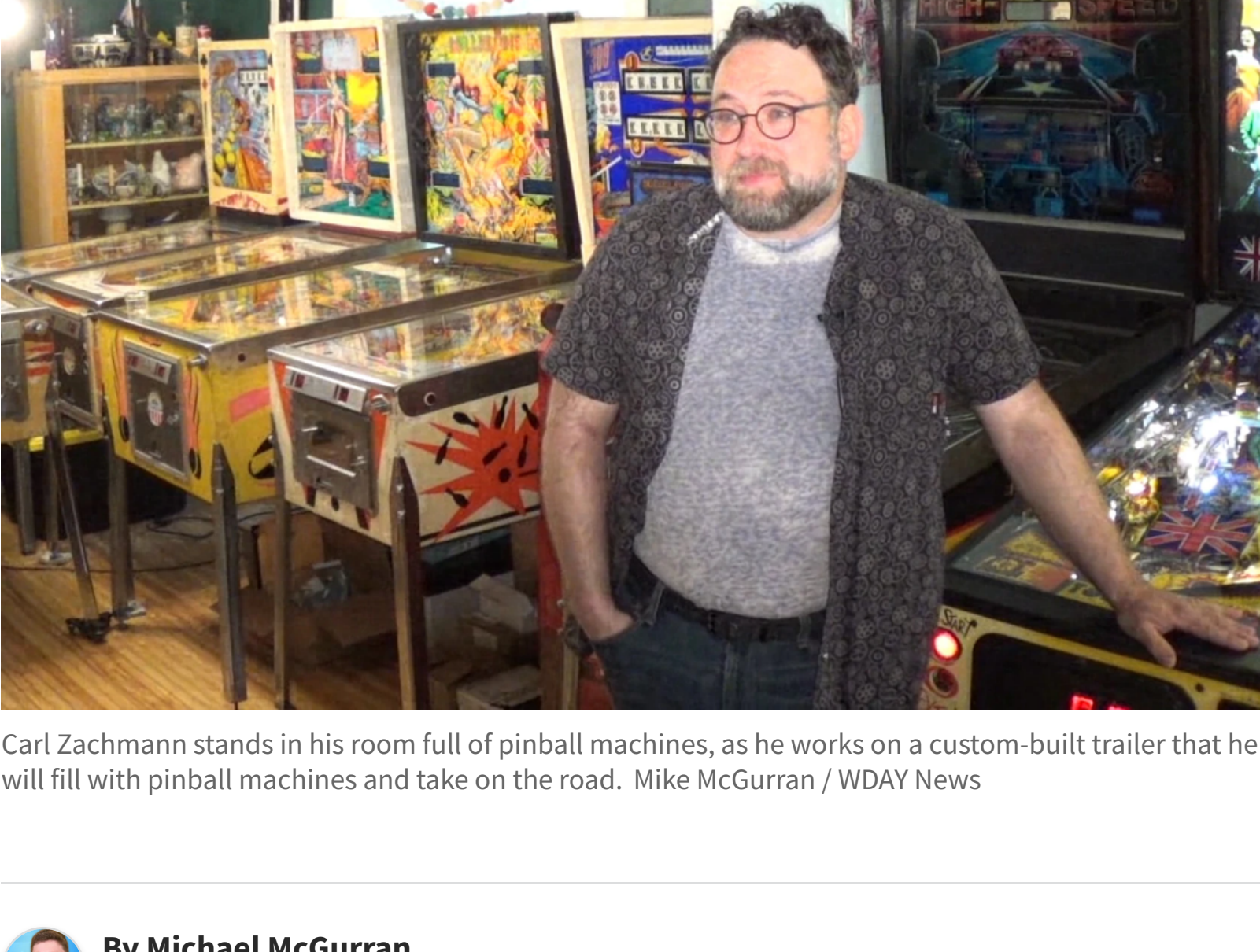




NEWS MINNESOTA

Lights, bells and nostalgia power traveling pinball truck

Fergus Falls artist Carl Zachmann is launching a mobile pinball arcade, built from scratch, that will debut at Summerfest and travel to parties, markets and more.



Carl Zachmann stands in his room full of pinball machines, as he works on a custom-built trailer that he will fill with pinball machines and take on the road. Mike McGurran / WDAY News

By Michael McGurran

May 20, 2025 at 10:27 PM

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FERGUS FALLS, Minn. — What began as a love of pinball has turned into a traveling arcade for Fergus Falls machine artist Carl Zachmann.

Zachmann, known for his engineering-inspired art, has transformed a 19-foot drop-axle trailer into a mobile arcade called the Nomadic Arcade. The project merges his fascination with vintage pinball machines and a desire to share the nostalgic joy they bring with others.

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“I would like to have a dining room table again,” he joked, noting that for the past year his home has been overtaken by lights, sound and machines. “I haven’t been able to have company over to eat in about a year.”

For Zachmann, pinball isn’t just a game — it’s a piece of art and a marvel of human creativity.

“Art is designed to make you feel things — happy, sad,” he said. “Pinball makes you feel things. It makes you feel happy. It came out of the Great Depression. You could escape your troubles for a nickel.”

Zachmann once considered opening a traditional arcade, but said it wasn’t feasible in a small town.

“You have to pay employees and rent and all that kind of stuff,” he said. “So I started rolling the idea around in my head and came up with the idea of doing an arcade like a food truck.”

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The result is Nomadic Arcade, a trailer that will soon hit the road and appear at farmers markets, parties and weddings. The arcade is expected to make its debut at Summerfest in Fergus Falls.

Zachmann has built everything inside the trailer, from the walls to the electrical work. All that’s left is installing the machines and taking care of a few finishing touches.

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“The feel and the look and the sound,” Zachmann said, describing what he loves most about pinball. “There’s the ticking of the score in the old ones, the sound of the flippers, the bells, the chimes, the sound effects. It’s all just tied up in those wonderful memories.”

The Nomadic Arcade already has its first wedding booking scheduled for October.

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By Michael McGurran

Mike McGurran has been a reporter and anchor at WDAY-TV since 2021.

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