

AN EXPERIMENTAL 430 V8 FROM 1965

Article by John Csordas, BCA #8929, Putnam Valley, New York and Dennis Manner, BCA #12350, Linden, Michigan
Photos by Dennis Manner

Editor's note: This engine turned up recently in the Northeast Chapter of the GS Club and was given to retired Buick powertrain engineer Denny Manner, who is a BCA member. He is donating it to the G.M. Heritage Center in Michigan, along with his description of what makes it unique. It is a prototype, one-of-a-kind, built in 1965 for possible use in a front wheel drive Riviera, which was never adopted. I asked Denny for some photos and details on this engine, which he kindly provided. I also asked John Csordas of the Northeast GS Club for permission to reprint his story of how he came across this engine. Thanks to both of them for this material.

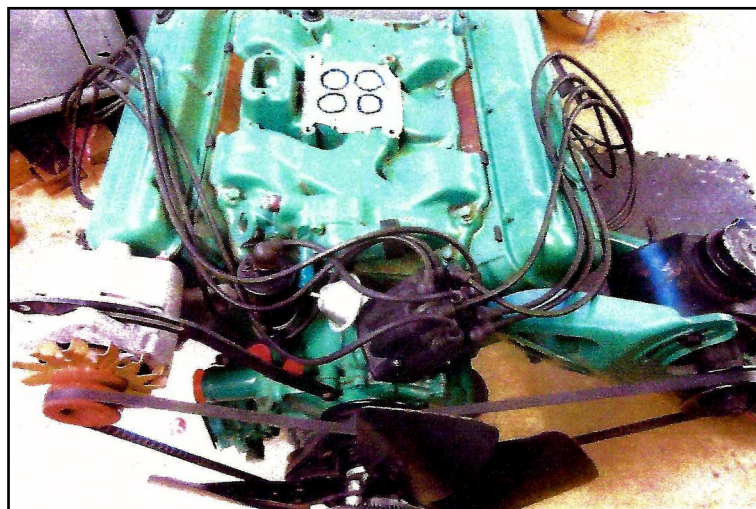
Many of our members saw this Buick experimental motor at our spring meeting last year and I had it on display at the GS Nationals at the TA Performance booth. I got this motor from Sean Ryder who was the caretaker of it for the last 10 or 15 years for the Buick Performance Group (BPG) Club. Where the BPG got it from I do not know but Sean lost the storage area for it and asked if I would like it. I said, "Sure, but I really don't have the space for it at the shop or home but come drop it off". Sean drops it off and Mark Deconti and I start checking it out. It's a very unusual motor as it was a very early production 430 motor built in 1965! The engine looked to be built to go in a front wheel drive car, but Buick never made a front drive until 1979 in the Riviera. I called Mike from TA to see if he wanted it but he was not interested, plus how would he get it to Scottsdale if he did take it?

So while on display at the GS Nationals I approached Dennis Manner, who was the one of many Buick engineers at the time the engine was built, if he could find some info about it and also find a good home for it. Dennis agreed to do some detective work and get back to me once he got home. In the meantime the GS Nationals were winding down and I did not want to bring this motor back to New York, so what can I do? I asked Mike at TA again if he wanted it but he had no room to bring it to Arizona. My last resort was to twist Dennis Manner's arm to take the motor. Dennis agreed and said he would bring the motor to Flint and it will be on display at the G.M. Heritage Center. Dennis will also cart the engine around to various Buick meets along with the four-bolt main 455 motor which was on display at the GS Nationals as well, so others can see this part of Buick history.

See the letter (*below—ed.*) from Dennis about the information he found on experimental engine 65X430-17.

This engine, numbered 65X430-17, indicates it was built by Buick Engineering in calendar year 1965, 430 cubic inches, and was the 17th engine we built that year. This is an early prototype engine built about a year and a half before the new Buick 430 engine was introduced for the 1967 model year.

During this time frame, G.M. was designing a front drive axle assembly that was used later by Oldsmobile in the Toronado and by



Notice that the distributor is at the front of the engine, like other 430s. The power steering pulley is abnormally small.



Notice how the intake manifold and carburetor base are located lower than usual, due to the engine having to be mounted higher than usual above the front drive transmission and axle.

Cadillac in the Eldorado. We believe this engine design was for evaluation of the Buick prototype 430 engine installation with the experimental front drive unit. Buick did not adopt the front drive unit, but stayed with rear drive in the Riviera during the 1960s.

Observations:

If we recall correctly, the engine was installed fore/aft, mounted higher, and packaged around the front drive transmission and axle assembly. The intake manifold has an abnormally low mounting surface and uphill intake branches in relation to the higher carbure-