



My love of LREs is pretty recent compared with a lot of others in NALRETO. About 20 years ago while working as a mechanic in a shop in Provo, Utah my co-worker (who is a lifelong Mopar man) told me about the famous Li'l Red Express Truck that Dodge made in the late 70s. Sounded pretty cool but at the time my affinity leaned toward another, more "General" manufacturer.

Fast forward to Summer 2019 when I bought my first Dodge truck to use at our shop. It was a beat up 78 Power Wagon plow truck that was so cheap I couldn't pass it up. Here enters my friend Zac Johnson who in our area is Mr. Tin Grille Man (72-80 Dodge trucks). He helped me get Rudolph going (obvious name choice since he's brown and only comes out in Winter) and starts getting me hooked on this era of truck!

I've always loved step side trucks, no idea why or when it started. So as I got more and more into these I was drawn to that type over all others. In February 2020 I got the chance to buy a 79 LRE out of Colorado that was in need of much much love

I'm sure everyone knows what that means 😊 and I'm hoping to have it running and driving this next year.

But...I've also always loved the birdbath hood. Again I have no idea why but it just looks SO GOOD! And the 77/78 grille - awesome! So in the midst of dealing with the pandemic in 2020-2021 as I went a little nuts buying trucks from this era, I kept an eye out for a 78. I learned they are hard to come by so wasn't super hopeful I would be able to ever own one.

September 2021 I learned of a 78 through the NALRETO Facebook forum that was up in Canada. It was a fair price all things considered and the exchange rate basically paid for the transportation costs to get it brought down. A company out of Salt Lake City handled all of the paperwork and had a title in my hands within 30 days. I was super pleased to finally have the truck I wanted!

The only history of the truck I know is that it lived in Alberta most or all of it's life. The restoration appears to have happened a while ago, I'm guessing 15-ish years ago.

As those who saw my truck in Branson this past year can attest, it's got many faults but is overall pretty complete. Earning the Bronze level in Concours judging was a huge surprise and I'm very grateful to everyone that was so kind and helpful to me and my family. (Side note: If you haven't made it to one of the National meets, DO IT.)

That's my journey and I'm so happy to be a part of this very cool and exclusive club!

Rodney Martin, American Fork, Utah

