HAVING FUN WITH TRAINS

NOVEMBER 2024 | FREE

MRH

MODEL RAILROAD HOBBYIST

ALSO:

- Adding structure lighting
- All wheel steam loco pickup
- Build a Y.M.C.A. structure model
- Getting started in ops

... and more inside!

Craig Thomasson does ...

Locale swapping on the Office Park Zone

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MRH
MODEL RAILROAD HOBBYIST

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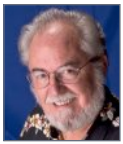
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PUBLISHER'S MUSINGS

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JOE FUGATE: MRH'S LATEST AUDIENCE STATS, AND THE COMING WHO'S WHO BOOK

VIEW READER COMMENTS

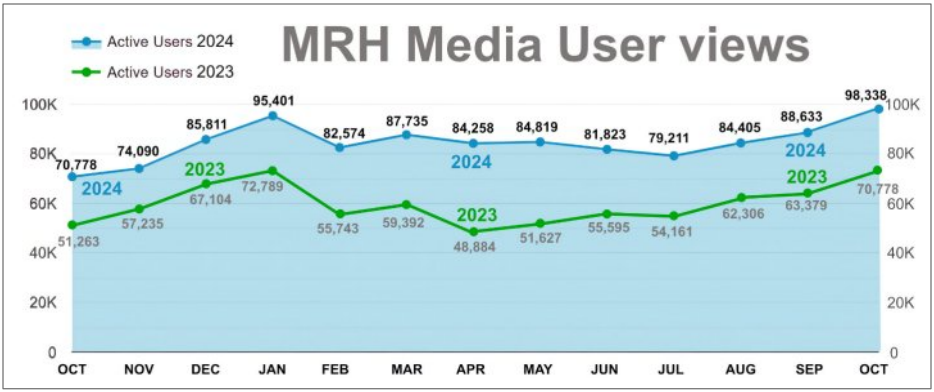
LIKE ALL PUBLISHERS, WE KEEP TRACK OF OUR AUDIENCE TRENDS. Being that we're an online magazine that you can read online and do not necessarily need to download, we measure our audience size based on unique IP addresses who visit our site from month to month.

An IP address is how the internet identifies your device and can find your device to send web pages to it. If you're astute, you may wonder how we deal with folks who visit our web-site with multiple devices?

In other words, IP addresses gives a total device count, but several devices can represent a single head (person). How do we get the device count down to the actual number of heads?

Official digital magazine audience size rules stipulate that you need some way to dedupe IP addresses into actual heads. One way is to do a statistically valid survey of your audience and ask them how many devices they typically use to read your publication.

We have a reader survey we typically do every couple of years, and once question we ask is how many different devices you typically use to read our magazine(s). From this information, we can develop a formula to dedupe the IP address count.



1. *MRH* has grown our audience by 30-35% year-over-year from 2023 to 2024.

Also, folks can log in on the *MRH* forum, so we can easily tell just from that number that you're a unique head. What's left are "guest" visits from folks who do not log in, and we can dedupe that number.

In [1] you can see our latest audience size stats by month for 2023 and 2024. From these stats we can see that our monthly audience year-over-year has grown by 30-35% on any given month!

As a side note, you may notice our audience size typically peaks in the winter and bottoms out in the summer. That's an industry dynamic those in-the-know have understood about the hobby for a long time. Folks like to do indoor hobbies most in the colder months and they prefer to do outdoor hobbies in the warmer months, so no big surprise there.

A more interesting question is to ask, why has *MRH* grown so much in the last year?

Why has the *MRH* audience grown?

We strongly suspect our significant growth has been due to Train.com's online presence (particularly their forum), being somewhat static in 2024.

Publisher's musings | 3

While we expect the Trains.com sale to Firecrown bodes well for the hobby, *MRH* seems to have benefited from the uncertainty around the future of Trains.com over the last year. The *Model Railroader* forum has gone through unstability for an extended period now, so folks went looking for an alternative and they found *MRH*, our free magazine, and our forum.

We have many new members on the *MRH* forum and many of them say they've come over from Trains.com due to the inconsistent performance of the trains.com forum.

We expect Trains.com to make a strong comeback under Firecrown, but we also anticipate many of the new members *MRH* has acquired will remain with us.

Here's to a bright future for all hobby media!

Our coming Who's Who in the hobby book

Our long-standing hobby industry news expert, Richard Bale, is putting together an extensive book on who's who in the hobby. Richard has been in the hobby since the 1960s and he has rubbed shoulders with a lot of hobby legends.

I love talking to Richard and listening to his stories of when he roomed with John Allen at a convention, for instance. Others like Whit Towers, Cliff Grandt, and Jim Findley were quite the ornery fellows, and I find these stories to be a real delight.

I kept asking Richard if there was some way for him to document his hobby industry knowledge for the rest of us, especially his insights into the hobby's history around the personalities that have been part of its growth.

As a result, Richard has put together and extensive who's who in the hobby. Many of the folks in this coming book are no longer with us, but for the more prominent ones, we're not only giving you a short bio, but we're providing pictures.

Modern photo AI to the rescue

MRH has a number of fancy photo AI tools that have entered the market in recent years. These AI photo tools can work wonders with old photos. We're regularly using these AI tools to enhance many of the photos we bring you in every issue of *MRH* and *Running Extra.*

I thought it would be fun to show you an example of what these tools can do and to also give you some idea of what to expect with many of the photos coming in the new Who's Who book in 2025.

We ran across an interesting low res photo of John Allen online [2]. We ran our AI photo enhancement toolset on it and photo [3] is the result. I continue to be amazed at what these tools can do to take a so-so photo and turn it into a sharp and clear image that's nothing short of stunning.

This AI software includes advance facial recognition sharpening features that completely rock. I've been running this

2. Here is the original tiny soft-focus photo of John Allen we found online.

3. And here is the AI-enhanced photo done using advanced facial recognition sharpening tools.

software on older photos and they take what was a nearly lost cause and turn it into a real keeper photo.

We're using these tools on the photos we're running in Richard's Who's Who book that's in the works. While these tools are amazing,

they're not magic. In other words, if the photo is extremely grainy and has mostly blown out highlights, it doesn't fabricate details that don't exist. On those photos, something is better than nothing, so we're electing to run with the poorest photos that AI can't really save.

But as you can see, when the photo has a bit of intact detail, the AI photo enhancement can be fabulous.

Watch for more about Richard Bale's new Who's Who book early next year.

The Locomotive book

The last *Run like a Dream: Locomotives* book sneak peek in August had 60 pages in it. The total book will be circa 100 pages like the books on Trackwork and Rolling Stock.

I'm planning to release another sneak peek before year end and am shooting for 75 pages. Then I will be working very hard to bring this thing in for a landing in Q1 of 2025. Finally!

I'm getting into the real meat of the book now, dealing with the sections on mechanism tuning and decoders. I have a pretty good idea what I want to say, which is at least half the battle. The other half is sitting down and actually doing the work to shoot photos to illustrate the points.

I'm covering both steam and diesel in this book, even though I'm mainly a diesel guy myself. I've been doing a ton of research on brass steam, and I've got a good collection of info now. I also have a Daylight 4449 brass steamer that I want to rework using the ideas I'm presenting in the book.

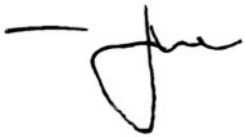
Theory is one thing, but I figure if I can actually do the things I recommend I can provide additional insights from my own experiences - and I can take photos as I go to show how it's done. A picture is worth a thousand words as you know.

One of the pre-order customers of the loco book has this to say once he saw the latest sneak peek:

"WOW! This may be the best model railroad locomotive book anyone has ever done and all I have seen so far is a 60-page preview. There is more highly detailed information on maintenance and performance for both steam and diesel internals as well as getting the external wheels and gears to run and operate as smoothly and flawlessly as possible.

I can't even begin to describe the usefulness of the precise and uncomplicated step by step instructions on making your engines run like a dream. I can't wait for my hard copy."

So there you have it. Have a great Thanksgiving! ☑



Last issue likes

Most liked articles in **September 2024 issue** of *MRH* are:

1st Nobody knows my troubles: Advice for laying trackwork
2nd Central of Georgia flatcar with a pole load
3rd Electrical Impulses: Servo turnout control retrospective

Most liked articles in **September 2024 issue** of *Running Extra* ...

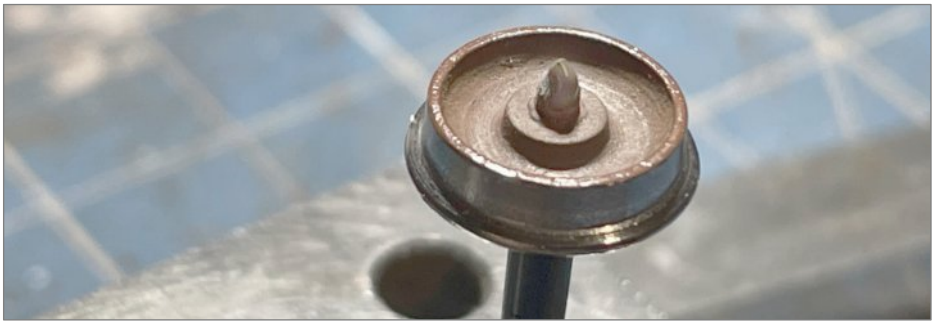
1st Introduction to DIY 3D printing
2nd Limited Modeler: Exploring the Ballville branch
3rd Modeling the ocean

If you want more of this type article, then like the article! Click the *Give us a like* or *comments* button on each article and press the like button on the article's forum page if you want to see more articles like these. ■

Best of the MRH FORUM THIS MONTH

Model Railroad Hobbyist | November 2024

Compiled by JOE FUGATE



How to add rolling friction when needed

MRH forum member **Vince P** maintains a blog on the *MRH* forum about his Southern RR layout. Recently he explored adding friction to cars that "bounce" when switching.

"I added all the weight I could. They're better, but still bounce. I needed more friction, so I added a glob of paint at the end of each axle, it's a bit hard to see in the photo. I also painted the inside of the truck, not a glob but put it on thick. It worked nicely – no bouncing!"

VIEW READER COMMENTS

Check out Vince's blog for more!

View the full blog on the MRH website

▶ *MRH'S* MONTHLY GREAT MODELER POSTS

1. *MRH* forum member **Craig Townsend**, a a regular poster who models in 1:29, took his ten year old son to a serious outdoor layout op session.

Introducing ops to my 10 year old

MRH forum member **Craig Townsend** says:

"This summer ... I brought my oldest along for an introduction to operations. The layout that I took him to was the same one that I learned ops on when I was a teenager. The owner of the layout has a large scale narrow gauge model of a fictional branch of various narrow gauge railroads in Colorado. His layout was also featured in the August 2009 *Garden Railway* magazine."

To see how the session went, view the full thread!

View the full thread on the MRH website

3. *MRH* forum member **Sean Martin** asked about where to find lumber loads that fit a 63-foot centerbeam flat. Member **Packer** provided one answer shown here .

Lumber load for a 63ft centerbeam flatcar

MRH forum member **Sean Martin** asked:

"I have an ExactRail 63ft Centerbeam Flatcar. I've been trying to locate a lumber load for this car. However, all I can find are 72ft and 50ft loads. Does any manufacturer make a 63ft lumber load that would fit a centerbeam flatcar?"

Several members provided suggestions, but one of the coolest looking suggestion came from *MRH* forum member **Packer** (see [3] above). He says:

"I used the Wheels of Time loads and assembled it for one of mine."

We think this load example from **Packer** looks really cool!

This thread has more suggestions listed with links. Check out the full thread on the *MRH* forum for all the details.

View the full thread on the *MRH* website

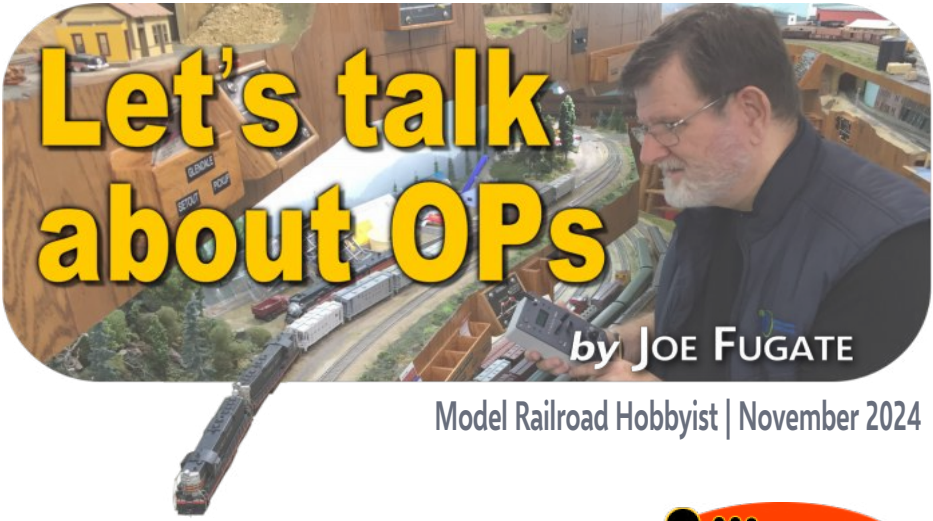
Recent Weekly Photo Fun threads

This time we have some photos from a recent Weekly Photo Fun thread showing some interesting perspectives. Enjoy!

View list of recent Photo Fun threads

4. *MRH* forum member **RMM** (Robin Mountenay) posted this stunning low angle photo of a scene on his layout. Impressive!

5. *MRH* fourm member **Mark Deimling** who models in both HO and Sn3 posted this photo. Mark says: "Pulled a backdrop that was given to me a while ago out of storage and temporarily hung it up." It's amazing what a realistic photo backdrop can do when put behind some nice models.



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Getting started with more engaging operation doesn't need to be hard ...

VIEW READER COMMENTS

If you're new to more engaging model railroad ops, you probably have some misconceptions about doing anything more than just ad hoc running of trains.

First, you probably think getting into more realistic operation means all the fun gets overshadowed with a mass of procedures and paperwork. Second, you also likely have no idea where to start even if you are interested in doing more with ops.

I'm here to tell you neither of these concerns need to be true.

As the saying goes, "There is only one way to eat an elephant: one bite at a time." And that's exactly how I got started in ops on my Siskiyou Line 1.

I started out by determining what trains I wanted to run – for now let's just assume I have my list of trains – I'll talk more about how to develop that list in next month's column.

I made a sheet of paper for each train. I put the train's name on it, where it started from and where it ended its run.

1. The earliest op sessions on my Siskiyou Line 1 were deliberately nothing fancy. I made up a list of trains with where they started and where they ended their run. Then the guys came over and we just ran trains! That's ops regular Joe Brugger.

When you first start out trying to do more serious operation, you likely don't know the answer to some simple questions, like how long does it take a train to go from A to B on your layout?

Your modeling buddies who are interested in ops on your layout also likely don't know the layout real well, nor do they know what trains you might regularly run.

Your very first op sessions are intended to answer these questions, so start out super simple. Invite the guys over to do ops, then take your pile of train sheets and just run the trains in sequence. Take the first sheet, put it on a clipboard, and hand it to the first operator.

Their job is to locate the first train and to run it at a reasonably realistic speed (this isn't the Indy 500) from its starting point to its end point, and to record the run time in minutes and seconds on the sheet.

Once the first train has left, hand out the next train sheet to the next operator. Keep doing this until you have three or four trains in motion on the layout. Now walk around the layout and help opposing trains meet at towns where they can pass each other. Above all, have fun!

That's it, welcome to your first operating session. It's that easy! ☑

WHAT'S NEAT column

Model Railroad Hobbyist | November 2024

VIEW READER COMMENTS

KEN PATTERSON COVERS THIS MONTH:

- ADDING MORE LIGHTING TO A MODULE
- BACHMANN TRAINS CHRISTMAS ANNOUNCEMENTS

click to play video

PHOTOS AND VIDEO OF SUPERB MODELS

THIS MONTH, Ken shows how he continues to add lighting to the ongoing module project, and Doug Blaine joins via Skype to share some of Bachmann Trains' upcoming train sets and models for the Christmas season.

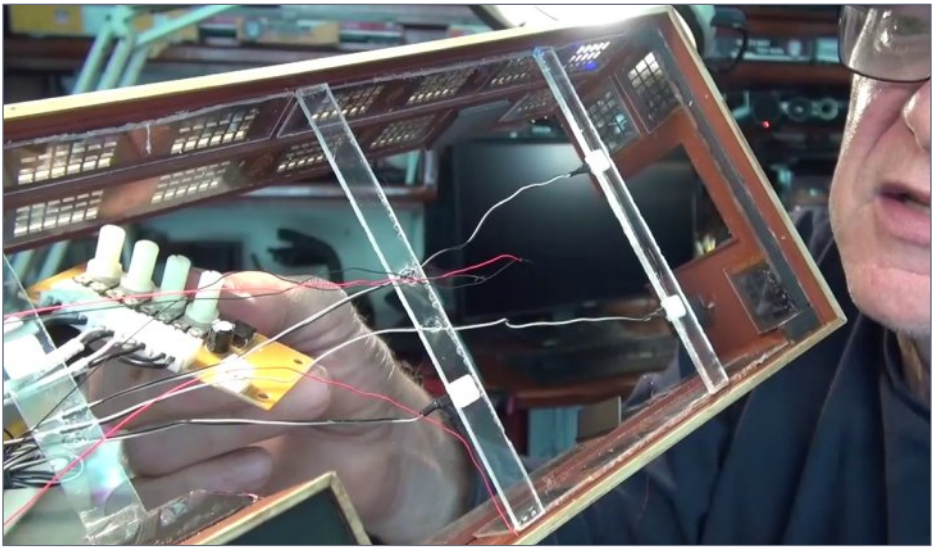
Work continues on the Construction Equipment Shop Complex

1. Ken starts this segment by explaining how he's cutting inch-wide gaps in the tracks where he had to cut the module out of the layout. He'll use N scale rail joiners on Micro-Engineering Code 70 track to bridge the gaps.
Info: microengineering.com/ProductInfo.html

VIEW READER COMMENTS

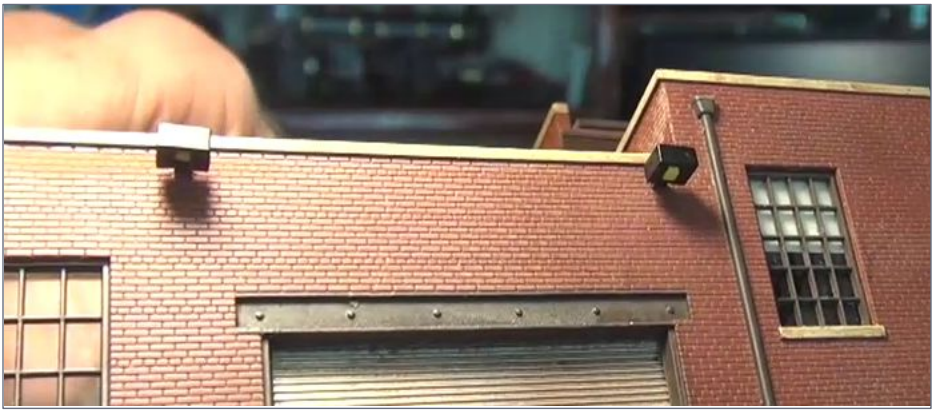
2. The center mainline track has the new track pieces inserted.

3. Ken is going to make powering the tracks individually controllable. Here he's carving out a location for a control panel.



4. Ken has installed LED lights both inside and outside of the construction equipment building, controlled with a Woodland Scenics JustPlug hub from which he's removed the case. Info: woodlandscenics.woodlandscenics.com

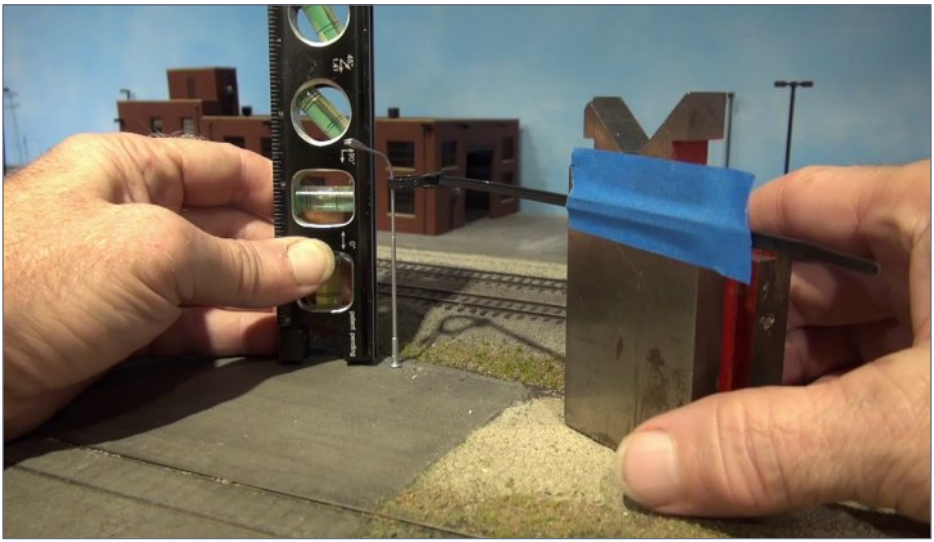
VIEW READER COMMENTS



5. A&B The two types of LEDs Ken mounted on the outside of the building were gooseneck lights over doorways and security lights he made from the tops of Atlas two-lamp light poles. Info: shop.atlasrr.com

6. Ken's control panel grew from five to six tracks, and he may be adding more. The hole he cut earlier is no longer large enough for it.

7. To hold the light poles up straight while the silicone he used for glue cured, Ken took a machinist's gauge and removed the arm, replacing it with a brass tube to which he attached an eye hook with just enough of a gap to hook it to the pole.



8. Needing more fixtures to support the light poles, he made a couple more with steel blocks, tape, and zip ties, leaving a loop large enough to go over the lamp at the top.

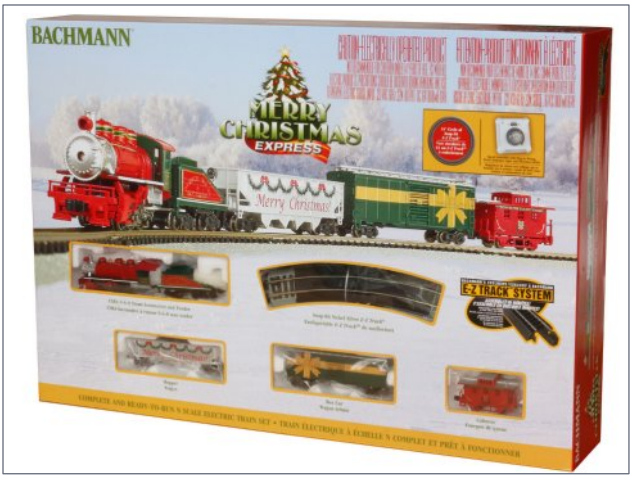
9. Here Ken applies silicone around the base of a light pole.

Bachmann Trains Christmas announcements

10. Doug Blaine of Bachmann Trains joined Ken to introduce some of the products coming for this Christmas season. In HO scale, the Jingle Bell Express features an 0-6-0 locomotive with tender, three cars, and a caboose, all decorated for the season.

11. For Thomas and Friends fans, the Thomas Saves Santa's Sleigh train set includes a plow-equipped Thomas with moving eyes, plank wagon with sleigh load, and a "Naughty or Nice" brake van complete with Santa.

12. Here Doug shows a new licensed product, the HO scale Scout Elf Express, featuring an Elf on the Shelf™ figure, an 0-6-0 locomotive with tender, two freight cars, and a caboose.



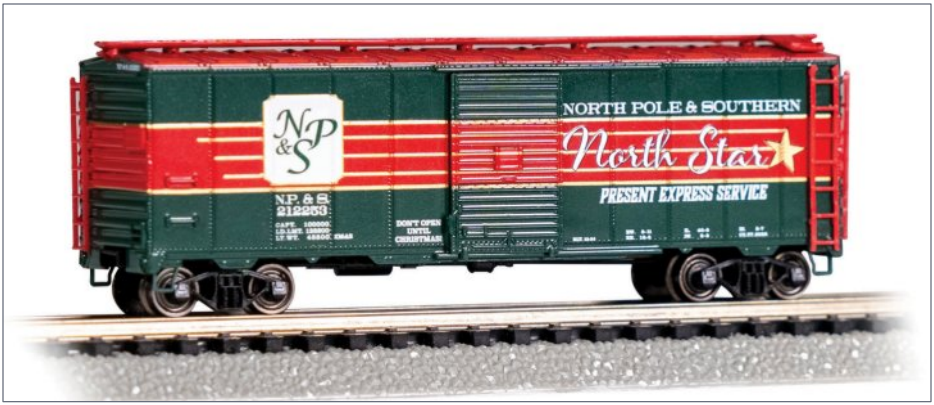
13. In N scale, the Merry Christmas Express comes with an 0-6-0 locomotive with tender decorated for the North Pole & Southern, two Christmas decorated freight cars, and a 4-wheel bobber caboose.

14. A multi-year favorite in large scale, The Night Before Christmas is what circles Ken's Christmas Tree. The set includes a 4-6-0 locomotive with tender decorated for the North Pole & Southern, a NP&S gondola, and a four-wheel bobber caboose.

VIEW READER COMMENTS

15. Separately available items include this HO scale Quad Hopper decorated for the Claus Coal Mines. Part of Bachmann's Silver Series of rolling stock, the car includes blackened metal wheels, body mounted couplers, non-magnetic axles, and a removable coal load.

16. A separately available Thomas release for Christmas is this 12-ton van decorated with a Christmas wreath.



17. In N scale, the North Pole & Southern's North Star Present Express Service rides on an AAR 40′ boxcar. The car features separately applied brake system details, body mounted magnetic couplers, and detailed trucks with blackened metal wheels with RP25 contours.

18. Due in 2025, the large scale (1:29) Mrs. Claus Wassail car promises Christmas Punch to everyone around the tree. The model features modern roller bearing trucks with metal wheels and separately applied details.
Info: bachmanntrains.com

For complete information on how Ken finished installing lighting on the module and all the Bachmann train sets and other products, check out the video linked from the first page of this article. ☑

Adding all-wheel pickup to a steam loco

Electrical Impulses

1. This Mantua 0-4-0 steam loco is converted to all-wheel pickup.

VIEW READER COMMENTS

Model Railroad Hobbyist | November 2024

BERND FANGHANEL ADDS ELECTRICAL WIPERS TO A STEAMER ...

IN THIS ARTICLE, I discuss improving electrical pickup on a Mantua 0-4-0 steam engine [1].

The model belongs to a friend's son, who bought it with his own money as his first engine. He and his father struggled to make it run better. When they saw the work I've posted on the *MRH* forum, the father asked if I could help.

He and his son installed a can motor, but that did not solve the problem. The loco still ran erratically. At their wits' end, the dad asked for my help, and I said, "Sure, why not?"

There is a good reason this engine performs so poorly at low speed, and even worse at higher speeds. The engine has only two wheels picking up electrical power on one rail, while the tender has four wheels picking up on the other rail.

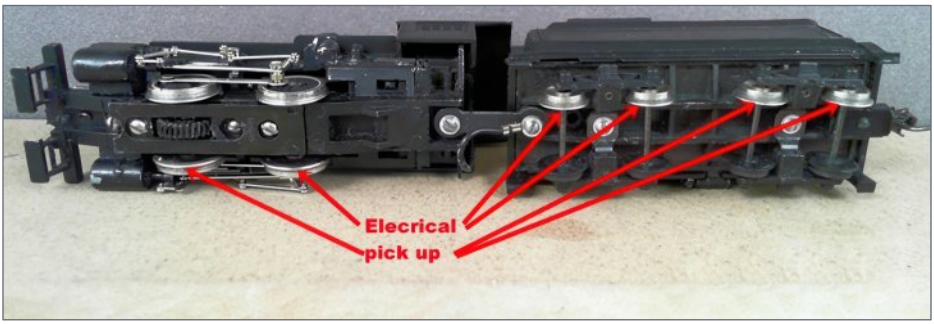
Unfortunately, the power path on those four tender wheels depends on the contact between the axles and the tender truck bolsters, which is intermittent at best. Then there's the contact between the bolsters and the tender frame, which can also be iffy as well.

I made this engine run better by upgrading it to use all-wheel pickup, with wires directly from the wheel contacts to the motor. The methods I show can be applied to just about any steam loco, and can be adapted to work with diesel and electric locomotive models as well.

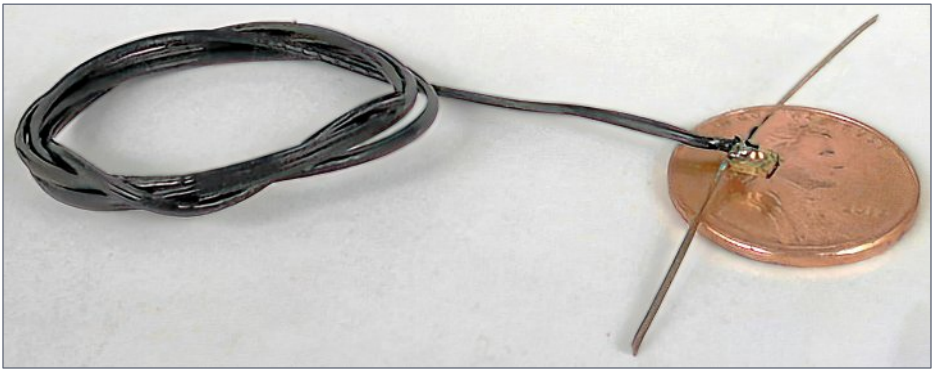
TENDER TRUCK WHEEL WIPERS

First, let's talk about building and mounting the tender truck wheel wipers.

I make the wipers from a strip of 0.006″ to 0.008″ thick phosphor-bronze sheet (see the shopping list for where to buy). I use scissors to cut a two-inch-long strip. I try to keep them narrow, approximately 1/16″ to 1/8″ wide.



2. As it comes, this steam loco has old-school pickup, with the loco picking up on one rail and the tender picking up on the other.



3. Here is a finished tender truck wheel wiper. I made two for each truck, one for each rail.

Next, I cut out a small 1/4″ x 3/8″ rectangle of 0.030″ brass – a motor tool cutoff disk works for this. I drilled a no. 50 clearance hole to clear an 0-80 screw.

I soldered a piece of #26 stranded black wire from a black ribbon cable to the brass square, and soldered the brass square to the center of the phosphor-bronze wiper [3].

I replaced the metal truck frames with Delrin frames that had leaf springs common to most tender trucks. This way, adding the wipers does not short out the truck.

The ¾-inch-long 0-80 screws I had on hand for fastening the wiper to the truck were too long. I made a small brass fixture to hold the screw for cutting it to length, and to make it easy to file the burrs off [4].

I drilled a #55 hole in the truck beam between the wheels and tapped it for 0-80 screws, then test-installed each wiper. I bent the wiper to mark where to cut it to the proper length [5]. I also bent the wiper slightly near the center to set the proper pressure against the back of the wheel. You want the wiper to make solid contact, but not press so hard that it impedes wheel rotation.

On the left of [6] is a finished truck with a set of wipers fastened to the truck using shortened 0-80 screws. In the center are two more

M. Dodd

USE COLORED WIRE TO AVOID CONFUSION

We strongly recommend not using black wire for all pickup and motor connections. Instead, use NMRA standard DCC colors:

Red – right rail

Black – left rail

Orange – motor +

Gray – motor -

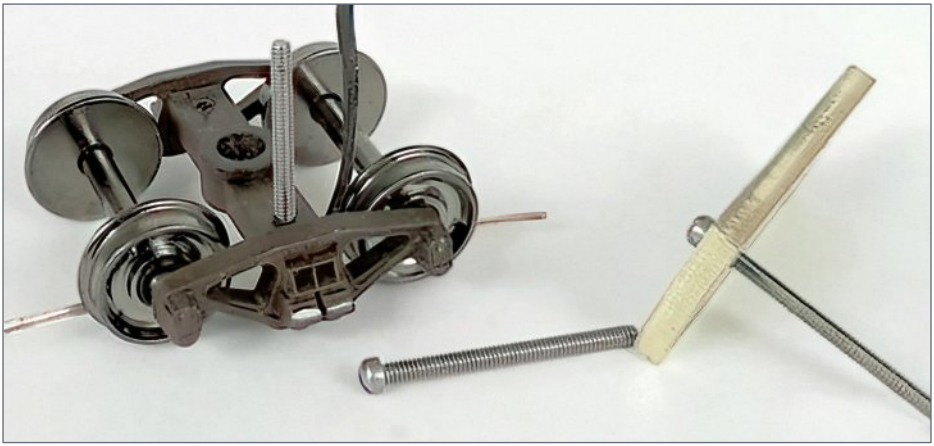
The complete NMRA DCC wire color list is here: www.nmra.org/sites/default/files/standards/sandrp/DCC/S/s-9.1.1_decoder_interfaces.pdf .

Colored wires make it easy to confirm you've wired the pickups correctly. They also help you remember the correct orientation of the tender trucks. Furthermore, colored wires should always be used on plugable connections, such as seen in [14]. That way, you can feel confident that you're plugging a cable correctly, and won't damage something because of a wrong connection.

It's easy to use colored wires. Buy several feet of "50-conductor rainbow ribbon cable." Peel off the colored wires you need, and save the rest for other projects. There are 10 different colors that repeat across the flat cable, so three feet of 50-conductor cable will yield five 3' red wires, five 3' black wires, five 3' orange wires, and so on.

You can use the extra colors for other uses like wiring LEDs or switch machines. ■

wipers and two spacer washers that go under the brass rectangle to set the wiper high enough that it won't rub on the wheel axle.



4. The 0-80 screws I have on hand are too long, so I made a brass fixture for cutting them to the proper length.

5. I attach the wiper to the truck then bend the ends of the wipers to mark their length and cut off the excess.

VIEW READER COMMENTS

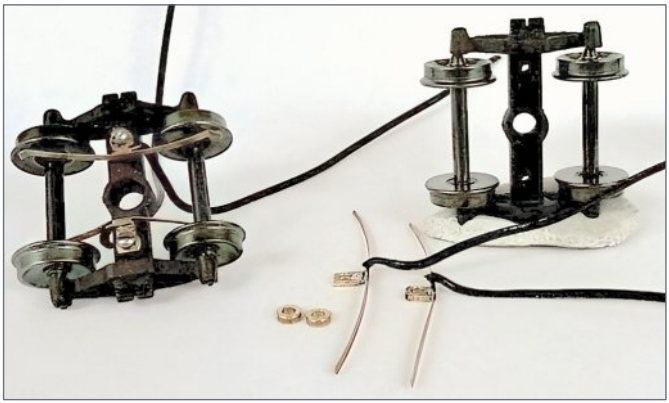
I also drilled four holes in the tender chassis to run the wires through.

Photo [7] shows the tender complete, with wires installed through their holes.

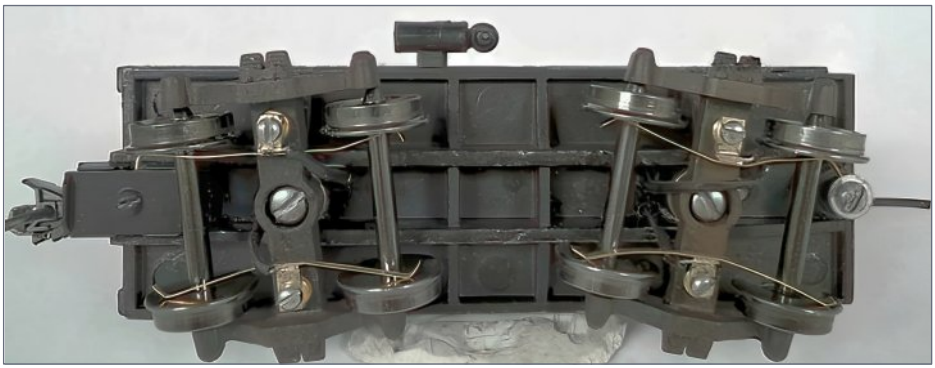
The trucks swivel freely, although with a bit of resistance from the wires. It's nothing that will interfere with normal operation.

STEAM LOCO DRIVER WIPERS

Next, I built driver wipers and mounted them to the frame.



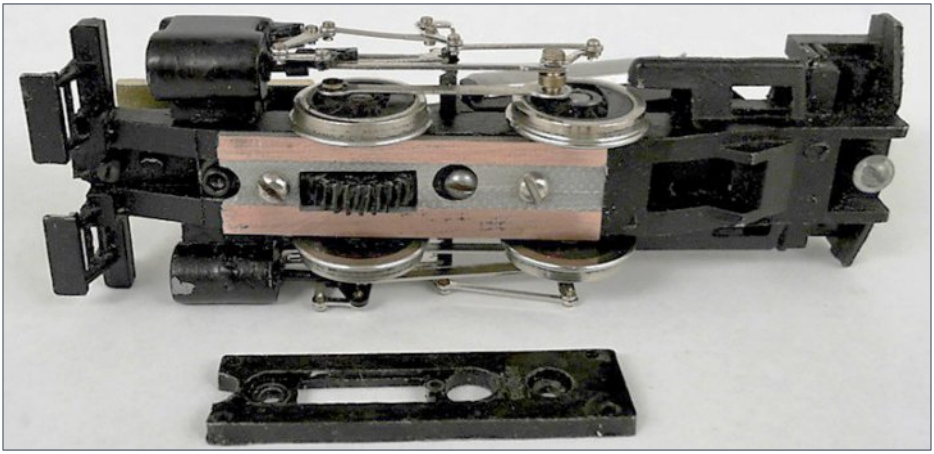
6. The truck on the left has both wipers installed and trimmed to length. The truck on the right is next.



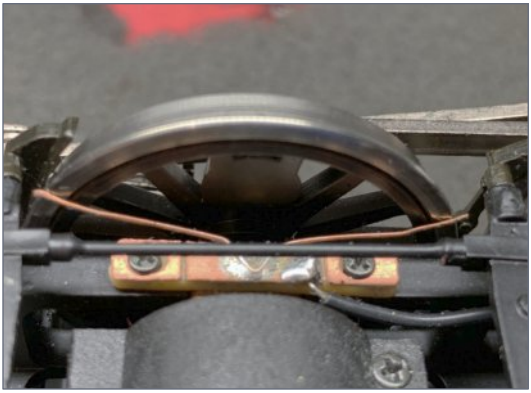
7. The tender with the wipers installed. I drilled the four holes in the tender floor for the wiper wires.

I replaced the original driver retainer plate with one cut from a piece of PC board [8]. I filed the foil off the middle of the plate, cut a hole for the gear, and drilled out the holes to match the original plate. Then I fastened it to the bottom of the engine with the original screws. This makes installing the driver wipers much easier.

If you can't easily replace the entire driver retainer plate, you can put a strip of PC board onto the bottom of the loco right behind each driver and solder to it, as seen in this photo [8a] by *MRH* forum member, herronp.



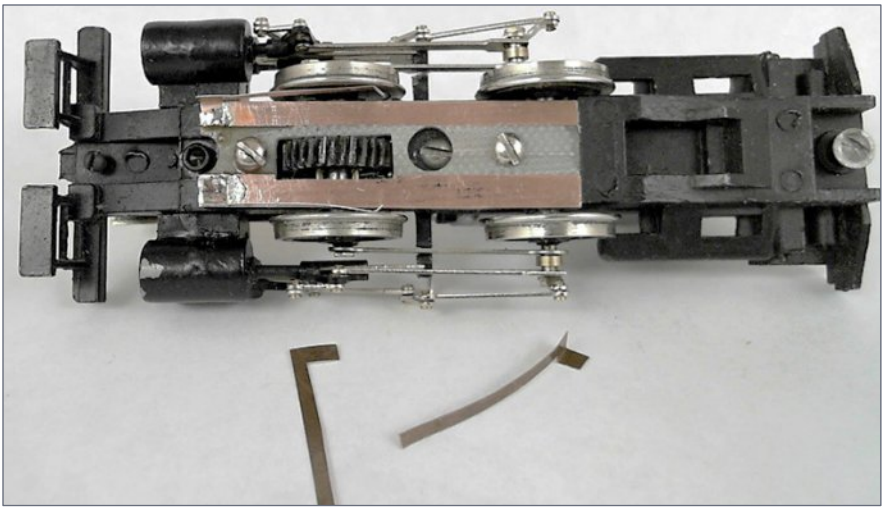
8. The replacement driver retainer plate made from PCB stock.



8a. If you can't easily replace the entire driver retainer plate, you can also use individual strips of PC board behind each driver as shown here. *Photo by Peter Herron*

I drew four L-shaped wipers on my computer, printed them, and tacked the paper to a piece of 0.008″ phosphor-bronze with rubber cement. Then I cut them out with scissors. I bent the wipers to shape and soldered them to the PC board [10], [11].

9. The four L-shaped wipers patterns on 0.008″ phosphor-bronze.

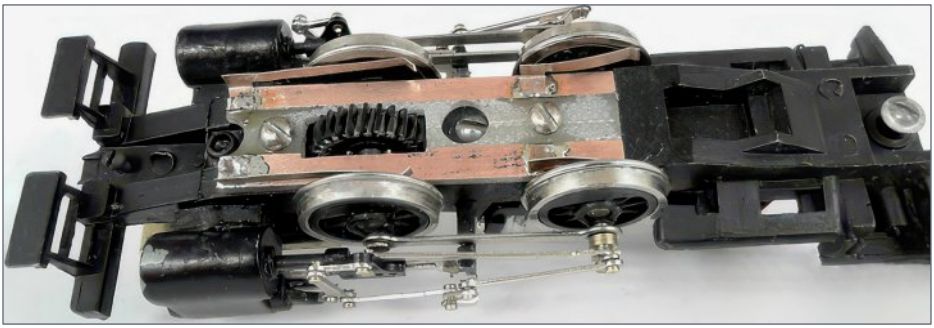


10. I bent the wipers as shown, then soldered two behind the front drivers.

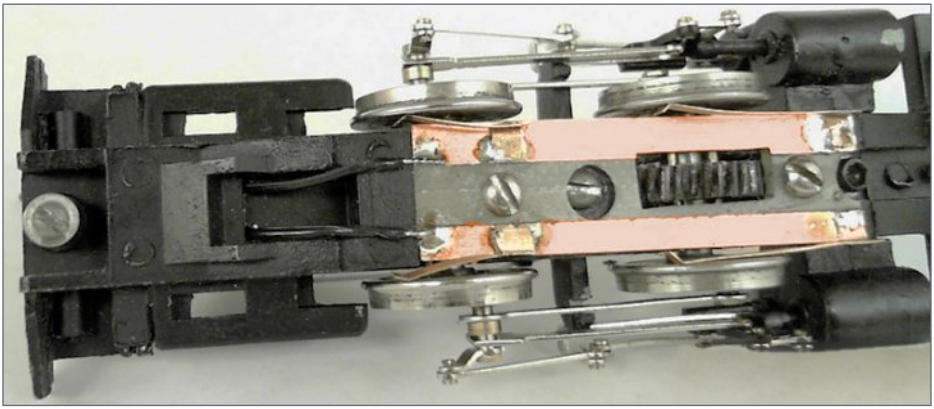
I soldered two #26 wires to the cab end of the PC board, then drilled two holes below the firebox so I could run the wires up under the cab floor to hook up later in the tender. The decoder will be in the tender, so I'm setting up to run the locomotive pickup wires out the rear to the tender.

I temporarily wired it all together and took a test run with straight DC to see if there was an improvement.

Here's a video of the loco in action: (youtu.be/wjOURBlI6kg).



11. All driver wipers installed.



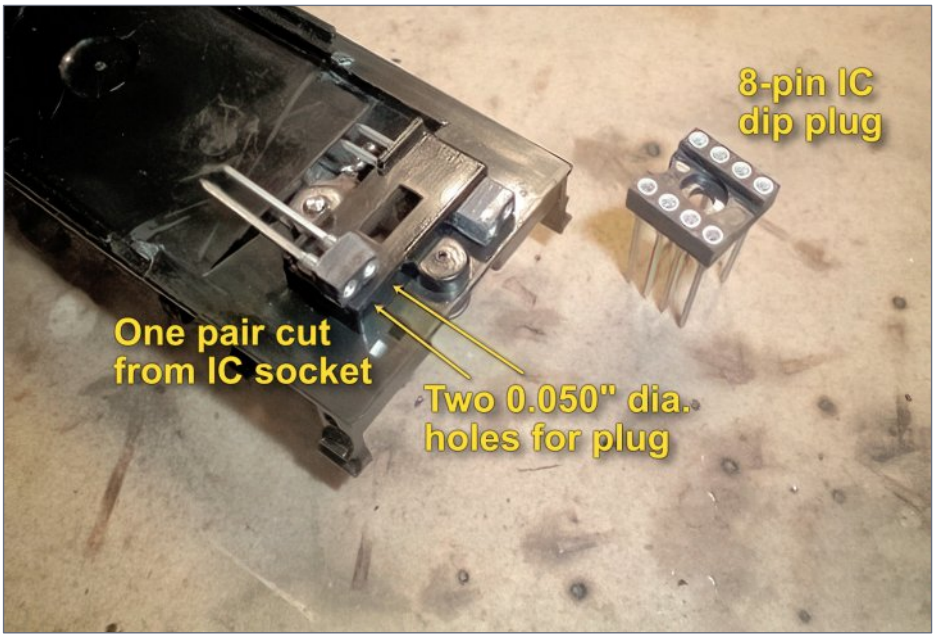
12. Pickup wires added and run through holes in the firebox.

This is how smooth a 4-wheeled switcher, now with 12-wheel pickup, can run. The can motor also helps tremendously.

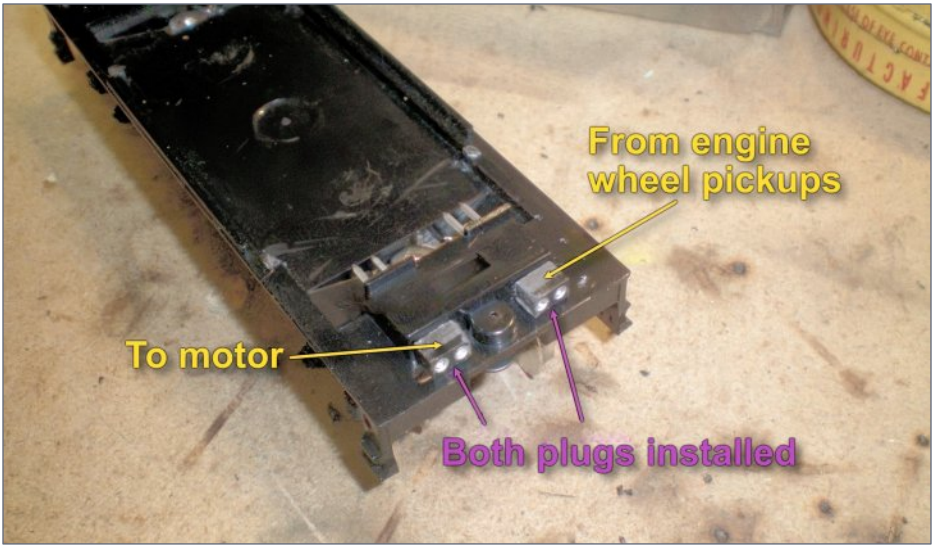
CONNECTING THE TENDER TO THE LOCOMOTIVE

I generally like to install the decoder into the tender, since it has the most space. To make running the wires as easy as possible, I route the two wires from the loco pickups back into the tender. I then route the orange and gray wires from the tender into the loco and to the motor.

To facilitate easy disconnection of the wires between tender and loco, I use an 8-pin DIP socket, and cut it up to get two pairs of socket connectors for the tender and two pairs of plugs for the locomotive wires [13, 14].



13. I like to use 8-pin DIP plugs to make my own wire connectors between a steam loco and the tender.



14. Once I have installed both sets of plugs, I have a full set of connectors for installing a decoder into the tender and getting the power to and from the motor.

REMEMBER THE WIRE ORIENTATION


M. Dodd


J. Regier

As recommended near [3], you should use colored wires for these plugable connections. If you don't like the appearance of brightly colored wires running between the locomotive and the tender, paint them black, but leave ¼" of the color showing next to the connector.

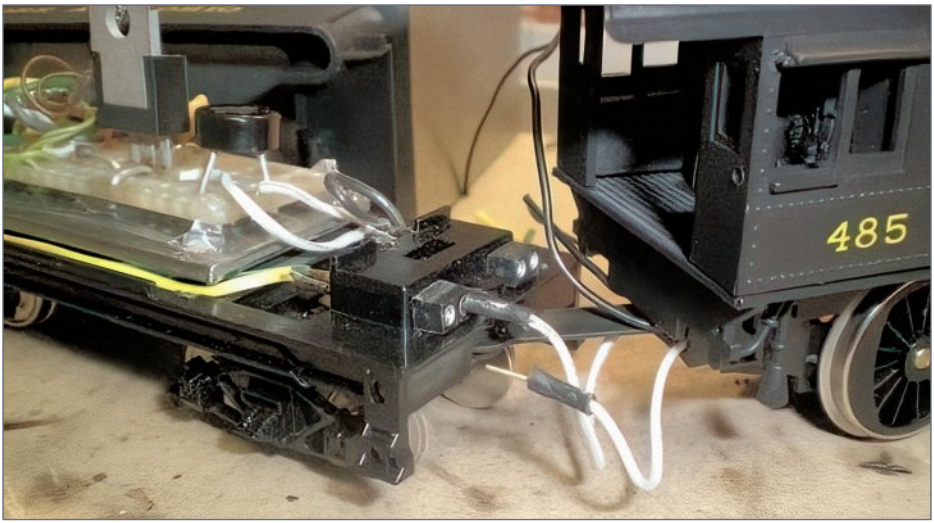
In our experience, single-pin connections tend to be prone to failure, because the single pin does not provide enough friction to stay securely in place. Use two pins or more for each wire connection. The added friction of two or more parallel pins will help make for a more secure connection.

SUMMARY

So that's the entire process of getting all-wheel pickup with your steam locomotives. The improvement in locomotive running quality is like night and day, making the effort totally worth it.

These connectors work great and make connecting or disconnecting the tender to and from the loco a breeze. Paint the wires in [15] all black and they look like hoses running between the tender and the loco. ☑

Follow this link to access the shopping list for this column:
mrhmag.com/magazine/mrh2024-11/elec-impulses-shopping



15. With everything installed, I can just plug things in easily. I paint the wires black (or use wires with black insulation to start with) and I'm good to go.


J. Fugate

More contacts and ditch the stay-alive?

On discussions about adding wipers to a loco, this comment often gets posted:

"I would think with all-wheel pickup on DCC engines you could eliminate the need for keep-alive."

That's the theory with all-wheel pickup. And that would hold true if only one wheel set would get dirty at a time. The trouble is, all the wheels tend to get dirty equally, and at a certain point none of the wheels will pick up reliably, no matter how well your wipers work.

Another flaw with this thought can be a weak conductivity path from the track to the decoder and motor. A good example of this is the LifeLike (LL) SD9s. They have six wheels on each rail – and in theory *something* ought to be picking up power.

But I have seen LL SD9s with clean wheels on clean track not budge unless nudged, after which they move a couple inches and stop dead again. Research into why reveals these locos use an axle-tip-to-metal-truck-side-plate method of getting the power from the wheels to the wire going to the decoder.

Kato uses the same method, and their power pickup is very reliable. Where LifeLike dropped the ball is in how the side frame metal plate is manufactured.

Kato uses phosphor-bronze side frame plates, and they drill out the axle holes. LikeLike uses copper for the side frame plates and one the plate, the axle hole area has an x-shaped slot that's stamped and splays out.

Phosphor-bronze is a harder metal than copper. Plus, the Kato tight-tolerance drilled axle holes gives a very precise fit for the wheel axle tips, guaranteeing good contact.

The LifeLike copper side plates, on the other hand, combined with the crudely stamped axle holes, results in a loose fit for the wheel axle tips, not guaranteeing contact on all six axle tips. On top of this, copper is a softer material, so the holes wear quickly, adding still more slop. Finally, the splayed copper in the side frames acts


J. Fugate

MORE CONTACTS AND DITCH THE STAY-ALIVE? *CONTINUED ...*

as a dirt magnet, picking up all kinds of fuzz and gunk. Bottom line, as the LL SD9s get used, power pickup reliability drops quickly, and you end up with a loco where none of the six axle tips will be touching, so the model just stops dead. A nudge will get an axle tip or two to touch the side frame, and the loco will run a few inches, but then stop again.

Adding wheel wipers to the back of all six LL SD9 wheels with a wire running directly to the decoder solves this problem completely. Adding a stay-alive to such a locomotive will not solve a poor conductivity path problem, it will only obscure it. If there's no power going to the stay-alive capacitors due to poor contact, the stay-alive will soon drain and the loco will run poorly again.

If you want the absolute best loco performance, add all-wheel power pickup as shown in this article and add stay-alive. Don't just do one or the other. It's what I like to call the "belt-and-suspenders" method, guaranteeing that one way or another, your loco will keep running flawlessly almost like it's on battery power. ■

BERND FANGHANEL

Bernd has been interested in model railroading ever since he can remember.

Though he was interested in live steam at one time, he finally settled on HO scale in 3′ and 2′-6″ gauges, as well a standard gauge. He has dabbled in TT and On30.

Bernd retired from Gleason Works, a major producer of gear-cutting machines, after 30+ years of service.

He and his wife live in upstate New York in a house he designed with a large basement for the New York, Vermont & Northern Ry, yet to be built. ■

MRH MARKETPLACE

Have you seen these popular blogs on the MRH website?

John Winter's PRR
123,000 reads
CLICK TO READ IT NOW

Randy Seiler's B&O/PC
508,000 reads
CLICK TO READ IT NOW

Modeling the contemporary-era Office Park Zone: 2

Craig Thomasson adds scenery and begins operation on his TOMA-style shelf layout ...

INDEX TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. This office park zone layout is generic enough to represent many different locations and recent eras. Here it's July 1989, and the CN St. James local is busy switching one of the local industries. Note the Canadian style crossbucks that became common starting around 1986, and the Buda wheel stops in the foreground common to the CN. A truck belonging to a local company waits for the crossing to clear.

Modeling the Office Park zone: 2 | 3

Model Railroad Hobbyist | November 2024

VIEW READER COMMENTS

Last month, I described the rationale for my Office Park Zone TOMA-style shelf layout, and how I started the build. As I ended last month, the layout track was laid and wired, and I showed how I added mockup structures for all the industries.

On to finishing up the layout and doing some ops.

Painting the track

I painted all the track using camouflage brown paint, and it made a big difference. However, it seemed a little too uniform, especially since this is an industrial park spur that doesn't see much maintenance. After searching and reading a number of posts, I finally decided to conquer my fears and try painting some ties.

I had tubes of acrylic paint in burnt umber, titanium gray, and ivory black, so I squirted a bit of each into a small cup with a bit of water, grabbed the brush, and started on one of the spurs in the back. I figured if I didn't like the results, I could simply go over it again with the camo brown paint.

Initially, I worried the colors were going on too bright and intense. However, the paint was more diluted than I thought, and when dry it toned down nicely.

I went back to Google Maps a couple of times just to get a feel for what the ties look like on a typical industrial spur. I didn't want the colors to be too random or too uniform.

The siding in the back [2] was where I started. I wanted it to look like it had aged, with the odd individual tie or groups hav-

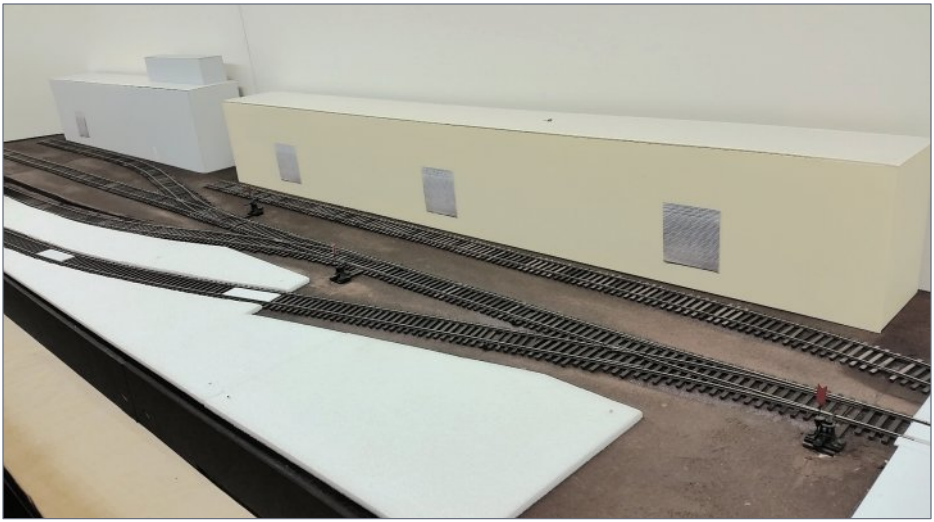
2. I started at the layout's right end with the plastic pellets industry, weathering and painting the track.

ing been replaced recently. The front siding is for the latex distributor, and I wanted that to look like it had been installed or rebuilt recently. Curiously, the ties I left camo brown almost look out of place among the other painted ones.

Once I got the hang of it, I started having fun. Within a couple of hours, I had painted the ties on the entire layout [3].

Looking back, my main fear was screwing up. Either I'd end up getting paint where it shouldn't be, or the colors would be way off. When it comes to rolling stock, I can tell if I get the color right or wrong quickly. But with the subtle variations and shading found on scenic elements, not so much.

When painting a model, the slightest imperfection can mean stripping and starting over. With the ties, sloppy painting simply blended in. And after ballasting, one more final weathering pass blends everything together even more.



3. Here is the left end weathered. That's Rudy's Tortillas in the far corner and my "generic warehouse" in the foreground with the three loading doors. Out of the picture to the left is the lumber yard.

PAVING THE ROAD AND LOTS

With the road temporarily on the layout, I decided that I was happy with its width and placement. I glued all the pieces together and added risers where appropriate. I did one final test fit to make sure everything lined up without clearance issues.

I cut patterns for the lumber yard and latex distributor paved areas from scrap 3/16" foamcore that I had used for the original warped backdrops. It sat about 0.040" above the railhead, which was too high.

Satisfied with the size and shape of the patterns, I transferred them to a clean sheet of 1/8" foamcore, which sits slightly below the code 70 railhead and looks better [4]. I find the foamcore easier and cheaper than styrene for paving large areas.

4. Across from the plastic pellets industry, I have a latex distribution tank car loading/unloading facility along the front of the fascia – the industry itself is supposedly in the aisle. I added the concrete area shown here using 1/8″ foamcore.

The foamcore can be tricky to work with. If it gets too wet while painting, it will warp.

In Lance Mindheim's book on building a switching layout, he paints his road surfaces with a combination of gray primer and textured paint from spray cans. After buying appropriate paints, I followed his technique to give the road surfaces texture.

It's hard to see the texturing in Lance's book, but my own results were a bit too rough for me. After things dried, I sanded the surfaces lightly to knock down some of the texture.

Using gray and sandstone colors to vary the surface color works effectively. I made the latex distributor surfaces look newer by applying more sandstone color to it [4] versus the lumber yard lot [5].

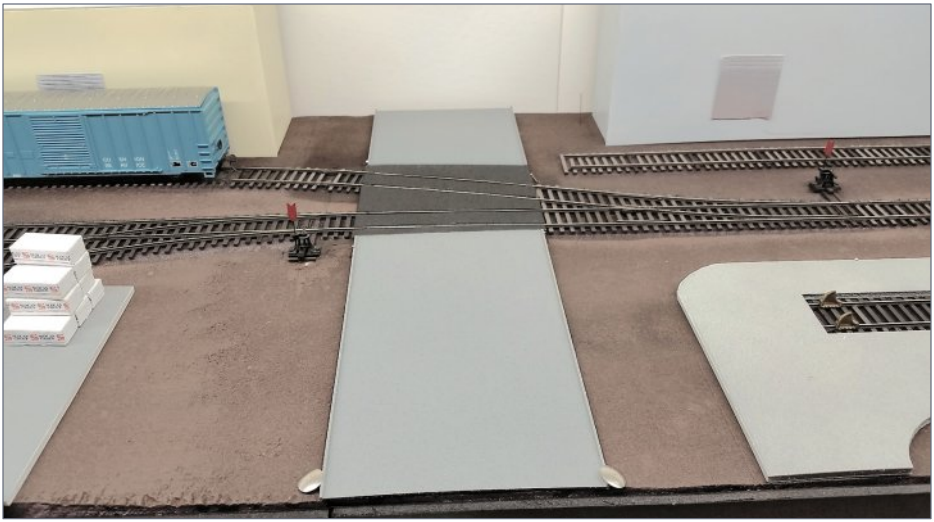
Since the lumber yard lot is an older concrete surface, I used more gray than sandstone. The wrapped bundles of lumber await final assembly into a load for a bulkhead flatcar. They also show just how much space the load from a single car will fill up!

Finally, I tacked 0.030″ styrene sheet in place for the roadway [6]. Using styrene let me vary the height of the roadway, so I could create a bit of a hump where it rises to cross the tracks. It also hides the joint between the two layout sections [14, 15].

This road represents poured concrete with asphalt at the crossing. I later lightened the asphalt for a more weathered look. The module joint runs just under the left edge of the road, and I think the road does a nice job of hiding the seam.

All the paved surfaces still needed a bit more work after these photos were taken. I glued them down and marked expansion joints and cracks.

5. The lumber yard is at the other end of the layout from [4]. I added 1/8″ foamcore for the concrete loading/unloading area.



6. I used 0.030″ styrene to form the road between the left end of the plastic pellets industry and to the right of the "generic warehouse."

WEATHERING THE ROADWAY SURFACE

After staring at the painted road surfaces for a few days, I felt something wasn't quite right. The texturing was too rough.

The color also bothered me. The gray looked too uniform, but I couldn't put my finger on what else bothered me. I spent hours wandering around Google Maps and Street View to see if I could figure it out.

The concrete color runs the gamut from almost white through gray to sand color for the aged streets. The satellite photo [7] has nice high contrast between the sections (goo.gl/maps/H-n9Xa893N8p).

The street view, on the other hand, has very little. Maybe the street view is a couple of years newer, so more aging has occurred, or maybe the overhead view has more contrast from the image processing that Google does.

I took a trip to the store to pick up a few more cans of spray paint in various gray/sand/almond colors, then went back to my workshop to do some experimenting.

I took the road surface to my shop and added some shade variations [8]. I feel I have the faded asphalt color looking about right around the crossing. I still need to sand down the texture a bit more.

The patchwork looks too uniform, and the far patch might be too dark. I lightly sanded the surface in the lower-right corner before painting it. It still has texture, but not too much.

When I do scenery work, I always I let it sit for few days, taking time to see if I want to make any further changes.

PROGRESS ON THE CREEK

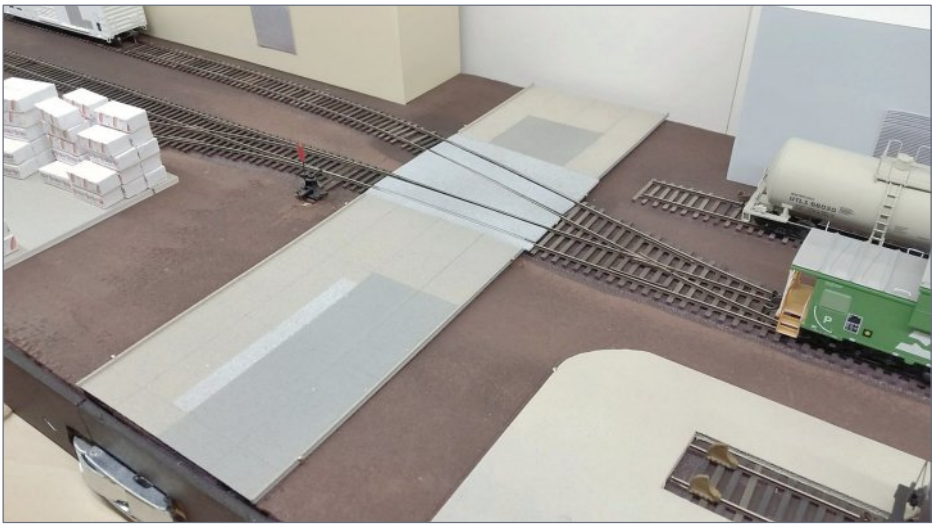
Next, I worked on the creek area. I took the module to my workshop where I could use a sanding block to contour the banks and ditches. I weathered the bridge using washes of burnt umber, black, gray, and white acrylic paints. I painted the creek using a burnt umber and black to cover the newly shaped banks, and I painted on different mixtures of burnt umber, black, green, and raw sienna for the creek base. First a lighter, greener coat as the base, and then a darker coat for the middle [9].

I poured a layer of Envirotex about 1/16″ thick for the water, which made the imperfections of the stream surface in [9] disappear [11]. It represents standing water, so it has a flat surface with just a few ripples.

I finally got the concrete surface for the latex industry glued down. Using a trowel palette knife, I built up the ground along the edges with Woodland Scenics foam putty.

I also built up the ground along the right side of the street. Since streets like this are typically at or below ground level, the ground usually slopes up to the adjacent building.

7. Google maps satellite view of office park streets showing the patchwork that's common to these areas.



8. I reworked the street to add some patchwork sections to the concrete, and I weathered the asphalt around the crossing to lighten it.

9. Here I'm working on the bridge and creek area on the far-right end of the layout.

10. I started ballasting the track here at the plastic pellet industry and the latex distribution spur.

After the foam putty dried, I mixed up acrylic paints and painted all the white surfaces dirt brown to match the painted foam surface.

LET THERE BE BALLAST

I decided to do ballast before ground cover, figuring it would be easier to "grow" the grass up into the edges of the ballast than the other way around.

I chose buff-colored ballast for the siding, and gray ballast for the main track [10]. After doing some map surfing, I believe the specific colors aren't important, as I found four or five different colors of ballast in the same areas. It appears they simply used what they had on hand when they did the trackwork.

Fortunately, I didn't have any problems with the moisture when ballasting, thanks to first gluing down the latex spur foamcore surfaces.

ON TO STATIC GRASS

I've noticed in my Google Maps surfing that industrial park areas are well-maintained. The public-facing turf areas typically get mowed regularly. Areas around the back may not see as much attention, but they still keep them neat. Even the large fields appear to be mowed several times a season.

Before adding static grass, I did some tests.

I sprinkled Woodland Scenics (WS) green blended turf onto scrap foam, then I went back and applied WS light green static grass using a static grass applicator. I also tried mixing the blended turf and static grass together, and then applying the mix. I tried both matte medium and Mod Podge matte in my tests.

Though Mod Podge matte dries clearest, it's also the shiniest. I ended up going with matte medium. I also found the pre-mixed turf and static grass applied together looked the best to me.

For the grass behind the tracks [11], I used a 2:2:1 mixture of turf, medium green grass, and light green grass. For the area in front of the tracks, I used a ratio of 1:2:1.

I used the 4mm grass along the street to give the impression of regular mowing. I put longer 6mm field grass for weeds along the track and warehouse farther from the road [11].

I'm amazed at how quick and easy the static grass process is. Before trying static grass, I was anxious about doing this part, but after my initial results, I couldn't wait to put more grass down.

I wanted to do something where the street meets the backdrop, so I found a location similar to what I'm modeling and printed a Google Street View image to test. You can see that on the upper

11. I added static grass. Here is the area in front of the "generic warehouse."

right of [11] against the backdrop. The photo looks really good from a low angle – I think it looks much better than just the street dead-ending against a blank backdrop.

I also added shrubbery along the creek to get a feel for how that might look [12].

THE TOMA MODULE JOINT

From past experience with modules built on foam, I've learned that the gap at the joint gets bigger as the foam shrinks with age. I used the roadway to help hide the gap. It overlaps onto the adjacent section slightly. I planted grass right up to the edge of the road, and the gap completely disappeared [14].

I also took advantage of the tongue-and-groove built into the edge of the foam sheet to provide additional gap filling. When connected, there is no visible seam [15]. if the gap ever increases, I can put down more static grass along the edge to fill it in.

12. I added extra greenery around the creek area – looks pretty nice! I added Envirotex water to the creek (the blue tape dams keep it contained).

C. Thomasson

Switch stands

I use Caboose switch stands exclusively. They look much more realistic than regular ground throws, and I find them easy to operate [13].

Speaking of manual switch stands, here's what I recommend:

- Use a consistent placement. I mount all my switch stands on the diverging side of the turnout. With the exception of yard ladders and crossovers, the prototype seems to prefer placing them on the diverging side as well.
- Note which way the handle swings and be consistent here too. If the handle points right, travel is to the right. This means the handle points away from the track when lined for the diverging route.
- The stock throw rod length is overly long to ensure the handle always clears, but to me it's too long. I shortened all my rods to move the stand closer to the track. ■

13. I find Caboose Industries switch stands easy to throw using an uncoupling stick.

14. Here is a closeup showing my TOMA module joint with the street disguising it. I use a latch to hold the two modules together.

15. When I put the two modules together, the street completely hides the seam!

PHOTO-LAMINATED WALLS

I wanted to add photos to the walls of the foamcore structures. I started with photos I took in the field of warehouses, and tinkered with the images, skewing and scaling them until they were correctly sized for the plastics unloading warehouse.

I used three different images:

- Three-panel section with yellow door in middle one
- Two-panel section with no doors
- One-panel section with a security gate door.

I could easily cut the door from one panel and put it on any other panel. I tested several images taped to the foamcore mockup in [16a].

I found it tricky to match the balance/contrast/saturation/hue across the different images. Furthermore, what gets printed doesn't always match what's on the monitor.

I kept fiddling with the images, learning how all the color adjustment tools work, and doing test prints on the inkjet printer. I finally managed to get all the images to match, and to remove most of the color shift [16b].

My eyes seem to play tricks on me. If I stare at the screen long enough, the color appears to shift from tan to gray, to blue, then to tan!

I think part of the problem comes from working with images taken in the shade. If the walls were in full sun, it might be easier to render the colors, but then there's the issue of shadows.

Also, I was printing on plain paper at standard quality. Printing at high quality on matte photo paper gives better results, but it's more costly.

On the next one, the general-purpose warehouse, I think the colors turned out much better [17]. There's very little color shift in the walls.

16a. My first attempt at doing photo laminated walls for the plastic pellets industry. I didn't like the blue/magenta tint.

16b. My next attempt. I reduced the contrast and eliminated the blue/magenta tint. Much better!

This one was made up of five different wall images. After I took photo [17], I worked to match the brightness between panels, and to match the scaling for all of them as seen in [19].

MAKING FENCES

I used Walthers chain-link fence kits. I learned a few tricks with these.

I first learned to take the wire that comes in the kits and toss it in the scrap pile, then go out and get some 0.025″ piano wire instead. The stuff that comes in the kit is still curved from coming off a spool and it's chemically blackened, so it doesn't take CA easily. It's also so soft that it's difficult to get a good straight piece.

The first section I built used the last of my piano wire supply, and I found it a breeze to construct. I used the wire from the kit for the next two small sections. Not only was it a pain to get the wire

17. My next structure, the general-purpose warehouse. I didn't quite get all the sections scaled correctly; some are bit taller than the others. I got that fixed on my second try.

in place, but the sections came out all cattywampus. I put the rest of the fencing on hold until I bought some more piano wire.

The instructions recommend installing the posts first on the layout, then attaching the wire. That seemed like too much work, so I pulled out a scrap piece of Masonite to use as my assembly surface.

I marked off 10′ increments, taped posts to it, and glued on the top and bottom runner wire between the posts. I had the first 230-foot section done in about 15 minutes.

I built each straight section as an individual piece, and glued them together at the corners when I installed them [18]. Since the gate was the determining factor for placement, I started from the gate and worked outward.

The instructions recommend placing the fence fabric on a sheet of contact paper for cutting it into strips. I found blue masking tape works fine – just stick a strip of tape to the fence fabric for trimming on a paper cutter.

I worked with the short side of the piece of fabric in the kit instead of the long side because that orientation fit my paper cutter better. I stuck a strip of tape onto the edge of the fabric, marked the desired width, and sliced it off, leaving the fence fabric at the proper height.

The short width appears sized for 8′ pole spacing. I used 10′ spacing, so I had some waste on each strip.

If I run out, the fencing material is easy to find at any fabric store as wedding veil tulle.

I did the first fence around the latex distributor along the fascia [18]. I think it looks pretty cool. The vertical fence gives more interest to an otherwise flat area.

I didn't get the bends for the gate mounts exactly the same, so the gates hang a little crooked. But hey, when was the last time you saw gates that weren't a little banged up?

18. I installed a chain-link fence around the latex distributor tank car lot.

19. I added a chain-link fence around the lumber yard concrete pad. Across the tracks stands the completed general-purpose warehouse.

Next, I did the fence around the Lumber warehouse yard [19].

For barbed wire, Nick Santo on the *MRH* forum recommended Coats and Clark Metallic thread CA00011 (see the shopping list link at the end of this article). When I took these photos, I had not yet added the barbed wire thread.

At this point, I took the layout to the Tyler, Texas train show. I was sitting briefly at the left end of the layout [20], and realized I never get to see this view because that end of the layout is in the corner of my room. The mini canyon formed by the buildings, and the sunken track for the lumber building made a cool scene!

LATEX DISTRIBUTOR TANK UNLOADING

The only major detail left for the latex distributor was the unloading piping. On the prototype, the industry sits one lot over

20. View from the left end of the layout not typically seen when the layout is in its usual space.

from its siding (hypothetically in the aisle on the layout), so pipes run from the siding to the storage tanks off-layout.

I started by building a bunch of support brackets using styrene I-beams and square strip. I'm building mine as a four-pipe run in a 2x2 configuration.

The pipe run needs to make a 90-degree turn to fit the space. To make the bends, I fired up the hot-air gun on my soldering station and held the styrene rod close to the hot-air nozzle at the bend point.

I used rounded needle-nose pliers as a form for the bend. The styrene was cooling as I was shaping it, but another quick shot of hot air coaxed it to set into the final curve.

You could achieve the same results by holding the styrene over a soldering iron tip and letting the radiant heat warm the area of the rod you want to bend. A hair dryer might also work, but they tend to blow air over a much larger area, so you would need to be more careful.

I snipped some pieces of wire for unloading hoses for now until I can find or make a proper portable pump unit [21].

PLASTIC PELLETS INDUSTRY

The next project involved redoing the plastic pellet silos for the industry across the tracks from the tank unloading area.

I built new silos with all new details using a Walthers Cornerstone plastic pellet transfer kit (933-3081). From photos, I noticed the piping and safety appliances typically have a galvanized steel or aluminum color, with the tanks usually being shiny white. I painted the detail parts while on the sprue, making assembly much easier later.

I also reworked the base for the silos. I painted the base pieces and glued them onto the layout. After fixing up the scenery around the base, it blended in much better. I also painted the

21. The latex distributor tank unloading area with piping added. The actual unmodeled industry is assumed to be in the aisle.

22. The reworked silo area of the plastic pellets warehouse.

utility shack, and got the kit piping along the rear of the silos assembled [22].

I've looked at lots of pictures, satellite images, and street views to figure out the appropriate layout for the car unloading pipes. So far, the best answer falls somewhere between "it depends" and "there is no real answer."

It depends on whether the industry has large outdoor silos or small indoor surge tanks, how many tanks they have, how many types of plastics they might use, if they use silos, or if the hopper cars themselves serve as primary storage.

Hopper unloading works as a three-step process: a vacuum sucks the pellets out of the car and into a cyclone hopper. The pellets separate from the air stream and fall to the bottom of the hopper where they pass through an airlock gate. A compressor then blows the pellets through the pipes and into the storage silo or directly to equipment inside the plant.

The Walthers plastic pellet silos kit has two pipes for two car spots, with each pipe having connectors. I thought of having four pipes, one for each silo, so multiple cars could be unloaded simultaneously.

This combined vacuum/hopper/compressor assembly would be inside the little utility shed included in the kit. Unloading two cars to two different silos simultaneously would require two sets of these vacuum/hopper/compressor units.

Unless the vacuum/hopper/compressor units are small, only one could reasonably fit in that little utility shed. If there's only one unit, but four output pipes to different silos, there must also be some sort of gate selector mechanism, or flexible hose and quick connectors allowing the employee to easily connect the car to the desired silo.

If I have all this correct, then it makes sense to have only a single unloading pipe. Workers would set up connections to unload a

particular car into a particular silo, and would continue the transfer until either the car is empty, or the silo is full.

Then, they would change the connections for a different car and silo combination. Meanwhile, the machines inside would continue to draw product from the silos as needed independent of car unloading.

Based on this, I've decided to have a single unloading pipe, which simplifies things a bit.

I made piping from the utility shed to the silos from extra pipe bits and pieces left over from this silo kit and scraps from other kits [23]. The unloading pipe runs the length of the siding along the building foundation. I spot-tacked it to the building foundation with canopy glue.

23. Closeup of the unloading utility shed. Here I ran a pipe along the foundation of the building and am adding connecting hoses made from insulated wire. After this photo, I touched-up the hose ends and highlighted the doorknobs on the silo doors with silver.


C. Thomasson

SMALL BUT FUN AND ACHIEVABLE LAYOUTS

Lance Mindheim's approach to doing a fun layout influenced my layout design. I only had room for a small shelf layout, so I started out trying to fill every inch with industries. The whole time though, something never seemed quite right.

Lance clearly articulated several concepts, including minimalizing and the importance of open spaces. Several of those concepts had been swirling around in my mind, but I could never quite get them to gel until I read his small-layout books. Simple is good!

Lance's approach gave me specific and manageable bite-size tasks to tackle when first starting the Office Zone layout. This helped make my latest layout attempt more successful – this is my first layout to progress beyond a plywood prairie!

For those still nervous to dip their toes into the water, Lance has a very relevant blog post about how to keep things simple and get started with a layout that's more likely to be satisfying: lancemindheim.com/2012/12/no-skills-no-problem

Reading Lance's blog post should help get you out of your arm-chair and actually doing the hobby. Even better, get his book on Amazon (link in the shopping list). ■

VIEW READER COMMENTS

REPLACING THE FOAMCORE STRUCTURES

While the foamcore buildings worked well, I eventually replaced them with something more finished. After doing more research and pondering, I bought several Walthers kits to replace each of the buildings on the layout.

First up is Rudy's Tortillas. The prototype building is one of those early-style tilt-wall warehouses with outside ribs. You can see the original foamcore building in [24].

The Walthers concrete grocery warehouse kit (933-3864) works great for this background building, and leaves lots of parts for future projects. Rather than attempt to cut and piece together bits from the kit roof, I found it easier to cut the roof from a large sheet of 0.040″ styrene.

I tested 100-grit and 60-grit sandpaper to represent a gravel roof, and used 60-grit sandpaper, since I liked its higher contrast and color differences. I added a gas pipe running to the AC/heater units on the roof.

24. The original Rudy's Tortillas structure made of foamcore.

25. The final model of Rudy's Tortillas kitbashed from a Walthers kit.

The real Rudy's Tortillas has outside storage tanks. I don't have room for them, so I'm assuming there are smaller storage tanks inside. I modeled unloading pipes that simply run up the wall and inside.

While the warehouse has two doors, only the left one is in active service, so I added a 3D-printed security gate across the right door. You can see the final building in [25], installed and ready for service.

Since the backside of such office park warehouses typically looks plain, I wanted to add enough detail to give it some interest, but not so much that it looks out of place. Eventually, I plan to go back to add some grass and weeds along the foundation, and a little bit of trash. Since this is a warehouse that processes food products, they will keep the unloading area fairly clean.

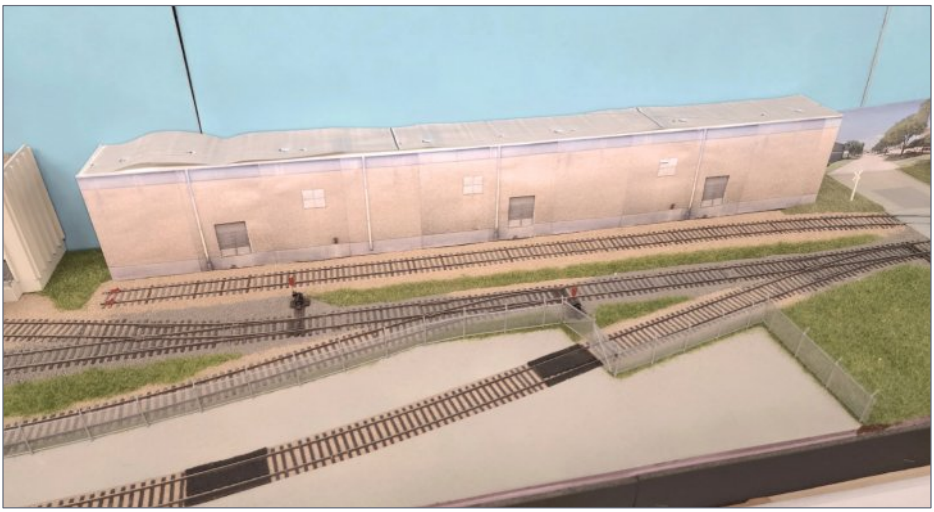
Just like the real tilt-up warehouse buildings, the general-purpose warehouse became a quick finish, although it's much plainer. I used the Walthers Modern concrete warehouse kit (933-4067) for this warehouse [27].

I liked the blue trim along the top of the photo warehouse, so I did the same thing on the Walthers kit [27]. I want to add more details than shown in the photo, such as a couple more door security gates, ladders beside the doors, and maybe some gas lines and heater stacks on the roof. But as it is, it's quite typical of a modern warehouse trackside wall.

I noticed while street map surfing that door panels can get damaged and replaced, often not with the same color. These doors have had previous encounters with over enthusiastic forklift drivers!

For building number three [28], the lumber yard, I didn't have a nice drop-in kit like the first two, so after ruminating a bit, I came up with a plan on how to slice up and lay out the wall sections of the Walthers steel warehouse kit (933-4080) to get my desired structure.

The corrugated metal panels in this kit are easy to score and snap, and they always have straight and square edges. The



26. The foamcore and photo-laminated general-purpose warehouse.

27. After kitbashing a Walthers kit, this is the final general-purpose warehouse.

doors need to be enlarged considerably, but I am modeling them open, so no need to fabricate larger doors to fit.

I enlarged the door openings to match a double-door boxcar, and shifted them down. The real building slab sits at ground level instead of being raised to car floor level, and the tracks sink down so the building slab floor aligns with a boxcar floor. Since this building sits at the front edge of the layout, I wanted the interior to be fully visible.

I prepped the interior wall surfaces by removing mold marks. To make things easier, I gave the full interior surface a rough sanding to simulate the fabric-style insulation seen in metal buildings. This also meant I should not have to model the various wall brace components, since they would be hidden within the insulation.

The real building is a faded-yellow, so I wanted the same for the model. I visited several stores to find just the right yellow in a spray can.

The slab is at ground level, but I had to raise it slightly for the interior, so it matched the doors and the adjacent lumber yard lot. I included a people-door at the wall ground level on one end, so I notched out the slab to match the door on the inside [29].

Since it's a steel building, the interior needs to also have steel structural frame components. I first added the vertical members. I went online to do a quick search of steel building structure frames for other details.

I found even with insulation, most pictures showed the girts (horizontal members) exposed. The corner posts typically use a smaller size than the intermediate frame columns.

Manufacturers all have slightly different variations, but this follows the basic design. I'm attaching the end upper frame pieces to the roof to help keep the walls square.

I added the roof and safety railing around the door, plus I've modeled the overhead doors as open and ready to start unload-

28. Next, I tackled replacing the lumber yard warehouse along the front edge of the layout.

29. View of the new lumber yard warehouse from the aisle. I modeled the complete interior structure, and left the doors open so it's easy to tell when boxcars have been properly spotted.

ing boxcars [29]. I also made some bridge plates so the forklifts can span the gap from the warehouse floor to the boxcars.

I can already visualize forklifts zooming around stacking bundles of plywood and insulation foam!

The last building to be replaced was the plastic pellets company. This is a 41-inch-long building with the main part being 30 inches long. I used the Walthers Lakeville warehouse kit (933-2917) for the main body of the warehouse. It didn't have enough blank sections, so I used a couple leftover wall panels from the kit used for the lumber distributor [30].

This kit uses a multi-layer design, where the walls have a base frame with the metal and brick pieces dropping in for a mix-and-match customization. I built three of the wall sections and had my desired door spacing.

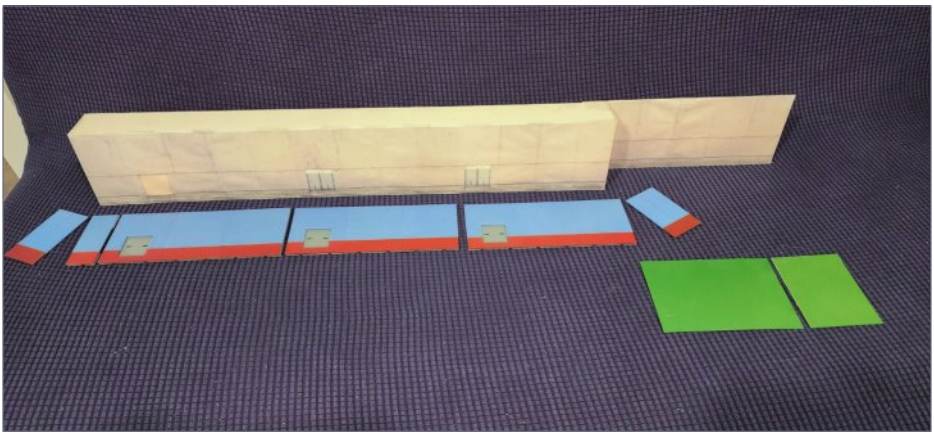
However, the original foamcore building is longer, so I needed to cut a smaller section to extend the new building to

the correct length. The section on the right is behind the plastic pellet silos, and sits flat against the backdrop. I modeled this as an add-on extension, since the parts are full-height metal walls. I painted it a different color to emphasize that it's a warehouse expansion.

Walthers has four different kits that use various combinations of these parts sprues, so you get some nice bonus parts depending on which kit you have. In this case, I used wall parts from a Bud's Trucking Company background building (933-319) kit I had on hand as the end walls.

The Lakeville kit includes two sets of the end walls, so I glued them together to get the required depth.

I glued the walls together on a base and set it in place to see how it looked [31]. It was about 1/8" shorter in height and 1/4" shallower than the original building, but that should be easy to deal with. After I had taken photo [31], I got another large sheet of styrene for the roof.



30. The original foamcore plastic pellets building, with the new kitbashed Walthers kit walls in front. I also needed a couple of panels from the Walthers steel warehouse kit used for the lumber yard warehouse.

The wall sections behind the tank stand taller than the rest of the building. They're the same height as the original foam board building, but the rest of the warehouse is now shorter. Rather than being a problem, I think this will reinforce that this end of the warehouse is an add-on.

OPS TO REPRESENT ANY RECENT ERA OR LOCATION

The nice thing about a contemporary (1980s to today) industrial warehouse area layout is, it is generic enough to represent almost anywhere in North America. Only a few specific details need to change for the generic scene to represent specific locations.

Since my interests cover several railroads, this works to my advantage – and has been one of my design goals from the beginning [1, 32, 33].

31. I test-fitted the new plastic pellets structure to see how it looked. With a roof, it will be ready to go.

In my operating sessions, I have learned some things:

- The full-length shelf along the front of the layout, and the throttle pockets are invaluable. You can never have too much space to put down your uncoupling stick, pencil, throttle, paperwork, or drink and keep them off the layout.
- The height at around 62″ works well for viewing. For operations, I need a small step stool to work the switch stands and uncouple cars.

Stepping down, dragging the step over, and getting back up again can be a hassle, but I've found needing to move the step around helps me plan moves better. Just like how the brakeman doesn't want to be running all over the place, the step stool keeps me from constantly wandering back and forth.

- The lumber building at the very front of the layout on the left side makes it difficult to spot cars. So far, I've been stopping to uncouple before going behind the building, and then pushing the car into place. That's why I decided to leave the building loading doors open – I can see when the boxcar doors are lined up with the loading doors.
- Multiple conveniently placed pens/pencils and uncoupling sticks are a good thing, especially when using a step stool. I can get all set up to work on one end while up on the stool, only to realize that I left my uncoupling stick on the other end!
- My initial operating sessions were too simple, and things went too quickly. I'm using JMRI for car routing, and I've made some adjustments so cars do not cycle so fast. I've also added operating procedures specifying how cars are to be spotted (return any cars moved back to the same location, spot loads at the far end of the track, and so on). Do not underestimate how much that can add to the session.

32. It's August 1990, and the local Cotton Belt crew uses an SP switcher to work the industries in Addison, TX. The scene is the same as in [1], but the US-style crossbucks and Hayes wheel stops set its Texas location. The Roadway truck reinforces the setting.

33. It's May 1988, and the BN local is switching one of the warehouses along the old DSP&P (Denver, South Park, & Pacific) branch. Again we see US-style crossbucks and Hayes wheel stops. A BN supervisor van observes the crew's progress. It has been unseasonably wet this spring, so the grass is greener than normal.

CAR SPOTTING

Plastics hoppers don't really need specific spots; just run piping along the entire length of the track. As long as a hose can reach from the hopper to the pipes, it's good. Next time you're Google map-surfing, zoom into an industry that receives plastics hoppers, and notice how they usually have the hoppers jammed into every track.

I don't have any industry spots for reefers at the moment, but I have many reefers in my roster. It's easy to change the customer for these industrial buildings. Today it's a furniture distributor. Next month I can make a quick change, so it becomes a cold storage warehouse.

I felt I needed space for three cars (plus fencing, a gate, and a derail) on the front track, so I went with that in the current design. So far, in the op sessions I've run, it's working as planned.

The only minor issue is, the end of the track is close to the street, which creates a blind spot for vehicle traffic. However, that just adds to the fun when running a loco with sound; I've added an operating instruction specifying the crew needs to stop and flag the crossing, along with lots of horn and bell!

With my last couple of op sessions, I've come up with some additional operating instructions.

When spotting tanks at the latex distributor, setouts need to be placed on the west (left) end of the track. For other industries, if a car gets moved during switching, but not picked-up, it must be returned to the same location when switching is complete. The crew can't simply shove existing cars to the end of the track when spotting new ones.

The crossing can be blocked for a maximum of six moves (approximately five minutes). After that, the crew must make a move that clears the crossing. They can block it again after that, but this rule prevents crews from hauling around long cuts or parking cars that block the crossing.

It's amazing how adding these operating instructions can turn a simple four-car spot op session into an interesting and fun time.

Now I look forward to having a quick op session, and I haven't even set up any customers at the warehouse yet. I'm not even running the layout at full capacity!

FINAL THOUGHTS

My Office Park Zone layout is 10′ long by 16″ deep, with a 6-foot staging extension that connects to one end during operations. I have found it to be manageable and enjoyable.

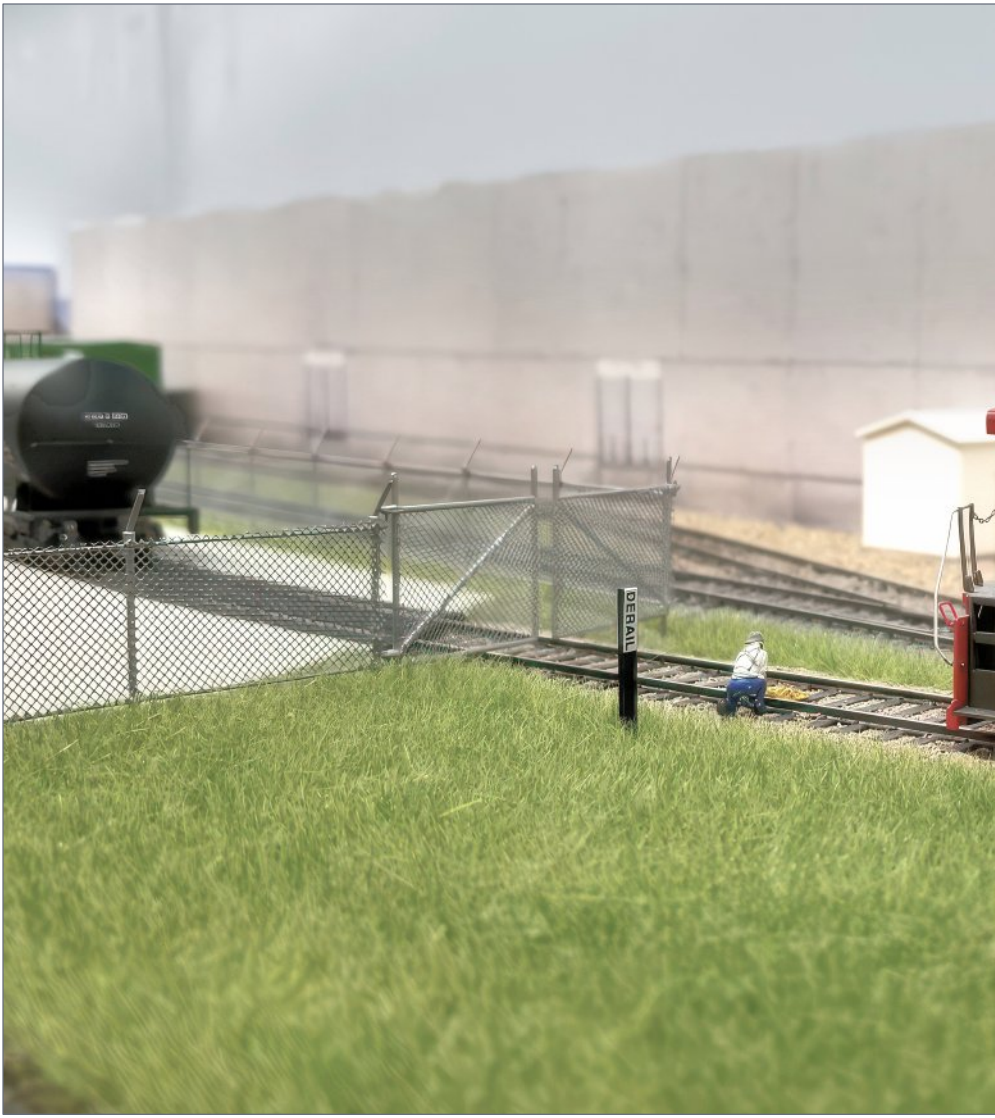
My biggest concern was that I would become bored quickly with a small layout like this. So far that has *very much* not been the case! ☑

CRAIG THOMASSON

Craig has had a fascination with trains for as long as he can remember. His first train set at age 5 cemented his interest in the hobby. As a teen he became active in several local clubs, and he was fortunate to meet many people through the clubs that influenced and mentored him.

After getting a degree in Computer Engineering, a job change brought him to Central Texas. There he got into On30, and became active in Live Steam. He made another move to East Texas, where he was fortunate to meet a small group of local modelers that held periodic operating sessions.

When not working on the Office Park Zone, he is helping develop and install the electronics for a full CTC system on a local layout, exploring the world of 3D printing, and traveling with his wife. ■



34. The brakeman now has an actual derail and gate to operate when working the tank cars at the latex distributor spur.

Follow this link to access the shopping list for this column:
mrhmag.com/magazine/mrh2024-11/cover-story-shopping

It's fun to build your own Y.M.C.A.

Model Railroad Hobbyist | November 2024

VIEW READER COMMENTS

Michael Anteau scratchbuilds a prototypical facility ...

Visitors to my layout often tell stories about their experiences with the railroad or about places they've visited similar to those I model. One visitor was my brother-in-law, Roy Lowe.

Roy grew up in West Virginia, and spent many years managing 180+ employees at the Russell, KY YMCA. In the days of steam and early dieselization, YMCAs around the country worked hand-in-hand with the railroads providing beds, showers, meals and social space for railroaders.

Railroads often participated in their construction, and the C&O funded the large brick YMCA built in Russell, KY in 1948. You can learn more about the history of the building at abandonedonline.net/location/russell-ymca, and view the main prototype photo I referenced at www.cardcow.com/239500/russell-kentucky-ymca.

When Roy visited my C&O-themed Nicholas & Ashley Creek RY, he reminisced about his days at the Y. I had long planned to include a YMCA on my layout because of its place in railroad history, and this seemed an ideal prototype to model.

I searched for several years, but couldn't find a satisfactory kit to represent this structure. So, I decided to give scratchbuilding a try for the first time, following prototype photos. I dedicated the structure to Roy.

My YMCA was designed and built to fit a small triangular area. I will describe the techniques and materials I used to construct it, and some things I learned along the way. You can then apply them to your own scratchbuilding.

BUILDING THE BASE

I began my project by building a base for the YMCA out of ¼" hardboard. I first traced my unusual area on paper [1], and then transferred it to the hardboard and cut out the base [2].

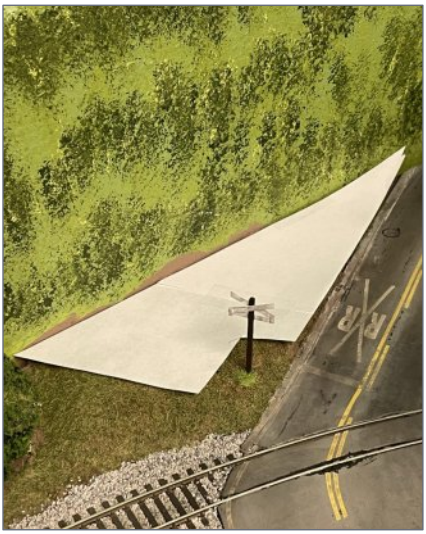
I drew sidewalk sections right on the hardboard and then carved them into place with a hobby knife and straightedge [3]. I also drilled a 1" hole in the base to pass future structure wiring [4].

DESIGNING IN CAD

I had no drawings for the prototype, so I drew my own in CADRail. You could use any CAD or drawing program for this, or even graph paper.

To start, I measured the Tichy windows I planned to use for the project, and I drew these in CAD. Next, I measured the windows and the overall building height on the prototype photo.

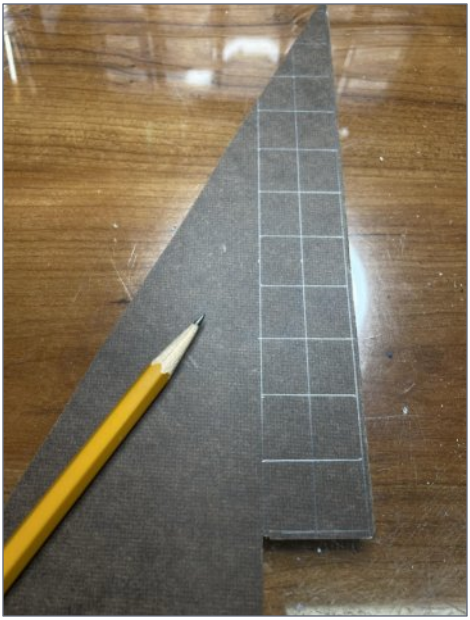
From these measurements, I figured out the ratio of the window height to the entire building, then duplicated that ratio in CAD in relation to my drawn Tichy windows. This gave me the height of the model. I sanity-checked this height with a scale ruler, and by comparing the height to commercial models.



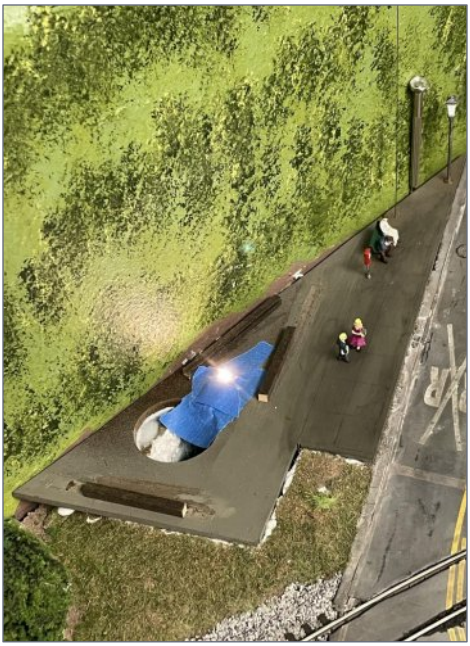
1. I made a paper template of the available area.

2. I used the paper template as a pattern for a hardboard base for the structure. This base will be permanently installed when complete, and the structure will be removable.

VIEW READER COMMENTS

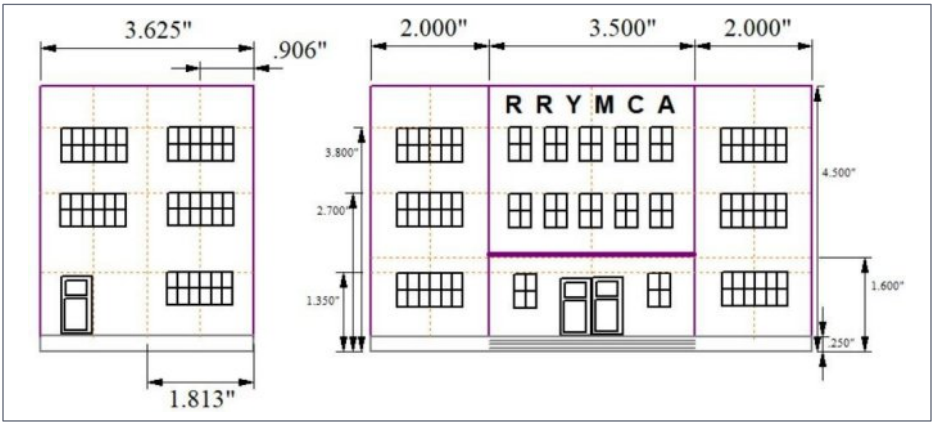


3. I drew a sidewalk directly on the base to match the surrounding structures. A metal ruler makes it easy to carve the slab lines directly in the base. You can also carve cracks, pits, and broken concrete. After painting and weathering, the individual slabs stand out.



4. The finished base installed on the layout. A hole drilled through it and the benchwork allows for lighting the structure. The base will be worked into the surrounding scenery with Sculptamold, ground foam, paint, and other scenic materials. Building the base first allowed me to get exact measurements for the space I had, and for how wide and deep the finished structure must be.

I knew my model would have to be much narrower than the prototype, so I played around with the available space in CAD until I came up with a selectively compressed drawing [5]. My model has fewer windows, but retains the concrete porch and overall look of the prototype [6].



5. I produced a CAD drawing for my selectively compressed YMCA using Tichy doors and windows. I printed these drawings 1:1. The dimensions are for cutting the wall material.

6. This is a postcard photo of the prototype facility, found at www.cardcow.com/239500/russell-kentucky-ymca.
Harry Cornwell photo

I used the drawing dimensions to cut temporary walls from scrap cardboard. I taped these together to make a mockup [7]. Satisfied with my design, I moved on to the next step: building walls.

WORKING WITH MATBOARD

I decided to build my YMCA from matboard. Matboard is traditionally used to frame photos, and I first worked with it decades ago in a college art class. I used 1/16″ matboard, which is very strong and cuts cleanly with a hobby knife or single edged razor blade.

Making 90-degree cuts in matboard is pretty easy. I first measured the length I wanted for the piece and made a small mark with a pencil.

I then braced the matboard against a straight edge (I used a FastTracks point form tool), and marked a perpendicular line [8]. I cut the pieces out with a hobby knife and metal straightedge.

7. A simple mockup made from cereal-box cardboard confirmed my structure would fit.

I was worried cutting out windows would be tedious and difficult, but it turned out to be easy. I simply taped a copy of my CADRail plan on top of each wall [9], and then cut out the printed windows with a sharp knife [10].

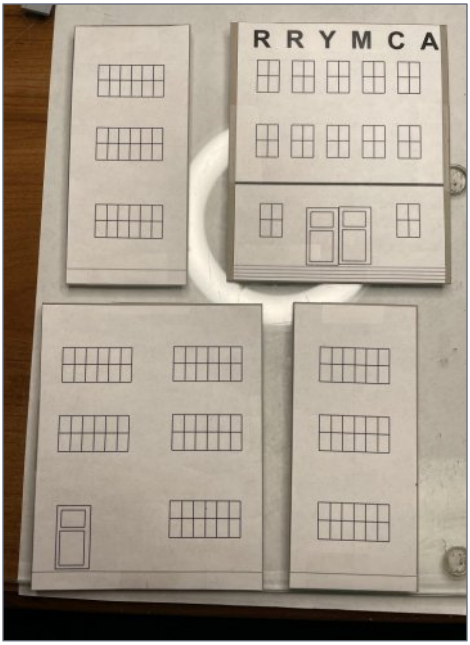
I went through a LOT of blades doing this! Along the way I learned a trick from the *MRH* forum. I used an old leather belt as a blade strop. Drawing the blade across the strop a few times on each side doubled the life of each blade.

Even with this technique, I could only cut a couple of windows per blade. I test-fitted the Tichy windows as I finished each cut [11]. In a couple of evenings, all the door and window openings were cut.

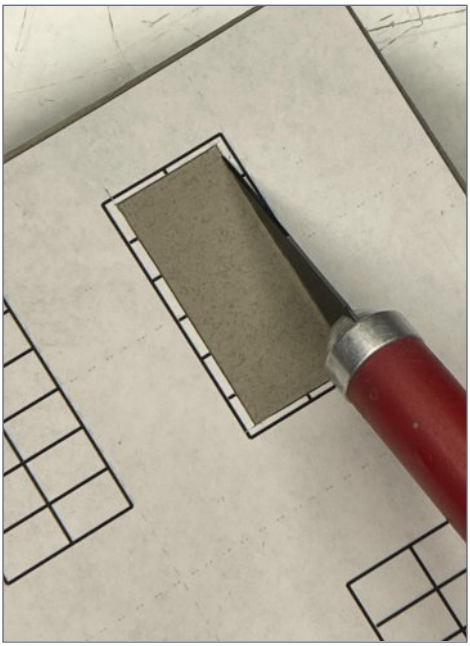
WORKING WITH BRICK PAPER

The prototype YMCA is a brick structure with a concrete foundation. I chose MicroMark's embossed, self-adhesive brick paper to model this.

8. Drafting tools like triangles, T-squares, and a compass are useful to lay out and cut walls, roofs, and other architectural objects. A piece of glass with the edges protected by duct tape makes a great flat cutting surface. Keep your pencil sharp for precise measurements!

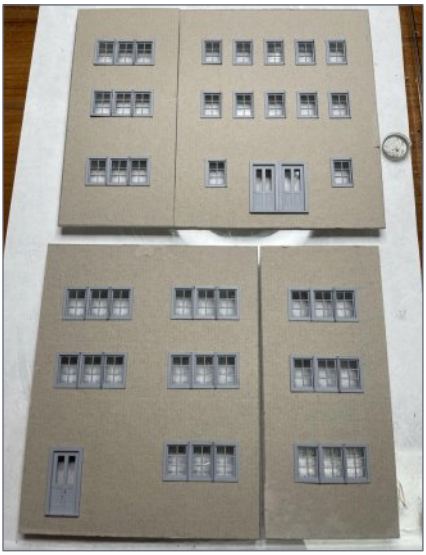


9. I taped a copy of my CAD plan to each wall. This made it easy to cut out the windows and doors without a lot of tedious measurements.

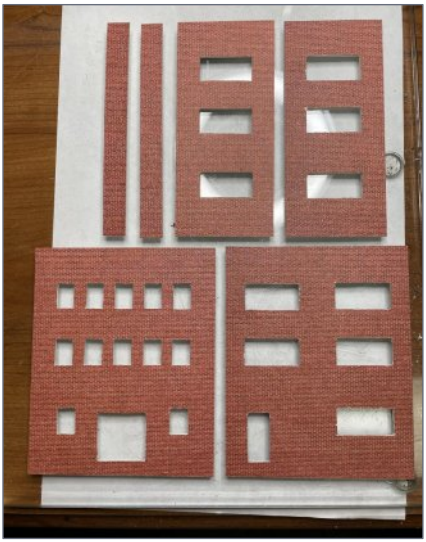


10. The back of a Tichy window is smaller than the front molding. I cut openings slightly smaller than the CAD lines so the cuts would be hidden by the window edges, then widened as necessary for a snug fit. Use a sharp blade.

I peeled off the paper backing and placed it face-down on my workspace. Then I carefully set a wall in place on the paper, and pressed down firmly. I cut the brick paper along the wall edge, and cut out all the window openings from behind. In quick time, I had all the brick paper installed [12].



11. All the window and door openings are cut, and the Tichy parts are test-fit into place.



12. MicroMark brick paper on the wall sections. Cutting out the wall openings from behind is easy, and the installed windows will cover any ragged edges.

VIEW READER COMMENTS

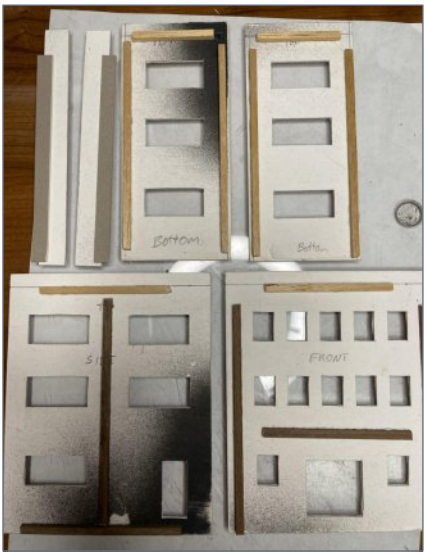
I touched-up the exposed edges of the brick paper with a red Sharpie [13]. I also used my Cutterpede paper trimmer to cut 1/16″ strips to cover wall edges that would be exposed after assembly [14].

13. Exposed paper edges will show as a stark white line. Coloring the line red covers his line, and blends into the brick.

14. Some wall edges will be glued to other walls, but some will be exposed. I used a paper cutter to cut 1/16″ strips to hide the exposed edges.

FINAL WALL PREPARATION

Before assembling the structure, I added ⅛″ stripwood as bracing and roof supports [15]. I painted the back of the walls black to prevent light bleed-through [16]. I painted all the windows and doors prior to



15. Matboard is pretty stiff on its own, but I added 1/8″ bracing for extra rigidity. I spaced the top pieces to provide support for the roof.

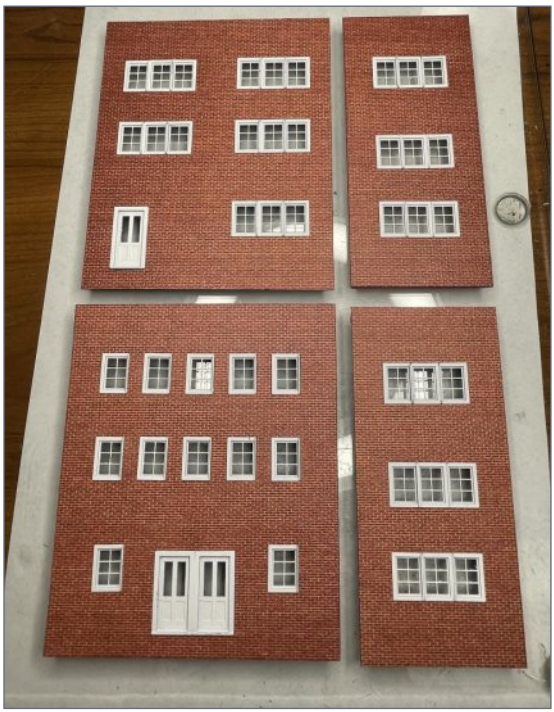
16. I wanted to light the YMCA, so I sprayed the backs of the finished walls black. When the paint was dry, I added more brick paper where the walls would extend above the roof line.

installation. I initially painted them light gray, but that didn't look right. Closer examination of the prototype photos showed them to be closer to white, so I painted them white instead.

I installed all the windows and doors into the walls [17]. The windows were a tight press-fit, but I secured them in place with tiny drops of CA I applied with a needle applicator [18].

I made the needle applicator by inserting a needle in a wooden stick and cutting the eye in half with wire nippers. I then put a drop of CA into a metal paint tray, and dipped the needle in the CA to apply it precisely where I needed it on the model. When the needle tip became clogged, I cleared it by holding the tip over a flame for a few seconds.

Editor's note: *acetone will also dissolve CA, without the risk of staining the tip black with carbon and tinting future CA applications.*



17. With the windows and doors installed, the walls are starting to take shape.

18. Applying CA with the needle-tip applicator.

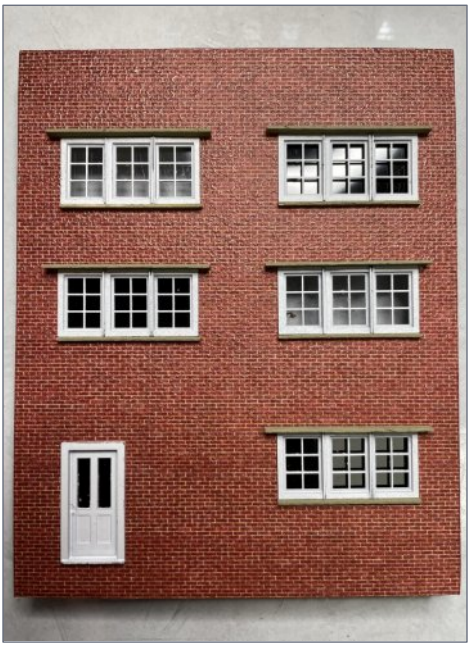
Working from the back, I applied large pieces of clear plastic over all the windows to serve as glazing. I wanted light to show through only some of the windows, so I blocked out the rest with several coats of black paint [19].

Using the prototype photos as a guide, I created lintels for the windows from 2x8 stripwood, and sills from 2x4 stripwood. It's easiest to install these details with the wall laid flat, before final assembly [20].

ASSEMBLING AND BRACING

I used canopy glue to assemble the YMCA. Canopy glue is thin and spreads easily at first, but it sets up in a few minutes and bonds extremely well. I used this glue throughout the project, except as noted.

19. I applied glazing to all the windows, and then blocked out some of them with black paint.



20. Lintels and sills on the windows.

I assembled the building on flat glass. I cut small squares of matboard on a chopper, and glued them in the corners to keep everything square. I used a variety of weights and jigs to keep everything square during assembly [21].

I built the stairs and porch by stacking pieces of matboard cut to fit between the two wing walls. I then glued the whole assembly to the front of the structure [22].

I made the porch awning and the main roof from matboard I covered with gray 400-grit automotive sandpaper [23]. The texture really helped the roofs grab and hold the weathering powders.

The prototype shows a concrete belt line running around the building above the first floor, even with the fascia around the porch awning. I used ⅛″ stripwood to represent this concrete strip [24]. When the

21. The glass made a flat surface, and the metal squares kept everything properly square.

VIEW READER COMMENTS

structure was assembled, I capped the walls with 2x8 stripwood, and added the roof.

FINAL DETAILS

The prototype had the letters RRYMCA at the top of the building. I duplicated this lettering in Google Draw. Google Draw is free and is very useful for creating signage. I printed and glued the letters to matboard with spray adhesive, then cut them out with a sharp hobby knife.

I used dry-transfer letters to put the words "Roy Lowe Bldg" below the top row of windows in honor of my brother-in-law. The prototype had "Albert's" stenciled on at one point, and I wanted to represent a painted-on look. I applied them imperfectly to imply weathering [25].

22. The stairs are made from stacked matboard painted concrete.

23. The porch roof, cut from matboard and covered with 400-grit sandpaper.

24. The porch roof and concrete belt line in place.

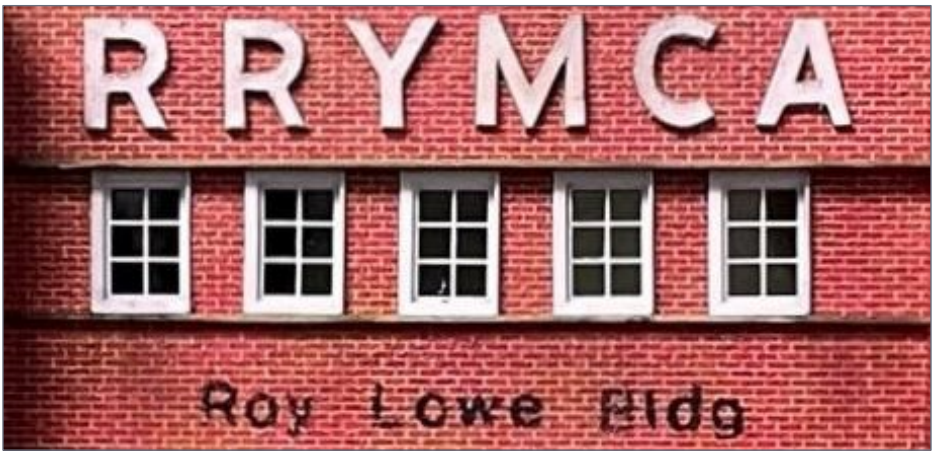
I needed posts to support the awning. The prototype had eight concrete pillars for this purpose, so I modeled these with ⅛" square stripwood, trimmed with 1x8s [26].

The roof had a pergola supported by round posts and with large, circular openings in it [6]. It was such an odd feature I had to model it.

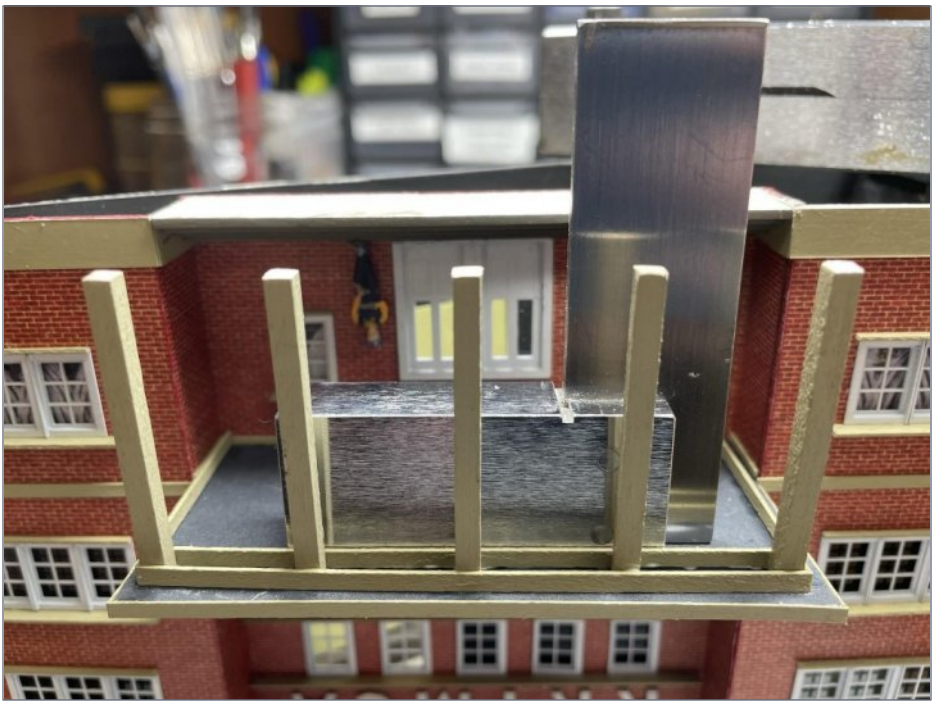
I cut a rectangle of matboard that would fit my roof, and used the top of a putty tube to trace circles on it [27]. After cutting the holes out, I mounted the pergola to the roof with wood posts from my scrap bin [Lead photo].The prototype YMCA had a US flag flying out front, and my model had to have that feature. I found a period-appropriate 48-star flag on the internet, printed it, cut it out, and mounted it on a flagpole I made from 0.014" wire [28].

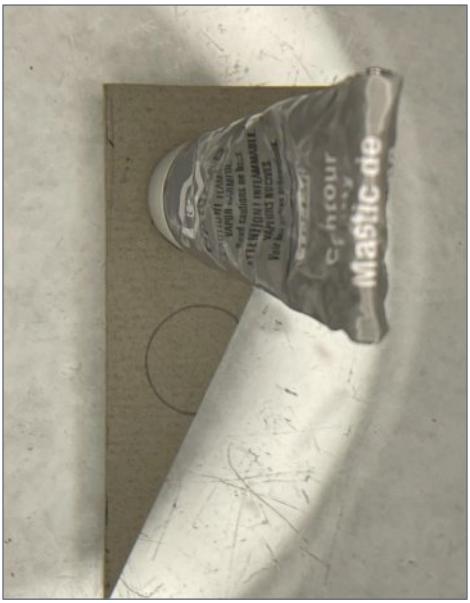
The prototype featured a cornerstone that gave the construction date as "A.D. 1948." Since I model 1948 and wanted the building complete with some weathering, I decided to change the cornerstone to reflect Roy's birth year of 1941 instead. I created the cornerstone in Google Draw [29].

Text continues on page 22 ...



25. The matboard lettering of RRYMCA provides a three-dimensional look that matched the prototype, while the black transfer-decal lettering represents stenciled paint.



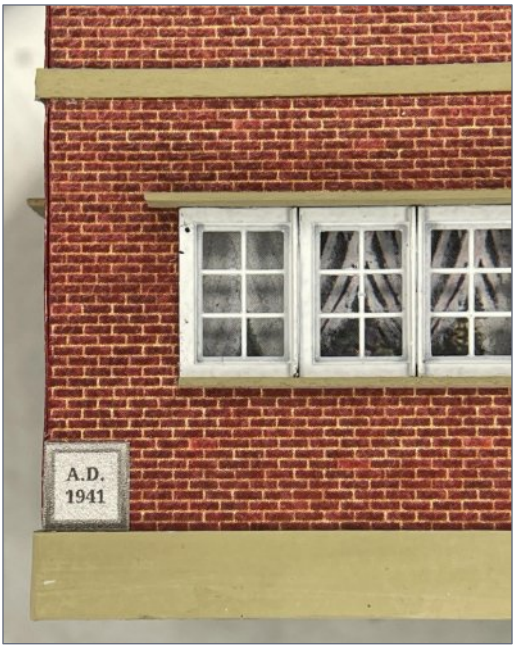


↑26. I cut and sanded the awning posts so they would touch the sidewalk when installed. The building is removable, and the posts are permanently affixed to the awning.

←27. Tracing holes in the pergola.

VIEW READER COMMENTS

28. The US flag had 48 stars in 1948.



29. The new cornerstone.

30. Stairs for the side door.

MICHAEL ANTEAU

Michael comes from a railroading family. His grandfather was an engineer for the C&O, and his father was an engineer for CSX.

Michael was first bitten by the model railroad bug watching his dad's Lionel trains, and he built his first 4x8 layout at the age of ten. Michael is now working on his "dream" layout, a prototype-freelanced coal hauling railroad set in transition-era West Virginia.

Michael lives in Northwest Ohio and works in information technology. He is married and has two grown children. When he is not working on the Nicholas & Ashley Creek RY, Michael enjoys playing piano, biking, hiking, and traveling. ■

I added a side door to the building, so I needed stairs for it. I used stairs I found at a swap meet, and scratchbuilt the railings from stripwood [30].

I drilled a hole in the base of the building so I could light it with a single LED while keeping the building removable. I made baffles for

the inside of the building to help direct the light. All lit up at night, Roy's YMCA welcomes all railroaders for a delicious meal and a good night's rest [31].Scratchbuilding a structure from matboard turned out to be easy and very rewarding. The materials are easy to work with, inexpensive, and forgiving. You can experiment with dimensions and architecture as you go, and finish with a unique building. I encourage you to give it a try. ☑

31. The lighted YMCA makes a warm, welcoming place for rail workers.

Savvy Modeler Online

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Detailing HO Scale F Units

YouTuber **Barker's Trains** shows how to add wire details to a number of vendors' diesel F-unit models.

VIEW READER COMMENTS

The BT-100 detail kit he mentions is no longer available, but you can visit our shopping list link for other similar alternatives. Or you can always form your own from brass wire (also in our shopping list). Perhaps most valuable is his detailed drilling instructions and tips for each vendors' F-unit models. Worth a watch if you have F-units to detail. ☑

GREAT MODELER VIDEOS ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB

NOVEMBER NEWS column

RICHARD BALE AND JEFF SHULTZ
REPORT THE LATEST HOBBY INDUSTRY NEWS ...

VIEW READER COMMENTS

CLUB CAR

The **Great Northern Railway Historical Society** is taking deposits for a Rapido GN U25B Phase IV locomotive in HO scale. The models will feature GN's non-standard 5-step step well, a prototypical snowplow pilot, side mounted handrails, two-piece windshield, upward sloping nose, and fireman's side nose mounted ratchet handbrake. The models will be in the as-delivered simplified orange and green paint scheme with correct road numbers and the post-1968 cab roof warning flasher. Both DCC/sound and DC only models will be produced, with a 25% deposit required for reservation. 100 reservations are required to manufacture the locomotive, and deposits will be refunded if it is not produced. Info: store.gnrhs.org/collections/engines

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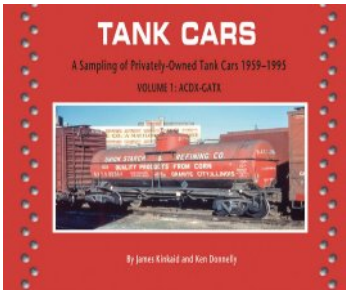
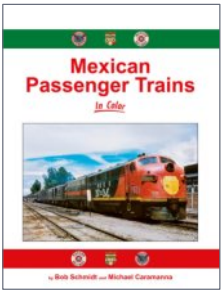
NEW PRODUCTS FOR ALL SCALES





New publications from **Morning Sun** include *Tank Cars Volume 1* by James Kinkaid and Ken Donnelly. The 96 page softcover book covers privately-owned ACDX to GATX tank cars from 1959 to 1995.

Also scheduled for release this month is *Mexican Passenger Trains.* Authors Bob Schmidt and Michael Caramanna document passenger trains that operated, with mostly hand me down equipment, from the Pacific Ocean and Gulf of California in the West to the Gulf of Mexico in the East, and from the U.S. Border in the North to the Yucatan Peninsula in the South, Also featured are examples of motive power including steam, diesel, and electric, plus three streetcar lines.
Info: www.morningsunbooks.com

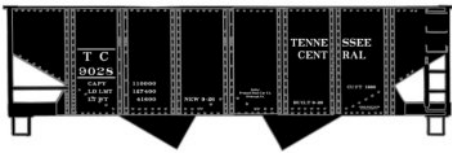
O SCALE PRODUCT NEWS

Atlas O scale models recently shipped to dealers include this Premier series 50′ Gunderson hi-cube boxcar. Road names in this release include Montana Rail Link, Burlington Northern, York Rail, CSX and two TTX schemes.

Info: Contact a dealer.

HO SCALE PRODUCT NEWS

A preview of new HO scale freight car kits coming from **Accurail** includes this 36′ single-sheathed Fowler boxcar decorated for the Chicago, Indianapolis & Louisville Railway, also known as the Monon.



Also coming soon from Accurail is a kit for a USRA twin-bay coal hopper decorated for Tennessee Central. The prototype for this HO scale model was built in 1926.

This 36′ double-sheathed wood boxcar is based on a prototype built in 1922. The model features steel ends and a straight underframe.

Also coming soon from Accurail is a kit for an AAR 41′ steel gondola decorated for the Pittsburgh, McKeesport & Youghiogheny Railway.

Accurail is preparing to release an HO scale kit for this Illinois Terminal boxcar. The model is based on a double-sheathed prototype built in 1924 with wood ends and a straight underframe. All Accurail car kits come with appropriate trucks with Delrin wheelsets and Accumate knuckle couplers.
Info: accurailinc.com


R. Bale

SOUTHERN PACIFIC MT-4 MOUNTAIN STEAM LOCOMOTIVE

The SP began building their MT-4 class 4-8-2 Mountain's in 1926. They were completed with green boilers, but by the mid-1930's they were painted the standard black scheme with Southern Pacific Lines lettering on the tenders. In 1939 SP began adding the skyline casing on top of the boilers to help direct exhaust smoke atop the boiler, away from the locomotive cab. In 1946, five of the MT-4s received the Daylight red and orange paint scheme for service on the San Joaquin Daylight. The cabs were partially painted while the tenders were given the full Daylight scheme. Of the five, only No. 4361 had Southern Pacific Lines spelled out on the tender. In June 1946, SP dropped the word Lines from their tenders and began using larger letters spelling out Southern Pacific on the tenders.

Athearn has scheduled another release of its Genesis series Southern Pacific 4-8-2 class MT-4 steam locomotives with delivery planned for April 2026.

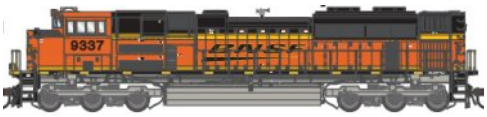
Locomotive No. 4361 will feature an SP Daylight paint scheme with *Southern Pacific Lines* lettering. All of the drivers will be spoked and the pilot will be corrugated metal.

SP 4-8-2 steam locomotive No. 4362 will have a standard black paint job with full *Southern Pacific Lines* lettering on the Vanderbilt tender. It will have a skyline casing, a boiler tube pilot and spoked drivers.

No. 4365 will wear standard black paint with bold *Southern Pacific* lettering on the tender. The locomotive will have a semi-streamlined skyline casing, a corrugated pressed steel pilot and Boxpok main drivers.

Athearn SP locomotive No. 4354 will be offered in a fantasy two-tone grey paint scheme with *Southern Pacific Lines* spelled out on the Vanderbilt tender, a corrugated steel pilot and Boxpok main driver wheels. The attractive two-tone paint scheme was applied to several SP passenger locomotives but never to an MT-4.

Athearn has included an SP MT-4 decorated for Athearn in this release. All of Athearn's MT-4s will come with skyline casing, alligator crossheads, a 160-C-1 / C-2 Vanderbilt tender, metal handrails, cab interior and backhead details, non-operating marker lamps, adjustable cab windows and doors, lighted number boards and coupler lift bars. The front pilot pocket will be able to accept an operating coupler. A minimum track radius of 22″ is required. Both DC and DCC sound versions of the Genesis model will be available in this 2026 second quarter release.



For hobbyists favoring more modern equipment, Athearn is preparing another release of its popular EMD SD70ACe diesel locomotive. With a scheduled release date of April 2026 this latest Genesis version of the HO scale diesel will have LED truck lights, lit number boards and new road names.

SD70ACe locomotives decorated BNSF and Electro Motive will have non-isolated cabs with the headlight mounted in the nose.

CSX units will be available in two different paint schemes including a fantasy version in the YN3 livery.

An ex-CSX SD70ACe unit with a large GPS dome will be available decorated for NSMX-North Shore Mining.

Completing this release is a Santa Fe unit with a nose mounted headlight and a large GPS dome. In offering this unit Athearn is suggesting that if the merger with Burlington Northern had not taken place, ATSF would have ordered a few EMD SD70ACe units in the famous War Bonnet scheme.

All SD70ACe models in this release will have flexible rubber trainline and MU hoses, etched see-through steps, lit number boards and truck lights, coupler cut levers, full cab interior, LED lighting, walkway tread, windshield wipers, wire grab irons, and detailed fuel tank with fuel fillers, fuel gauges, breather pipes, and retention tanks. The roof will be attached by magnets making access easy.

The Genesis eight-wheel driveline features all-wheel electrical pickup and a 5-pole skew wound motor with machined flywheels. DC versions of the model will be DCC-ready with a 21-pin NEM connector. Sound equipped models will feature SoundTraxx Tsunami2 sound and DCC decoder. The Genesis

SD70ACe will operate on an 18″ minimum track radius, however, for more reliable operation Athearn recommends a 22″ minimum radius.

A Genesis series GATC 2,600 cu. ft. Airslide hopper is included on Athearn's April 2026 production schedule.

The HO scale model is based on a 70-ton single-bay Airslide covered hopper General American Transportation began building in 1953.

The model will have a see-through metal roof walk, wire grab irons and brake piping, Optional details appropriate to the road name being modeled include rectangular or oval shaker brackets , gravity or gravity-pneumatic outlets and plain or roller bearing trucks with machined metal wheelsets.

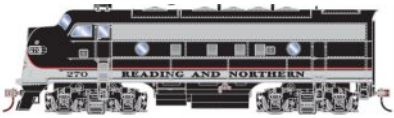
Road names in this release will include Conrail, Southern, Canadian National, Colorado & Southern, Diamond Sugar, Nebraska Consolidated Mills, Pillsbury and Redpath.

An FMC 4,700 cu. ft. triple-bay covered hopper is included in Athearn's April 2026 production schedule. Factory applied details on the injection molded body include wire grab irons, roof hatches and etched metal roof walkway and end platforms. Road names on this release will be Burlington Northern, BNSF, Chicago & North Western, First Union Rail, Kyle Railroad and Wilbur-Ellis Company.

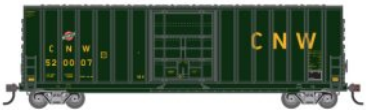
A 60′ Berwick boxcar available with three car numbers each for Santa Fe, Norfolk Southern, Southern Pacific, Conrail and Norfolk & Western is coming from Athearn in 2026. The HO scale model will have wire grab irons and etched end platforms. Athearn suggests a minimum track radius of 22″.

An economy priced EMD F7A diesel locomotive is coming from Athearn under the Roundhouse brand name. The HO scale model is based on EMD's early Phase l version of the F7A.

Features on the upgraded model include a refitted cab, porthole and rear window glass, improved all-wheel electrical pickup with two wires to each truck and a revised frame with provision for 21-pin DCC decoder.



Road names on the DC, DCC-ready model, will be CSX, Reading & Northern. Clinchfield, Boston & Maine, Seaboard System, Metra, Rock Island, Conrail and Athearn.



Also coming under the Roundhouse brand name is a 50′ exterior post hi-cube boxcar with plug doors. The injection molded car body will have mostly cast-on details. The model will come with appropriate trucks with machined metal wheelsets and McHenry knuckle couplers.

Road names on this release will be Union Pacific, Laurinburg & Southern, International Bridge Terminal, Canadian Pacific, Chicago & North Western and Coe Rail Inc.
Info: www.athearn.com

Atlas has just released its latest production run of HO scale EMD GP40-2 diesel locomotives to its dealer network. The factory is sold out but dealers may still have

some units available. Road names on the October release include Atlanta & St Andrews Bay, CSX, Indiana Harbor Belt, Ontario Northland, Southern Pacific, Union Pacific and Denver & Rio Grande Western.
Info: Contact a dealer.

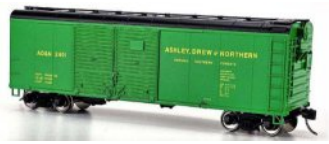

R. Bale

PENNSYLVANIA X-31 BOXCAR

In 1934 the PRR began production of the X31 -- a new series of 40' boxcars. The X31s were built with two distinctive round roofs designed to maximize loading capacity. The two round roofs: – one flush to the sides and the other with a 2'' setback at the top of the side – were applied to cars with both single and double sliding doors. In 1939 and through 1940, the PRR modified the roofs of nearly 700 40' double-door X31s with a raised turtle-back roof to accommodate wartime shipment of Army Jeeps. The X31s traveled throughout North America until the mid-1960s when they were withdrawn due to age.

Bowser Trains has released a wide selection of HO scale X31 boxcars with three different types of roofs: round flush roofs, round inset roofs, and turtle roofs. This release includes cars with one or two sliding side doors.

Cars decorated for Pennsylvania Railroad will be available in a choice of three Keystone styles and all three of the roof types.



Bowser's current release includes X31 cars decorated for Ashley, Drew & Northern, Detroit Toledo & Ironton, and two schemes each for Norfolk & Western and Seaboard Air Line.

The ready-to-run HO scale models come with knuckle couplers and appropriate trucks with machined metal wheelsets. Info: bowser-trains.com

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Broadway Limited Imports has scheduled a third release of its HO scale EMD GP35 for next summer. The preorder deadline to ensure availability is December 19, 2024. EMD developed the 2,500hp GP35 to compete with GEs 2,500hp U25B.

Eight road names will be available on this run including Canadian National, Erie Lackawanna, Southern Pacific, Reading, Norfolk Western, Conrail, PRR, and Wheeling & Lake Erie.

Individually controllable lights on GP35s in this release will include the headlight, rear light, front and rear number boards, front and rear classification lights, cab lights, ditch lights and rotary beacon. Each road name will be available as a DC stealth model with no sound, and with the Paragon4 Sound/DC/DCC system featuring Rolling Thunder.

Broadway Limited is preparing another release of a Union Pacific 4-8-8-4 Big Boy steam locomotive including an upgraded version of No. 4019 with smoke deflectors. Additional updates include a new builder's plate, polished cylinder heads, revised chalk marks, triple dynamo and a PTC antenna box on the tender.

The order deadline for this production run of Big Boys is March 6th, 2025, with an expected delivery of Fall 2025.
Info: www.broadway-limited.com


R. Bale

B&A XIH Boxcar

In 1950, the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad commissioned Magor Car Company to build 300 insulated heated plug-door boxcars for potato service. An additional 150 cars were ordered from Pacific Car & Foundry in 1953. The cars were equipped with ventilators and charcoal heaters and painted in the now-iconic red/white/blue State of Maine scheme. New Haven piggybacked an order of 100 cars with the PC&F lot and factory-decorated its cars in the State of Maine scheme to save money on the purchase. The cars initially carried potatoes in the winter and fine paper products in the summer. In time, successor roads replaced the State of Maine scheme with less complex painting arrangements. The XIH boxcar ran in revenue service for more than 40 years. *Bryan A Bussey.*

Eastern Seaboard Models is now accepting reservations for the second release of its HO Scale XIH boxcar. Road names on this release will be Penn Central, Bangor & Aroostook, New Haven and Okee Industries.

The model consists of injection molded plastic body with nearly 100 individual details parts including an etched brass running board and brake platform and Hi-Tech Details rubber hoses.

Additional features include InterMountain's ASF A-3 50-ton plain-bearing trucks with blackened metal wheelsets and Kadee No. 148 whisker couplers.

The reservation period is open through December 31, 2024 via your preferred hobby dealer. Availability is planned for the 4th quarter of 2025. Any item that does not meet the minimum reservation quantity will be postponed until a later release.
Info: www.esmc.com

HomeShops has released Evans coil cars with angled hoods decorated for Jim Hediger's Ohio Southern and Allen McClelland's Virginian & Ohio railroads. Available in six road numbers for each road, the cars build dates are set as April 1967 (V&O) and July 1968 (OS).

The models, built by InterMountain, feature metal coil loads for additional weight, separately applied grab irons, metal wheelsets, and Kadee couplers.
Info: homeshops.net

InterMountain ihas released to its dealers a new production run of HO scale Evans coil cars. The model is based on a 100-ton prototype with round hoods. Details include two diecast metal coil weights, an etched metal walkway, wire uncoupling bar, a Keystone or Hydra-Cushion underframe and roller-bearing trucks with 36″ machined metal wheelsets. Road names include BNSF, Burlington Northern, Illinois Central, Norfolk Southern, Union Pacific, Ohio Central, and Indiana Harbor Belt.

Also new from InterMountain is an HO scale Bi-Level Autorack with photo-etched metal side panels.

Road names include CSX, Canadian National, Ferromex, Southern Pacific, Canadian Pacific, BNSF, Conrail and Trailer Train.

InterMountain is booking reservations for an HO scale 40′ FGE wood refrigerator car.

Road names on this release will include Fruit Growers Express, Milwaukee Road, Century Beer, Fort Worth & Denver, Swift, Lion Brand Milk, Dubuque, and Canadian National.

Also open for reservations is the unique Skybox for Aerospace loads car. Used by various railroads and aircraft manufacturers for transporting outsized aircraft parts, the skybox was a special lid that mounted on top of a flatcar to protect the cargo from the elements and vandalism. The models feature an updated hood with separate grab irons, factory installed coupler cutbar and air hose, and metal wheelsets and knuckle couplers. Reservations are due December 31, 2024. Info: www.intermountain-railway.com

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Kadee has released its 2024 Christmas car. The colorfully decorated HO scale 40′ PS-1 boxcar features Pullman-Standard six-panel sliding doors.

Kadee also has a 50′ PS-1 boxcar decorated for Western Pacific. The HO scale model replicates a prototype built in 1955 with an 8′ six-panel Superior door. Both models mentioned in this report come with Kadee couplers and Kadee self-centering trucks with metal wheelsets.
Info: www.kadee.com

Moloco has announced the immediate availability of a group of HO scale ready-to-run ACF 50′ hi-cube boxcars. The group includes five slightly different Burlington Northern cars. All have 10′ sliding doors.

A model decorated for Missouri Pacific has two 8′ plug doors.

Models decorated for Florida East Coast and Frisco have 10′ sliding doors.

An undecorated kit with sliding doors is also available in this release.
Info: www.molocotrains.com

VIEW READER COMMENTS


R. Bale

GENERAL ELECTRIC P32AC-DM LOCOMOTIVE

The P32AC-DM is a 12-cylinder, 3,200 HP diesel electric locomotive built by GE Transportation in Erie, PA. It is one of the Genesis series locomotives GE built for Amtrak, Metro-North and VIA Rail during the 1990s. The P32 has a smaller engine than other Genesis locomotives but is capable of higher speeds through the use of AC motor technology. The DM designation identifies the P32AC as a dual mode locomotive which allows it to operate in 3rd rail territory including the tunnels of New York City. In the 2020s, Metro-North decorated a few P32s in heritage schemes as well as a special employee tribute scheme.

Rapido Trains is developing an HO scale version of the GE P32AC-DM locomotive. A key distinctive feature of the model will be the Krupp-MaK high speed bolsterless truck with third rail detail. Additional features include an ATC/Cab signal under-pilot detail (ACSES box), HEP plugs on the nose and rear, wire grab irons, an operating headlight, ditchlights and marker lights. Metro-North units will have a unique antenna array, a hatch in the nose and long air tanks.

The locomotive will be available for silent DC operation with a 21-pin DCC ready plug. DCC/Sound models will come with an ESU LokSound V5 Decoder.

Paint schemes in the initial release will include CDOT (New Haven McGinnis Scheme), Metro-North (silver with blue stripe),

Metro-North (current blue, red and silver scheme), Metro-North (blue, red and silver Beachball Scheme), Metro-North (New York Central Heritage) and Metro-North (Employee Tribute).

Still to be announced is the deadline for ordering, delivery and the final selection of Amtrak schemes.

R. Bale

GENERAL ELECTRIC 44-TON SWITCHER

The GE 44-ton switcher is a four-axle diesel electric locomotive built by General Electric between 1940 and 1956. It was designed for industrial and light switching duties. In the 1940s, the steam-to-diesel transition was in its infancy and railroad unions were trying to protect the locomotive fireman jobs that were redundant with diesel units. One measure taken to this end was the 1937 "90,000 Pound Rule", an agreement that locomotives weighing less than 90,000 pounds (45 tons) did not require a fireman. GE specifically designed its 44-tonner to permit users to operate it without a fireman. Other manufacturers also built 44-ton switchers, but the GE unit proved to be the most popular. Many remain in service and in museums.

The next relese of Rapido's General Electric 44-ton diesel switcher is scheduled for late next year. The deadline for ordering is February 17, 2025.

Rapido is adding two new versions of the 44-tonner: Phase 1a/b (with side-sill mounted steps) and Phase II. This is in addition to Phase Ic (flat ends, and side mounted radiator shutters), Phase III (radiator shutters on the end and longitudinal hood-top hatches) and Phase IV units (radiator shutters on the end and longitudinal opening on hood tops).

Features on all units include a heavy, diecast chassis and fuel tanks, appropriate fuel tank skirting, separately applied door latches, full cab interior, photo-etched cab steps and dual flywheels. DC models will be DCC-ready with factory installed speakers. DCC models are sound equipped including a capacitor circuit for uninterrupted DCC power.

A Phase 1a unit will be available decorated for Great Northern. Burlington and Burlington Northern schemes will be available on Phase 1b versions of the 44-tonner.

Phase 1c units will be available decorated for Lehigh Valley, New York, Ontario & Western, and yellow with no lettering. Road names for Phase IV GE 44-ton switchers include Erie, Greater Winnipeg Water District, Illinois Central, Lackawanna (DL&W), Middletown & New Jersey, Penn Central, Strasburg Railroad, and Industrial blue with no lettering. A Phase II unit will be available for Western Maryland.

Phase III versions of the GE 44-ton locomotive will be available decorated for New Haven (McGinnis), Pacific Electric, Claremont & Concord, and in Industrial red without lettering. All phases will be available undecorated.

In addition to the above paint schemes, several road names will be available exclusively through dealer/distributor arrangements. Trainworld will have a New York Dock Railway 44-ton switcher in three road numbers. Hobbytyme

Distributors will have one road number each for Vermont Railway, Connecticut Company, Omaha, Lincoln & Beatrice, and Nickel Plate Road.

Rapido has announced plans to produce an HO scale model of a modern Greenbrier transverse coil gondola car capable of handling up to five rolled steel coils. The model will replicate the more than is 2,500 prototype cars Greenbrier has produced for the coil steel railcar market.

The model will have a metal underframe, etched-metal walkways, metal grab irons, separate cut levers, and 100-ton trucks with metal wheelsets.

Paint schemes on the initial release will be Arkansas & Oklahoma, Chicago Heights Terminal Transfer, Norfolk Southern, South Shore Freight, Union Pacific, and Warwick Railway. Each scheme will be available in six car numbers. An order deadline and delivery date is TBA.

1937 AAR 40' boxcar update: Rapido has added four road names to its in-production 1937 AAR 40′ boxcar The new railroads include Lancaster & Chester, Northern Pacific, Florida East Coast, and Ontario Northland. These new schemes are added to the original list which included Canadian National, Canadian Pacific, Chesapeake & Ohio, Erie, Lackawanna, Minneapolis & St. Louis, Monon, New Haven, New York Central, Nickel

Plate, Seaboard Air Line, Soo Line, Southern Railway, Southern Pacific, and Western Pacific.

All of the images including computer renderings in this report are courtesy of Rapido Trains.
Info: www.rapidotrains.com

Scale Trains has announced a new run of the HO scale Trinity 82′ 7883 mechanical reefer cars, featuring new road numbers and paint schemes, including weathered or patched paint schemes. Schemes in this run include three BNSF, a TILX (patched ex-BNSF), and two data only schemes.

Also in HO scale is a new run of Rivet Counter GE ES44 GEVO locomotives. The run features five new CSX Heritage paint schemes – Family Lines, Western Maryland, Pere Marquette, Seaboard Coast Line, and Pittsburgh & Lake Erie, as well as BNSF Heritage III, Canadian National (ex-CITIRail), Ferromex, and Kansas City Southern. Preorders for the Reefers and GEVOs are due by November 25th.
Info: www.scaletrains.com

VIEW READER COMMENTS


R. Bale

TRINITY 4750 CU. FT. COVERED HOPPER

Following nine years of continuous production, the PS 4750 covered hopper was the largest mass-produced covered hopper design in North American railcar history. After Pullman-Standard's demise in 1981, Trinity Industries acquired the design and production rights for the PS version, which killed Trinity's own 4750 from the catalog. Shippers continued to request the Pullman-design. Between 1988 and 1995 Trinity produced the Pullman design while making a series of refinements to the original. Many Class I railroads purchased the Trinity 4750, with BN, UP, and CSX ordering them in the thousands. Trinity 4750 cars continue to serve Class I, short line, and in lessee services today, hauling grains, fertilizer, salt, and other bulk commodities. *Dave Lehlbach*

Tangent Scale Models has released a newly-tooled HO scale model of Trinity Industries Pullman-design 4,750 cu. ft. triple-bay covered hopper. Nine road names with unique details are included in this release plus four undecorated ready-to-run models. Features on all road names, unless noted otherwise, include unpainted galvanized Morton running board, coupler lift bars and access holes in the centersill dividers.

CSXT models from the 1988 period will have Universal 9200 brake housings and galvanized steel trough hatches.

A Burlington Northern car in Cascade Green will come with an Elcon National D-5600 brake housing.

A 4750 covered hopper decorated for Union Pacific will have galvanized steel trough hatches, bolt-on outlet gates and a Universal 9300 brake housing.

A DGHX car leased to North American Chemical will also have a Universal 9300 brake housing plus Gravex gravity-pneumatic outlet gates, shaker brackets on the outlet bays and fiberglass trough hatches.

Details on Tangent's 4750 decorated for GACX include galvanized steel trough hatches, an Elcon National D-5600 brake housing, bolt-on outlet gates and shaker brackets on the outlet bays.

A BNSF car features a large Swoosh logo and conspicuity stripes. Roof details include fiber glass trough hatches and the Morton running boards are painted in the car body color. Additional details include bolt-on outlet gates and a Universal 9300 brake housing.

This former BNSF car has been patched out for GACX. It has fiber glass trough hatches and a Universal 9300 brake housing. Of special note are the white grab irons.

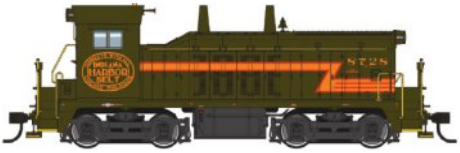
Another BN patch is this GACX 4750 with fiber glass trough hatches, a Universal 9300 brake housing and bolt-on outlet gates.

Completing Tangent's release of decorated Trinity 4750 Pullman-style covered hoppers is an INTX car with galvanized steel trough hatches, bolt-on outlet gates, Universal 9300 brake housing, and conspicuity stripes.

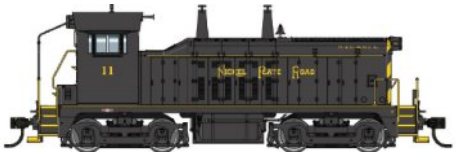
All versions will have separate air hoses, Kadee couplers, 100-ton Barber S-2 trucks with 36″ machined metal wheels, rotating bearing caps, and separate brake beam parts.
Info: www.tangentscalemodels.com

Walthers is preparing new tooling for a Proto series model of an EMD NW2 diesel switcher. The initial release, scheduled for next summer, will include Phase I, III and IV versions of the prototype. NW2s decorated for Southern Railway and Union Pacific will have Phase III hood and standard cabs

A Santa Fe version of the NW2 will have a Phase I hood, high cylindrical exhaust stacks, an etched wagon wheel antenna and a Leslie A125-247 horn.



Models decorated for Indiana Harbor Belt and New York Central will have Phase IV hoods and blanked out front cab windows. The IHB unit will have MU stand and hoses. The NYC loco will come with an operating beacon light.



Walthers all-new NW2 decorated for the Nickel Plate Road will have a Phase IV hood, an etched spark arrestor, a fire cracker antenna and a Leslie A125-247 horn.

Features on all versions of the NW2 include LED constant and directional headlights, sunshades, welded 600 gallon fuel tanks and AAR four-wheel trucks with plain bearings. Each road name will be available for DC operation and with ESU LokSound 5 sound and DCC.

Walthers 2025 winter production schedule includes a classic F7 diesel locomotive. A units of the Mainline series HO scale model will be available along with matching A-B sets.

Road names will be Bessemer & Lake Erie, Lehigh Valley, New York Central, Reading, Western Pacific, and Electro Motive demo.

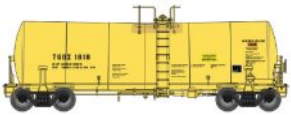
A units will have an operating headlight, factory installed handrails and the same drive system as WalthersProto locomotives.

WalthersMainline F7 will be available for standard DC operation and with ESU Sound and DCC.

Additional Mainline series models coming from Walthers next winter include a 50′ 100-ton quadruple-bay open hopper car. The HO scale model features a diecast metal underframe, sloped sheet braces, fully detailed brake gear, and roller-bearing trucks with 36″ machined metal wheels.

Decorating schemes will be Chicago & Eastern Illinois, Chicago & North Western, Denver & Rio Grande Western, Illinois Central Gulf, and Conrail.

New WalthersProto models scheduled for release in the spring of 2025 include a 40′ Trinity 14,000 gallon molten sulfur tank car. Details include factory installed grab irons, see-through etched metal walkways and end platforms, heating coils, and an insulated jacket for handling molten sulfur and similar commodities.



Decorating schemes will be CGTX-General American, FHRX-Flint Hill Resources, GATX-General American, ITDX-Sulcom, TCPX-Trinity Industries Leasing, TILX-Trinity Industries Leasing (yellow), TILX-Trinity Industries Leasing (black), and TGOX-First Union.

These special tank cars will come with contemporary roller-bearing trucks with 36″ machined metal wheels.

Walthers has scheduled a winter 2025 release date for a Proto series 40′ Gunderson rebuilt well car. The HO scale model replicates a modified prototype able to carry containers from 20′ to 40′ in the well and 40′ to 53′ in a double stack arrangement. Containers in above illustration are not included with well car model.

Road names are Northwestern Oklahoma and five TTX schemes: new logo, new logo-Forward Thinking, new logo-Railbox, new logo-patch, and old logo. The model features etched metal see-through walkways, factory installed brake gear, and wire grab irons. The roller–bearing trucks are fitted with 33″ machined metal wheels.

Loads available as a separate purchase for the rebuilt well cars will include 20′ corrugated containers decorated for CMA, Hamburg Sud, Mediterranean Shipping, ONE, Gateway, Hapag-Lloyd, Triton, and ZIM.

Decorating schemes available on 40′ hi-cube corrugated container will include Evergreen, Hapag-Lloyd, ONE, HMM, CMA-CGM, Matson, TEX, and ZIM.

A 40′ hi-cube corrugated container with flat roof will be available for Evergreen, Hapag-Lloyd, K-Line, Hanjin, Hyundai, and Yang Ming. A 53′ corrugated container will be available decorated for Canadian Tire, EMP, JB Hunt, Rail Run, CSX, FedEX, and Swift.

All of the containers listed in this report will come in 3-packs. They are designed to fit in WalthersProto and WaltersMainline well cars and container flatcars.

A 41′ ballast hopper car is listed on Walthers 2025 winter production schedule. The Mainline series model is based on prototype equipment used to maintain home road right of way.

Although not shown in the above illustration, the ballast car is fitted with longitudinal discharge gates. Additional details on the Mainline series model include a diecast metal underframe and full brake gear.

Road names available on this release will be Amtrak, Burlington Northern, CP Rail, and Conrail.

Completing this month's list of new models coming from Walthers next winter is a Mainline series 89′ flatcar with a bi-level open auto rack. The open rack represents prototype in use from about 1968 into the early 1970s.

For stability the long model has a diecast underframe. Uninstalled bridge plates will be included with the model.

A 24″ minimum track radius recommended. Road names will include Burlington Northern, Grand Trunk Western, Illinois Central, Louisville & Nashville, and Western Pacific.

Info: www.walthers.com

N SCALE PRODUCT NEWS

New **Atlas** models recently shipped to dealers include an N scale RS-3 diesel locomotive. Road names on this latest release include British Columbia, New Haven, Delaware & Hudson, Erie

Lackawanna, Pennsylvania Railroad, Burlington Northern, and Louisville & Nashville.

Additional Atlas models released to dealers last month include a GE B23-7 diesel locomotive. Road names for the N scale model include Conrail, Finger Lakes Railway, Minnesota Commercial, Santa Fe, and Southern Railway. Info: Contact a dealer.

Bluford Shops is accepting pre-orders for a second production run of its dented N scale gondolas. Buford's 52′ 6″ mill gondolas feature diecast floors and plastic sides and brake gear. The models come with metal wheels and magnetically operating knuckle couplers.

Road names on this release will be Pittsburgh & Lake Erie, Burlington Northern, CB&Q, Erie Lackawanna, Great Northern, Nickel Plate Road, The Rock, Frisco, and New York Central.

Each road name will be available lightly dented, medium dented and heavily dented.

The Lightly Dented versions have multiple deflections in the side sheets above the floor line. The Medium Dented versions have the side sheets visibly puffed outward between the rivet lines as countless small dings to the inside faces accumulated and stretched the sheets into rough domes. The Heavily Dented versions also have the puffed out panels but to a greater extent – plus many of the ribs have also been

deflected outward. The concave dent detail on the inside faces matches the convex outside faces.

Pre-orders will be accepted until November 25, 2024 with delivery expected in 2025.
Info: bluford-shops.com

InterMountain is booking reservations for an N scale 40′ FGE wood refrigerator car.

Road names on this release will be Fruit Growers Express, Milwaukee Road, Century Beer, Fort Worth & Denver, Swift, Lion Brand Milk, Dubuque, and Canadian National.
Info: www.intermountain-railway.com

Kato USA has added to new road names to its current selection of EMD SD70M locomotives. The N scale models are based on the 4,000hp prototype EMD delivered with flat radiator sides and self-steering HTCR-II radial trucks. The new road names include Union Pacific No. 4015 and No. 4444 that have been updated with a new logo on the side certifying current UP excursion service.

Also new is CSX No. 4679 and No. 4688 that has *Spirit of Tampa* in script lettering on the cab side. All versions will have directional headlights, preprinted number boards, magnetic knuckle couplers and Kato's five-pole motor with dual brass flywheels.

The DC analog models will be DCC-ready for installation of an after-market decoder.
Info: www.katousa.com

New models available from **Micro-Trains Line** include this Santa Fe excess height boxcar. The N scale model is based on an ATSF Bx-188-class car.

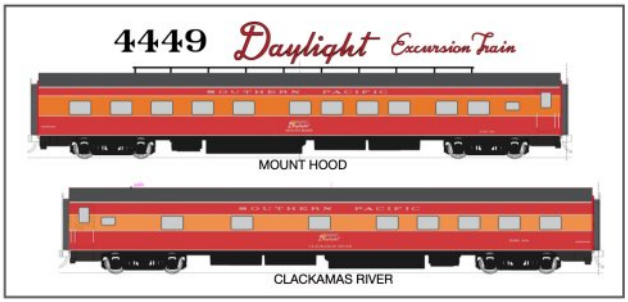
Also new from Micro-Trains is a 2-pack of Burlington Northern twin-bay Airslide hopper cars. Both cars come weathered with graffiti.

Micro-Trains new N scale BNSF 3,200 cu. ft. twin-bay covered hopper represents a prototype built by American Car & Foundry in the mid-1960s. The model is available with Barber roller-bearing trucks
Info: Contact a dealer.

RailSmith Models is accepting deposits and reservations for an N scale EMD E7 decorated for the *Golden State,* the Chicago-to-Los Angeles name train operated jointly by Southern Pacific and Rock Island from 1902 to 1968.

The N scale locomotives are being produced for RailSmith by Broadway Limited. The A unit will come with the optional front pilot coupler, as well as the enclosed solid pilot as seen in

the illustration. The E7s are being offered as an A-B pair with the A unit powered and a dummy B unit. A separate powered B unit is also available. The locomotives will be available as analog DC non-sound units or with the Paragon 4 DCC with sound. Availability is planned for 2025.



Also announced is a new passenger train in N scale, the 4449 Excursion Train. Featuring cars owned by the Friends of the 4449 and Doyle McCormack, the first cars available for preorder are the Clackamas River sleeper and the SP&S Mt. Hood Lounge Sleeper. Both will be painted in their current SP Daylight colors. Info: www.lowellsmith.net

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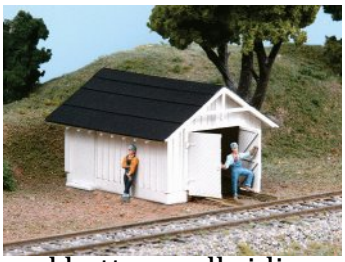
A new run of N scale SD40-2 locomotives in **ScaleTrains** Rivet Counter line is open for preorders. Including both high and low short hood models, road names in this run include BNSF, CSX, DM&E, Missouri Pacific, Norfolk Southern, and Union Pacific.

The locomotives feature road number specific details such as the grille type, nose length, dynamic brake type (or not at all), and fan housings.

LED headlights, number boards, and front and rear ditchlights as appropriate for the prototype are included. The locomotives are equipped either with ESU

LokSound 5 DCC and sound or as DC/DCC ready with an E24 connector.
Info: scaletrains.com

STRUCTURES AND SCENIC SUPPLIES



Berkshire Valley Models has released a kit for two HO scale lineside Tool Sheds. This is an updated reissue of a former American Model Builders kit originally designed by the late John Hitzeman. This set of two Tool Shed kits features laser-cut parts with board and batten wall siding, rolled roofing, exposed rafter tails, positionable track side doors, interior flooring, and code 70 rail for the handcar setoff. Assembly and painting are required.
Info: www.berkshirevalleymodels.com

B.T.S. has released four new craftsman style kits including two versions of oil columns. The oil columns are available in both S and O scale.

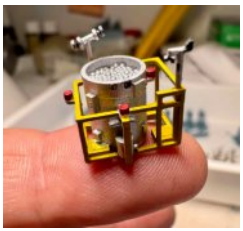
This single stall engine house is available from B.T.S as an O scale kit.

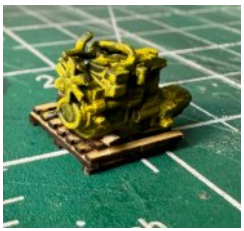
Kits for this single car garage are available in HO, S and O scales. Additional kits planned for release soon include a single stall

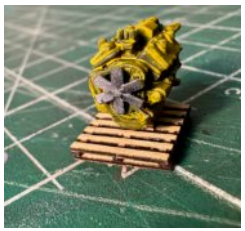
engine house in HO and two O scale kits: McCabe rail facility office and McCabe wood oil tank.
Info: www.btsrr.com

New from **DVL Design LLC** is the Noble Gas & Tungsten-Neon series of finescale neon sign kits in HO scale. Utilizing miniature LEDs, the kits include photo etched sign frames that include details such as a supporting chain, power cord, neon transformer, and neon tube wiring. Available in six colors, instructions and templates are available for free download to assist in planning.
Info: dvldesign.com

miniprints has released several new items recently, including several just in time for the holiday season, such as a 12-foot illuminated inflatable Santa figure and log reindeer.





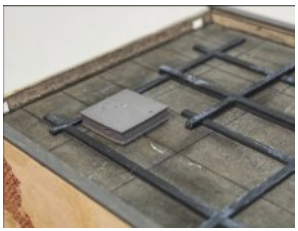


Featured in the movies Twister and Twisters, the Dorothy I is the perfect detail for the storm chasers on your layout, just as the Caterpillar 3048 and 3406 engines will work in your diesel shop. ITLA pallets are not included. All items are available in N, HO, S,

or O scale unless otherwise noted on the miniprints website.
Info: miniprints.com

Monster Models has announced the availability of J&L's Diner, an HO scale structure kit with several custom signs. The structure features a detailed laser-cut storefront. Additional components include 3D laser engraved old brick walls, corners, and coping and peel & stick laser-cut windows and doors. The finished building, which requires assembly and painting, has a foot print of 3.3″ x 5.3″.
Info: www.larkspurlaserart.com

Showcase Miniatures has a kit for an HO Scale Volvo/White Tractor. The pewter kit includes numerous photo etched detail, including optional grilles, for customizing the model. Additional details include decals, a vacuum formed clear windshield and illustrated instructions. Assembly and painting is required.

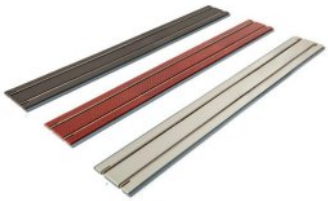


Showcase Miniature is selling several structure details including a barn hoist, covered entry and roof hatch. These are items from their structure kits that are now available individually.
Info: www.showcaseminiatures.net

New structure kits coming from **WalthersCornerstone** during the winter of 2025 include a kit for this four-piece Transformer Factory. The four separate structures – metal factory, brick office, crane, and transformer yard -- can be positioned in a variety of

ways. Assembly is required, painting is optional.

Also coming from Walthers is a Coffee Shop. The small brick structure is molded in three colors and can be repurposed for a variety of offices or small retail businesses. The finished kit has a foot print of 4.44″ x 3.56″. Assembly is required.



Walthers has scheduled a Winter 2025 release for three styles of Street Track. Street types include concrete paving, asphalt paving and brick paving. The track is compatible with Walthers existing code 83 track components and Walters Cornerstone HO scale street system. The new street track comes with two 10.75″ long sections.

Three new sets of HO scale hand painted figures and animals are coming from Walthers this winter.

The sets include 18 workmen, 21 cattle and 18 seated people.
Info: www.walthers.com

Woodland Scenics is releasing several HO scale animal figure sets, including sheep, goats, dogs, a cat, and three different sets of birds.

All sets come painted and ready for playing, grazing, flying, swimming, or nesting in farm fields, mountain meadows, or the local swimming hole.
Info: woodlandscenics.com

DECALS

ClassOneModelWorks.com is offering a set of 86′ boxcar shipping pool decals. Printed by MRH advertiser PDC, the decals can be used to mark where the boxcars originated from and what routes they would be on. While the marks were frequently located near the reporting marks on the boxcar, their exact placement varied widely. Photographs of the pool service mark locations can be downloaded from the ClassOneModelWorks.com website.
Info: classonemodelworks.com

Briefly noted at press time ...

Broadway Limited has added two Wheeling & Lake Erie schemes to the road names for its previously announced HO scale EMD GP35. The W&LE schemes will be available exclusively through Chases Train Garage. Info at www.chasestraingarage.com ...

InterMountain has just released HO scale Gunderson MAXI IV 3-unit well cars and 53′ containers to its dealer network ...

Canadian-based **KR Models** has postponed the release its HO scale two-truck Shay until next summer in order to redesign and manufacture one of the drivetrain gears ...

The latest publications from **Morning Sun** include volume two of *Guilford Rail System* and volume one of *Covered Hoppers AACX to MQGX* ...

New HO scale freight cars coming from **Walthers** this winter include a 45′ Difco dump car, a 61′ wood chip gondola, a 63′ pulpwood flatcar with a rack and a newly tooled 50′ AAR boxcar. A new high-hood GP9 is scheduled for release next spring ... ■

SELECTED EVENTS

November

Please submit your event information, including website, to model-railroad-hobbyist.com/contact/News_event_-_product_announcement

Ongoing 2024

ONLINE, Zoom, dates vary, see website. Operation Special Interest Group Meetups – limited attendance available.
Info: www.opsig.org/Virtual
Archive: www.youtube.com/c/OperationsSIG

ONLINE, Zoom & YouTube, Wednesday & Saturday, see Facebook page. "New Tracks" Meetup, hosted by Jim Kellow, MMR.
Info: newtracksmodeling.com
YouTube: www.youtube.com/channel/UCMA_VhPb5pjdkAYTdXLceJA

ONLINE, Facebook & YouTube, dates vary, see Facebook page. "NMRAx" organized by Gordy Robinson, Martyn Jenkins, Speed Muller, Jordan Kramer.
Info: www.facebook.com/groups/nmragroup

ONLINE, YouTube, every other Saturday. 4th Division, Pacific Northwest Region, NMRA hosts online layout tours and clinics.
Archive: https://www.youtube.com/c/4DPNRMovies

ONLINE, Zoom, Second Tuesdays, 8pm Eastern. "Off the Beaten Track" featuring Narrow Gauge layouts, clinics, and manufacturers.
Info: groups.io/g/NNG

AROUND THE USA, IN-PERSON, Various dates. ScaleTrains.com Road Trip.
Info: www.scaletrains.com/roadtrip

November - December 2024

CALIFORNIA, CROCKETT, December 7-8, 2024. Carquinez Model Railroad Society Open House. 645 Loring Avenue.
Info: cmrstrainclub.org

CALIFORNIA, SAN LEANDRO, December 7, 2024. San Leandro Historical Railway Society Winter Open House and Porch Sale. Thrasher Park, 1302 Orchard Avenue.
Info: www.slhrs.org

CALIFORNIA, TURLOCK, December 7-8, 2024. San Joaquin Valley Toy Train Operators, Inc. annual train show. Stanislaus Fairgrounds, 900 N Broadway.
Info: sjvttoinc.com

COLORADO, LONGMONT, December 10-13, 2024. Boulder Model Railroad Club 47th Annual Model Railroad Expo. Boulder County Fairgrounds Exposition Hall, 9595 Nelson Rad.
Info: www.bmrconline.org

ILLINOIS, CHICAGO, November 16, 2024. Lake Shore Model Railroad 78th Anniversary Open House. Calumet Park Fieldhouse, 9801 South Avenue G.
Info: www.lakeshoremodelrr.org

INDIANA, DANVILLE, November 23, 2024. Danville Train Show, sponsored by the Central Indiana Division of the NMRA. Hendricks County Fair Grounds, Old US 36 (E. Main St).
Info: www.cidnmra.org

KENTUCKY, BOWLING GREEN, December 13-15, 2024. Festival of Trains, sponsored by The sHOw Modular Railroad club. Greenwood Mall, 2625 Scottsville Road.
Info: facebook.com/events/s/2024-festival-of-trains/1248307982862254

KENTUCKY, LOUISVILLE, November 16, 2024. Division 8 Mid-Central Region, NMRA 34th Annual Train Show and Sale. Holy Family Parish Saffin Center, 3938 Poplar Level Rd.
Info: division8midcentralregionnationalmodelrailroadassociation.thundertix.com/events/226342

MAINE, BREWER, November 23, 2024. 2024 Eastern Main Model Railroad Club show and swap meet. Jeff's Catering, 15 Eventcenter Way.
Info: www.easternmainemodelrailroadclub.org

MARYLAND, CHESTER, December 7-8, 2024. Festival of Trains, sponsored by the Queen Anne's Railroad Society. 61 Piney Narrows Road.
Info: www.qarrs.org

MASSACHUSETTS, ORLEANS, Saturdays November 23 – December 28, 2024. Nauset Model Railroad Club Annual Holiday Open House. 180 Rte 6A.
Info: www.nausetmodelrrclub.com

MICHIGAN, ANN ARBOR, December 1, 2024. Southeast Michigan Model Railroad Show & Sale. Washtenaw Farm Council Grounds, 5055 Ann Arbor Saline Road.
Info: www.railsonwheels.com

MICHIGAN, SHELBY TWP, November 30 – December 1, 2024. Model Train Show at the Packard Proving Grounds. 49665 Van Dyke Ave.
Info: packardprovinggrounds.org/event/model-train-show

NEW JERSEY, BLACKWOOD/TURNERSVILLE, December 13-15, 2024. Trees & Trains Winter Wonderland. Calvary Chapel Gloucester County, 5360 Rout 42N.
Info: www.cc-gc.org

NEW YORK, ALBANY, December 8, 2024. Great Train Extravaganza, sponsored by the Hudson Berkshire Division NER/NMRA. Empire State Convention Center, Empire State Plaza, 100 S Mall Arterial.
Info: gtealbany.com

OHIO, HARRISON, November 30, 2024. Semi-Annual Harrision Veteran's Train Show. Harrison VFW Post 7570, 9160 Lawrenceburg Rd.
Info: Ralph Jackson 513-477-3733, Bill Floyd 513-293-4508

OHIO, MARION, December 7, 2024. 38th Annual Marion Station Association Train Show & Sale. Marion Ohio Fairgrounds Coliseum, 220 E Fairgrounds St.
Info: mariontrainshow@outlook.com

OREGON, PORTLAND, Weekends November 16 - December 8, 2024. Columbia Gorge Model Railroad Club 2024 Open House. 2505 N Vancouver Ave.
Info: cgmrc.com/events

OREGON, RICKREALL, December 7, 2024. Willamette Valley Model Railroad Museum Annual Railroad Show & Swap Meet. Polk County Fairgrounds, 520 S Pacific Hwy W.
Info: www.wvmrm.org/new-page

VIRGINIA, MIDLOTHIAN, November 23-24, 2024. The Virginia Train Collectors Holiday Train Show and Sale. Westchester Commons Mall, 301 Perimeter Drive (Left of Target).
Info: vatraincollectors.com

WISCONSIN, MILWAUKEE, November 23-24, 2024. Trainfest – America's Largest Operating Model Railroad Show. Baird Center, 400 W Wisconsin Ave.
Info: www.train-fest.com

Future 2025 by location

ALABAMA, MOBILE, March 8, 2025. Southwest Alabama Railroad Modelers (SWARM) Model Train Show. Mobile Via Health, Fitness and Enrichment Center, Arlene F. Mitchell Campus, 1717 Dauphin Street.
Info: gasamuel@aol.com

(HYBRID)CALIFORNIA, SAN LUIS OBISPO, March 27-30, 2025. Daylight Limited – Pacific Coast Region Convention. Embassy Suites by Hilton San Luis Obispo, 333 Madonna Road.
Info: pcr2025.org

ILLINOIS, MACHESNEY PARK, March 29-30, 2025. 2025 Rock River Valley Train Show, sponsored by the Rock River Valley Division. Harlem High School, 9229 Alpine Rd.
Info: www.rrvd-nmra.com/show.php

INDIANA, LEBANON, January 26, 2025. Central Indiana Division Lebanon Train Show. 1300 E 100 S.
Info: www.cidnmra.org

MASSACHUSSETS, WEST SPRINGFIELD, January 25-26, 2025. 2025 Railroad Hobby Show, sponsored by the Amherst Railway Society. The Eastern States Exposition Fairgrounds, 1305 Memorial Avenue.
Info: www.railroadhobbyshow.com

OREGON, EUGENE, February 15-16, 2025. 36th Annual Model Railroad Swap Meet & Train Show, sponsored by Willamette Cascade Model Railroad Club. Lane Event Center, 796 West 13th Avenue.
Info: www.facebook.com/events/1014615623750734

OREGON, PORTLAND, March 8, 2025. Willamette Model Railroad Club Annual Swap Meet. Kliever Armory, 10000 33rd Avenue.
Info: wmrrc.com

TENNESSEE, JOHNSON CITY, May 30-31, 2025. George L. Carter Railroad Museum Inc. Big Train Show. ETSU Mini-Dome on the East Tennessee State University Campus.
Info: johnsoncityrailroadexperience.org

TEXAS, PASADENA (Houston), February 15, 2025. Greater Houston Train Show, presented by the San Jacinto Model Railroad Club. Pasadena Convention Center, 7902 Fairmont Parkway. Info: sanjacmodeltrains.org

WISCONSIN, MADISON, February 15-16, 2025. 57th annual Mad City Railroad Show, Exhibition Hall, Alliant Energy Center. Info: www.nmra-scwd.org

WISCONSIN, STEVENS POINT, January 11-12, 2025. Central Wisconsin Model Railroaders 27th Annual Model Railroad Show. Holiday Inn Convention Center Hotel, 1001 Amber Avenue. Info: www.facebook.com/groups/3035277813184123 ■

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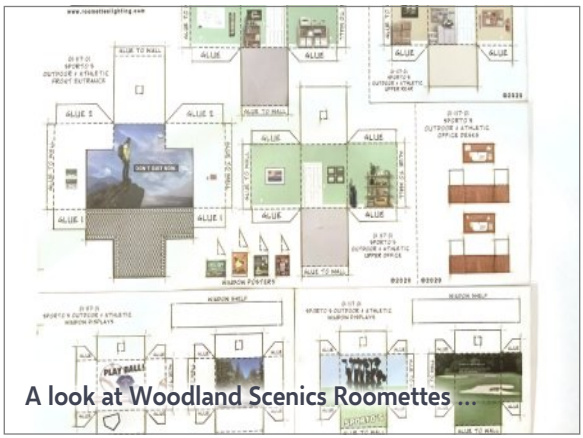

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