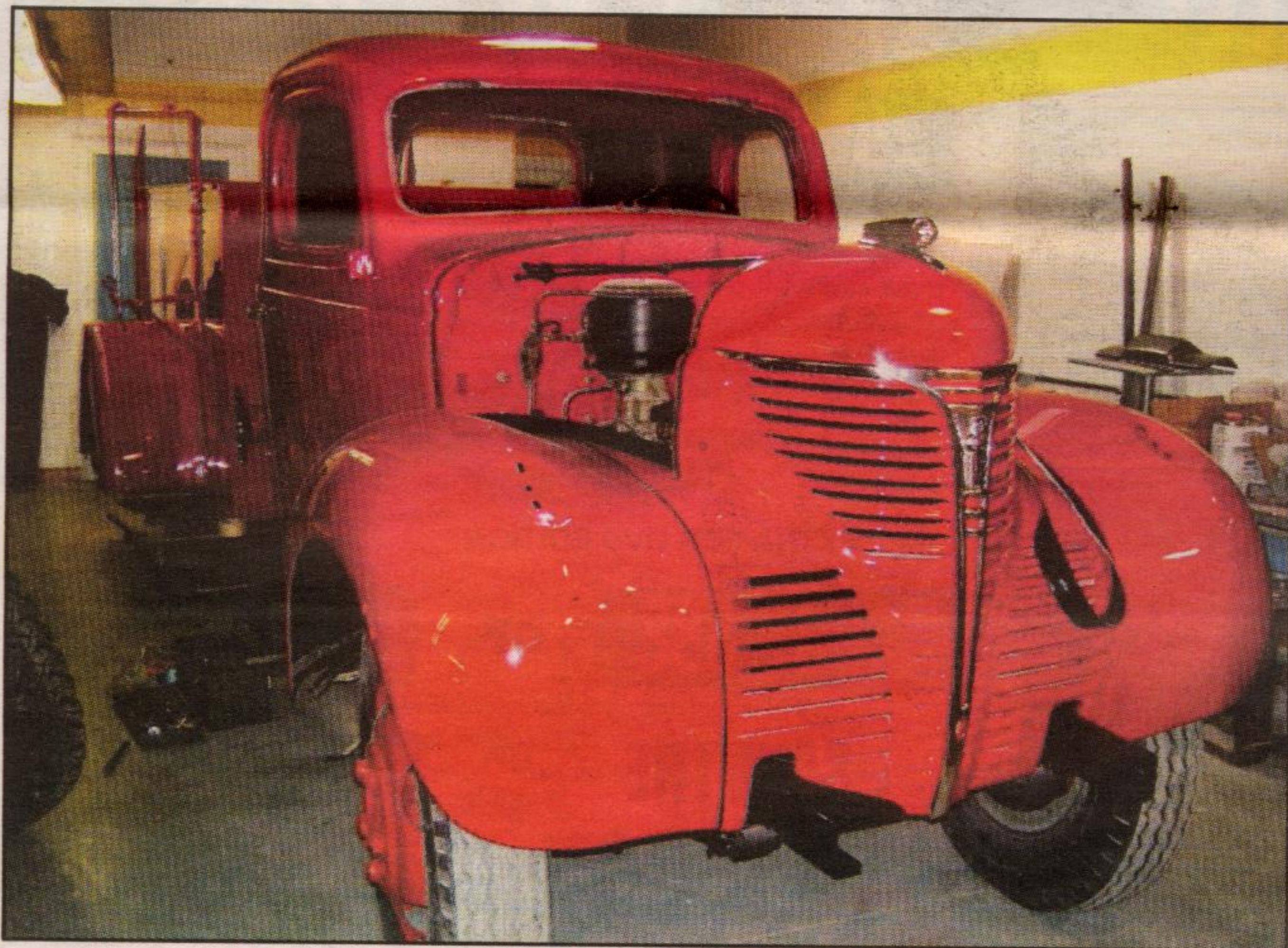
BY ANN KORNUA

The 1946 Fargo Fire Engine might not fight fires any longer, but it will soon be making public appearances again. Milton can claim to be one of the few fire departments that still own their original fire rescue units. Like many restored service vehicles, the Fargo needed a little extra love and care to bring back the lustre of this once glorious engine. Ian Gibb, Andy Miller, Ron Turner, Ron Townsend and other members of the Fire Fighters Club have dedicated hundreds of hours restoring the shine.

The 1946 Fargo was in service at the Milton Fire Department on Main Street where Carriage Square now stands. It was purchased from the old Johnston Motors on Main Street and the three ton chassis was sent to Woodstock at the famous Bickle Motor plant to have pumps installed. In 1978 when the Milton Fire Department moved into the Steeles Ave. location the Fargo moved

into that building and remained there until sometime in 1980, when it was sold and then repurchased by the Town in 1990. For three years the Fargo sat at the Country Heritage Park until it was moved to make space. For the past four months the Fighting Fargo has been at Churchill Collision getting much-needed TLC.

In 2002, an application was made to the Milton Community Fund for \$25,686 to restore Milton's second ever fire truck. When the firefighter team started working on the truck they found a slew of problems. The electrical system was shot. It needed new tires and was suffering from basic mechanical problems from transmission to brakes. Ron Townsend has been locating original parts for the Fargo by attending garage sales, contacting old manufacturing plants and flea markets in hopes of finding spare parts such as brackets and electrical components. Ron also surfed



The 1946 Fighting Fargo as it stands now almost near completion.

drive shed

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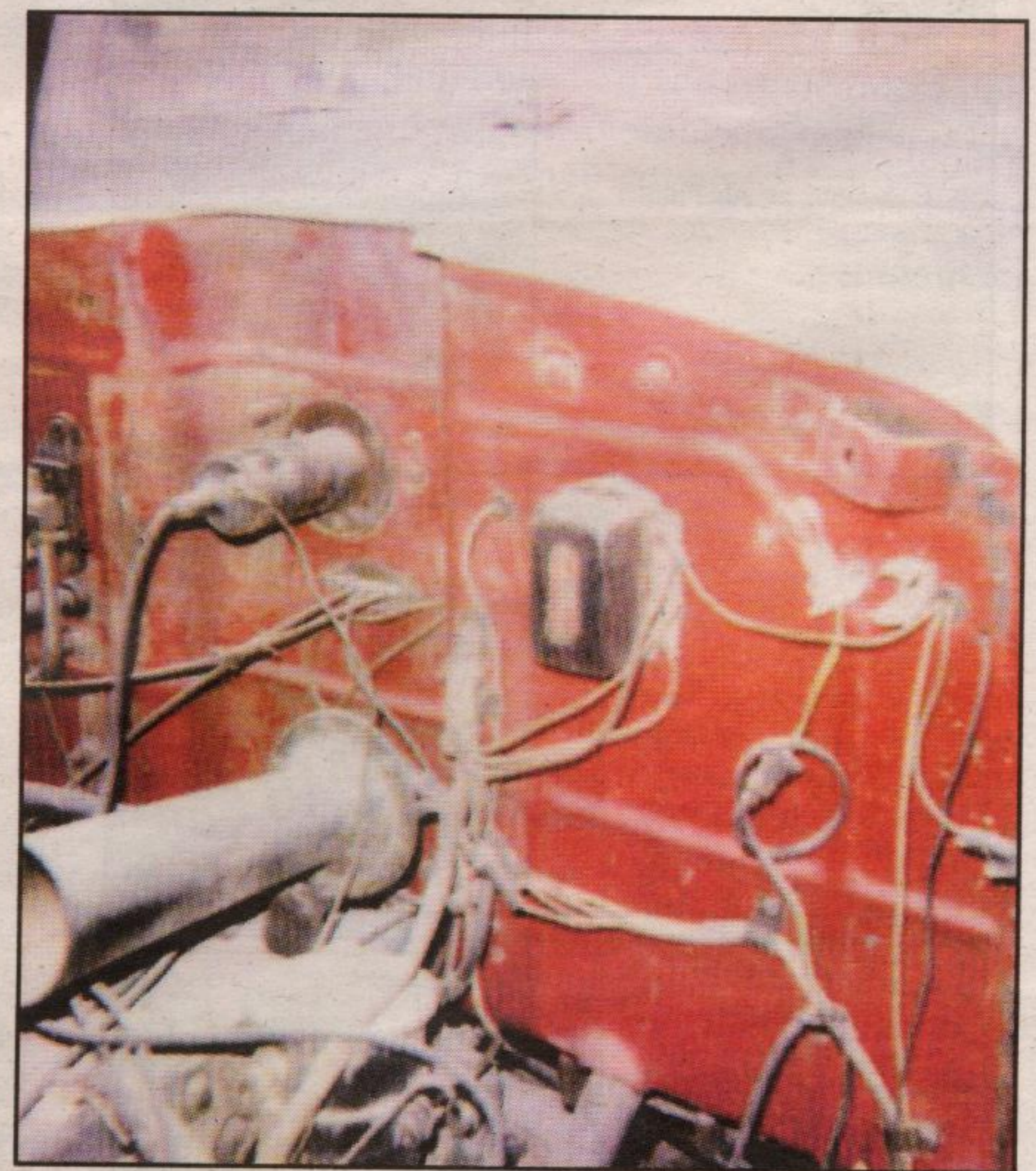
The Fire Fighters Club with members of Churchill Collision with the Fargo.

EBay and other online sources to find just the right parts. Ron was able to find four new cylinder pipes online and has been able to find other parts that are either authentic or a close match. The engine itself is unique, being one of the last rotary gear pumps used before centrifugal pumps were introduced.

"I am proud we received this truck," Ron Townsend said. "We now own both the first and second Fire Engines that served this community." Everyone volunteers their time to work on the Fargo and if they are not on calls for the department or at home with their families they are at work looking for parts or doing research on the truck itself, finding out stories and the history of the engine. "We get paid with the pride of ownership of this engine," Ron said.

The Firefighter Club may own this Fighting Fargo, but it will be available to the community when it is completed in the spring. "I would like to see this truck used in food drives and in a part of Fire Prevention week at the

fire hall and events like the Santa Claus parade, the Fall Fair and Steam Era," Ron said. The man hours put into this project truly reflect a love for the history and passion for the Milton Fire Department. This 1946 Fargo is a tribute to Milton's history and the dedicated Fire Rescue Service offered by the volunteers and members of past and present.



An interior shot of the engine before the work was started. PHOTOS BY ANN KORNUA

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