

Fire-Am

Build the Ultimate Trans-Am



BACKGROUND

Pontiac gave Herb Adams a contract in 1977 to develop a package for making Trans-Ams competitive on race tracks. This package was to remain street-legal and production compatible. These requirements restricted engine modification to minor changes to the intake and exhaust. To be competitive on a road-race course and to be exciting on the highway, the focus of the package was to improve the Trans-Am's already excellent handling.

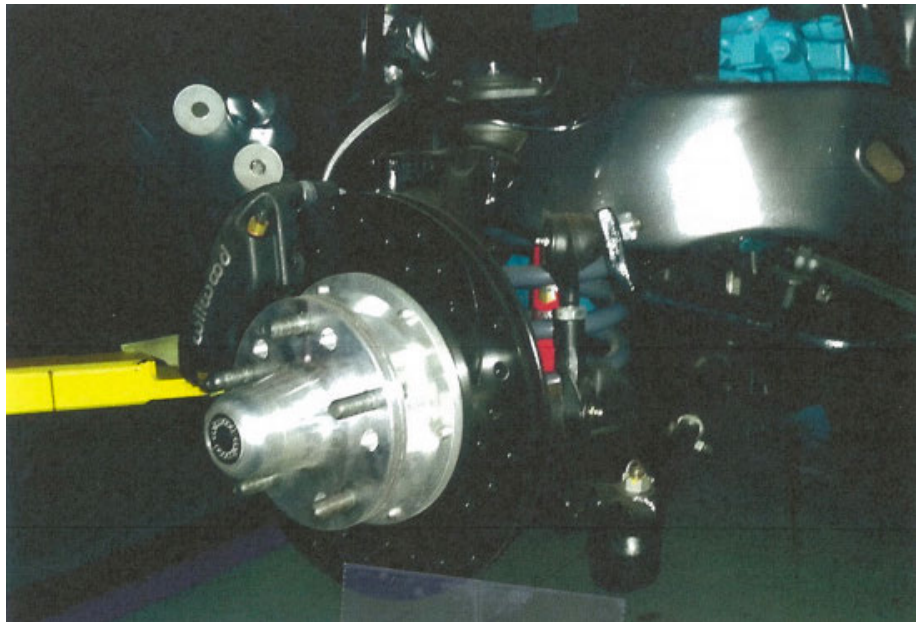
Here are the changes made to develop the Fire-Am package together with the reasons why they work.

NOTE: All changes could have been made on production Trans-Ams at the factory.

HANDLING PACKAGES

The obvious first step in improving any car's handling capability is wheels and tires. At the time, the best high-performance tires were Goodyear Wing-Foots. So, they were mounted on 8 x 15 wheels. Today much better tires and wheel combinations are available but recent testing has shown that anything less than a 40 Series tire produces less forgiving responses at the tire cornering limit.

A similar situation exists with modern braking equipment. On the first Fire-Ams metallic pads were used on the front, and metallic shoes were used at the rear. They were primitive but they did work on the race track with a little more noise. Lowering a car usually improves its handling so several steps were taken in this regard. At the front, 1.00 shorter springs were used together with Koni adjustable shocks.



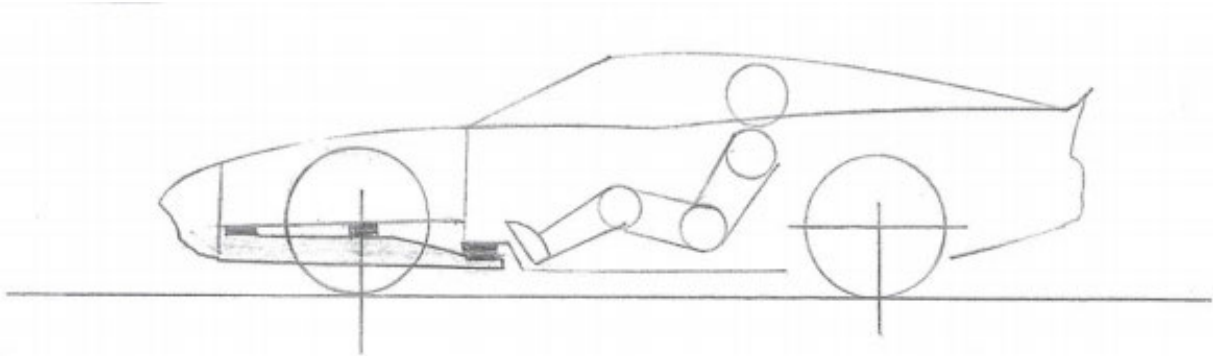
STABILIZER BAR AND LINKS

The Trans-Am production car demonstrated how important it is to have front stabilizer bar links that restrict deflection. Why have a healthy front bar if the links deflect so the anti-roll forces are not directed to the control arms. The Fire-Am moved this technology forward by using rod ends for these links. These are very durable and don't rattle. They are expensive but they're worth it.



TILT THE SUBFRAME

Additional lowering was accomplished by replacing the rubber sub frame mounts with aluminum spacers. These spacers were made with different thicknesses and were installed with the thickest mount at the rear and the thinnest at the front. The result of this combination is to tilt the sub frame relative to the body which lowers the front of the car. a rubber strip was used where the body touched the subframe to prevent squeaks etc. The net result of this lowering package was noise levels almost as good as a production Trans-Am.



When working to lower front of the Fire-Am it becomes obvious that the sub-frame was bending ahead of the firewall, to rectify this problem front-struts were added between the upper control arm bracket and the cowl flange. To provide additional torsional structure these front-struts also anchored to the front fender mounting bracket. This triangular support greatly increased the Fire-Am front structure which made the handling better and greatly improved the feel and response of the car.



MORE ANTI-SQUAT AT REAR

When lowering the rear of the Fire-Am it was possible to also make improvement in getting the power to the ground. By raising the height of the front of the rear-spring both factors are made much better. A revised spring bracket is required to make this change. The result is much better



traction coming out of corners with no change in noise isolation.

If some slight increase in road noise is accepted, even better traction and cornering precision is possible with replacing the rubber bushing at the front of the spring with a mono-ball package, the other way to improve cornering and getting power to the road was to move the battery to the trunk.

REAR STABILIZER BAR

The first Trans-Am (1969) didn't have a rear stabilizer bar so it had some understeer. The second generation cars which were the basis for the Fire-Ams did come with a rear stabilizer bar. Because of the increased cornering power realized with the modifications at the front of the Fire-Am, a larger rear stabilizer bar can be used. The combination of more cornering power at the front and applying more cornering forces to the rear tires results in very good total cornering power on the Fire-Am.

A Fire-Am will not only corner well, the steering response and overall feel is excellent. Many customers rate the Fire-Am the best handling car they have ever driven, bar none.



INTERIOR

Part of the Fire-Am package was to add a roll bar behind the seats. The seats were also replaced with racing versions to get more driver support and to save some weight. The rear seat can also be removed for racing conditions. Racing seat belts were also added for better support.

Dry sump was used on serious Fire-Ams for track use.



RESULTS

With the available tires at the time, production Trans-Ams would corner at about .8gs. The Fire-Am would corner at about .95gs, so they really felt good. With today's tires a Fire-Am as described would probably corner at 1.10gs.

NOTE: In those early days a production Camara would corner at about .7gs which is one reason the Trans-Am had a reputation for exceptional Handling.

Pontiac Engineering tested and approved the Fire-Am package and 8 Prototypes were built. Management didn't appreciate vehicle performance by that time so the Fire-Am wasn't offered as an option.



Fire-Am built by Matt Adams and Jimmy Haller at V.S.E., sons of Herb Adams and Don Haller -original developers of the Fire-Am package. Additional performance improvers are available. Matt Adams 248-701-1480

PARTS AVAILABLE

The good news is anyone with a second generation Fire-Bird (even non-Trans-Am) can now have a FireAm. **NATIONAL PARTS DEPOT** supplies all the parts needed to build one. NPD's parts are exactly as described above and are immediately available. (see attached PARTS LIST) The Fire-Am parts are installed with normal tools and techniques so they can be done by home car builders.

...AND don't tell the Firebird fans, but Fire-Am parts also work on a Camaro to make a Cheverra.

PARTS LIST (FIRE-AM)

C-7007-70AK	FRONT SUBFRAME LOWERING KIT, Special Performance by Herb Adams
C-7241-70AK	SWAY BAR KIT, Front, 1-5/16 inch race style, Special Performance by Herb Adams
C-7241-71A	SWAY BAR KIT, Rear, Hellwig, 1", Special Performance by Herb Adams, 1-5/16" front sway bar and the other Special Performance by Herb Adams suspension modifications
C-7242-70AK	DROP LINK KIT, Rear Sway Bar, Special Performance by Herb Adams
C-7526-70AK	BRACKET KIT, Leaf Spring Front Eye, Special Performance by Herb Adams
C-7504-70BK	BEARING KIT, Rear Leaf Spring Front Eye, Special Performance by Herb Adams
C-8800-FA	Hood Bird And Name Kit, Fire Am, 9 Color, Reflective, (7), NPD Exclusive OE-Correct Repro

PARTS LIST (CHEVERRERA)

C-7007-70AK	FRONT SUBFRAME LOWERING KIT, Special Performance by Herb Adams
C-7241-70AK	SWAY BAR KIT, Front, 1-5/16 inch race style, Special Performance by Herb Adams
C-7241-71A	SWAY BAR KIT, Rear, Hellwig, 1", Special Performance by Herb Adams, 1-5/16" front sway bar and the other Special Performance by Herb Adams suspension modifications
C-7242-70AK	DROP LINK KIT, Rear Sway Bar, Special Performance by Herb Adams
C-7526-70AK	BRACKET KIT, Leaf Spring Front Eye, Special Performance by Herb Adams
C-7504-70BK	BEARING KIT, Rear Leaf Spring Front Eye, Special Performance by Herb Adams
C-12181-70A	Whaletail, Rear Spoiler, Fiberglass, **NPD Exclusive **
C-12181-70B	Deck Lid W/ Whaletail, Rear Spoiler, Fiberglass, **NPD Exclusive **
C-8054-70A	HOOD SCOOP, Special Performance by Herb Adams, fiberglass
C-1263-70A	AERODYNAMIC NOSE PIECE, Special Performance by Herb Adams, all fiberglass
C-7833-70A	Spoiler, Front, Fiberglass And Rubber, **NPD Exclusive**
C-8130-70A	FENDER PANEL SECTION, Flared, Special Performance by Herb Adams, RH, fiberglass
C-8130-71A	FENDER PANEL SECTION, Flared, Special Performance by Herb Adams, LH, fiberglass
C-12940-70A	QUARTER PANEL SECTION, Flared, Special Performance by Herb Adams, RH, fiberglass
C-12940-71A	QUARTER PANEL SECTION, Flared, Special Performance by Herb Adams, LH, fiberglass



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