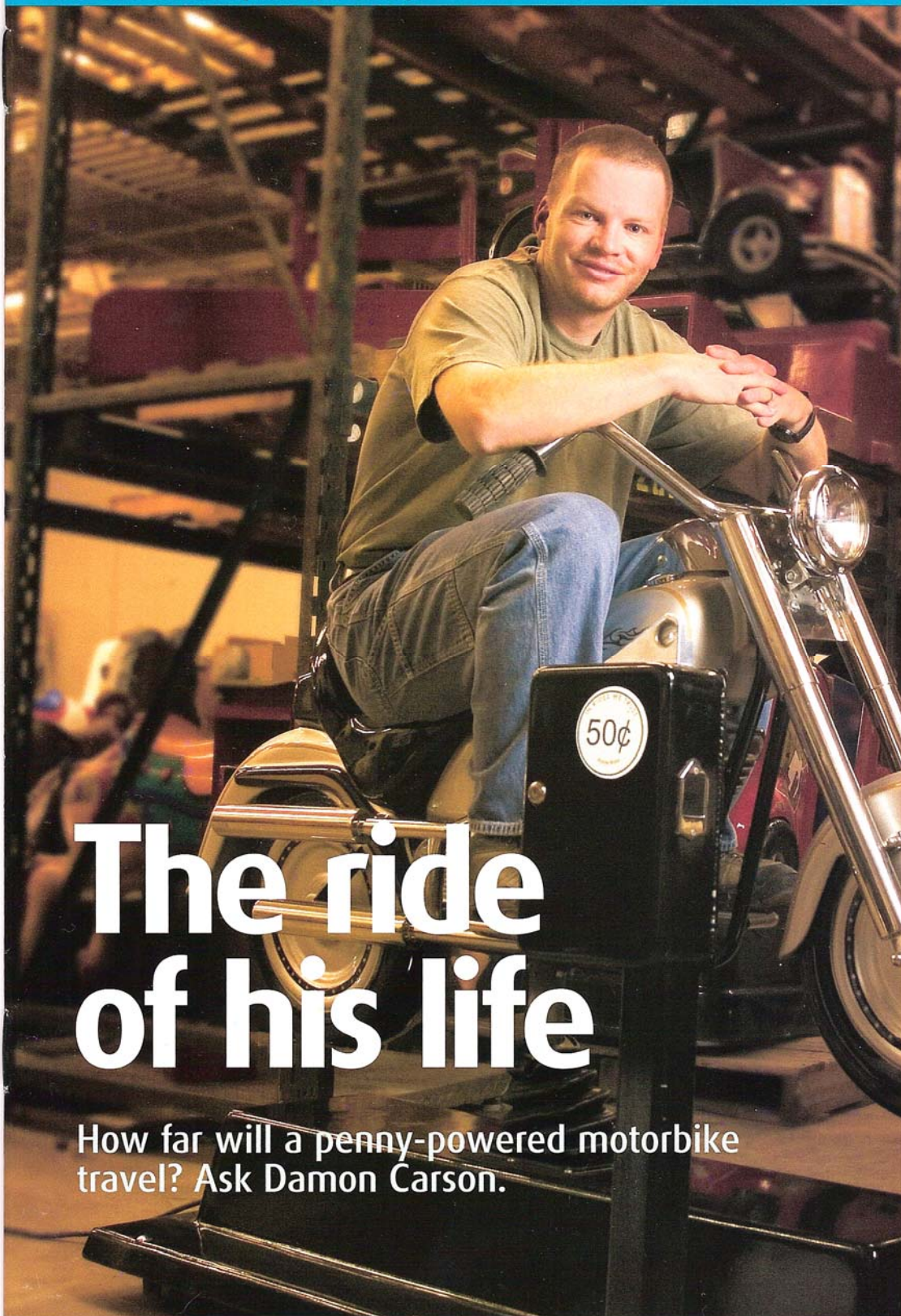


# RoundUPS

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Fall 2006



## The ride of his life

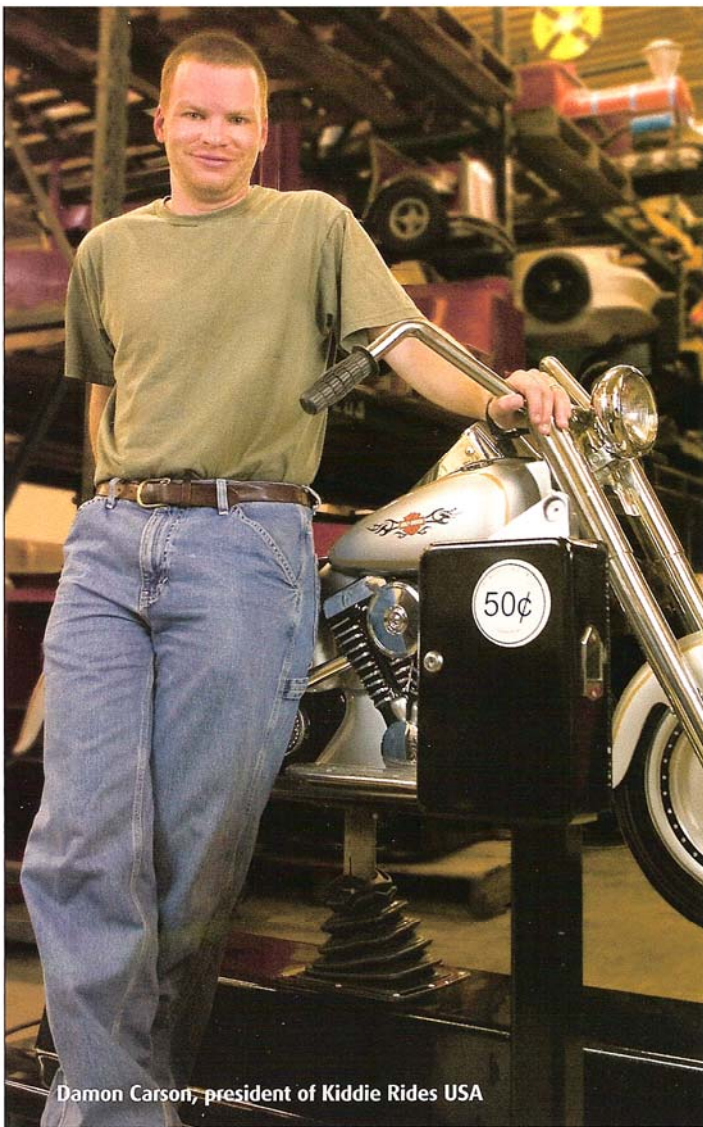
How far will a penny-powered motorbike travel? Ask Damon Carson.

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Damon Carson, president of Kiddie Rides USA

**D**amon Carson, president of Denver-based Kiddie Rides USA, has a fun job. His company stocks the coin-operated theme rides that have clattered their way from amusement parks and grocery stores to private homes and corporate lobbies. The rides come in almost every conceivable shape, and at any point may include a Roy Rogers horse, a giraffe-piloted Jet Ski or all manner of planes, trains and automobiles.

Carson's company is the last of its breed in the United States, after the "kiddie ride" heyday of the 1980s and '90s. Rather than mass-producing new rides, Carson's company remanufactures old ones.

"We have more than 300 rides in our warehouse," Carson says. The rides, which the company finds at auction or through word-of-mouth, are stripped to the fiberglass and restored using high-end automotive body paint. The finished products can cost between \$995 and \$5,000.

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# Profit rockets

With help from UPS, Damon Carson of Kiddie Rides USA puts a lucrative spin on a dying tradition.

## Who wants a ride?

At a nickel a whirl, a Mr. Potato Head wagon isn't exactly a money-making machine. It is, however, an excellent way to make friends. Many grocery stores, for example, still vend the rides for a penny. "While the golden age of kiddie rides as vending equipment may be passed," says Carson, "they still allow business owners to provide a little fun and goodwill at their locations."

But not all of Carson's rides go toward charming the children. Some are used as marketing vehicles by major corporations. A rail company, for instance, may purchase a miniature steam engine and pay Carson's team to paint a custom exterior that promotes the company's brand.

## Kiddie Rides USA

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### Web

[kiddieridesusa.com](http://kiddieridesusa.com)