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Josh Cady/News Tribune

Hobert Frohman poses with his 1957 Dodge Coronet Lancer he has been working on for the last two years after buying it from a member of the Mid-Missouri Car Club. Frohman is currently majoring in mechanical engineering at Missouri S&T with the hope of becoming an automotive engineer.

Repairing classic car inspires Frohman's college studies

By Gemma Asef
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Not many 20-year-olds these days can say they drove a 1950s classic car to prom. But for one Jefferson City native, that statement is true.

While Hobert Frohman is currently studying mechanical engineering at Missouri S&T in Rolla, he credits much of his inspiration and knowledge to the experience he gained repairing his classic car.

"No one uses a lot of the engineering stuff that they did in 1950, so going to school for engineering,

I think that the engineer who has some knowledge of how it was done before can innovate on those ideas instead of just being taught, 'Well, this is how it's done,' Frohman said. "It's, in my opinion, better to know how they did it before."

After learning a 1956 Dodge Coronet Lancer was for sale when he was just 18, Frohman and his father met with the seller a few times before finally deciding to purchase it. It was in those meetings with the seller that Frohman was invited to a meeting of the Mid-Mo Old Car Club and introduced to a whole world of cars and camaraderie.

The four-door, hardtop Coronet Lancer wasn't

in perfect shape when Frohman purchased it. The car hadn't been driven for the previous 10-15 years and despite the previous owner doing a brake job and running the engine, Frohman had no knowledge of whether it would drive.

Fixing an old car up can be time-consuming for anyone, but with Frohman being a senior in high school at the time, the project quickly became his winter and summer project.

"It's got the standard Mid-Missouri body rust, the rockers are a little rusty and the bumpers are — the chrome's peeling — but it's in good condi-

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tion for a 67-year-old car," Frohman said.

By the time prom season rolled around, Frohman and his friends decided it would be fun to take his new car to prom, despite issues with the charging system.

But Frohman didn't let the faulty charging system ruin his plans. He came up with a workaround: He put the car battery on the charger and brought his lawnmower battery with him so that later in the night, the lawnmower battery could power the headlights, allowing the car battery to power everything else.

The car club has allowed him to meet lots of people from all walks of life, which has quickly grown to be one of his favorite things about owning a classic car and being a part of the classic car community.