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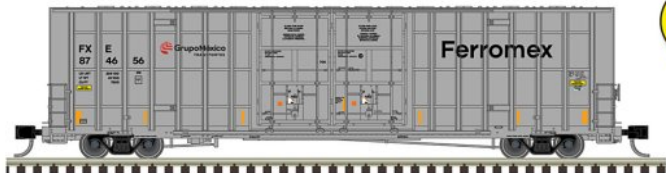
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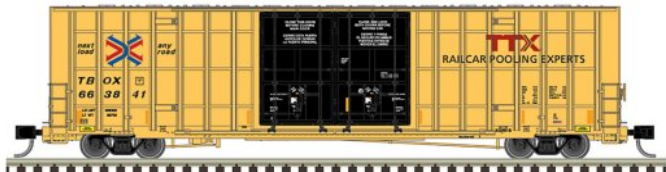
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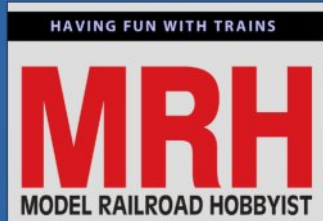


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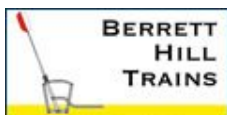
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JOE FUGATE



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October 2024 news and events
RICHARD BALE and JEFF SHULTZ



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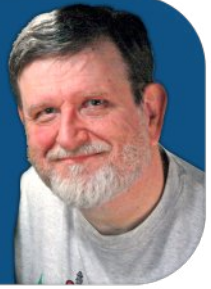


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PUBLISHER'S MUSINGS



Model Railroad Hobbyist | October 2024

JOE FUGATE: HE WHO DIES WITH THE MOST TOYS WINS?



I BELIEVE MORE THAN A FEW MODEL RAILROADERS SEE THE ULTIMATE KEY TO HOBBY SATISFACTION is getting more hobby stuff.

In other words, to have the greatest hobby satisfaction, you need a bigger layout, more locomotives, more rolling stock, more, *more, MORE!*

Just like that old saying goes, “he who dies with the most toys wins!” But hold on, I’m not so sure this is really the road to the greatest hobby satisfaction. That’s why I put a question mark at the end of that old saying in my title.

When I consider why *I* do the hobby, it’s operation – running the trains. What sets model railroading apart from other hobbies like military modeling is that *the trains move*. See my new operations column [in this issue here](#).

Making things run well is why I launched my [Run like a Dream series](#). They can be made to not only run well, but can be made to run *awesome*, so why not do that?

Quantity versus quality

This is where I think some modelers, especially new comers to the hobby, miss the mark. They think *quantity* is the key to hobby satisfaction – bigger layout, more locos, etc.

After 57 years in the hobby, I'm here to tell you the secret to a deeply satisfying hobby is *quality*, not quantity. Obviously, if you're primarily a collector, then a bigger collection *is* the goal.

However, I'm talking to the rest of us who are *railroad modelers* first. We want the trains to not only look nice, but to run nice as well. If things can run like a dream, then that's model railroading nirvana.

Don't believe me? Then let's look at some examples.

Let's say you visit a model railroad (layout A) and get to run some trains on it. Let's say the layout looks nice so you're excited to run something on it.

How would you feel if the trains stall a lot, and things derail a lot? Does that sound like much fun? Unfortunately, I've seen more than a few layouts that look pretty nice, but things ran really rough.

Let's consider a different example.

You visit a second layout (layout b), and it looks okay but not great. You likewise get a chance to run some trains on it.

This time, the trains run like clockwork. The locos all have sound and they have superb slow speed performance with zero stalling. Everything tracks perfectly with no derailments. Now, how do you feel about this layout?

I think the answer is obvious – the more satisfying layout is layout B. It may not look as nice as layout A, but overall, layout B will be a lot more satisfying.

I've actually had the layout B experience. I visited a layout that was open for ops, and got a chance to run trains on it. The layout looked unfinished in a lot of areas, and the benchwork looked rather roughly done. The wiring didn't look particularly organized. Frankly, I didn't expect much as an operator that night. I was pleasantly surprised to find out I was wrong!



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PUBLISHER'S MUSINGS | 3

This layout ran like the proverbial top. I had a total blast running trains that night, and I got to the point that I didn't "see" the lack of finish or the rough construction. If there ever was a "you can't judge a book by its cover" layout, this layout was exactly that.

A layout like layout B has a much higher "quality of run" than layout A. That layout I visited that night definitely had a high quality of run.

Smaller layouts

In fact, I would go so far as to say that a smaller layout with a high quality of run will be a lot more satisfying than a larger layout with a low quality of run.



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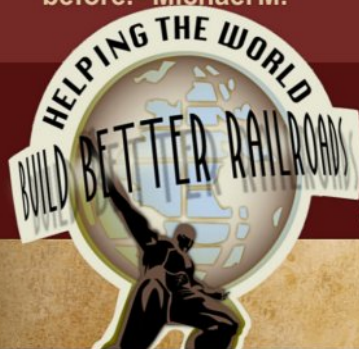
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This clearly debunks the notion that more stuff is better. More quality is the road to better, not more quantity (aka, more stuff).

Some of the most fun I've ever had running trains was the 8x13 portable TOMA shelf layout we took to shows for a few years.

I had a ProtoThrottle from Iowa Scaled Engineering [1] that I took to the show as well. The ProtoThrottle is a miniature replica of a diesel loco control stand with an 8-notch throttle, a brake, a reverser, along with a nice horn handle, and a bell button.

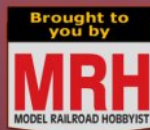
1. I find using an ISE ProtoThrottle to run trains to be extremely engaging. It's essentially a miniature version of the control stand in a diesel locomotive cab, and it has completely transformed running trains for me. While this throttle is not cheap, it's about the cost of a couple sound locomotives, and it's a whole lot more fun than them.



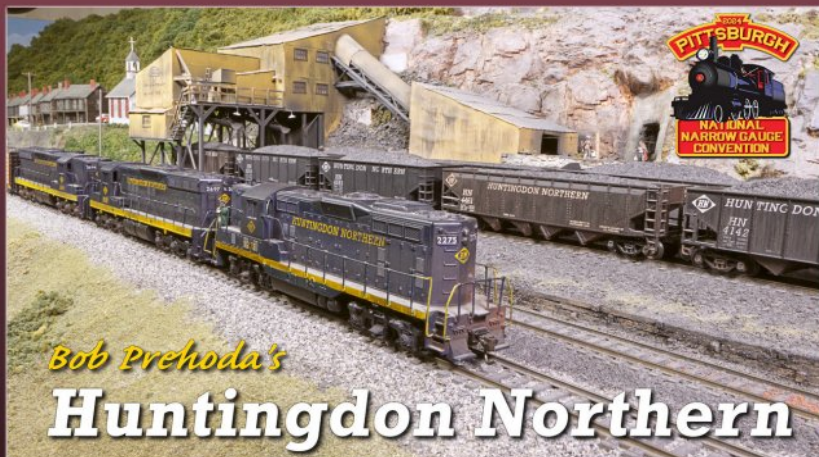
I've never had so much fun running trains as I do with the Protothrottle. Essentially, you set the momentum in your DCC sound decoder to near maximum, and you tune the loco speed to fit the 8 throttle notches.

With your loco sitting there idling, you release the brake (hear a slight hiss), then notch up the throttle to notch 2 or 3 to get the loco moving. You turn on the bell as a heads-up to anyone nearby as you move out. You also blow a couple short bursts on the horn to indicate you're about to start rolling.





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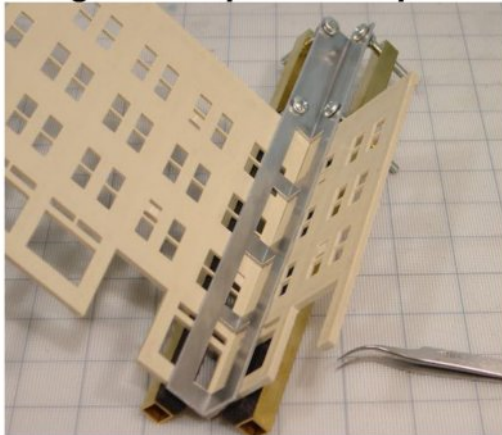
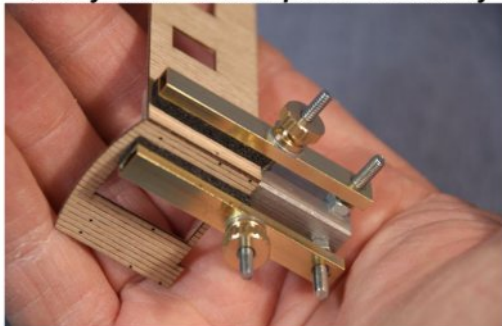
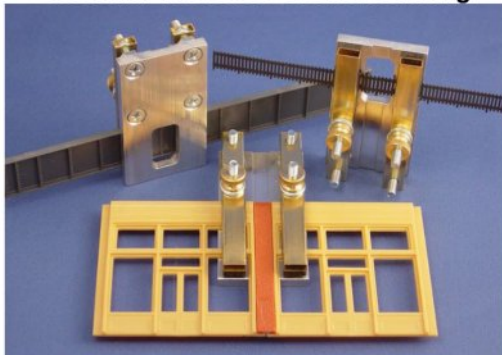


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You hear the prime mover rev up, but the loco very slowly starts rolling, imparting a sense of great mass as it slowly comes up to speed.

I need to plan ahead as I approach a string of cars I want to couple to. I drop to idle on the throttle and start feathering the brake – moving the brake handle partway to the right, then back to the left, then back to the right, and so on to intermittently apply the brake.

If I've done it right (and you can easily repeat this with a little practice), I coast gently into the first car's coupler, getting a soft, but firm "kiss coupling."

Then I notch up again and the loco slowly revs up as we move out with the string of cars in tow.

Talk about fun! This is a definite "quality of run" upgrade. If your loco runs well and your cars don't derail very much, this is a complete layout operations game changer. If you've never tried a Protothrottle before, you have no idea what you're missing.

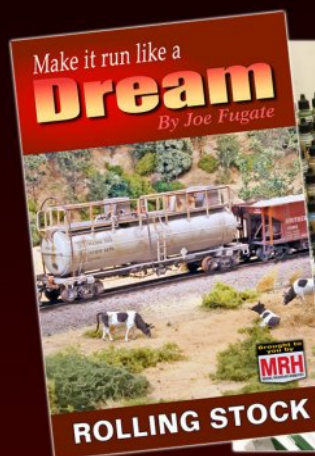
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To summarize what I think the road to true satisfaction is, “he who dies with the *best* toys wins!” It’s all about quality, not quantity.

Other projects on the table

Several years ago, we got the idea to republish some of the best content from *MRH* as paperback books. We did our first volume on Trackwork – the best trackwork articles from *MRH*’s first 99 issues [2].

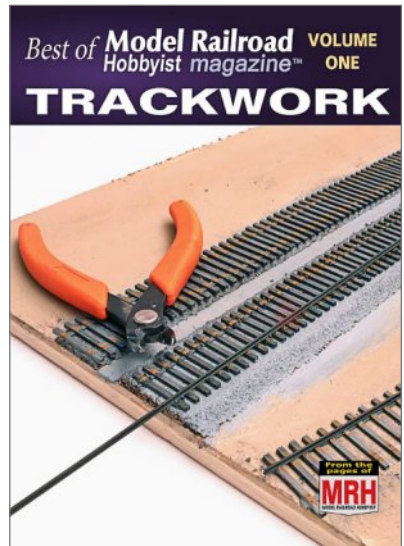
At the time, we found this to be far more work than anticipated because of the images. They were too small, even though they looked decent on screen. To make them large enough took a lot of manual editing of the photos.

As a consequence, we lost our enthusiasm for putting more articles to paperback at that time.

However, things have changed with the introduction of AI photo enlargement tools. It’s now quite easy and quick to use AI photo enlarging tools to upsize photos for print, and have them look decent.

As a result, we’re working on volume two of our “Best of *MRH*” article put to paperback. In this case, we’re taking the popular “Servo turnout control” series and putting that to paperback. As part of this effort, we’re streamlining the series to present the final best circuit and program code into the paperback.

But let me quickly add that I’m very aware of the long-standing Run like a Dream: Locomotives book that’s still to be completed. Before we release this next best of *MRH* book, I first will be putting out the next sneak peek of the loco book (sneak peek



2. Back in 2018, we published our first “Best of *MRH*” paperback on Trackwork.



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3. Here is our next “Best of MRH” paperback on servo turnout control, coming in 2025.

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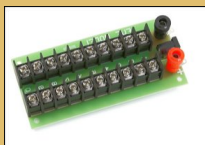
#6). The last sneak peek was 60 pages, so I expect the next sneak peek to be ~70 pages. I am aiming for the final book to be around 100 pages, so that means I'll soon be 70% of the way there!

So if you're a *Run like a Dream* customer, and you've been wondering about the locomotive book, I'm planning on another sneak peek to be coming by November, sneak peek #6.

If I can get one more sneak peek out before Christmas, that will put us at around 80 pages. From there, we should be looking at the finished locomotives book release in Q1 2025 for sure. *Finally!* ☑

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- 1st** Nobody knows my troubles: Advice for laying trackwork
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- 3rd** Electrical Impulses: Servo turnout control retrospective

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Issue 71: October 2024

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magazine EXTRA**Publisher's Welcome: New high-performance thinner**

JOE FUGATE

**Limited Modeler: The new Ballville Branch track plan**

JIM SIX

**Getting Real: Kitbashing a sinker derrick**

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Best of the

MRH FORUM

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THIS
MONTH

Model Railroad Hobbyist | October 2024

Compiled by **JOE FUGATE**



Alternative to the Centerline track cleaning car

MRH Author **donm** (Don Mitchell) commented on a thread about the Centerline track cleaning cars, offering the new ALine alternative.

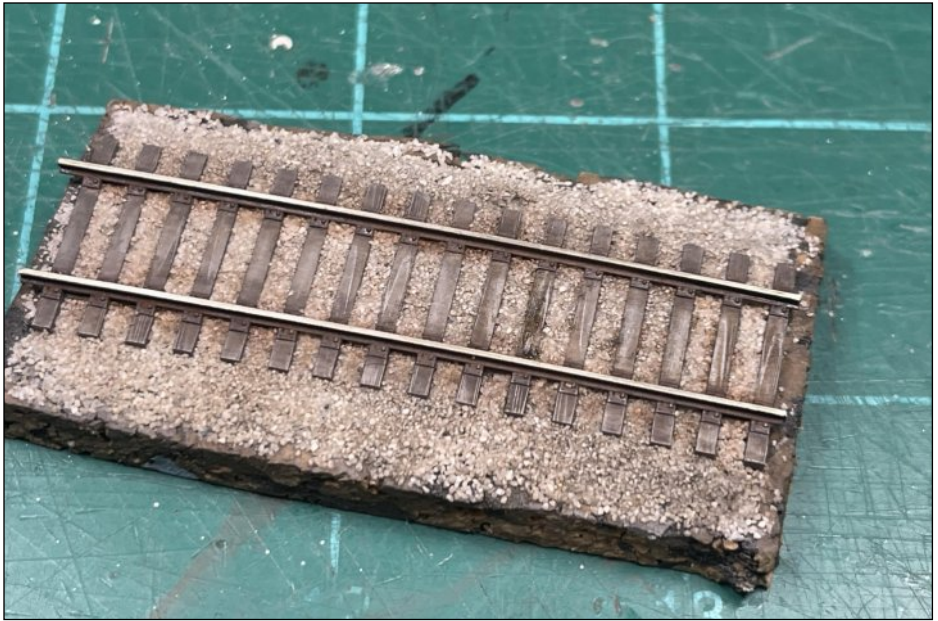
“The lead covered hopper has a Masonite wiper to knock off heavy oxidation. The TTX tank car distributes mineral spirits. The ALine wiper car removes most of the wet dirt atop the rail. The three SD’s provide more than enough power to guarantee the train will keep moving. Finally, the last three ALine wiper cars ensure the rail is dry.”

Check out the full thread for more!



[View the full thread on the MRH website](#)

▶ **MRH'S MONTHLY GREAT MODELER POSTS**



1. *MRH* forum member **ednadolski** (Edmund N.) has been experimenting with 3D-printed tie strips. Here's a photo of the HO tie strip finished and weathered.

3D printed tie strip experiments in HO and N

MRH forum member **ednadolski** (Edmond N.) has a thread discussing his experiments with 3D-printing tie strips for HO and N scale.

This is a development we expect to become a significant option for doing trackwork on your layout. The best part about 3D-print CAD drawings, they work in any scale. Edmond discusses the design process and the outcome of his experiments, which look great!

To see more including 3D file downloads, visit the full thread.

[View the full thread on the MRH website](#)

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3. *MRH* forum member **VinceP** posted photos of his period scale automobile models. Visit the thread for his sources.

Scale autos from various eras

MRH forum member **VinceP** started a journal thread discussing his 1979-era Indian Rock Fall layout set in West Virginia. For one thing, he's putting together a fleet of fire and police vehicles.

Vince is working on repainting his cars and trucks, as well as updating the vehicles wheels. He's replacing the wheels with wheel+axle sets from Busch. He turns the wheels around to put the white walls on the inside because he feels that looks better for professional vehicles.

He also mentions a good source for 3D-printed automobiles from the 1920s up to today: [DarkWolf 3D Models](#). Check out their Facebook page, vehicles are \$15 each + shipping.

This thread has more interesting modeling ideas and techniques. Check out the full thread on the *MRH* forum for all the details.

[View the full thread on the *MRH* website](#)



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Recent Weekly Photo Fun threads

This time we have some photos from a recent Weekly Photo Fun thread showing some not-often-seen modeling. Enjoy!

[View list of recent Photo Fun threads](#)



4. *MRH* forum member [musgrovejb](#) (Joseph M.) posted this photo of his NYC auto rack flat with some great vehicles appropriate to the 1960s. Nice!

5. *MRH* forum member [Sauced07](#) (Shane B.) had some fun running Vermont Railway power on his layout. While he says running this loco just doesn't reflect reality, it does look fantastic on that nicely modeled weedy track. Shane has a real eye for scenery, and this looks just right to us!



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Introducing our new column about
having fun running trains ...

AS MENTIONED IN MY EDITORIAL THIS MONTH, I'm starting a new column about operations. Let me say right up front – this is *not* going to be limited to what many modelers normally think of when they think “operation.”

I will not solely focus on ops processes and procedures such as car cards, track warrants, Timetable and Train Orders, and all those things that groups like the OpSIG may cover in depth. Yes, I will talk about those things, but I intend this column to be much broader.

I want this column to to cover *all things* related to running trains, and making the experience more fun.

I plan to get outside the box, and for some of you, open your eyes to new ways of running trains that can be more fun. Put simply, I want to increase your train running *satisfaction*.

For instance, if I discover a new DCC decoder setting that does some amazing things, I'll talk about it here. I will also discuss my own experiences, such as trying to spin up new layout ops on the Siskiyou Line with a new operating crew.

1. Allagash operator Brian Bennett is clearly immersed in running his train. To maintain the illusion, it helps to have sound in the locos and to set the levels so they aren't annoying. Photo by Mike Confalone.



And I also will pull from the best practices other modelers recommend and pass them on here.

For the rest of this column, let's talk about sound locos and setting the volume levels properly. I know several modelers who say they "tried sound," but have rejected it because the noise "drove them nuts" after a while. If you set your sound levels properly, the sound enhances ops, and it doesn't drive people out of the layout room.

First thing I do when I get a new sound locomotive is adjust the sound volume levels. Any repetitive sounds like the bell, I set to one-third volume. The horn or whistle is only blown periodically, and in real life this sound tends to carry, so I set it at 75% volume. Then I set all other sound volumes at 50%.

Finally, I move to the master volume and set it down to a level where I can hear the loco nicely when standing next to it, but low enough I can't really hear it from ten or more feet away. I find this means setting the master volume to about 50%.

With these settings, I can hear the train as well as an operator standing next to it, and only the horn or whistle sound will carry not unlike the prototype. The proper sound volume setting greatly enhances ops for me.

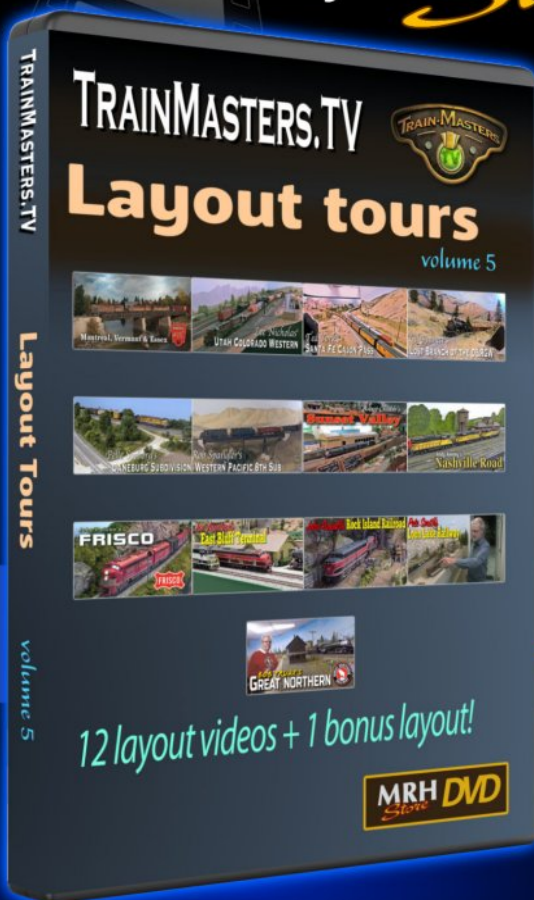




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WHAT'S NEAT

column



Model Railroad Hobbyist | October 2024

KEN PATTERSON COVERS THIS MONTH:

- BROADWAY LIMITED MODELS
- JAMES REGIER'S 3D-PRINTED FARM EQUIPMENT
- STEVEN M. CONROY SHOWS TEHACHAPI LOOP FROM ABOVE
- KR MODELS THE LEADER
- ADDING LIGHTING TO A DIORAMA
- TIP: DIORAMO LIGHTING SYSTEM
- BACHMANN TRAINS FALL ANNOUNCEMENTS



click to play video

PHOTOS AND VIDEO OF SUPERB MODELS

THIS MONTH, Ken shows off the Broadway Limited Chicago North Western GP35, and some other models outside, and KR Models British The Leader locomotive runs on the basement layout. The diorama project that Ken has been working on gets lighting – after it gets cut apart. Ken is introduced to the Dioramo lighting system, and Larry Harrington joins Ken to share some of Bachmann Trains’ fall product announcements.

What’s Neat this Month



1. Continuing the series of BLI GP35’s that Ken has photographed is this Chicago North Western unit without dynamic brakes.

in the **JANUARY 2023 MRH RUNNING EXTRA!**

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2. Backing up the GP35 for the photo-shoot are a series of BLI cryogenic tank cars in HO scale.

Info: broadway-limited.com



3. Also part of the photo-shoot is this flatcar with a John Deere farming equipment load designed and 3D-printed by "What's Neat This Week" regular and *MRH* assistant editor, James Regier.

Info: www.facebook.com/james.regiers.models



4. One of the more unusual locomotives to grace Ken's basement layout is this OO gauge SR/BR Leader class 0-6-6-0 articulated steam locomotive from KR Models. It's pulling a series of "What's Neat this Week" boxcars from Value Trains USA/Samson RC Hobby.



5. A British prototype, The Leader was a single locomotive of a planned five produced after WWII in an unsuccessful attempt to demonstrate that a modernized coal-fueled steam

locomotive could compete with diesels.

Info: krmodels.net

Info: www.samsonrchoobyshop.com



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Adding lights to the Construction Equipment Shop Complex



6. Ken is adding lights to the diorama, but first he has to cut it apart from the rest of the layout so he can reach the underside. Here he is cutting the tracks apart with a Dremel motor tool.



7. Ken then used an oscillating multi-tool to cut the fascia and the boards behind it.



8. A pull-saw was used to get through the foam.



9. With the cutting done, Ken pulls the layout section out onto one of the carts normally used for supporting photo dioramas in the back yard.



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10. Looking at the back edge of the diorama, Ken discovered that the concrete pads needed filling, and applied the concrete and mortar repair to the gap.



11. Having marked where he wants to install the Atlas 30-foot double- and single-head lights, Ken flips up the diorama to access the underside, using a hole saw to go through the bottom foam layer where the lights will be, and then using a router to remove the foam for the wire paths.



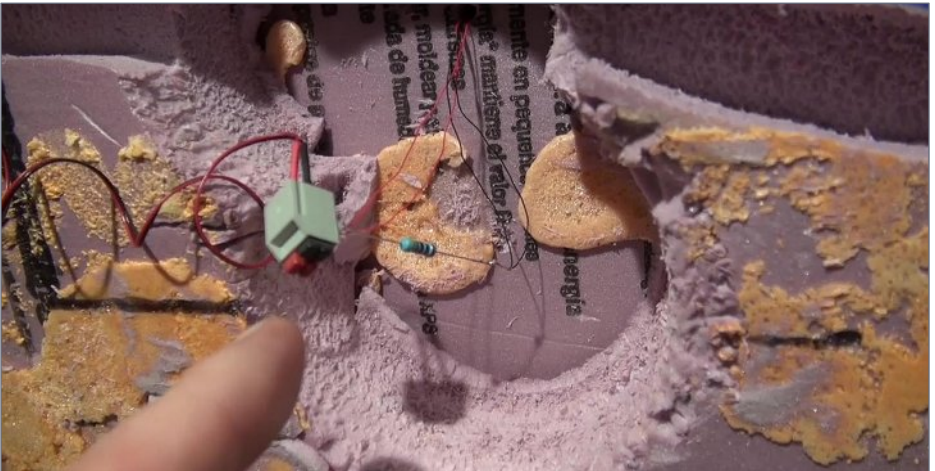
12. Ken uses a 3/32" drill bit to create the holes for the lights' wires, using a brass tube to line the hole while he feeds the wires through, then pulling the tube out from the bottom. This simplifies getting the wires through the foam.



13. After mounting two Woodland Scenics Just-Plug light hubs and an expansion hub on a board, Ken uses Great Stuff adhesive foam to secure it in a recess carved in the diorama's foam base.



14. Here Ken feeds the wire from an Atlas streetlight through the brass tube in the hole drilled in the foam.



15. After soldering the provided resistor to the black wire on the Atlas light per the instructions, Ken connected it to a Woodland Scenics Linker Plug, plugging the other end into a Light Hub. He later discovered the resistor was unnecessary, as the Linker Plugs set included a preinstalled resistor.



16. To control the lights, Ken installed an Auxiliary Switch from the Just Plug system to the front fascia.

Info: woodlandscenics.com

Info: shop.atlasrr.com

Modeler's Tip: Dioramo lighting system



17. Ken was recently introduced to the Dioramo lighting system, which includes simple on-off hubs like the one pictured, dimmer hubs, and flashing/flip-flop hubs, that have adjustable flash rates. Half of the ports will flash in the opposite sequence. They offer LED lighting components and accessories.

Info: dioramo.com



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Bachmann Trains fall announcements



18. Larry Harrington joined Ken via Skype to show off some new products in the fall announcements from Bachmann. Here is the first decorated sample of the New York Central Dreyfuss Hudson, along with one of the Pullman cars Bachmann is producing to accompany it. An RPO or baggage car and an observation car are also in development.



19. Here Larry has a sample of what he describes as a Phase 3 Trainsim World ACS-64, which is now shipping. The prototype Amtrak 662 was covered with this vinyl wrap for an unusually long period, and the model is equipped with TCS WOWSound.



20. In N scale, Larry had a painted sample of the Via Charger to show off. The model is due next year and will be available with TCS WOWSound.



21. An early Christmas announcement is this large-scale Elf Express speeder that includes two elf figures and features road number 1/2.



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22. Just arrived in the warehouse at Bachmann are N scale SD40-2 locomotives equipped with SoundTraxx Economi. In addition to the Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern units seen here, CSX and Santa Fe road names are also available.
Info: bachmanntrains.com

To see more views of the models seen at the beginning of the article, all of Ken's techniques as he works on the diorama, more of the products from Dioramo, and all of the products Larry showed off from Bachmann, check out the video linked from the first page of this article. ☑



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Getting better sound out of a legacy sound decoder



1. This Kato RS-2 has a legacy SoundTraxx Tsunami sound decoder, and the sound volume was very low. I solved that without needing to invest in a new sound decoder.



Electrical
Impulses

Model Railroad Hobbyist | October 2024



MIKE HUGHES UPGRADES THE SOUND IN A KATO RS-2 ...

I RECENTLY ACQUIRED TWO USED KATO RS-2S IN CANADIAN PACIFIC livery from an estate sale. Both locos were DCC, one with a motor-only Digitrax decoder, and the other with a Soundtraxx sound decoder. After I got them home, I discovered the loco with sound had low volume levels.

I know the Canadian Pacific had four of these in Vermont, and the ones I bought are numbered correctly as 8401 and 8403.

I like that they have cab interiors with crews, and that they run “KATO-smooth.”

Time to figure out what to do about 8403 and its low sound volume.

LOOKING INSIDE 8403

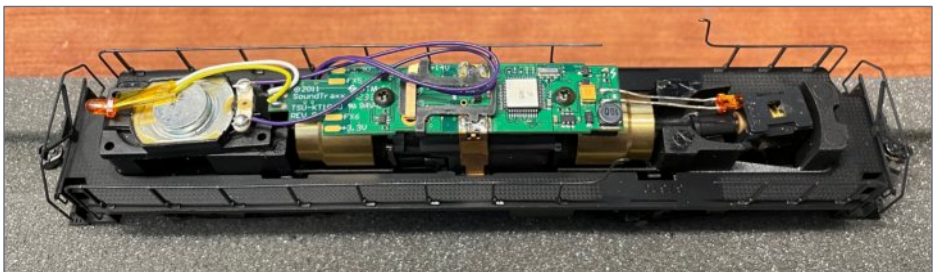
These never came with factory sound, so the original owner must have installed the sound decoder.

My initial guess at matching in DecoderPro for 8403's sound decoder was wrong. I found it actually made a difference in the sound by finally picking the correct decoder, but I couldn't be sure of the right one until I could see the decoder.

I opened up 8403 to have a look [3]. The shell lifted off easily. Nothing to unscrew, pry, or to squeeze hard. No handrail removal is required. Just lift straight up at each end – done!



2. One of the two used Kato RS-2s came with sound. That's the focus of this article.



3. Here's the inside of 8403.



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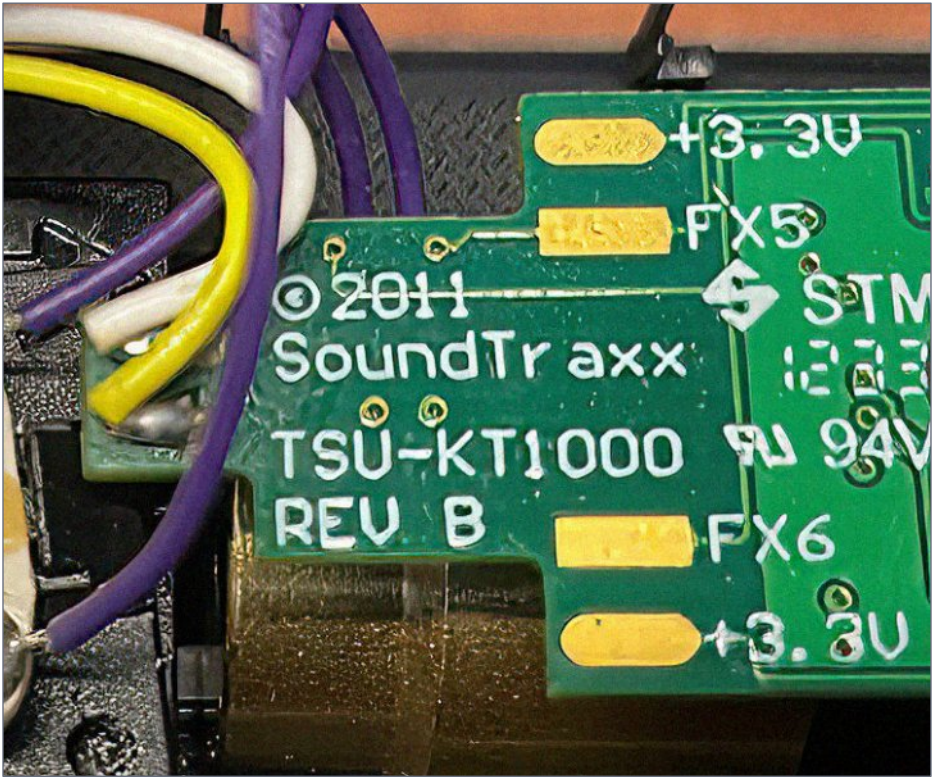
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4. A closer look shows this is a Tsunami 1 legacy decoder, KT1000 series Rev B, and it's 13 years old.

Initially I put the loco on the programming track and used JMRI's decoder-discovery feature [5]. I got about 50 possible matches! Now I knew it's a TSU-KT1000 Rev B.

Once I could see the decoder model number, the decoder I needed is on the match list (TSU KT1000 Kato RS-2). JMRI gave me a lot of choices and, believe me – it matters, because they all sound different!

I found this old reference on Tony's Trains from 2009:



NEW! Tsunami TSU-KT1000 Digital Sound Decoder Plug and Play Digital Sound Decoder for KATO HO Diesels

The TSU-KT1000 Digital Sound Decoder is here and ready to provide you with the best Digital Sound for your KATO HO diesel models. This specially designed decoder allows even the most timid to easily install pure 16-bit digital sound in KATO HO diesel models. Nothing is sacrificed; all the features that you've come to expect from any SoundTraxx Tsunami Digital Sound Decoder are included. These Digital Sound Decoders are designed to replace the light board that comes in recent production KATO HO Diesel engines. The Tsunami comes with 16 airhorns appropriate to the prototype.

Unfortunately, I found the sound was too quiet. I hoped the problem might be a function of the speaker, and that some tweaking of settings in JMRI might raise the volume to where I would like it to be. Unfortunately, that turned out to not be the case.

So now what could I do?

I could add sound to the motor-only RS-2 and then just consist them, not worrying that the other loco was too quiet. I decided to write Soundtraxx for more info first.

Soundtraxx told me it's just a really old, last-generation audio amp and not very loud, so it needs to be replaced if I want more volume. I began to wonder if buying the sound unit was a waste of money.

Not ready to admit defeat, I decided to dabble with better speakers, and see if that helped.

IN PURSUIT OF A BETTER SPEAKER

It looks like a wee bit of filing was done at some point to clear the old speaker. The current speaker is pointing down, which may contribute to why it is so quiet.



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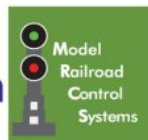
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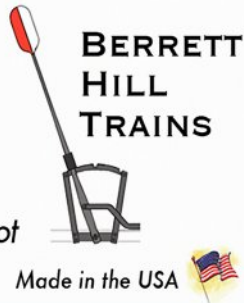


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J. Regier



J. Fugate

BAFFLES ARE IMPORTANT

Looking at photo [3], the speaker has no enclosure. This is at least partially to blame for its lack of volume.

As speakers vibrate, both sides of the membrane emit diametrically opposed sound waves. When those sound waves meet, they disrupt and muffle each other. An enclosure or baffle contains the sound waves coming off the back of the speaker, so that the waves from the front are uninterrupted.

This is also why it is important to make sure that all speakers are wired with the same polarity if two or more are used. ■

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The screenshot shows the Decoder Discovery software interface. The main window displays a list of decoders with columns for ID, DCC Ad., Icon, Decoder Model, Road N., Road No., Manufact., Model, Owner, and Date Modified. A detailed view window is open for decoder ID CP-8402-A10, showing its manufacturer (Tsurumi Diesel), model (Tsurumi Diesel), and other details. The decoder list includes various models such as NWSB Steam 101 554, SIV HPFSDC #153, Selskik, Semphanga RS-18, Mark's Melior, Kato Power Truck, Doroelberg, DCC LIRA 0 8 0, CP-SH2000S-6119, CP-SJ 7091 N Scale, CP-SD20-7013, CP-SD20-7010, CP-RS1-8427, CP-RS-2-8403, CP-RS18-8764, CP-RSCL1 - 49055, CP-NLW-M630-49003, CP-NF5AC-31438, CP-H-24-56-8905, CP-H-16-44-4556, CP-GP9-8506, CP-GP9-8487, CP-GE-AC400-8276, CP-GE-4000-8076 N Scale, CP-CR16-4-4456 C-Liner, CP-CR16-4-4104 C-Liner, CP-ALCO-S1-0311, CP-8402-A10-RS-2, CP-8000-A10-F11, and BE-HR-01-M630-4707.

5. JMRI's decoder-discovery feature still showed 50 possible matches, I had to open up the loco to narrow things down.

It's nice that the cab pops off the shell easily, and the cab interior pops out of the cab almost as easily. The crew, once installed, may have to put up with poor sound, unless I can figure this out!

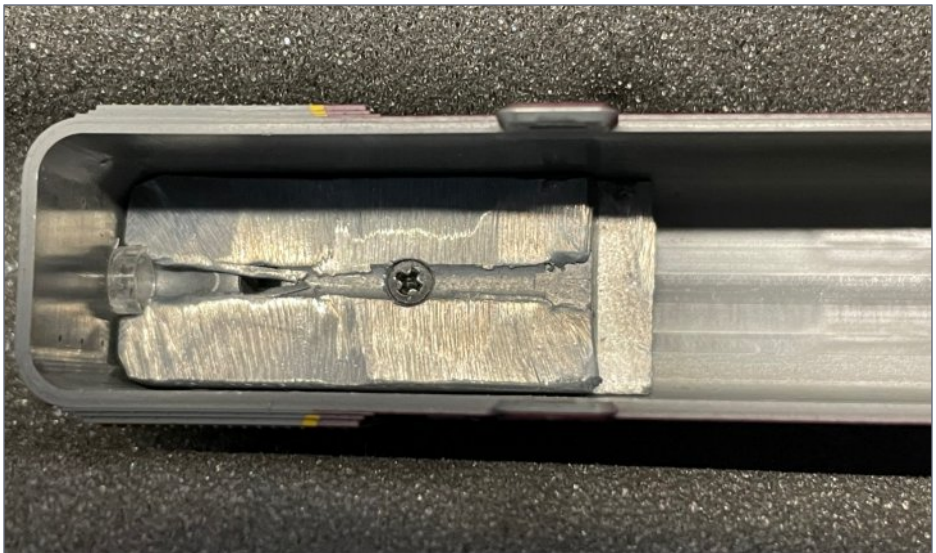
I started experimenting to see if I could get improved sound out of this existing decoder. I was not excited about dropping another \$150 on a new decoder to make this model sound better.

I noticed that the current speaker had a crack in its housing, no doubt due to being jammed between the loco hood and weight.

The shell seems impervious to allowing sound to escape, so I thought I should try putting the speaker inside the cab roof, up above the interior and more-or-less out of sight. The current speaker mounting left a lot to be desired.

There is no room in here for a Scale Sound Systems speaker (my first choice) and they don't list an optimal choice for this loco.

The challenge became which speaker that I already owned might work? Time to do some testing.



6. The prior owner had to file the Kato shell weight to make room for the current speaker.

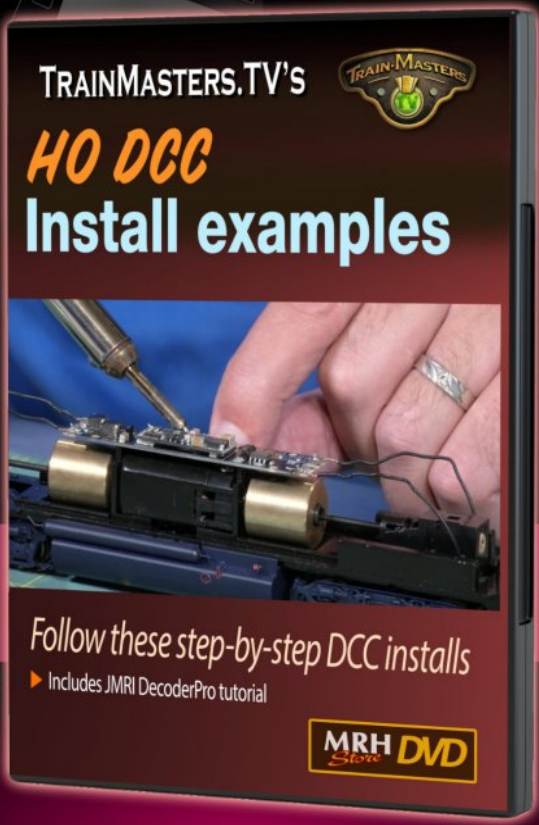




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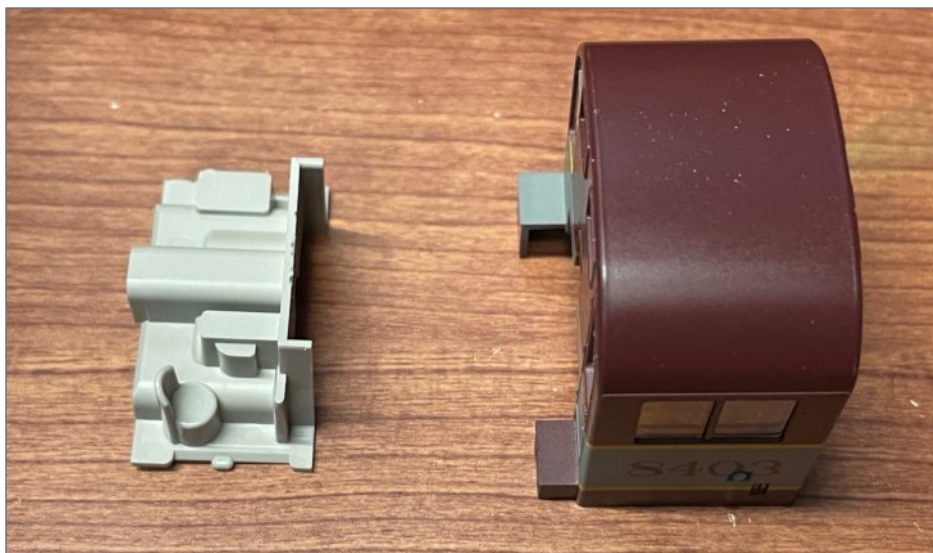
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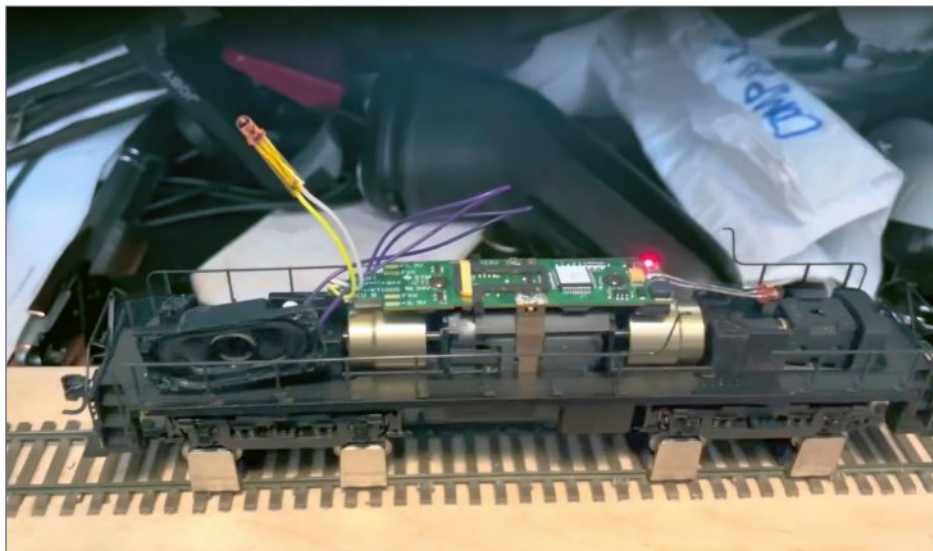
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7. The cab and interior come off the shell quite easily.



8. Testing the original speaker. To hear how it sounds on a video recording, go here: [youtu.be/ tITpRP9WTQ](https://youtu.be/tITpRP9WTQ)

SPEAKER TESTING

I had several speakers on hand, including one that matches what is already in the unit – which appears to be a 35mm x 16mm speaker from Soundtraxx. It has a decent frequency range, but low power output with the audio amp on this decoder. It also has no enclosure.

I made a recording of this speaker in this video [8]. It sounds better on the recording than it does in person.

Next up, I tried a Soundtraxx Mini Cube 3 Speaker, part 810162.

These speakers are somewhat pricey at \$25 Canadian each (two are required, \$50 total). Here are the requirements to use these speakers:

- They each have 4-ohm impedance, so they must be wired up two in series or they will burn out with the Tsunami board's eight-ohm speaker circuit.
- They come with six different enclosures – I tried the shallowest and deepest.
- The deepest enclosure yielded the best results, but in my opinion was not very good with this decoder.
- Two of these speakers together are larger than a single ESU Sugarcube speaker.

Here is the recording [9]. Again, it's louder on the video than it is in person.

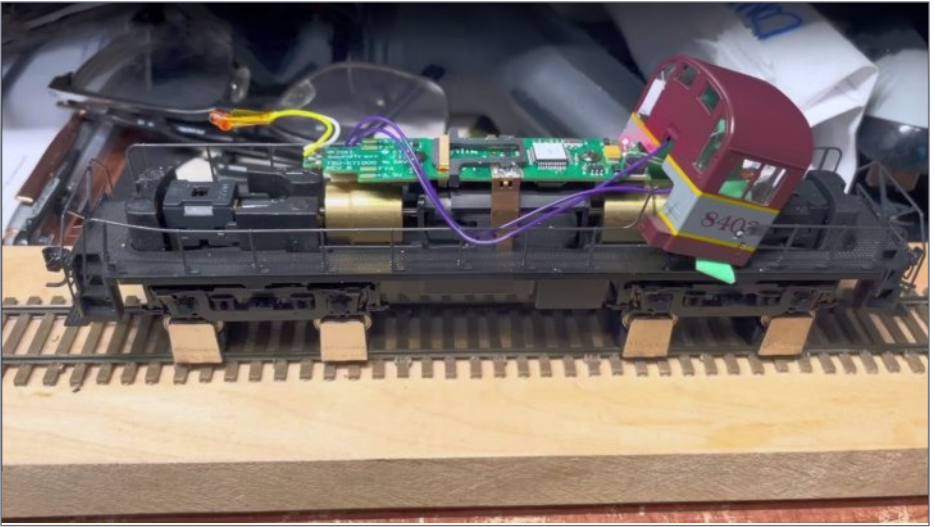
I did my final test on an 11mm x 15mm ESU Sugarcube 50321.

I have several of these on hand because they are small, cheap (\$14 Canadian), come with an enclosure, and make good sound for such a tiny size.

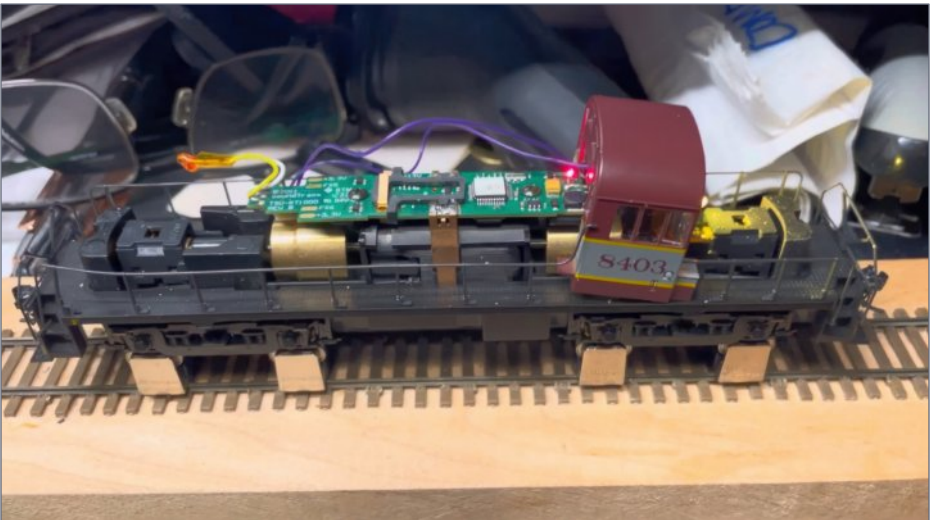
The enclosure can be configured in various ways for different widths and depths. I could discern no difference going to the wider sound box, so tried the shallow and deep enclosure.

The deeper enclosure sounded richer [10].





9. Two Soundtraxx Mini Cube 3 speakers in the cab. To hear how this one sounds on a video recording, go here: youtu.be/UosmdVkRj68



10. ESU Sugarcube 50321 speaker in the cab. To hear how this one sounds on a video recording, go here: youtu.be/Ap44BPPJf10

I decided to go with the deep, single-enclosure ESU speaker.

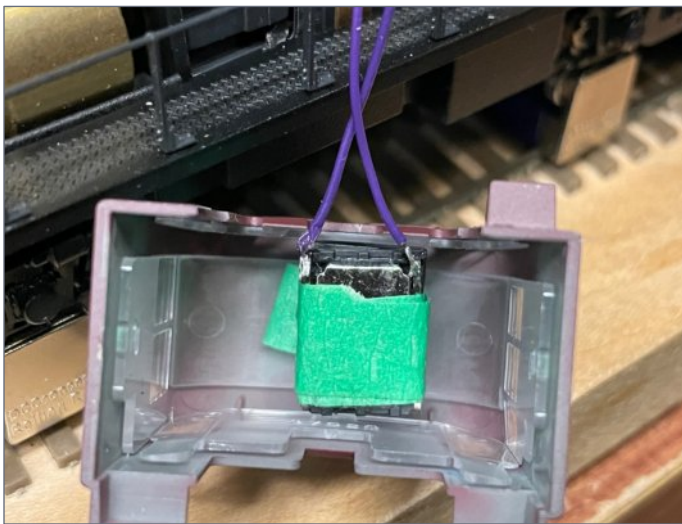
Tests with this speaker setup and newer decoders in other models yield even better results. Keep in mind, these speakers are not being driven properly by this ancient device, so this is a “good enough” configuration. Modern decoders would be even better, but I prefer to economize with the good-enough result.

INSTALLING THE SPEAKER IN THE CAB

[11] is a shot of the speaker assembly inside the cab roof. The green tape will be gone when I glue the enclosure together properly. Painting it gray may help – we’ll just tell everyone it’s an air conditioner!

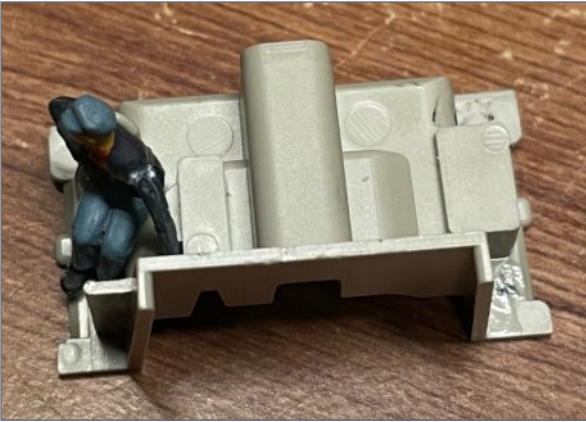
I thought about installing two crew members in the cab, but I decided to keep the other crew member for #8401. You can see the crew member in the cab insert in [12]. No, I didn’t cut and position his arm – it was broken in the package, so I did my best to glue it back on.

I think he looks right at home [13]. The black speaker enclosure is barely visible, if you know to look.



11. ESU Sugarcube speaker inside the cab roof. The green tape is temporary.





12. Crew member installed in the cab insert.



13. Cab insert and finished speaker (with black enclosure) installed into the cab.

I glued the speaker together and used Goop to attach it into the center of the cab roof [14]. When reassembling the cab, I found the wires were too tight, so I filed a groove for them in the cab insert so they could pass through without binding.

FINISHING UP

And finally, I got everything all buttoned up [15] and put back together.

Then I did a proper test run [16] with everything in the final state. It's likely awful loud for the crewman! The speaker wires had a plug so was easy to snake them through the cab, and long enough for the cab to stand off from the chassis for testing.



14. Look into the cab and you can see the black speaker enclosure assembled and attached to the cab roof.



15. The cab re-installed on the shell. You can hardly see the speaker in the cab roof.



16. I put the assembled loco on the test stand and ran it to see how it turned out. You can listen to it here: youtu.be/nGoNgiORglo

Note the wee gap visible in [16]. You see the red LED light on the decoder.

I think it sounds much better – at least I can hear it now [16], and \$14 is a lot better than ~\$164!

I had neglected to reinstall the long handrails when I made the final video, so here they are done [17, 18]. KATO plastic is just so awesome. Such a precise press fit and just the right amount of flex to allow positioning without breakage. No glue needed.

These run great. I've only owned pure KATO in N Scale before. My first foray into their HO models.

While I am not enamored with this decoder the previous owner installed, it may have been the best plug-and-play available at the time. It will have to do until I run into a barrel of money. I have to save my pennies for all my Bowser and Rapido preorders that may show up in my inbox. Work is slow these days, and costs are up all over the place. ☑



17. The finished KATO RS-2 locomotive from the fireman's side.



18. The finished KATO RS-2 from the engineer's side.



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NOTE FROM J.W. (FORUM MEMBER)

I have two of these fine Kato RS2s, bought new. Both are converted to DCC and Sound with Soundtraxx decoders, they're very smooth runners with excellent sound! Mine currently have Decoder Buddy Mini 21-pin boards with Soundtraxx TSU-21PNEM8 decoders and Railmaster DS1425-8 speakers with ported enclosures aimed down, out short hood end.

If that decoder is a Tsunami, it should have the seven-band equalizer feature. Have you tried setting the Soundtraxx seven-band equalizer to optimize sound quality?

Suggest you set the Equalizer as follows:

	CV	Value
Equalizer Control	153	7
62Hz Cut/Boost	154	0
125Hz Cut/Boost	155	0
250Hz Cut/Boost	156	160
500 Hz Cut/Boost	157	200
1K Hz Cut/Boost	158	220
2K Hz Cut/Boost	159	200
4K Hz Cut/Boost	160	128

Those CV numbers are for the older Tsunami decoders, the same settings in newer Econami and Tsunami 2 decoders are in the CV225 thru CV232 range.

I use those in ALL my HO Soundtraxx decoders, with small speakers and matching enclosures (including sugar cube type). Default decoder settings, IMHO, are very weak to my old ears.

BTW, if using a two-watt output decoders with tiny sugar cubes, I suggest you restrict the master volume level to a maximum of 128, to avoid blowing the speaker. With a one-watt output decoder you can safely go higher.

I have done many of my own DCC & Sound installations in my fleet of 60-some Locos. Over the years I find most sound best with speakers aimed down, out through a frame truck opening, front or rear. On some, that required cutting or milling frame or chassis weights (for example, Proto GP7 or GP9) but upward facing speakers, even out through open roof fans or grilles proved inadequate!



J. Regier

THE IPHONE SPEAKER OPTION

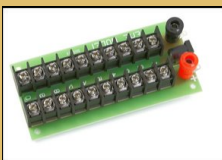
If you're looking to get a speaker in a tight spot, such as the minuscule space between the weight and truck tower of a Kato RS2, a replacement iPhone speaker would be a good option to try. iPhone speakers are 8-ohm, are built into their own baffles, and there are several to choose from that are the correct width for an HO locomotive hood. They are also inexpensive, at around \$7 on Amazon.

I have used iPhone 7 speakers on several installments, and I can say for their size, they pack a good punch. There are a couple of mounting tabs on the iPhone 7 speaker that put it over-width for an HO shell, but these can safely be trimmed off. It is important to mount them securely, using double-sided tape, so that they do not rattle in the locomotive.

More recent iPhone models, such as the iPhone SE 2020, and SE 2022 use a slightly narrower speaker format than the 7, which should make them an even better fit. ■

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MIKE HUGHES



Mike is a semi-retired (but always looking for work) certified management consultant focused on IT strategy, and process innovation. He has an education in engineering physics and marine biology and has been model railroading for over 5 decades in multiple scales from N to 1-1/2" live steam.

Mike's travels over many years with Ernst & Young and his own firm, and KPMG permitted many stop-overs at cool train stores in many U.S. and Canadian cities. Some were Central Hobbies in Vancouver (now InterCity Hobbies and Trains), and the old Caboose Hobbies in Denver. He once took 14 clients there for a visit, and then to dinner after the second leg of a flight was canceled enroute to Dallas for a PeopleSoft Conference. ■

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Modeling the
**contemporary-era
Office Park Zone: 1**

**CRAIG THOMASSON'S TOMA-STYLE SHELF
LAYOUT BUILD ...**



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1. I am loosely modeling a Dallas-Ft. Worth area industrial office park. In this article, I go through the process I used to design and build this fun-to-operate switching layout.



I HAD TO DISMANTLE MY LAST LAYOUT IN 2008. It never got past the plywood-prairie stage. It grew organically – a product of “how many industries can I fit into this space” – and lacked staging, so it was always full, which made operating it a pain.

I spent the next several years “Google-maps-railfanning” and dreaming. A recent move finally gave me the space to build a layout again. So, what to build?

I like running long mainline trains. The large, modular layouts at clubs where I had a membership supported 60-70-car trains well, but they wouldn’t work in the space I have available.

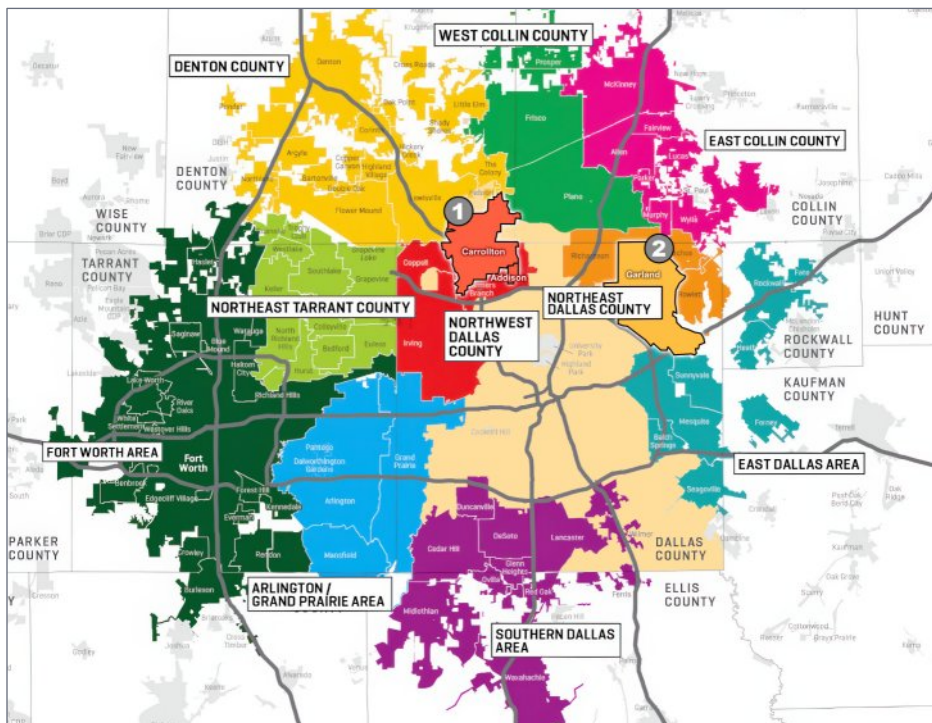
I also like operations and switching. Industrial areas could fit the space nicely, but most prototype locations have only a single crew switching industries. I want to host op sessions with up to three crews.

I also have diverse interests: CN, CP, BN, BNML (BN Manitoba Ltd.). In addition, pre-merger SP, SF, Mopac, and Katy are growing on me.

In my web surfing, I also found several excellent modeling blogs, in particular from Lance Mindheim (lancemindheim.com) and Trevor Marshall (themodelrailwayshow.com).

I settled on two track plans: One is for the layout space in the shop, and the other is for a shelf layout in my office. I am starting with the shelf layout, since it’s small enough to ease me back into modeling.





2. Greater Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area. I got my industry inspiration mainly from the Carrollton/Addison area (1) and the Garland area (2). In [3] and [4], I've included links to Google Maps for these two areas so you can explore them for yourself.

DECIDING ON THE SHELF LAYOUT THEME

I'm basing the layout industries loosely on prototype industries in the greater Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas area, particularly around Carrollton/Addison and Garland [2].

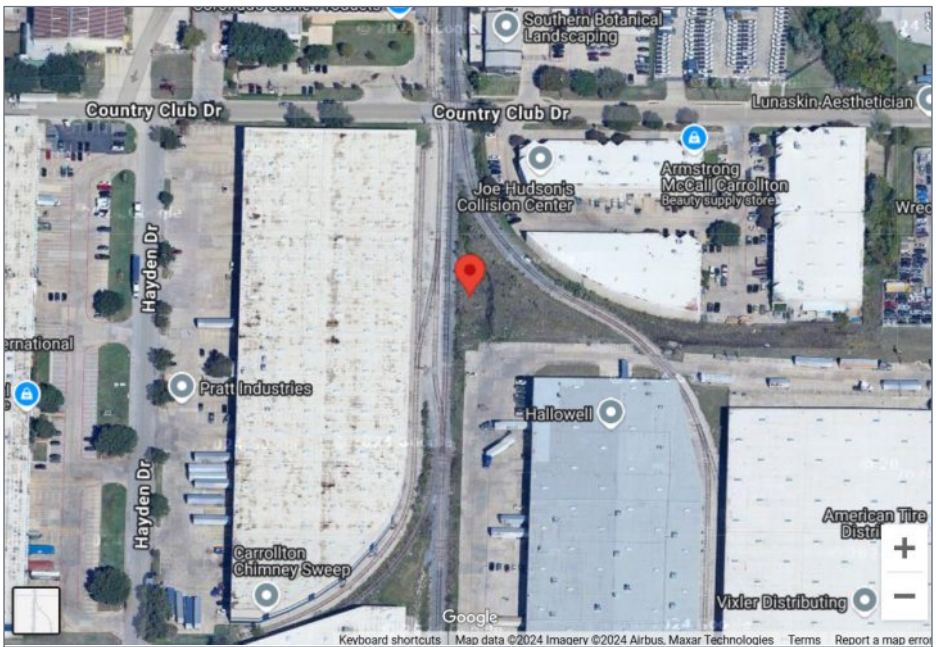
Several industries are ideal for a small layout. Larger multi-tenant warehouses typically look pretty generic on the backside. Since tenants come and go over time, it's easier to alter the industry on paper than constructing a new building.

You can also find several industries where the siding is nothing more than a loading or unloading area, with product being piped off to facilities nearby.

I decided to make a day trip to Dallas for prototype research. Google Earth and Maps work well if they're all you have, but visiting the location can help answer any remaining questions. Obviously, this has the most value when you're modeling circa-2000 like I am.

On the prototype I want to model, the latex distribution facility and lumber distributor [5] sit across the tracks from each other. The lumber building is at ground level, so the spur slopes down about three feet below ground level.

The latex distribution facility looks like an excellent candidate for a simple industry. There's a concrete surface on both sides



3. Google Map of a Carrollton/Addison area railroad industrial park. (maps.app.goo.gl/p5hF8YzsNRaZoSec6).



4. Google Map of a Garland area railroad industrial park (maps.app.goo.gl/JF1CZct6niYEXgbbA).



5. Lumber distributor is on the right, with the latex distribution facility on the left where the tank cars are.



of the track [6]. The back side has a portable ladder to access the tank car domes. On the front there's a run of five pipes [7]. When unloading, crews bring in a portable pump, and connect it between the tank and appropriate pipe. The storage tanks are located a short distance away, so this piece could make a great little industry along the front edge of the layout.



6. A closer look at the latex distribution facility. There are concrete pads on both sides of the track.



7. Another view of the latex distribution facility showing the ladder on the back side. If you look closely through the weeds, you can also see the concrete pads that run alongside the track.



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I took a photo of the trackside (back) of Rudy's Tortillas in Carrollton, TX [8]. It has spots for unloading two pressure-differential hopper cars at one time, and one spot for conventional hoppers. There are a couple of doors further down, but they don't appear to be used anymore.

Rhino Linings makes spray-on protective coverings, and has a facility in a generic warehouse – a great example of a warehouse spot taking tank cars [9]. During business hours, workers open the loading door and drag out a hose to connect to the tank car being unloaded. At the end of the day, the hose is brought back in.

The placard in the photo [9] shows the contents of the closest tank belongs to group 3082, a catch-all for hazardous liquids. There is a wheel chock on each tank car, not just one at the end of the whole cut of cars.

DESIGNING THE LAYOUT

I knew I only had room for a small shelf layout, so I began my design trying to fill every inch with industries. Something never seemed quite right.



8. Rudy's Tortillas in Carrollton, TX. Six vertical tanks add interest to this industry.



9. A plastics industry warehouse with several tank unloading spots.

Lance Mindheim’s philosophy greatly influenced me, and changed my direction for the better. Lance clearly articulates several key design concepts, including minimalization and the importance of open spaces. I could never quite get these concepts to gel until I read his small layout books. Simple is good!

Armed with these insights, I could finally approach my “Office Park Zone” layout design with manageable, bite-size tasks. This has been helpful considering this is my first layout to progress beyond the plywood state.

I’m building the Office Park Zone on two 15-inch-wide, hollow-core folding closet doors, with a 3-1/2-inch-wide shelf added to the front. I’m making each section 5’ long to make it easily come apart in a TOMA-style. See the TOMA side note for more.

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I decided it would be easiest to design the track arrangement full-sized, directly on the door modules sections laid on the floor, using cars to plan siding lengths for several industries [10-14].



J. Fugate

WHAT'S TOMA?

TOMA stands for The “One Module” Approach. It promotes the idea of building a home layout in bite-sized chunks as small module sections 4-6 feet long, and up to 24” wide. The idea is, the module

section needs to easily fit through a door, so it needs to be fairly short and narrow.

Classic TOMA says design and build one or two module sections, add temporary staging to one or both ends, and build the module section(s) to completion before moving on to anything more. By adding the temporary staging to the end, you start running trains soon, to maintain interest.

The TOMA module sections can be any shape or size; they don't need to follow any specific module standard.

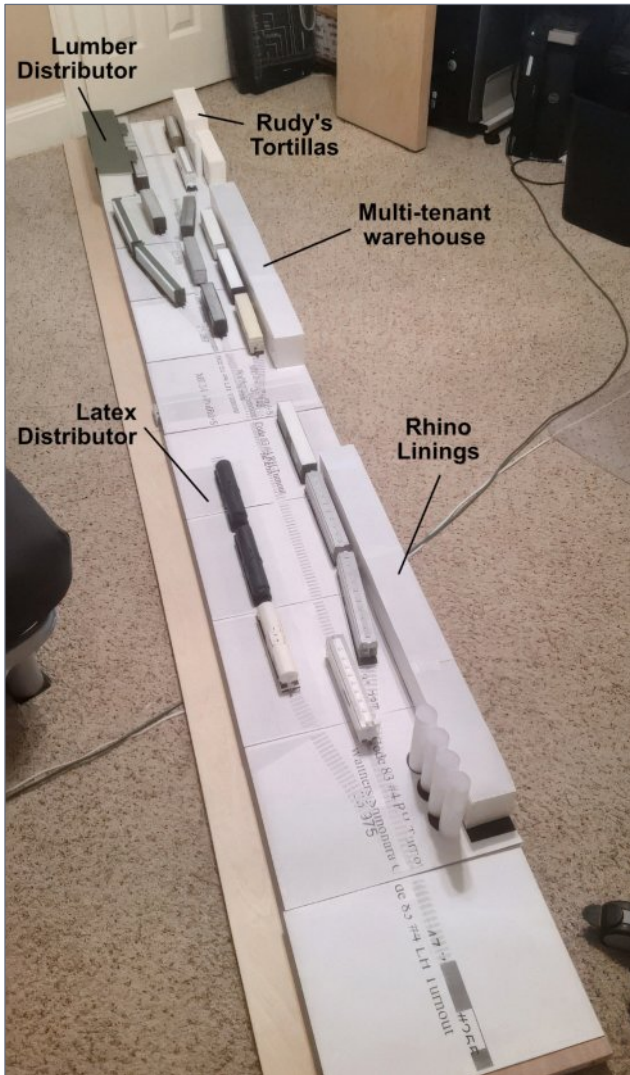
Once you've completed your first one or two TOMA module sections, do you want more layout? No problem – build more TOMA module sections to completion and expand the layout. Just repeat, and over time you can end up with a larger, fun layout. Meanwhile, all along the way you've been able to enjoy the entire hobby and have a layout that looks finished.

There's a lot more that we've written about TOMA and its variations – for a more complete list of TOMA articles, forum threads, and videos, see the TOMA index in the August 2017 issue of *MRH*: mrhpub.com/2017-08-aug/online/?page=22



Classic TOMA

Logistically, rail cars can be in one of three locations: on the Office Park Zone layout, on the staging tracks to the far-right, or in off-layout storage under the layout. Cars will be hand-picked from storage, and placed on the staging tracks to make a train. Afterward, they will be moved from staging back to storage by hand.



10. Two five-foot door modules connected together and laid on the floor for planning. I built crude poster board and foam-core mockups of the industries.



11. Closeup of the Rudy's Tortillas end of the shelf layout. I designed the lumber unloading spur in the front to accommodate 73' center-beams. The multi-tenant warehouse in the back easily handles three 57' reefers.



12. This view facing the lumber distributor shows that I designed the lumber warehouse to handle up to two 60-foot boxcars. Prototype lumber companies I observed had separate sidings to unload boxcars and bulkhead flat cars.



13. I added $\frac{3}{4}$ " of foam to the top of the doors, and mounted the 10-foot shelf in place using shelf brackets. I will add a backdrop and valance overhead.



14. I cut into the foam to make a ditch so I could lower the track to the lumber warehouse. This is needed because the loading doors are near ground level, just as on the prototype.



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I used shelf brackets spaced 32" apart to mount the combined 10-foot shelf in place along the wall [13]. I added $\frac{3}{4}$ " of foam to the top of the doors, and also determined where the valance will be above the shelf using more shelf brackets. I also intend to add a backdrop behind the shelf.

Much to my surprise, one of the 5-foot-long hollow door modules sagged, so I added extra supports to make it 16" between the shelf brackets. This solved the sag problem.

Next, I laid track and wired the modules [15, 16]. I added the staging track by opening the door and extending it out into the hallway, using a drop-down hinged leg to support the far end [17].

With this all done, I held my first operating session, just as the TOMA methodology espouses [18]. I found that being able to operate the layout helped me better plan the structures and detailed scenery. I think the TOMA methodology is on to something with its emphasis on getting to ops more quickly, and not getting mired in years of layout infrastructure construction.



15. At the module joints, I embedded wood into the foam and added PC ties to which I could solder the rails to stabilize the module rail joints.



16. Because I added a ¼" plywood shelf to the front, I added a ¼" plywood strip to the back of the shelf as well. This gave me a "trough" on the underside of each door module through which I could run wiring. It also allows me to set the shelf down firmly onto a work table away from the layout space and not have it rock or wobble.



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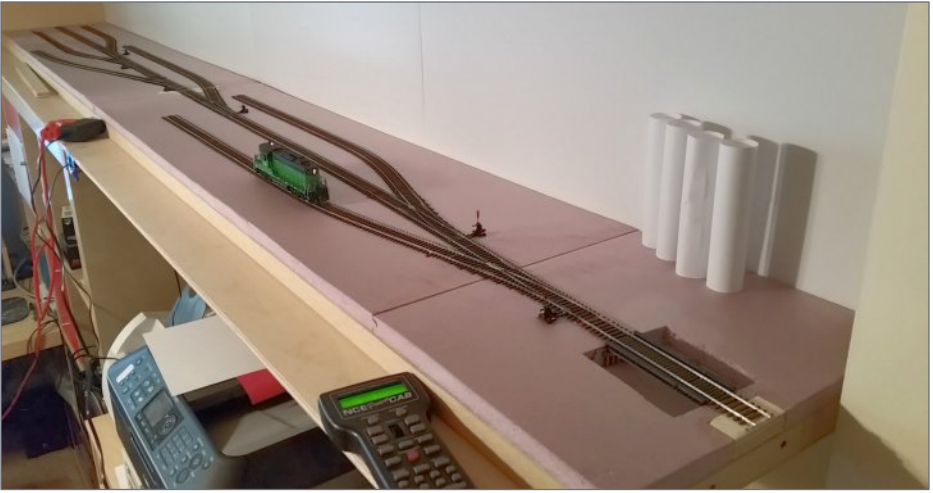
17. By opening the door, I have enough space to extend a simple staging track out across the hall. I made a drop-down leg that supports the far end of the staging track. The leg folds up and is held in place with a door bolt on the near end (visible under the track in front of the door).

I added a roll-away drawer storage unit under the layout to keep the extra rolling stock handy. I originally placed the cars on their sides in the drawers so I could easily see the car numbers, but I almost broke details picking up the cars.

When the cars were set upright, I couldn't see the numbers. Creating tags for each car solved this, and helped me organize the cars by giving each a specific spot in its drawer [19].

I carved out a stream on the right end of the layout and built the bridge using a deck from the tie sections of a Central Valley bridge. I modified a Hobo Creek Trestle from Monroe Models to create trestle supports underneath.

To build walkways, I cut 0.110" square styrene into scale lengths of scale 10x10. I made the end and center pieces six feet long, and the intermediate pieces four feet long. I glued these pieces to the ends of the appropriate ties.



18. Next, I laid the track and added a temporary foam-core board backdrop. The hole in the foreground accommodates a small deck girder bridge, and will be extended into a small gully with a stream.



19. I set up an Elfa wire drawer unit under the layout for car storage. It fits nicely. The rolling stock for use on the layout pretty-much fills the drawers.

Then I cut strips of the 2x12s for the deck, four per side, to make a four-foot-wide walkway. Next, I cut the railing posts from the 4x4 styrene. I made them four feet long so that after attaching to the 10x10s, they provide a railing height of 38 inches. I cut strips of 1x6 to form the railings and the diagonal braces.

Finally, I painted the pink foam, track, and bridge with a medium brown-gray camo spray paint. Getting rid of that pink foam look really improved the look of the layout. See [20-22].

Now let's talk about how I made the industry mockups for the Office Park Zone.



20. With the track all wired-up and the staging track in place, I was able to hold my first early op session, just as the TOMA method suggests.





21. I carved the stream bed for the small bridge.



22. I finished building the small bridge with styrene, and then painted the foam, track, and bridge a brown-gray camo color from a rattle can. Much nicer!



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BUILDING THE FOAM-CORE STRUCTURE MOCKUPS

I like structure mockups. They provide an inexpensive way to test the fit and feel for planned structures. They also help give the layout purpose early-on, so you aren't simply spotting a car in an empty space.

I crudely hacked my first mockup buildings from scrap pieces of foam-core and poster board, and guesstimated their heights. Operating helped me determine what adjustments I needed to make. Being able to run trains early can make a huge difference in the finishing stages of doing a layout. Score one for TOMA.

I also used foam-core sheets for the backdrop, but wasn't happy with the results. The joints were too obvious, and the notches for clearing the upper shelf brackets weren't clean. If only there were some way to easily create an overlapping joint.

While web-surfing, I came across the line of tools from Foamwerks [23]. One of the tools is a rabbet joint cutter. It's amazing how the right tool makes a job easier. With these cutters, I can make crisp edges and corners. It's also amazing how well a sharp blade cuts foam-core.

You can see the pieces I cut for the improved lumber distributor building mockup in [24]. I'm using 3/16" foam-core for the new-and-improved structure mockups.

Note the rabbet (notched) cuts on the roof and side pieces. I simply taped the pieces together. The rabbet joints result in a surprisingly sturdy structure, even when just using tape.

Editorial note: Unfortunately, Foamwerks has discontinued their specialty cutters such as the Rabbet cutter and the V-grove cutter. Regardless, you can use the Straight/Bevel cutter in the bevel setting to cut clean 45-degree edges and get virtually the same effect as the rabbet cuts. As of this writing, the Foamwerks Straight/Bevel cutter is still readily available.

In [25] you can see the new mockup in place. After operating for a while, I discovered I needed to extend the spur in the foreground to better fit the gate at the other end.

After looking closer at the prototype, I realized I could locate the right loading door closer to the end wall. This let me shorten the structure to better accommodate the siding.



23. Foamwerks Straight/Bevel cutter (left) and Foamwerks Rabbet cutter (right). See note above.



24. New mockup for the lumber warehouse cut from foam-core.



At 20 feet, the original mockup was also not tall enough. After looking at the mockups on the layout, I decided buildings closer to 30 feet tall looked more correct.

The multi-tenant warehouse building shows off the nice crisp corners created by the rabbet joint. Like the lumber building, the original warehouse mockup was only about 20 feet tall. The new mockup is 30 feet tall and looks much better.

I also adjusted the door spacing to accommodate 60-foot cars. I marked the door locations with small sticky notes so they can be resized or relocated easily [26].

The plastic products manufacturer had the most significant changes. I had the original mockup shifted more to the right with semi-trailer loading docks on the left end [27]. That meant boxcars had to be spotted in the middle position between plastics cars for loading.



25. New foam-core lumber warehouse mockup pieces taped together and in place.

On the new mockup, I located the building all the way to the left, eliminating the truck loading dock [28]. That puts boxcars in the left spot for loading. Since this building may originally have



26. New multi-tenant warehouse mockup made with foam-core.



27. Plastics industry mockup first version with truck loading dock on left.

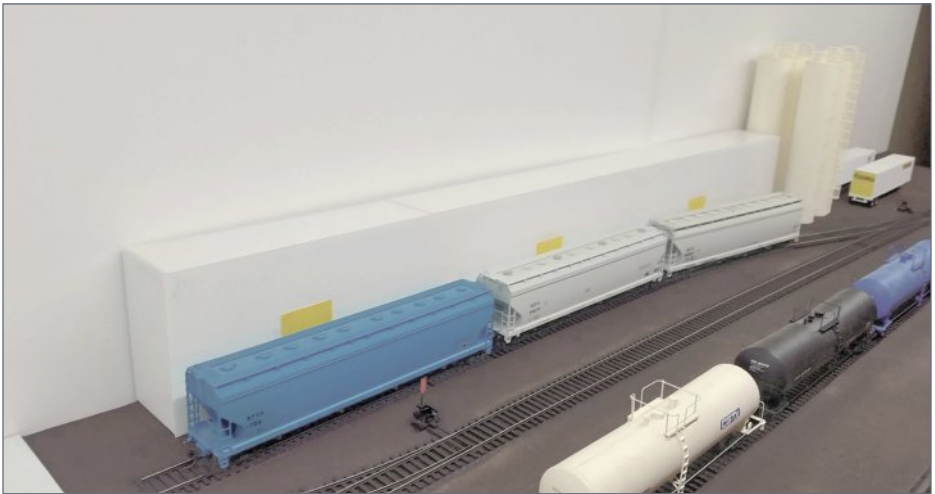
been built as a multi-tenant warehouse, I added three doors. However, the current customer uses only the leftmost door.

I also made some changes to the street. The original plan had a 24-foot-wide street, but that looked too narrow. Using the Google Maps measurement tool, I found almost every street in the industrial park was 40 feet wide.

I don't have that much space to work with, so I kept looking. I finally found a 30-foot-wide street, and just happened to run beside the prototype for the lumber distributor on the layout! The new 30-foot width made it easy to hide the joint between the modules [29].

I'm quite happy with the results. You can use mockups as the base for the final structure if you use Lance Mindheim's photolaminate technique to finish them off. See the January 2012 *MRH* for an article from Lance on his methods: mrhmag.com/magazine/mrh-2012-01-jan

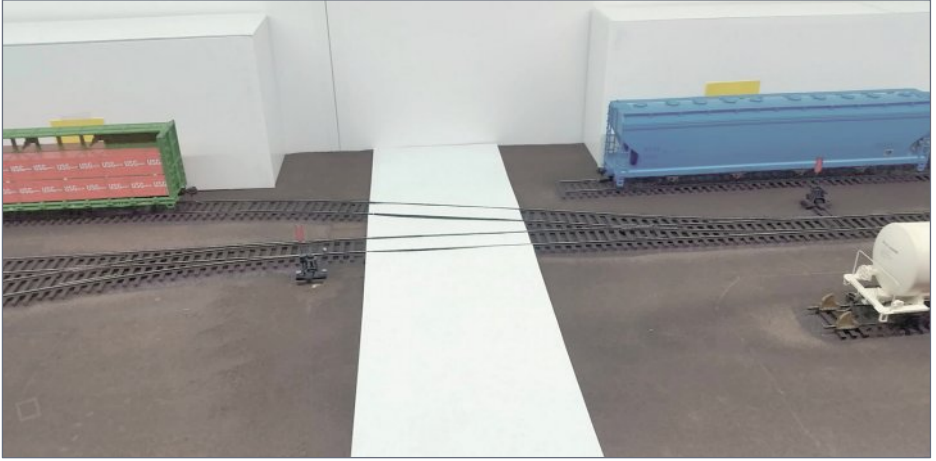
I spent some time searching the internet for pictures of warehouse doors, but couldn't find any. Anything from Google



28. New foam-core plastics industry mockup with the truck loading dock removed and the structure made taller.

Maps or Earth becomes unusable when zooming in due to distortion. Lance Mindheim has a page with some sample images (lancemindheim.com/about-us/photo-wallpaper), with a nice roll-up door. I used that for quick-n-dirty door images to replace the yellow sticky notes I was using [30].

I used some rattle-can spray paint to add color to the mockups. I found a yellow that closely matches the prototype lumber



29. I widened the street from 24 to 30 feet. It looks better now.



30. I found some warehouse roll-up door photos, printed them at the proper scale, and attached them to the warehouse.



distributor building, along with almond and light gray that looked like nice "warehouse" colors. As others have mentioned, the foam-core took the spray paint quite nicely – no issues with distortion or warping [31].

I purchased a strip of 5000K LEDs and mounted them along the valance. The layout is now nicely lit, and the scene looks much brighter.

REVISITING THE BACKDROP

While the mockups took the spray paint quite nicely, the foam-core backdrop did not take roll-on latex paint nearly as well [32]. I used regular indoor latex paint, and the foam-core absorbed water from the paint, and warped.

I was a little disheartened at this. The buildings took spray paint just fine, but the backdrop just didn't like the water-based latex.

MRH forum member Prof Klyzyr recommended matte board instead of foam-core for the backdrop. After some time away from the layout, I finally was motivated to try the backdrop again.



31. I used rattle-can paint to paint the foam-core structure mockups. I also added 5000K LED strips along the valance to light the layout.

I did the backdrop structure out of foam-core. as I wanted it to be lightweight and didn't want to attach anything to the walls. I cut strips from the old backdrop and from new foam-core sheet to create the support framework. I supported this framework using tabs attached to the shelf bracket support rails. I used hot glue to put everything together [33].

Then I tackled aligning, holding and gluing the matte board sheets onto the frame. There's a triangular hole in the corner that still needs to be trimmed and filled.

I used a scrap piece of matte board to test for warping when it is painted. Near-zero warping, so the matte board definitely works much better. I used joint compound/spackle to cover the seams.

I eventually finished and painted the backdrop [34]. The compound-curve hole in the corner was tricky to fill in, and ended up with some texture from the tape and mud job showing. I plan to paint some clouds in that corner to hide the imperfections.



32. Unfortunately, when I painted the foam-core backdrop with blue roll-on latex paint, it warped badly.





33. I built a framework for matte board to permit a curved backdrop, since the matte board is thin enough to bend.



34. The matte board curved nicely on the new backdrop framework. There is one triangular corner area I filled in.

I also purchased a strip of 3000K LEDs to mount along the existing 5000K LEDs. I find the light to be quite pleasing – the scene is much brighter, and a bit warmer. I assume the combined light is around 4000K.

NEXT MONTH ...

Next month, I will continue describing the steps I followed to finish the layout with the final structures and details. I also will describe how I operate the layout – see you then!

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. ■

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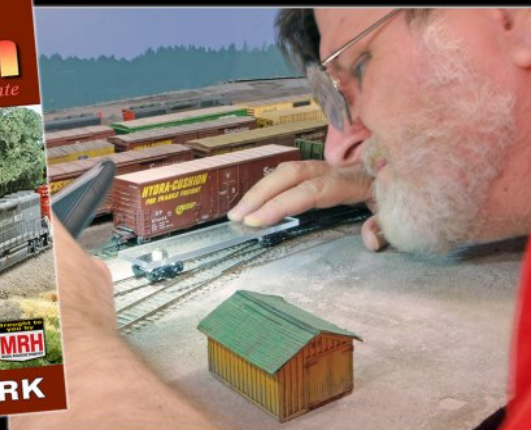
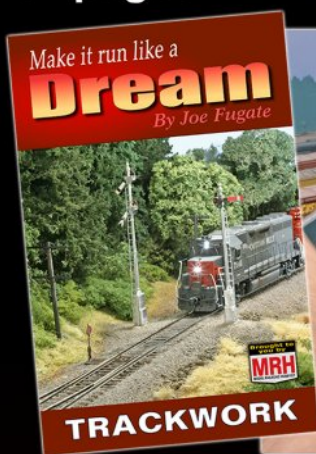
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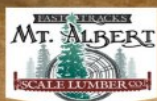
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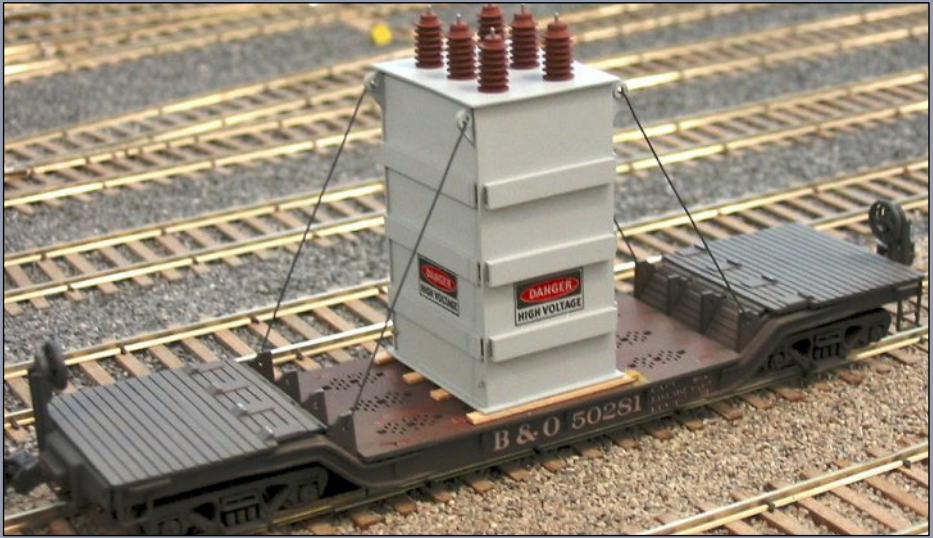


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Modeling a Transformer flat car



1. Adding a transformer load gave this flat car visual interest.

Model Railroad Hobbyist | October 2024



MIKE DODD CREATES A DEPRESSED-CENTER FLAT CAR LOAD ...

A VISIT TO THE VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF TRANSPORTATION (www.vmt.org) in Roanoke in the late-1990s inspired me to build this HO scale depressed-center flat car carrying a large electrical transformer [2].

FLAT CAR

The project began with an Eastern Car Works 90-ton depressed-center flat car kit. This is no longer available, but

MODELING A TRANSFORMER FLAT CAR | 2

Steel Mill Modelers Supply has one similar:

steelmillmodelerssupply.com/product/90-ton-depressed-center-flatcar.

I installed prototypical 28-inch wheels, which lowered the car and dramatically improved its appearance on the track. The lowered frame required a Kadee coupler with the knuckle offset upward.

The deck of the prototype flat car has remnants of angle-iron that was welded-on as blocking for previous loads [3].

I modeled these by applying liquid styrene cement to the end of a styrene U-channel, then pressing it against the deck. Before the cement dried, I removed the U-channel, leaving a



2. Prototype transformer on flat car at the Virginia Museum of Transportation.



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rough area where the deck styrene had dissolved. I painted these remnants a reddish brown to represent rust [4].



3. Prototype steel blocking welding remnants.



4. Modeled welding remnants.

TRANSFORMER

I scratchbuilt the transformer from styrene, modeled from the prototype at the museum [2].

The brown insulators on top were left over from a power station kit (probably Walthers) that I never got around to assembling [1]. The transformer is easily removable so the car can run empty if desired.

The tie-down rods are 0.020" brass wire with ends bent at a right angle. They are cemented to the transformer, and slip into holes in the flat car tie-down brackets. I did not model the prototype's turnbuckles.

I used Adobe Illustrator to design the **Danger High Voltage** label [5], then printed two on decal paper with a color inkjet printer. Libre Office (free software) has a drawing module with capability similar to Illustrator.

No, that's not white ink on the word DANGER and in the background of the HIGH VOLTAGE are. Most printers can't print white ink. The decal is transparent, and the light gray transformer paint shows through. At a casual glance, without close inspection, the impression is that it's white.

For reasons long forgotten, the transformer on my model rests on scale 2x12 wood planks, not steel U-channel. Still, the rusty remnants add to the realism.

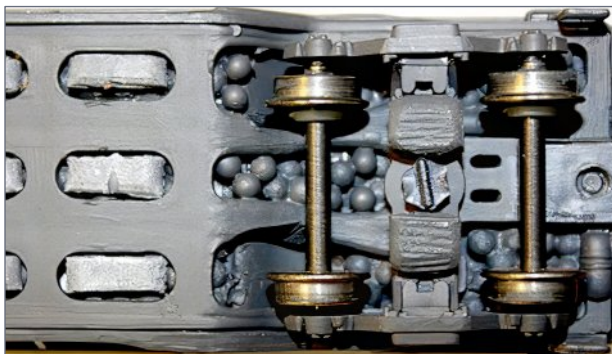
WEIGHT

As built, the model was too light, so I added lead – mostly bird shot from a gun shop – to every available cavity in the frame, and dabbed-on artist's matte medium to secure the pellets. Caution! Lead is toxic, so wear gloves and breathing protection when handling it. Better still, use tungsten weights instead of lead.





5. “Danger” decal on model transformer.



6. Weight in frame cavities and on truck.

This brought the weight up to about 80% of the NMRA-recommended standard for cars of this length. There was still some space after adding the bird shot to the frame cavities, but not enough for another layer, so I added thin strips of lead over the pellets. [6] shows the bird shot and the lead strips. Note the two small pieces glued to the truck frame for still more weight – every little bit helps.

CONCLUSION

Placing a scratchbuilt electrical transformer on a kit flat car and installing extra weight resulted in an interesting model that ran well. ✓

MIKE DODD



Mike lives in central Virginia and modeled the Virginian Railway in HO scale from 1995 until 2008, when the 25'x25' layout was dismantled and given to a frequent operator. The family moved to a new house two years later, and his interest shifted to large scale. He is currently beginning an Fn3 logging railroad.

Mike is retired from a career designing and building electronics circuits, as well as writing computer software.

Besides model railroading, he is active in amateur radio (call sign N4CF) and astronomy, with a telescope in a backyard observatory.

Mike is *Model Railroad Hobbyist's* copy editor. ■

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Agrium | PotashCorp before...

...after **Nutrien****Merger Completed Forming Nutrien, a Leader in Global Agriculture** *Feeding the Future™*

SASKATOON, Jan. 2, 2018 /CNW/ - Nutrien Ltd. (Nutrien) (TSX and NYSE: NTR) today announced the successful completion of the merger of equals between Agrium Inc. (Agrium) and Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan Inc. (PotashCorp), creating the world's premier provider of crop inputs and services. Nutrien has the largest crop nutrient production portfolio combined with an unparalleled global distribution network that includes more than 1,500 farm retail centers. With nearly 20,000 employees - and operations and investments in 14 countries - the company is committed to providing products and services that help growers optimize crop yields and their returns.



Nutrien (POTX) - National Steel Car Potash Service 4300 cu.ft. 3 Bay Covered Hopper

48 road numbers,
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Pacific Western Rail Systems

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Marine Industries 4550cuft 4 Bay Cylindrical Hopper

First time ever available in HO!



A couple of years ago a customer asked us at a large Train Show why we didn't like Canadian National. When we explained we did not have any reason to dislike Canadian National, we asked why he had that impression. "Well you are not making any of the Hawker Siddeley Cylindrical Hoppers in CN with large Noodle graphics".

To which we replied "That's because Hawker Siddeley didn't make any Cylindrical Hoppers for CN (4550 cuft) with large Noodle graphics". The customer then showed us images of what he thought were Hawker Siddeley 4550 cu ft Cylindrical 4 Bay Hoppers with CN Noodle Graphics. We then explained, the images he was showing us were not Hawker Siddeley built cars, they were built by Marine Industries in Quebec.

About 30% of the 4550 cu ft Cylindrical Hoppers were built by National Steel Car (NSC), and 40% were built by Hawker Siddeley (HS) and the balance were built by Marine Industries Limited (MIL). Many modelers confuse the HS car with the MIL car. Although similar they are very different, "if you know what to look for when closely examining the cars".

Remember, these cars have never been available before in HO Scale.

In test marketing customers have asked us to run 12 road numbers for five of the paint schemes. All the rest we will produce 6 road numbers. We will also do 6 cars equipped with Toggle Lock Pneumatic Gravity Gates! (see close up image above)



Large & Small Track Boards

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LOOK column

Model Railroad Hobbyist | October 2024



THE MRH STAFF LOOKS AT NORTH AMERICAN RAILCAR'S 60-FOOT MARINE INDUSTRIES/HAWKER-SIDDELEY 4550 CU FT CYLINDRICAL COVERED HOPPER...

NORTH AMERICAN RAILCAR IS KNOWN FOR EMBRACING SOME OF THE more challenging model railroad car projects. NARC sells their cars through the Pacific Western Rail Systems (PWRS) website [www.pwrs.ca].

NARC has released one such project: the 60' Marine Industries/Hawker-Siddeley 4550 cubic foot cylindrical covered hopper. Some 30% of the 4550 cu ft cylindrical covered hoppers were built by National Steel Car (NSC). Another 40% were built by Hawker-Siddeley (HST). The remaining cars were built by Marine Industries Limited (MIL).

Although very similar, there are notable differences in the cars made by each manufacturer. NARC is making a brand new series of cars faithful to Marine Industries available to modelers.

North American Railcar is proud to bring HO modelers these all new Marine Industries variations of this car, as well as a rerun Hawker-Siddeley version: see for yourself in the following pages.



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1. Example of the Marine Industries 4550-cuft cylindrical hopper.



2. Closeup of the pneumatic doors on a subset of the hoppers.

These two photos represent just an introduction to these covered grain hoppers. For more details on the MIL variations made, visit the PWRS website link below.

WEB: pwrs.ca/announcements/view.php?ID=15094

WHEAT BOARD OF CANADA (CNWX)



Wheat Board of Canada (CNWX). *Photo courtesy of Ron Hawkins*

In the early 1970's, the Canadian Government faced an increasing demand for grain transport capacity, so they built a new car to meet the needs of Canadian Grain Industry for the 1970s, '80s, '90s and beyond.

They agreed to follow a standard design, but each of the three major Canadian manufacturers could vary the details of the car as long as the overall size, shape, and capacity of the car remained the same.

The MIL hoppers were a modified copy of the HST hoppers. The basic tank is the same, but the slope sheet (end supporting wall of the car), end frame, brake lines, air reservoir, auxiliary reservoir, control valve location, ladders, running board, and running board supports are different.

Prototype spotting features of the MIL 4550 hoppers:

- Low brace end with vertical brake wheel housing, rectangular cross brace, and vertical face on bolster
- Low mounted air tank
- Trough hatch



Wheat Board of Canada (CNWX) model. Click this image to view the HO model on a web page and spin it a full 360 degrees to study the details.

- Toggle lock outlet gate
- 11 running board supports and riveted outlet gate

There are 6 road numbers available in this release, change the quantity in the cart to order more than a single car. The road numbers are CNWX 396800-396999, with gravity outlet gates and low brace ends, built 1980 to 1987. Road numbers available:

- 01 / CNWX 396801
- 02 / CNWX 396849
- 03 / CNWX 396897
- 04 / CNWX 396918
- 05 / CNWX 396943
- 06 / CNWX 396986. ■

WEB: pwrs.ca/view_product.php?ProductID=274852

ORIGINAL PAINT VERSION MED. GREY WITH RED CN NOODLE



Original paint version medium grey with red CN noodle. *Photo courtesy of Darrell Sawyer*

During the production life of the 4550 Marine Industries cylindrical hopper design, thousands of these cars were manufactured in various production runs by the three different manufacturers.

Marine Industries produced many of these cars over the production run, and in total MIL produced 15 variations of the basic design between the grain and potash types of this car.

Today, thousands of these cars remain in service with Canadian Pacific, Canadian National, and a number of other operators. Though they initially were primarily seen in Canada, they now travel the rails of North America from Canada to Mexico, with operations in many parts of the United States.

There are 12 road numbers available in this release for this version. Change the quantity in the shopping cart to order more than a single car. The road numbers for this variation are CN 382000-382699. These have gravity outlet gates and low brace ends, made from 1981 to 1987.

The 12 different road numbers available for this model are:

- 01 / CN 382001
- 02 / CN 382057
- 03 / CN 382091



Original paint version med. grey w/red CN noodle. Click this image to view this HO model on a web page and spin it a full 360 degrees to study the details.

- 04 / CN 382127
- 05 / CN 382161
- 06 / CN 382218
- 07 / CN 382327
- 08 / CN 382409
- 09 / CN 382446
- 10 / CN 382481
- 11 / CN 382541
- 12 / CN 382699



This is an original paint scheme done in the early 1980s. ■

WEB: pwrs.ca/view_product.php?ProductID=274729

GREY PAINT VERSION WITH BLACK CN NOODLE



Grey paint version with black CN noodle. *Photo courtesy of Joe Rogers*

In the 1970s, Canadian National and Canadian Pacific developed two different 4550 cu ft cylindrical hopper car types, one for grain and similar consistency products – and another for potash, dry chemicals, and fertilizers.

The most obvious difference between these two types of cars can be seen in the loading hatches on the top of the cars. The grain version of the car has trough hatches spanning the length of the body top, while the potash version has a series of round hatches spaced along the length of the body.

Model features for all the 4550 MIL hoppers include:

- 11 or 17 support running boards – etched brass
- Etched brass crossover platforms, individually applied
- 5 different ends (bracing variations)
- 2 Different outlet gates (toggle lock or spiral cog)
- Investment castings for capstans (end of gates)
- 2 hand brake variations (conventional or Ellcon-National)
- 2 reservoir positions (low for truck-mounted cylinders or high for body-mounted cylinders)





Grey paint version with black CN noodle. Click this image to view HO model on a web page and spin it a full 360 degrees to study the details.

- External brake rod with body mounted brake cylinders
- 3 styles of trough hatch (smooth, slash, "V")
- Kadee #58 semi-scale couplers
- Coupler cut bars
- 2 Bolster/jack pad styles (flat or sloped faces)
- Low-friction trucks Barber S-2 100 ton with code 88 36" wheels

Road numbers CN 382000-382699, with gravity outlet gates and low brace ends, first seen in this scheme from 1990 to present.

This paint scheme was not original but is a repaint. There are 12 road numbers available in this release, change the quantity in the cart to order more than a single car. ■

WEB: pwrs.ca/view_product.php?ProductID=274743



LIGHT GREY W/ENVIRO GRAPHICS, RED CN NOODLE



Light grey repaint with Enviro graphics, red CN noodle.

In the early 2000s, the CN added a new logo to some of its covered hoppers promoting the growing interest in the environmental movement.

“Rail - the environmental mode / Le train - la mode écologique” sported a green and red-lettered slogan over a road-to-rail graphic. The CN applied this scheme to select covered hoppers at CN’s Transcona Shops in Winnipeg during the last half of 2004.

This car has road numbers CN 382000-382699, with gravity outlet gates and low brace ends, first seen in this scheme from 2004 to present.

The available road numbers for the model are:

- 01 / CN 382022
- 02 / CN 382138
- 03 / CN 382328





Light grey w/Enviro graphics, red CN noodle. Click to view this HO model on a web page and spin it a full 360 degrees to study the details.

- 04 / CN 382590
- 05 / CN 382628
- 06 / CN 382076

This paint scheme was not original but is a repaint. There are 6 road numbers available in this release, change the quantity in the cart to order more than a single car. ■

WEB: pwrs.ca/view_product.php?ProductID=274762



ORIGINAL MED. GREY W/RED CN NOODLE - PNEUMATIC GATE



Original medium grey with red CN noodle and pneumatic gate. *Photo courtesy of Darrell Sawyer*

The Marine Industries Limited (MIL) 4550 cubic-foot cylindrical covered hopper appears at first glance to be identical to the Hawker Siddeley (HST) 4550. True, the bodies and side sills are identical when comparing the the number and size of side panels and the design of the side sill. Most of the rest of the car, however, has a number of detail differences.

We discuss the differences in the write ups for the remaining cars.

Some of the cars delivered to CN were modified for both gravity and pneumatic unloading. Two series of cars, CN 380600-380604 and CN 380619-380628, for a total of 15 cars, were modified by replacing their original gravity toggle lock outlet gates with gravity/pneumatic toggle lock outlet gates. The pneumatic tube is mounted down on the side frame of the outlet gate.

The model shown here has this outlet gate modeled accurately.

This car has road numbers CN 380619 - 380628, with toggle lock gravity pneumatic gates and low brace ends, built 1981 to 1987.



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Original medium grey with red CN noodle and pneumatic gate. Click to view this HO model on a web page and spin it a full 360 degrees to study the details.

The available road numbers for the model are:

- 01 / CN 380619
- 02 / CN 380623
- 03 / CN 380626
- 04 / CN 380625
- 05 / CN 380627
- 06 / CN 380628



This paint scheme is an original one. There are 6 road numbers available in this release, change the quantity in the cart to order more than a single car. ■

WEB: pwrs.ca/view_product.php?ProductID=291873

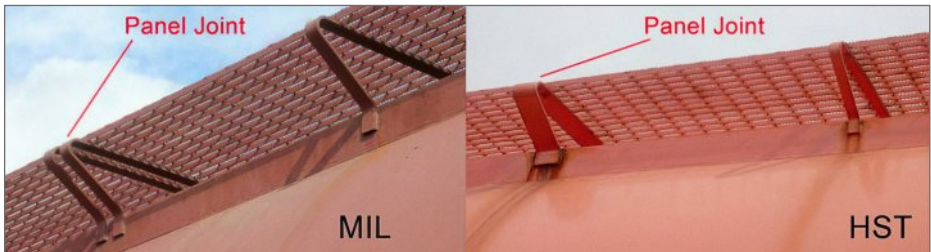
GREY PAINT W/SMALL BLACK CN NOODLE AND URL



Grey paint w/small black CN noodle and URL. *Photo courtesy of Stan Lytle*

The Marine Industries (MIL) and Hawker Siddeley (HST) 4550 cu-ft cylindrical hopper cars have a number of spotting detail differences.

On the roof, the MIL 4550 has a total of 14 running board supports, all the same width with a pair of supports at each running board panel joint. This differs from the HST design which uses narrow and double width supports, with the double width supports at the running board panel joints. See photo below.



Panel joint and bracing support differences between the Marine Industries 4550 cu-ft hopper and the Hawker-Siddeley hopper.



Grey paint w/small black CN noodle and URL. Click to view this HO model on a web page and spin it a full 360 degrees to study the details.

This car has road numbers CN 382000-382699, with gravity outlet gates and low brace ends, first seen in this scheme from 2002 to present.

The available road numbers for the model are:

- 01 / CN 382678
- 02 / CN 382164
- 03 / CN 382210
- 04 / CN 382332
- 05 / CN 382405
- 06 / CN 382020



This paint scheme was not original but is a repaint. There are 6 road numbers available in this release, change the quantity in the cart to order more than a single car. ■

WEB: pwrs.ca/view_product.php?ProductID=274756

WHITE PAINT VERSION WITH RED CN NOODLE



White paint version with red CN noodle. *Photo courtesy of Darrell Sawyer*

The Marine Industries (MIL) and Hawker Siddeley (HST) 4550 cu-ft cylindrical hopper cars have a number of spotting detail differences.

The MIL version of the end frame is slightly different from the HST version. The HST end upper platform frame on the left end of the car (both sides) is recessed behind the vertical ladder stiles, while on the other end of the car, the frame is on the outside of the ladder stiles. This means the running board end platform sticks out on one side of the car further than the other. The MIL version has the frame the same on both sides.

This car has road numbers CN 382000-382699, with gravity outlet gates and low brace ends, first seen in this scheme from 1990 to present.

The available road numbers for the model are:

- 01 / CN 382013



White paint version with red CN noodle. Click this image to view this HO model on a web page and spin it a full 360 degrees to study the details.

- 02 / CN 382117
- 03 / CN 382143
- 04 / CN 382188
- 05 / CN 382220
- 06 / CN 382260
- 07 / CN 382321
- 08 / CN 382424
- 09 / CN 382502
- 10 / CN 382543
- 11 / CN 382631
- 12 / CN 382697



This paint scheme was not original but is a repaint. There are 12 road numbers available in this release, change the quantity in the cart to order more than a single car. ■

WEB: pwrs.ca/view_product.php?ProductID=274744

BROWN PAINT VERSION W/WHITE CN NOODLE - URL

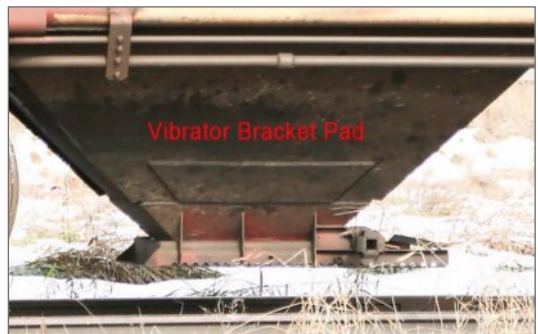


Brown paint version with small white CN noodle and URL. *Photo courtesy of Stan Lytle*

The Marine Industries (MIL) and Hawker Siddeley (HST) 4550 cu-ft cylindrical hopper cars have a number of spotting detail differences.

Both the HST and MIL versions of the 4550 were delivered with vibrator bracket mounting pads on the right-hand sides of the hoppers (with the B-end to the left). None of the HST cars were delivered with vibrator brackets, just blank mounting pads. However, some of the MIL cars were delivered to CN with vibrator brackets, so NARC tooled up the vibrator brackets so that the specific cars which have them can be accurately modeled.

Vibrator bracket pad as seen on some 4550 cu-ft cylindrical hopper chutes. CN pulled 25 cars and modified them with gravity/pneumatic outlet gates, and left the vibrator brackets in place.





Brown paint with small white CN noodle and URL. Click to view this HO model on a web page and spin it a full 360 degrees to study the details.

This car has road numbers CN 382000-382699, with gravity outlet gates and low brace ends, first seen in this scheme from 2004 to present.

The available road numbers for the model are:

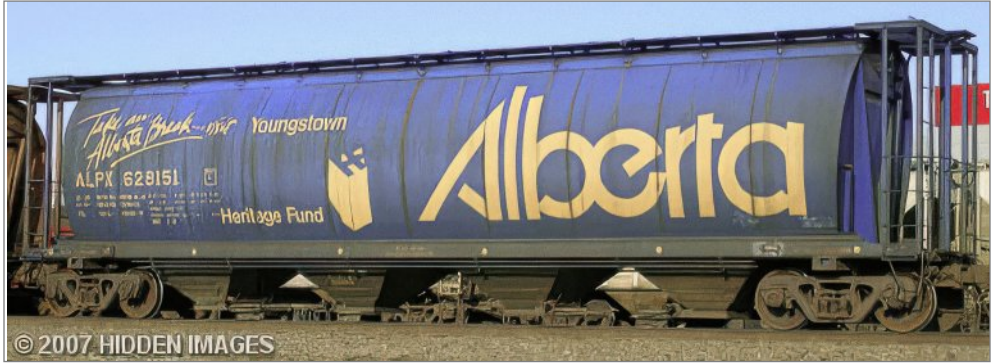
- 01 / CN 382281
- 02 / CN 382343
- 03 / CN 382347
- 04 / CN 382527
- 05 / CN 382540
- 06 / CN 382570



This paint scheme was not original but is a repaint. There are 6 road numbers available in this release, change the quantity in the cart to order more than a single car. ■

WEB: pwrs.ca/view_product.php?ProductID=274759

GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA HERITAGE FUND ALPX



Government of Alberta Heritage Fund ALPX. *Photo courtesy of hiddenimages.ca*

Hawker Siddeley produced many of these cars over the production run, and in total produced 15 variations of the basic design between the grain and potash types of this car.

Today, these cars remain in service and many can be seen in their original "Heritage" paint schemes. Though they initially were seen mainly in Canada, they now travel the rails of North American from Canada to Mexico, with operations in many parts of the United States.

These cars were new in 1981 and were built with number series: ALPX 628323-628522. This is a new run of these cars with these reporting marks:

- ALPX 628329 - Lomond
- ALPX 628338 - Duchess
- ALPX 628397 - Killam
- ALPX 628426 - Gleichen
- ALPX 628431 - Vilna



Government of Alberta Heritage Fund ALPX. Click to view this HO model on a web page and spin it a full 360 degrees to study the details.

- ALPX 628432 - Gull Lake
- ALPX 628449 - Olds
- ALPX 628452 - Vermilion
- ALPX 628458 - Stavely
- ALPX 628470 - Crowsnest Pass
- ALPX 628471 - Picture Butte
- ALPX 628505 - Granum

There are 12 road numbers available in this release, change quantity in cart to order more than a single car. ■

WEB: pwrs.ca/view_product.php?ProductID=308591



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Hand laying your own track

YouTuber Drew from **White River Line** demonstrates how he hand lays his track, which has become something of a lost art.

In this 16-minute video, Drew walks us step-by-step through the hand laying process, including a number of tips and tricks he's picked up along the way. This is a nice, no-nonsense video that's very useful if you'd like to learn how to hand lay your own track. Not only does it give you a great sense of accomplishment, but it looks good and saves money. ☑

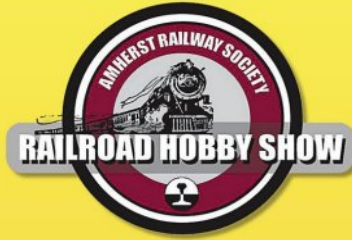


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OCTOBER NEWS

column



Model Railroad Hobbyist | October 2024

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



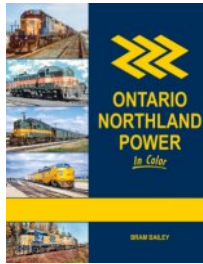
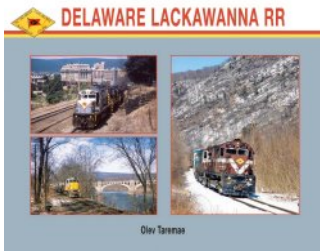
INDUSTRY NEWS

Hobby Trax, a United Kingdom-based manufacturer and a distributor of general line hobby products has announced plans to enter the North American market. The company specializes in mostly European models such as Hornby, Heljan, Dapol, Jouef, Bachmann and Rapido. Hobby Trax USA will be based in California and managed by Irwin D. Nathanson, a model railroader who served as president of the Hudson Berkshire Division of NMRA. According to Nathanson, initial products will include Hobby Trax Eye-Choo Camera, a four-wheel HO scale car with a built-in camera, throttle holders, NCE and Model Rectifier Corp. replacement throttle cables and an NCE PowerCab programming track switch. Operations will begin with a website scheduled for introduction on October 15, 2024.

NEW PRODUCTS FOR ALL SCALES

New publications coming from **Morning Sun Books** include *Delaware Lackawanna Railroad* by Olev Taremae. Using the best work from 13 photographers, this 96-page softcover all-color book chronicles the variety of Alco power powering

THE LATEST MODEL RAILROAD PRODUCTS, NEWS & EVENTS

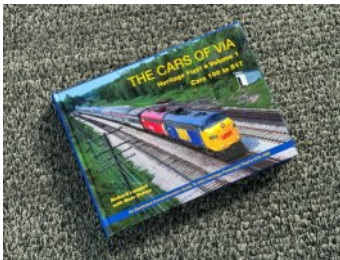


trains since the Delaware-Lackawanna became the contracted operator in 1993. The most scenic locations on all of the lines are well illustrated including the Pocono Main,

Carbondale Main, Laurel Line, Strawberry Hill Running Track and Vine Industrial Track.

Also set for release this fall is *Ontario Northland Power*. Author Bram Bailey traces the entire diesel roster of the ONR from the first Alco S-2 switchers imported from the U.S. to the present roster. This 128-page all-color book is a recommended reading for anyone modeling the Ontario Northland in the diesel era as well as for anyone who is interested in the evolution of the diesel locomotive.

Info: www.morningsunbooks.com



Rapido Trains has announced an all-new book, *The Cars of VIA - Heritage Fleet Volume 1*. The 300-page book features more than 400 color and black and white photos of both interior and exterior of every type of car during each car's history.

Over 100 passenger train consists are included along with up-to-date color diagrams for each passenger car group. Author Richard Longpre's thoroughly researched book documents each of the different types of cars, including new floor plans and colors.

Info: www.rapidotrains.com

Ring Engineering has announced the RailPro Radio Repeater, a USB powered range extender for RailPro radio control systems.



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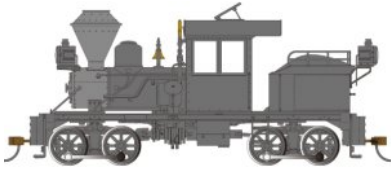
Used to both extend the range the modeler can control their locomotives from, as well as to eliminate dead spots on a layout, each repeater can extend the range of the RailPro signal up to 100 feet. Multiple repeaters can be combined for longer ranges and to develop multiple comms paths to avoid dead spots. When powered by portable USB power banks of the sort used to charge smartphones, the Radio Repeaters can be placed

anywhere on or around a layout.

Info: www.ringengineering.com

O SCALE PRODUCT NEWS

Bachmann plans to release its On30 scale 14-ton Stearns-Heisler geared locomotive with new road names and a SoundTraxx Tsunami2 Dual-mode DCC decoder. The model is based on a prototype introduced in the 1890s. Road names will be A.W. Stevens Lumber #1, Glen Union Lumber #2, Pacific Coast Borax #2 Francis and unlettered.



In addition to sound, features include a fully enclosed gearbox and soft LED headlight and backup tender light.



Bachmann is booking advanced reservations for an On30 scale triple-bay open hopper car with a removable coal load. The ready-to-

run model comes with E-Z Mate Mark II couplers and Bettendorf-type plain-bearing trucks with blackened machined metal wheels. Road names in this release will be East Broad Top, Durango & Silverton and White Pass & Yukon. An unlettered car painted in oxide red will also be in this release. Availability is planned for December 2025.

Info: www.bachmanntrains.com



Banta Model Works has a selection of four kits to convert Bachmann's On30 flatcars (not included) into wood side gondolas. The kits include laser-cut sides, floor and side stakes.



Kits with two, four and five board sides are available for Bachmann's 24' flatcar.



A kit to convert Bachmann's 18' flatcar into a two board side gondola is also available. The Bachmann flatcar is not included.

Info: www.bantamodelworks.com

HO SCALE PRODUCT NEWS



New economy priced plastic HO scale freight car kits coming from **Accurail** include this 40' Pacific Electric wood stock car. The model represents a prototype built in 1914.

New economy priced plastic HO scale freight car kits coming from **Accurail** include this 40' Pacific



Available this fall from Accurail is an HO scale kit for this 36' Monon boxcar. The single-sheathed wood car is decorated in Monon's 1923 lettering scheme.



Kits will be available singly and in 3-packs with different numbers.

This FMLX-FMC Chemical triple-bay Center Flow covered hopper is based on a prototype built by ACF in 1964.



Accurail's model of a 50' Grand Trunk Western welded steel boxcar represents a full size car built in 1957.



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Kits for this USRA twin-bay steel hopper car decorated for the Virginia Railway will be available singly and in a 3-pack with different numbers. All Accurail car kits come with appropriate trucks with Delrin wheelsets and Accurate knuckle couplers.
Info: www.accurail.com

Athearn has announced plans to deliver a Genesis series GE AC4400CW diesel locomotive in March 2026.

Notable features on all road names of the HO scale model include a walkway capacitor box, ditch lights, number boards, illuminated ground lights above the front truck, illuminated front and rear walkway lights and illuminated marker lights.

Additional features include etched see-through walkway steps, uncoupling levers, flexible rubber MU hoses and trainline, cab interior, walkway tread, Celcon handrails, windshield wipers, lift rings, wire grab irons, sander lines and a detailed fuel tank with fuel fillers, fuel gauge and breather pipes. A minimum track radius of 22" is recommended.



Models decorated for Union Pacific will have high mounted number boards, and a large GPS dome.



Canadian Pacific models will be available in the Golden Beaver scheme with dual flags, low number boards, Sinclair antenna, a single rear headlight and GE self-steering trucks.



Special details on locomotives decorated for CIT Group will have low mounted number boards and Sinclair antennas. Patched Norfolk Southern units, recently purchased from CIT, will have the same paint job and features as their predecessor.



Ferrosur (Ferrocarril del Sureste) and a General Electric demo unit share several features including low mounted number boards, a large GPS dome and GE self-steering trucks.



Athearn included three versions of road-worn BNSF AC4400CW locomotives in the March 2026 release. In addition to faded paint and primer patching, all will have high mounted number boards and a large GPS dome.



Athearn's March 2026 production schedule includes a Union Pacific 4-8-8-4 Big Boy steam locomotive. Each Big Boy will come with the unique Snowbus (caboose No. 25809) that accompanied UP No. 4014 on its

recent eight-week Heartland of America Tour.

The prototype Big Boy No. 4014 departed on the Heartland of America Tour on August 28, 2024, from Cheyenne, Wyoming, traveling across nine states: Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Texas. The eight-week tour concludes in late October 2024.



Athearn's latest version of the 4-8-8-4 will have the tender smokebox door

upgraded with special lettering, polished cylinder heads, commemorative plaques on the boiler and tender and PTC equipment. Additional features include illuminated number boards and headlights, correctly operating eccentric cranks, adjustable top cab vent and cab windows and a detailed backhead with printed gauges. Of special note is an improved loco-to-



tender connection harness. Sound versions of the Big Boy will come with dual speakers and a DCC decoder with SoundTraxx Tsunami2 sound.



The Snowbuses were modified CA-11 cabooses used to ferry crews to locations otherwise unreachable in the worst weather. The modifications included the addition of a MU pedestal, rubber signal hoses and a light in their enclosed porches.

Athearn's HO scale version of the Snowbuses will be available with a DCC decoder with SoundTraxx Tsunami Soundcar sound that provides a wide selection of sounds including an air horn, trainline air whistle, wheel clickety-clack, brake set and release sounds, brake squeal and more. Other features include full interior details, lighting functions with brightness control (in DCC equipped models), walkway lights, etched metal window screens on door and some side windows, wire grab irons and caboose trucks with rotating roller bearing caps. A minimum track radius of 22" is recommended.



Athearn has included an HO scale version of a Pullman-Standard 4740 cu.ft. triple-bay covered hopper in its March 2026 production schedule.



Road names will be BNSF, Denver & Rio Grande Western, Great Northern, CSX, Golden West and CIT Group. The model will come with roller-bearing trucks with 36" machined metal wheels.



Also coming from Athearn is another run of 30,000 gallon Ethanol tank cars. The HO scale models will have photo-etched metal walkways and end platforms, wire rails and end handrails, and 100-ton roller-bearing trucks.



In addition to PROX-Procor, decorating schemes will be CHVX-Chevron, DODX-U.S. Department of Defense, NCPX-Nebraska Corn Processing, ACFX-Chief and GATX-Reeve Agri Energy.



R. Bale

PFAUDLER MILK CARS

In the 1920's, the Pfaudler Company and General American Car Company manufactured hundreds of wood sheathed, insulated milk cars. Designed as bulk milk carriers, the cars were built around two 6,000 gallon glass lined tanks and a brine cooling system designed to keep the milk at a constant 38 degrees Fahrenheit. To expedite delivery of their vulnerable commodity, they were usually assigned to passenger trains. Accordingly, the Pfaudler cars were fitted with four-wheel express car trucks. These unique cars were often painted Pullman green to match the passenger cars of the era.



An HO scale 40' Pfaudler milk car is being prepared by Athearn for release in March 2026. The injection molded model, originally created by MDC

Roundhouse, has separately applied brake wheel and brake cylinder and screw-mounted express-type trucks with machined metal wheels.



Decorating schemes available on this release will be Boston & Maine, Central Vermont, Hood's, Atlantic & Pacific, Renken's Milk and Hendricks Dairies.



An HO scale wide-vision caboose decorated for Santa Fe, BNSF, GN with BNSF patch, Missouri-Kansas-Texas,



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Fracht, Illinois Central Gulf, Maine Central and SCL/Family Lines is coming from Athearn in early 2026.



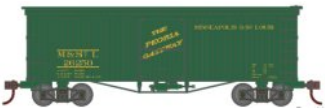
caboose trucks with machined metal wheels.

A separately applied smoke jack and brake wheel will be applied to the injection molded model. Additional features include clear windows and



sharply defined artwork, body-mounted McHenry knuckle couplers and arch bar trucks with 33" machined metal wheels.

Early MDC Roundhouse tooling will also be used to prepare an HO scale model of a 36' wood sheathed boxcar from the truss-rod era. Upgrades include



Road names in this release will be Santa Fe, New York Central, Pere Marquette, Minneapolis & St. Louis, Soo Line, and Wellsville Addison & Galeton. All

Athearn models mentioned in this report will come with McHenry knuckle couplers.

Info: www.athearn.com



boxcars rebuilt with steel sides.

A new production run of USRA steel rebuilt boxcars is now available from **Atlas**. The HO scale Master series model is based on the more than 14,000 USRA double-sheathed wood



Road names on the current release include Canton Railroad, Chicago West Pullman & Southern, Georgia Railroad, Great Northern, Santa Fe, Penn Central and, Wellsville Addison & Galeton. Atlas'

HO scale version features a 10-panel steel body, wire grab irons and both 7-8 and 5-5-5 panel Murphy ends. The model comes with Bettendorf-type plain-bearing trucks and Accumate couplers.

Info: shop.atlasrr.com



generation of medium-distance passenger railcars currently in use by Amtrak and VIA Rail Canada. The HO scale models are based on Venture equipment built by Siemens Mobility in California.



This release will include a coach and business car in multiple road numbers. A cab car will also be available in the Via Rail Canada scheme. Decorating schemes will be Amtrak Midwest, Amtrak San Joaquin and VIA Rail Canada.



Bachmann reports that the models will have fully furnished interior details, interior lighting, LED marker lights, metal handrails, and plastic diaphragms. A 22" minimum track radius is recommended.

Info: www.bachmanntrains.com



Bowser has released its HO scale Alco RS-3 locomotive to its dealer network. A limited number of the Executive series models are available directly from Bowser.

Road names on this release include Rock Island, New York & Susquehanna Western, Lehigh & Hudson River, Denver & Rio Grande Western, Conrail, Central New Jersey, Penn Central, Greenwich & Johnsonville, Delaware & Hudson, Northern Pacific and ex-Northern Pacific patched for BN.

For additional details see the July 2024 issue of *MRH*.

Info: bowser-trains.com

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R. Bale

BALDWIN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS RF-16

BLW introduced the RF-16 Sharknose diesel locomotive in 1950. The goal of the distinctive style was partly to differentiate Baldwin locomotives from competitors and partly to distance the new locomotives from early Baldwin diesels that were plagued with mechanical problems. The design was reminiscent of the PRR T1 duplex steam locomotive styled by Raymond Loewy. Baldwin built a total of 160 of these locomotives; 109 A-units and 51 booster B-units. The 1,625hp Sharknose locomotives saw regular service hauling heavy ore and coal drags. They beat their intended competitor, EMD's F7, with 100 additional horsepower, however, they did not match the endurance of the F7s, and most were retired by 1967.



paired with an unpowered B unit.



Broadway Limited is preparing another production run of its popular HO scale Sharknose diesels. A units powered with Paragon4 sound will be available singly and

In this production, Broadway Limited is offering the Sharknose diesel in four authentic paint schemes, along with eight fantasy paint schemes.



Authentic paint schemes on A and A/B sets include Pennsylvania Railroad units with both 1 and 5 stripes, Baltimore & Ohio, New York

Central, and Delaware & Hudson.



Fantasy schemes will be available on A/B sets decorated for ATSF, Central of New Jersey, Conrail, Missouri Pacific, Southern Pacific, two USAAF schemes and Duluth,

Missabe & Iron Range.

The delivery date is TBA.

Info: www.broadway-limited.com



A second run of Thrall 86' boxcars from **ClassOneModelWorks.com**

has recently been announced. Used in pool service for auto parts transport, any of the cars could be found on any of the pooled railroads. These cars were built in both four and eight plug door configurations.



Road names in this run include Chicago Burlington & Quincy, New York Central, Conrail,

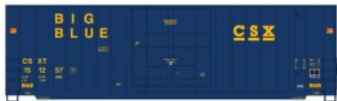
Norfolk Southern, Chicago Northwestern, Rock Island, Missouri Pacific, Southern, Norfolk & Western, Santa Fe, Baltimore & Ohio, Union Pacific, and Western Pacific.



The cars feature prototype specific doors, draft gear, brake wheels, brake details,

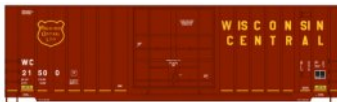
cut levers, stirrups, rubber air hoses, and ClassOne Classic metal couplers.

Info: classonemodelworks.com



InterMountain Railway has recently shipped 50' Gunderson high-cube boxcars to its dealers. The HO scale

ready-to-run models have a single plug door and box corrugated non-terminating ends recessed flush with the corner of the car body. The model comes with appropriate roller-bearing trucks with 36" machined metal wheels.



Road names in this release are Burlington Northern, Canadian National, Illinois Central, Wisconsin

Central, CSX and Montana Rail Link.

Info: www.intermountain-railway.com



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Kadee's newest ready-to-run freight car is a 40' PS-1 boxcar decorated for COPR-Copper Range, a railroad that operated from 1899 to 1972 in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

The HO scale model is based on a prototype car built by Pullman-Standard in 1948. Details include 6' seven-panel Superior sliding doors, P-S proprietary ends, Equipco brake wheel, Kadee couplers and Bettendorf-type plain bearing self-centering trucks with metal wheels.

Info: www.kadee.com



R. Bale

D&RGW STEEL CABOOSES

The Denver & Rio Grande Railroad embarked on updating their caboose fleet with steel cabooses in 1940. They were homebuilt at their Burnham Shops in Denver, Colorado and as such, were unique to the Rio Grande. The ladders, cupola and corner posts are all distinctive spotting features of these cabooses. From 1940 to 1951, 70 steel-riveted cabooses were built in production batches of ten. The series would later continue production until 1959 with a welded car body. Over the years, these cabooses would see multiple changes and rebuilds including several cupola and car body window variations, with the later riveted versions sporting a backup light and EOT light mounted over the ends. After the marriage of the Rio Grande and Southern Pacific in 1988, many of these cars would continue in service before retirement in 1992.





Rapido Trains is preparing production tooling for what promises to be a highly detailed HO scale model of a Denver & Rio Grande Western 01400 series steel-riveted caboose.



Decorating schemes will include four black versions including an as-built car, early and post-war modifications and a switch scheme with a red cupola.



Three D&RGW cabooses in Aspen Gold will include a post-war version with the roof, cupola and lower side in gray, a post-war version with an Action Road logo and a similarly decorated caboose with the windows blanked out.



A list of features on Rapido's D&RGW cabooses begins with a detailed underbody including all separate air and brake piping. Additional details include see-through etched metal steps and walkways, full end detail including uncoupling levers, interior lighting and all-wheel electrical pickup. A unique feature is etched metal road numbers packed in a polybag with each model. The HO scale ready-to-run model will come with Barber-Bettendorf caboose trucks with plain or roller-bearings as appropriate. The order deadline for guaranteed availability is December 16th, 2024. Availability is TBA.



Rapido is developing a detailed HO scale model of a Greenbrier 72' IL 7780 cu. ft. reefer. What sets the

7789 apart from other large box reefers is the 72' interior length which gives the car an impressive 82' over the drawbars.



In 2020, Lineage Logistics acquired Cryo-Trans and placed more orders for the Greenbrier 7780. Changes over earlier production cars included the cage around the reefer unit, the

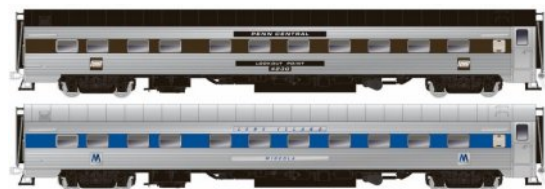
truck centers were made slightly closer and a more prominent notch for B-end step. Fortunately for modelers, Lineage Logistics continued the tradition of applying colorful paint schemes and individual car naming. Two distinct differences in 7780 reefers are the roofs. Some were built with Stranray Ready-Roofs with straight ribs across the top, while others have diagonal ribs.

Variations in Rapido's HO scale 7780 reefers include two roof styles, three end cages and three walkways. Sound equipped models will come with a pre-installed speaker and sound module. Road names will be Cryo-Trans, Lineage, UP-ARMN, AOKX and Ontario Northland.



In partnership with the New Haven Railroad Historical and Technical Association,

Rapido is preparing a New Haven 14-4 Point series sleeping car. Built by Pullman-Standard beginning in December 1949, each of the 27 Point cars had 14 roomettes and 4 bedrooms.



The cars were delivered with a Pullman Green window band and black roof. In 1955 all New Haven stainless steel cars were repainted into the McGinnis

Haven stainless steel cars were repainted into the McGinnis

scheme with the NH logos over each truck. After the Penn Central merger in 1969, seven cars went to the Long Island Railroad where they received Long Island letter boards, MTA logos and new names. In addition to these schemes, NHRTHA is offering an exclusive McGinnis 14-4 sleeper with skirts.



All versions of the HO scale model will feature a

stainless steel finish, partial skirting or no skirting as appropriate, full interior details, complete underbody details, operating diaphragms with end gates and track-powered constant lighting. The cars will ride on 4-wheel 41-BNO-11 trucks with blackened metal wheels. A 22" minimum radius is recommended. The Point cars can be ordered from Rapido, through a dealer or by visiting the NHRTHA.



Rapido is currently in production of another run of its highly rated HO scale Pacific Car & Foundry class B-70-69/71/75 boxcar.

PC&F built the first series of B-70-69/71/75 boxcars for the Southern Pacific and its subsidiary St. Louis Southwestern (Cotton Belt) in 1972.



In addition to original SP and SSW paint schemes with new road numbers, Rapido is offering the car in a wide range of patches and repaints

including Lake State Railway, a scheme for ROLX-Railroad of Lies and patch outs for SP, SSW and Golden West Service.

The model features full underbody brake rigging, scale-sized draft gear with a detailed Hydra-Cushion underframe, multiple door styles, metal grab irons and uncoupling levers and 70-ton trucks with 33" machined metal wheels.

Info: www.rapidotrains.com



Scale Trains plans to deliver HO scale Rivet Counter models of GE ES44AH diesel locomotives decorated in five CSX heritage schemes.



Each locomotive has the CSX blue and yellow scheme up front with individual heritage schemes honoring a predecessor railroad on the car body.



The Rivet Counter series of HO scale models feature LED lighting in the front, rear, and side walkway lights; ground lights, ditch lights and printed and lighted number boards.



In addition to the ACL, Monon, RF&P and NYC schemes shown above, a CSX ES44HA Heritage unit will also be available decorated for L&N. ScaleTrains

has scheduled the release of the Rivet Counter models for late February 2025.

Info: www.scaletains.com



Tangent Scale Models has released a new run of HO scale Greenville 86' high cube quad plug door boxcars with six new

paint schemes. The models feature prototype specific versions of 70-ton Barber S-2 trucks and roller bearing caps. All models feature genuine Kadee scale couplers.



Paint schemes in this run include Baltimore & Ohio, Detroit & Toledo Short Line, Canadian

National, Norfolk & Western, Union Pacific, and Southern. Two undecorated kits are also available, one with 1969-1970 End-of-Car Cushioning and the other with 1970 Center-of-Car Cushioning. Info: www.tangentscalemodels.com



R. Bale

ELECTRO MOTIVE DIVISION SD60 LOCOMOTIVE

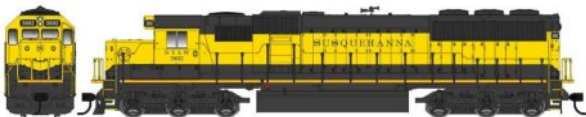
The SD60 is a 3,800hp, 6-axle diesel electric locomotive designed for heavy-duty drag freight or medium-speed freight service. It was introduced by EMD in 1984 with production continuing until 1995. The clean lines of the huge body were similar to its SD50 predecessor. Most of the changes were internal including a new 16-cylinder prime mover, wheel slip control, and microprocessor controls. Nearly 600 SD60s were purchased by American railroads. If the cab on the SD60s looks familiar it is because it is the same cab EMD used on its SD40-2s. EMD also offered the SD60 with a wide safety cab.



Walthers is preparing another production run of its popular SD60.

This version of the Mainline series HO scale model will have the original Spartan cab.

In addition to the EMD demo unit patched for Oakway shown above, road names will include Canadian Pacific, CITX-Group Capital Finance, Kansas City Southern, Soo Line and New York, Susquehanna & Western.



The economy priced Mainline model will have molded drill points to aid



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consumer installation of grab irons using a Walthers detail kit available as a separate purchase. This Mainline locomotive will have the same drive mechanism that Walthers uses on its Proto series models. DCC versions will be available with an ESU Sound & DCC decoder. DC units will come with a 28mm round speaker installed. Availability is scheduled for winter 2025.

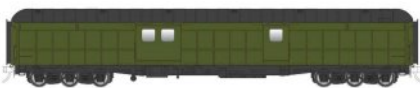
Walthers plans to deliver three front-end baggage and baggage/RPO cars next spring. Leading the list is a Proto series lightweight 73' Budd baggage car



Decorating schemes will include Amtrak Phase I (left), Amtrak Phase II and Amtrak Phase III.



Amtrak Phase IV cars will be available with a choice of black or white lettering.



baggage car. The Walthers Proto series HO scale model will be available next spring with both arched and clerestory roofs. Models with arched roofs will be available decorated for Union Pacific and unlettered in Pullman green.

Heavyweight passenger equipment will be well represented by an ACF 70'



Heavyweight baggage cars with clerestory roofs will be available for Chesapeake & Ohio (tri-color), C&O (Pullman green), New York Central, MOW and unlettered in Pullman green.

Heavyweight baggage cars with clerestory roofs will be available for Chesapeake & Ohio (tri-



car. The Proto series models will come with mail bag catcher arms and a 30' interior postal apartment detailed with mailbag stanchions and sorting cases.

Completing the heavyweight group is a 70' combination baggage/Railway Post Office

Decorating schemes for Baggage/RPOs with clerestory roofs include Chesapeake & Ohio (Pullman green), C&O (tri-color), New York Central and unlettered in Pullman green.



Cars with arched roofs will be available decorated for Union Pacific, Illinois Central and

unlettered in Pullman green.

Both the heavyweight baggage and baggage/RPO car will come with diaphragms and six-wheel Pullman-style plain-bearing trucks with machined metal wheels. Walthers recommends a 24" minimum track radius for the heavyweight cars.



Mainline freight cars scheduled for release by Walthers in the winter of 2025 include this 50' PS 4000 cu. ft. high-side gondola. Features on the HO scale models include interior bracing and roller-bearing trucks with 36" machined metal wheels.



Road names will be Burlington Northern, CPOX-Consumers Power, DEEX- Detroit Edison, JTTX-Joseph Transport, FPPX-Fayette Power Project and Southern Railway. An

undecorated model will be included in the mix.



Also coming from Walthers during the winter of 2025 is a 50' PS2DC 4427 cu. ft. covered hopper. The triple-bay car features a 4-3-4 exterior rib pattern.



Road names for this release include Denver & Rio Grande Western, Western Maryland, TLDX-Cargill, TLDX-Archer-Daniels-Midland,

TLCX-Indiana Farm Bureau, TLDX-Agway, TLDX-Cooperative Marketing Association, TLDX-Continental and undecorated.



A group of 89' TTX channel-side flatcars is included in Walthers 2025 winter production schedule. Road names will be TTX (Brown), TTX (Yellow), KTTX (Yellow), KTTX (Brown) and JTTX. Features include C-shaped channel side sills and a heavy cast metal underframe.



All Walthers models mentioned in this report come with Proto MAX metal knuckle couplers. Info: www.walthers.com

N SCALE PRODUCT NEWS



Athearn's
March 2026
production
schedule

includes a UP 4-8-8-4 Big Boy steam locomotive and the unique Snowbus (caboose No. 25809) that accompanied Big Boy No. 4041 on its recent eight-week Heartland of America Tour that began August 28 and concludes in late October.

Athearn is creating new tooling for its N scale version of the 4-8-8-4 Big Boy. Details will include polished cylinder heads, commemorative plaques on the boiler and tender and PTC equipment. Additional features include illuminated number boards and headlights, correctly operating eccentric cranks and a detailed backhead with printed gauges.



The Snowbuses were modified CA-11 cabooses used to ferry crews to locations otherwise unreachable in the worst weather. Athearn's N scale version of the Snowbuses will feature a unique body style with enclosed end porches, non-opening windows, MU pedestal and rubber signal hoses.



Also coming from Athearn is another run of 30,000 gallon Ethanol tank cars. The N scale models will have photo-etched metal walkways and end platforms, wire rails and end handrails, printed placards, and screw mounted 100-ton roller-bearing trucks



In addition to PROX-Procor decorating schemes will be CHVX-Chevron, DODX-U.S. Department of Defense, NCPX-Nebraska Corn Processing, ACFX-Chief, and GATX-Reeve Agri Energy.



An N scale 40' Pfaudler milk car is being prepared by Athearn for release in March 2026. The injection molded model will have screw-mounted express-type trucks with machined metal wheels.



Decorating schemes available on this release will be Boston & Maine, Central Vermont, Hood's, Atlantic & Pacific, Renken's Milk, and Hendricks Dairies.



Athearn has included a Pullman-Standard 4427 cu. ft. triple-bay covered hopper in its early 2026 production schedule. Features include body-mounted McHenry knuckle couplers and screw-mounted roller-bearing trucks with 36" machined metal wheels.



Road names will be Union Pacific, Chicago & North Western, Missouri-Kansas-Texas, Missouri Pacific, International Minerals & Chemical Corp, and Louis Dreyfus Corp.
Info: www.athearn.com



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Atlas has recently released a new Master series 25,500 gallon tank car to dealers. The impressive N scale model is based on a general purpose

insulated prototype built by Trinity. Road names include CHSX, TILX (2019 repaint), TILX (01 group), TILX (AGP), GATX (Owensboro Grain), GATX (Soy Power Bio fuels), and NATX (UTCK repaint). Special features on all schemes include see-through walkways and top platform grating.

Info: shop.atlasrr.com



Broadway Limited is preparing a production run of SD40-2 diesel locomotives in N scale. Replicating an 'original

standard' SD40-2, BLI's model features independently controllable headlights, cab lights, number boards, and ditch lights as appropriate. The model is equipped with Micro-Trains compatible couplers.



Roadnames included in the run are Santa Fe, Burlington Northern, Canadian Pacific, Milwaukee (Bicentennial),

Norfolk Southern (high short hood), Rock Island, Union Pacific (Desert Victory), Wheeling & Lake Erie, and two fantasy schemes, US Navy and USMC.



Sound equipped models feature the Paragon4 Sound & Control System with Rolling Thunder, and a unique road

number in each paint scheme will be available as a DCC-ready Stealth model. The models feature all-wheel electrical pickup and separately applied details such as handrails, grab irons, horn, bell, and antenna.

Info: www.broadway-limited.com



Kato USA has released an N scale version of an SD70MAC diesel locomotive. Features include all-wheel electrical pick-up and blackened metal wheels in trucks that replicate

the HTCR Phase II trucks. Additional features include a five-pole motor with dual brass flywheels, walkway-mounted lighted ditch lights, directional headlight, illuminated preprinted number boards and Kato magnetic knuckle couplers. DC models are ready for a drop-in DCC decoder.



Road names are BNSF and three Alaska Railroad schemes: Moose Pass, North Pole, and 100 Years.



Kato has also announced a Spring 2025 arrival of N scale EMD SD80MAC locomotives in Conrail and Norfolk Southern paint schemes. Features on the

models include the Kato five-pole motor with dual flywheels, directional headlights, preprinted number boards, Kato magnetic knuckle couplers, and a drop-in DCC friendly mechanism. The models are available in DC, DCC, and DCC+ Sound.

Info: www.katousa.com



New releases from **Micro-Trains** include a 4-pack of class XPI insulated boxcars decorated for Norfolk Southern. The N scale

models come with Barber roller-bearing trucks.



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This 89' Western Pacific flatcar also rides on Barber roller-bearing trucks. The car is

designed to carry two 45' trailers.



Micro-Trains' N scale Western Pacific wood caboose is based on a prototype built in 1931. It's updated silver and orange livery was inspired by the

California Zephyr's 1952 paint scheme. The model comes with Andrews plain-bearing trucks.



The inspiration for this N scale Western Maryland model is a B-29-class plug-door boxcar built in 1967 with a cushioned underframe and

Barber roller-bearing trucks.



This N scale ATSF Bx-188-class excess height boxcar was rebuilt from a smaller car in the 1970s. It featured a cushioned underframe, movable bulkheads, and Barber roller-bearing trucks.



The Thrall FT-44-class flatcar is equipped with ASF Ride Control trucks and was used for hauling

large vehicles and bulky industrial loads. Built in 1967 for ATSF, they were still in service when BNSF was formed from the merger of BN and ATSF in 1995.



Completing Micro-Trains list of recent releases is this 60' TTX high-cube rib-side boxcar. It appears that the TBOX

patch and modified double plug doors were installed after graffiti artists had expressed themselves.

Info: Contact a dealer.



EMPIRE BUILDER 1947



RailSmith is booking reservations for a pair of lightweight duplex sleepers decorated for Great Northern's streamlined edition of the Empire Builder. Cars open for reservation now are GN Gunsight Pass and CB&Q Red Gap Pass. The N scale models represent prototype equipment built by Pullman-Standard in 1947.



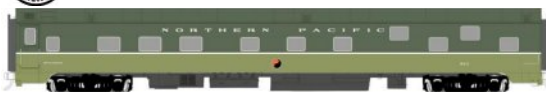
Western Star



Based largely on the popularity of its Empire Builder, GN introduced the Western Star in 1951. Rail Smith is taking reservations for two streamlined duplex sleepers assigned to the Western Star: Indian Pass and Stevens Pass.



North Coast Limited



Rail Smith is also taking reservations for a coach, sleeper and a dome sleeper decorated for Northern Pacific's North Coast Limited. The N scale models are based on prototypes delivered in 1948 decorated in the Pine Tree color scheme.

Info: lowellsmith.net



Showcase Miniatures has announced the availability of a kit for an N scale Class C 79-ton three-truck Shay locomotive. The narrow gauge model is designed to operate on Z scale track.

The kit provides components and instructions to assemble it into West Side Lumber Company No. 8 or No. 9. The multi-media



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kit is composed of pewter, resin and 3D printed parts. Two photo-etched frets provide options for detailing the Nn3 locomotive. The assembled model can be operated with one or two powered trucks which are available as a separate purchase from Showcase Miniatures. To see the locomotive in action visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=Af0dOF9SfuQ



To accompany the Shay kit, Showcase Miniatures is offering a set of accessories frequently found on logging locomotives. The set include oil cans, tool boxes and oil drums. Info: www.showcaseminiatures.com

STRUCTURES AND SCENIC SUPPLIES



Athearn's March 2026 production schedule includes a group of HO scale Freightliner COE tractors. The models will have a molded car interior, clear

window glazing and rubber tires.



Decorating schemes will be ABF Freight System, Gordon Trucking, USF Reddaway, Schneider National, Saia and Viking Freight.



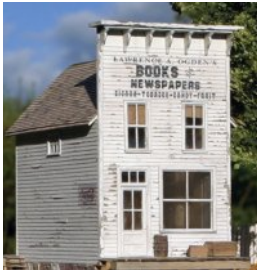
Matching the Freightliners is a pack of two 28' wedge trailers and a dolly decorated in the same schemes as the tractors.

Info: www.athearn.com



Berkshire Valley Models has a new HO scale craftsman kit for a classic North American barn. The laser-cut kit can be built with or without the dormers. The structure measures 7.5" x 5.5" x 5.75" high. Assembly and painting are required.

Info: www.berkshirevalleymodels.com



Among the newest HO scale craftsman kits from **BEST** (Brian Edgerly Scale Trains) is Ogden's Bookstore. The HO scale model is loosely based on a structure still standing (barely) in Bodie, CA.

Originally known as the Swazey Hotel, the little two-story building was later a casino and finally a clothing store. The kit includes laser-cut wood components, injection molded windows and doors, peel & stick shingles, copper flashing and a cast foundation. The model has a footprint of 2.75" x 5.125". Assembly and painting are required.

Info: www.besttrains.com



Frenchman River has released an updated edition of Becky Sue's House of Beauty. The 1:48 scale kit was re-designed in 2023 by Thomas Yorke. Features include hand-sculpted brickwork and wooden storefront. The building would be appropriate for any era from 1890s to present and can easily be repurposed for a different business. The kit

includes resin walls and accessories, window glazing material, decal signage, tar paper roofing material, aluminum flashing and instructions. The pictured bill board is available as a separate



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purchase. The assembled structure measures 2.875" wide x 5" deep by 5.125" tall.



Frenchman River Model Works has introduced an HO scale kit for a 169' three-track carfloat. The model represents an early 1950s prototype that was used to transfer freight cars from shore to shore as well as for interchange operations between different railroads.

The kit consists of detailed resin castings that feature scale weld lines, scuttle hatches, cleat bases and toggle pockets all cast in place along with three separate cast resin track bumpers. Cleats and bridge hooks are well detailed Britannia metal castings. Rail does not come with this kit as many modelers have their preference in rail size.

The assembled model measures 23.25" long x 5.5" wide. The float will accommodate up to eight 40' cars. The kit does not include the tugboat and cars shown in the photo.



This new HO scale kit from Frenchman River represents a through-girder pontoon float bridge commonly used in active coastal areas such as New York

Harbor. The land end of the prototype bridge rested on pivoting bridge shoes allowing the water end of the bridge to rise and fall with the tide. The pontoon that the outer end of the bridge floated on could also be raised and lowered using water pumped into or out of it as ballast. This would allow the crew to adjust the bridge to match the floating height of the carfloat. The crew would use the winches to align and draw together the carfloat with the bridge. Once aligned the toggle bars would be extended from the bridge through the toggle pockets on the bow of the carfloat locking them together to facilitate loading or unloading rail cars. Note that the switch and the rails are not included.

The kit consists of a one piece cast resin bridge with girders. Details cast in place include rivets, wood planking, decking and toggle assemblies. The kit includes a resin pontoon and cast resin bridge abutment with integral bridge shoes. Additional details include lead-free pewter winch drums, laser-cut gears and hand wheels for the winch assembly. There are rail chair details in the casting, but rail is not included in the kit. This float bridge is dimensionally compatible with the company's Three Track Carfloat.

Info: www.frenchmanriver.com



New from **Maple Leaf Trains** is a collection of 10 hobo figures in two sets. Set 1 includes five unpainted figures, one standing male, two seated males, and two seated or reclining females, one with her boots off. Set 2 is also five unpainted figures, a male and female walking, a male climbing on a car, a seated male, and a female lying on her front, supported on her elbows.

Info: www.mapleleaftrains.com



Micro-Trains has released a new HO (yes, HO) scale Grain Storage structure kit. A small grain elevator enclosing a boxcar, the kit comes undecorated and unassembled. Based on photos, additional details such as small crates, oil barrels, and sacked grain are included. The included boxcar appears to be an Accurail

3100 series 40' insulated plug door steel boxcar which is decorated and weathered on one side.

Info: See a dealer.



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New from **Mine Mount Models** are two new HO scale kits as part of the Echo Point Harbor series. The Lighthouse is a laser-cut structure featuring resin details including a clear Fresnel lens, stone base, and roof, shake shingles, Tichy door and window, and instructions with color photos. It builds into a structure measuring 1.75" x 2.5" x 4.75".



The second model is the Sunken Boat, which consists of a laser cut pilot house and resin half-sunk hull, life ring, cleats, and boat wheel. The completed model measures 3.5" x 1.5" x 1.5".

Info: minemountmodels.com



If you've ever wanted to model the corn fields around the baseball field in Field of Dreams, **miniprints** has introduced 3D printed rows of corn perfect for the job of swallowing up your little plastic baseball players. Consisting of eight 6-inch rows of

54 unpainted HO scale corn stalks planted 9.5 inches apart, each set totals 432 corn plants. Printed as separate rows, each 43 scale foot row can be painted and detailed prior to 'planting' on your layout. With three scale foot spacing between rows, the set covers a space approximately 2.8 inches x 6 inches.

Info: www.miniprints.com/product/corn-rows-8



Monster Models has released HO and S scale kits for this aging brick industrial structure. Titled John Burney's Carriage Shop, the model is based on a structure built in Dublin County, Indiana in the mid-1840s. The model can be built as the Carriage Shop or modernized for any light industrial business. Components in the kit include 3D engraved

aged American Bond brick walls with a stone foundation, 3D engraved brick corners and laser-cut storefront header, windows and doors, roof trim and raised seam metal roofing. Info: www.larkspurlaserart.com

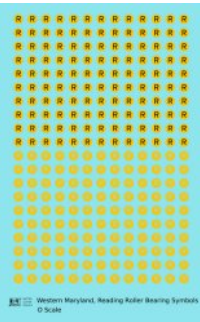


Sylvan Scale Models has HO scale kits for both reefer and dry versions of 1951-1955 34' tandem-axle Fruehauf stainless steel round nose trailers.



Also available from Sylvan is an HO scale cast resin kit for a 1934 Ford 5-window street rod. Info: sylvanscalemodels.com

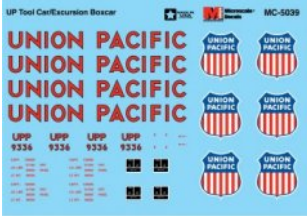
NEW DECALS, SIGNS AND FINISHING PRODUCTS



K4 Decals has issued new lettering sets for a Burlington Northern 50' insulated boxcar, Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac

heavyweight passenger cars in bronze/gold and Western Maryland Reading roller-bearing symbols in yellow. Also new are decals for a BN ore jenny, Southern Railway wood chip hopper and a Seaboard Cos Line 40' steel boxcar. All decals in this report are white unless stated otherwise. K4 Decals are available in all popular scales.

Info: www.K4decals.com



New and recently restocked decals from **Microscale** include Union Pacific 60' class BE-70 boxcars and Department of

Defense (DODX) decals for the U.S. Army and Air Force. Also new are decals for Canadian Pacific NSX and Trinity covered hoppers, and BN executive scheme for SD70MAC locomotives. All of the above decals are available in N and HO scale. Decals for New York Central diesels (1960-1968) in the cigar band scheme are available in N, HO and O scale.

Info: www.microscale.com

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**BRIEFLY NOTED AT PRESS TIME ...**

Athearn has shipped HO scale SW1500 diesel switchers to its dealers. Genesis series EMD SD70s are scheduled to arrive at dealers in later this month ...

Perry Becker, popular hobby store proprietor and notable steam era photographer passed away late last month at his home in Morgan MN ...

Bowser has extended the preorder deadline for its HO scale RS3 locomotive to December 1, 2024. See the July 2024 issue of MRH for information including road names ...

David Casdorff has released the printed version of *Auto Racks Since 1984 Volume 1: A Field Guide to the Greenbrier Multi-Max™ Auto Racks*. Details on the 96 page paperback are available at: www.lulu.com/shop/david-casdorff/auto-racks-since-1984-volume-1/paperback/product-57gk64p.html?page=1&pageSize=4 Volume 2 is scheduled for release later this month ...

English's Model Railroad Shop, Division of Bowser Manufacturing, is selling correctly sized coal loads for Accurail, Athearn, Bowser, Intermountain, Stewart and Walthers HO scale hopper cars ...

Rail Smith is accepting advance reservations for a limited run of a lightweight coach and sleeper for Southern Railway's Royal Palm, and Silver series sleepers for Pennsylvania Railroad's South Wind. All in N scale ... ■

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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: 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

October - November 2024

CANADA, ONTARIO, MARYHILL, October 19, 2024. Waterloo Region Model Railway Club Fall Open House. 1589 Maryhill Road (Woolwich Township Road #56).

Info: www.waterlooregionmodelrailwayclub.ca/open-house

CALIFORNIA, CROCKETT, October 26-27. Carquinez Model Railroad Society Open House. 645 Loring Avenue.

Info: cmrstrainclub.org

CALIFORNIA, SACRAMENTO, November 2-3, 2024.

International Railfair 2024. Cal Expo, Building C, 1600 Exposition Blvd.

Info: internationalrailfair.com

INDIANA, FORT WAYNE, October 19, 2024. Train show and swap meet, sponsored by the 3 Rivers Division of the NMRA. Allen County War Memorial Coliseum, 4000 Parnell Avenue.

Info: dehanley665@gmail.com

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

MICHIGAN, EAST LANSING, November 10, 2024. Lansing Model Railroad Club Show and Sale. Michigan State University Pavilion, 4301 Farm Lane (corner of Mt. Hope, Farm Lane, and College Roads).

Info: lmrc.org



MINNESOTA, BURNSVILLE, November 2, 2024. North Star RPM Meet. Burnsville Wyndham Hotel, 14201 Nicollet Ave.
Info: www.facebook.com/events/548423120848758

NEVADA, SPARKS, October 16-19, 2024. San Francisco Overland, 2024 SPH&TS Convention. Nugget Casino Resort, 1100 Nugget Avenue.
Info: sphts.org/convention

NORTH CAROLINA, DURHAM, October 17-20, 2024. Piedmont Junction 2024, Mid-Eastern Region NMRA Convention. Raleigh-Durham Marriott.
Info: piedmontjunction.cpd13.org

OHIO, CAMBRIDGE, October 27, 2024. Sixth Annual Buckeye Division Train Show. Pritchard Laughlin Center, 7033 Glenn Hwy.
Info: div6-mcr-nmra.org/trainshow.html

PENNSYLVANIA, LINDEN, October 19, 2024. Annual Fall Train and Craft Meet. Woodward Fire Company, 4147 N Route 220 Hwy.
Info: www.ccmrr.org/events.html

TEXAS, FOREST HILL (Fort Worth), October 25-26, 2024. DFW-Red River RPM. Forest Hill Civic Center, 6901 Wichita St.
Info: redriverrpm.org

WASHINGTON, KENT, November 9, 2024. Boeing Employees Model Railroad Club Annual Swap Meet. Ken Commons Community Center, 525 4th Avenue North.
Info: www.bemrrc.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 2024-2025 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

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

(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

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

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

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

Info: cdjhyoung@yahoo.com

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

Info: www.cc-gc.org



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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, March 8, 2025. Willamette Model Railroad Club Annual Swap Meet. Kliever Armory, 10000 33rd Avenue.

Info: wmrrc.com

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, 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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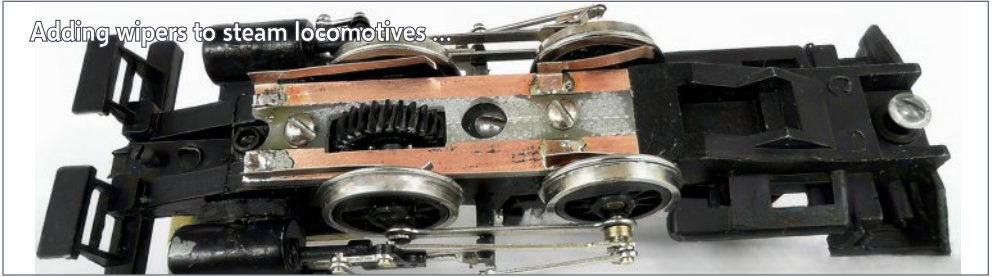
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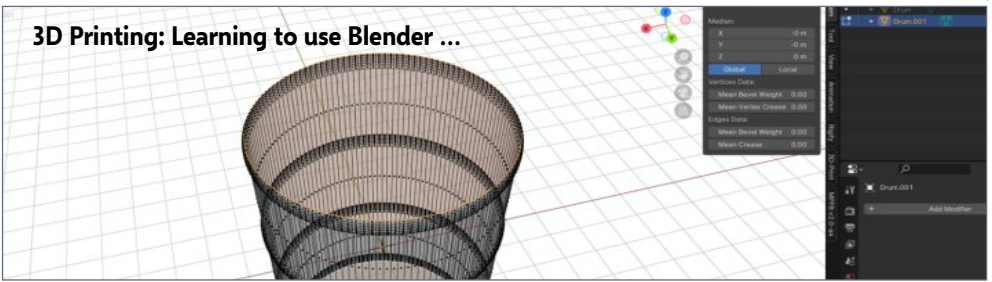
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