

# DODGE OR FARGO?

The Bledsoe family's 1974 Dodge W-100 is an optioned-out black beauty!



## Adventurer

By Loren Hoekema • Photos by Eric Arnold

### Sport

**IS IT A DODGE**, or is it a Fargo?" That was the question posed by *Vintage Truck* Editor Brad Bowling when he first saw the pictures of Sally Bledsoe's immaculate 1974 Dodge W-100 Power Wagon. The truth is that it really is a 1974 Dodge. The last Fargo trucks made for the North American market were built in 1972. In this case though, Sam Bledsoe (Sally's dad) combined his knowledge of Dodge and Fargo trucks with a sense of fun to produce something unique.

Bledsoe is a big-time follower of 1972–1980 Dodge pickups in general and is an acknowledged expert on 1979 Dodge Palomino pickups and 1980–1981 Dodge Big Horn pickups. He thought that creating the illusion of a 1974 Fargo W-100 would be a cool idea. It would

represent a vehicle that could have been produced but was not. To date, he has located a near-perfect woodgrain dash panel with the Fargo name on it. He also has the correct "FARGO" lettering for the hood and the tailgate decal, both of which would have been used on production Fargo pickups. He plans to install these additional items soon.

Little did the truck's original purchaser and long-time owner, Tommy Thompson, know when he walked into the local Dodge dealership in Salem, Oregon, in the spring of 1974 that the truck he was about to order would be so well-preserved three-and-a-half decades later. In 1974, four-wheel-drive trucks were just beginning to be used as daily drivers. The bulk of the new pickups

purchased at this time were still two-wheel drives. For a four-wheel-drive pickup of this period, Thompson's black Dodge was very heavily optioned. He sat down and checked his way right down the option list. He ordered the fanciest trim package available for a W-100 at the time (an Adventurer Sport package), along with a 360ci V-8 engine, an automatic transmission, power drum brakes, and power steering. He also chose front bumper guards, low-mount outside rearview mirrors, a 12-inch inside day/night rearview mirror, a cargo light, and an optional oil pressure gauge. For comfort and convenience, he added air conditioning, cruise control, a factory clock, an AM/FM radio, and tinted glass. By this time, the only boxes left unchecked on the order form were: bucket seats, a Sure-Grip rear differential, and a factory chrome rear bumper. Shortly after taking