

## Timeline Motorcycle – Just What the "Doc" Ordered

By John Gunnell

The Timeline Motorcycle — a 24-1.2-ft.-long machine that has seven engines and carries 10 riders — evolved out of an earlier project that Steve "Doc" Hopkins undertook in 2008. Hopkins owns Doc's Harley Davidson, of Shawano County, Wis, and his first multi-passenger motorcycle was called the "Four-Tee-Five." The name indicated it was designed to carry four engines and five riders.

### The Four-Tee-Five Project

The Four-Tee-Five project started when Hopkins visited a spring 2008 antique motorcycle swap meet and started buying a bunch of old 45-cid Harley flathead engines from the 1950s. A few months later, just prior to the Las Vegas Harley-Davidson® Dealer Show in July, Hopkins decided to install four of the motors in a long, hand-built, five-seat motorcycle frame.

During the dealer show, Hopkins refined his thinking a bit and came home determined to build the Four-Tee-Five in time for the Harley-Davidson® 105th Anniversary parade in Milwaukee. Since it was only four weeks away, speed was of the essence. As soon as Hopkins deplaned from his return trip to Green Bay, he went straight to a steel mill and purchased metal to build the frame.



Wild-eyed Doc with his DaVinci-like sketches of the Timeline Bike in December 2008.

By 6 am the next morning,

Doc was busy bending tubing and fabricating the custom frame. About the same time, he started working on the four old engines that needed to be completely rebuilt. A 5/16-in. rod was run through five separate box-end wrenches used to inter-connect the throttles. Hopkins then brazed each wrench to fill it with brass. Finally, he bored out the brass so the holes fit the actuator rod that ran to each carburetor via hand-forged linkages.

The engine drive sprockets were cut off and replaced with dual sprockets to allow all of the motors to be together. This also allowed all four motors to be kick-started at the same time. All four engines were timed together utilizing a very old, but effective method...that employs a cellophane cigarette wrapper! Two weeks and a day into the build, the Four-Tee-Five was kick-started for the first time. It fired on the third kick and was backed out of the shop at the Shawano dealership. Doc rode it around the building with Jeff Erdman as his first passenger. It worked perfectly and was completed two days later. B & J Custom gave it a shiny black-and-orange paint job and Steve Lemhouse of the Spinning Wheel restaurant kicked in a new Chris-Craft horn.

Five riders climbed aboard for a test lap around the dealership parking lot. Then, the Four-Tee-Five took off for Milwaukee and the 105th Anniversary parade. Doc, his wife Rhonda, his son-in-law Shannon, his daughter Kersten and Jeff Erdman even made the front page of the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel.



The bike is very long and very heavy. The "training wheels" add low speed stability.

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Sun., March 14 - Brat Stop Hall - Kenosha, WI

Sun., March 21 - Dunne Cty. Fairgrounds - Menomonie, WI

Sun., March 28 - Riverside Ballroom - Green Bay, WI

Sat., April 10 - Waupaca Expo Center - Waupaca, WI

Sat., May 1 - Rock County Fairgrounds - Janesville, WI

Sat., May 8 - Echo Speedway - West Union, IA

Sun., May 16 - Delta County Fairgrounds - Escanaba, MI

Sun., May 23 - Joe Davis Fairgrounds - Warren, IL