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DECEMBER 2024 | FREE

MRH

MODEL RAILROAD HOBBYIST



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- Ops: What trains to run, part 1
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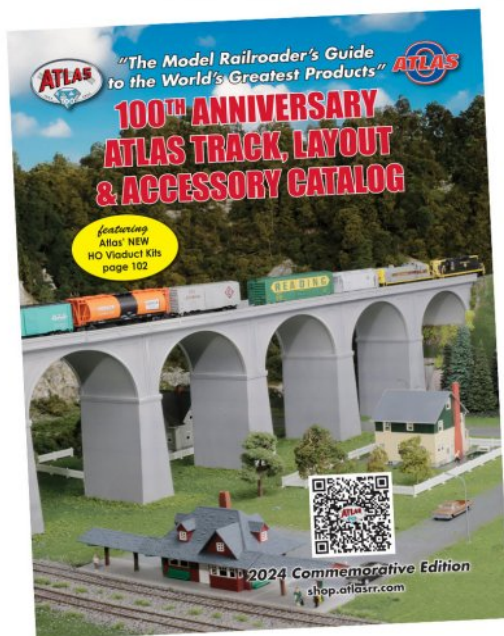
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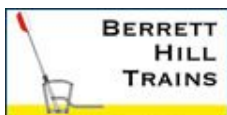
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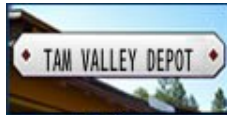
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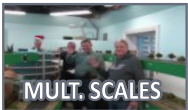
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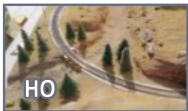
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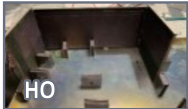
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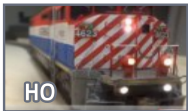
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RICHARD BALE and JEFF SHULTZ



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PUBLISHER'S MUSINGS



Model Railroad Hobbyist | December 2024

JOE FUGATE: GETTING STARTED IN THE MODEL RAILROADING HOBBY ON A SHOESTRING



ONE OF THE MOST COMMON COMPLAINTS YOU FIND ONLINE ABOUT THE HOBBY IS HOW EXPENSIVE IT HAS BECOME.

Next, due to the rise in hobby prices, folks comment that they don't see how anyone can do the hobby with today's high prices.

I'm here to tell you if you're starting out in the model railroading hobby, it does not have to be outrageously expensive.

Before I get into how to do the hobby on a shoestring, I want to look at this hobby from the perspective of why model railroading, of all hobbies?

Let's start with the youth – many folks who are in the hobby first get introduced to it as a kid. For the Boomer generation (born 1946-1965), it was almost always a train set at Christmas. For GenX (born 1966-1985), it was often getting gifted a train set or going to a train show.

For Millennials (born 1986-2005), it's often Brio, Thomas, Polar Express, or visiting a train show. For post-Millennials (born 2006-2025), it's often the same as Millennials, plus add to the list seeing model trains in action on YouTube.

Speaking of YouTube, when I do a general search there for model train videos, I see there's over 7 million videos. If each video is only two minutes long (many are longer) and if I were to watch

those videos for 8 hours a day, seven days a week, it will take me 80 years to watch all those videos. That's a lot of videos on model trains!

Many other hobbies exist today that compete with model railroading. Here's the cost of entry into one of these competing hobbies:

RC cars (realistic replica + controlled) - \$250.

Video games (console + two most popular games) - \$500.

RC airplanes (realistic replica + controller) - \$300.

So what about model railroading? Let's split the difference and say we have \$400 to get started with model trains. What could we do with a \$400 budget?

For this exercise, I'm going to assume we're putting the track down on a 4x8 sheet of plywood that we can temporarily put on top of a folding table and that we already have a folding table we can use for this.

Getting started in model railroading for \$400

One of the place online the frugal modeler can go is eBay. They sell a lot of used model train goodies for reasonable prices. The prices I quoted earlier did not include shipping, so for this discussion I will likewise ignore shipping for our model train starter goodies.

To get started in the hobby I want a starter DCC system, an HO locomotive with DCC installed, a half-dozen cars, and some HO track with a couple switches.

I can find a used DCC starter system on eBay for about \$150.

I found a used Santa Fe Super Chief diesel with DCC installed for \$60. As for the rolling stock, I'm interested in some kits - I want to do more than just "buy" my way into the hobby. I actually want to do some hands-on modeling with some nicely detailed kits where I can say, "I built that."



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PUBLISHER'S MUSINGS | 3

I'm looking for more than just "shake-the-box" kits. I found a set of twelve Details West box car kits for \$20.

So far, I'm at \$240, so I have \$160 left for track. Let's go deluxe: Kato Unitrack. I can get an HV1 loop set (\$88) and an HV2 passing siding set (\$88) for \$176. Yes, we went over by \$16, but we end up with a pretty functional combination for \$416:

DCC starter set, HO DCC diesel loco, twelve nicely detailed Detail West boxcar kits to build, and and a loop of quality track with a passing siding.

(If you want to get technical, I'll have to invest in some #148 Kadee whisker couplers for my boxcars, at a price of \$5.00 per two pair on eBay, for an additional cost of \$30. So all told, \$446.)



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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.

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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)

**HO****N****Pacific Western Rail Systems**

Notice I did not go for a train set. I could get a lot of train set on eBay for \$400. However, by piecing together my own train equipment, I get a solid foundation I can build on.

A train set typically has a controller you will end up junking if you stay in the hobby for very long. The rolling stock is generally not very detailed, and the track often is not the greatest as well.

With my purchase, for less than \$500, I ended up with:

- A DCC system that I can build upon later
- A DCC equipped locomotive from the get go
- Nicely detailed rolling stock that will look great
- Good track that I can either build upon or can use later as staging track.

My main point here: if you insist on buying top-of-the-line all brand new, then you will pay a lot more than \$450 to get started in the hobby. But thanks to eBay, you don't need break the bank. You can get started on a shoestring.

I wanted to make a quality start in the hobby, so that's just what I did. With my approach I started right out of the gate with a foot up because what I'm going with a good bit better than the typical train set.

But if I'm a money-strapped young teen and want to get started in the hobby at the most rudimentary level, I *can* find old unopened train sets for less than \$100 that include a loco, cars, track, and a power pack.

If you're really strapped for cash, then it's even possible to get something you can run right out of the box for just a C note.

So do not overlook eBay. It lists hundreds of thousands of used model train goodies for not much money at all compared to new.





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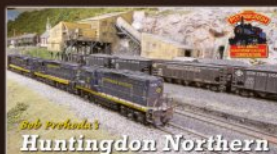


Pre-production car artwork by Rapido Trains, Inc.

The LOUNGE CAR

Guest: Mike Confalone Topic: Latest on Mike's Allagash

Mike Confalone: Backdrops, track weathering, and lots more!



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Speaking to parents about model trains

Before I leave this discussion, let's talk about whether or not model railroading is a good hobby for a youngster.

If you know anything about the maker movement, it's the idea that we want our kids to unplug and start doing something with their hands. Get involved in the real world, stop living completely in the virtual world online.

Model railroading is a superb maker hobby. It's actually a mega-hobby - by that I mean it's a hobby that encompassed several other hobbies.

To get the trains up and running involves electrical wiring and basic electronics. The DCC part of the hobby is full of computer programming concepts that can go as deep as you care to go.

There's a planning side to the hobby that involves track planning, graphics design, and these days, computer drawing software. These skills are foundational to a great career if your child develops a passion for them.



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There's also carpentry and woodworking skill needed to build layout benchwork. If you ever wanted your child to develop an appreciation for these areas and to develop skill using tools, this is a sure way for them to learn it hands-on.

There's also the artistic side. Model railroad scenery involves painting, making 3D scenery, working with a variety of materials from plaster to foam to cardboard to plastics to rubber molds.

There's also learning the concepts of lighting, light color, light temperature, color matching, and a host of other visualization techniques that introduce your child to concepts the most savvy Hollywood producer is familiar with.

Let me wrap this up with a Yale educator talking about the sophisticated and powerful preparation for life doing the model train hobby can have for young minds.

Watch this YouTube video to find out how great the model railroading hobby is for kids [1].



1. Watch this video to see how the model railroading hobby is superb at preparing young minds for life in the adult world.



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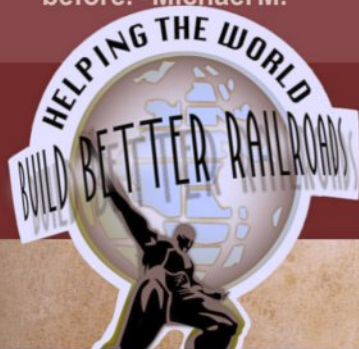
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- 1st** Let's talk ops: Getting started with ops is easy
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- 2nd** DIY 3D printing: Learning Blender
- 3rd** Limited Modeler: Further Ballville Branch Planning

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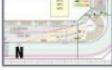

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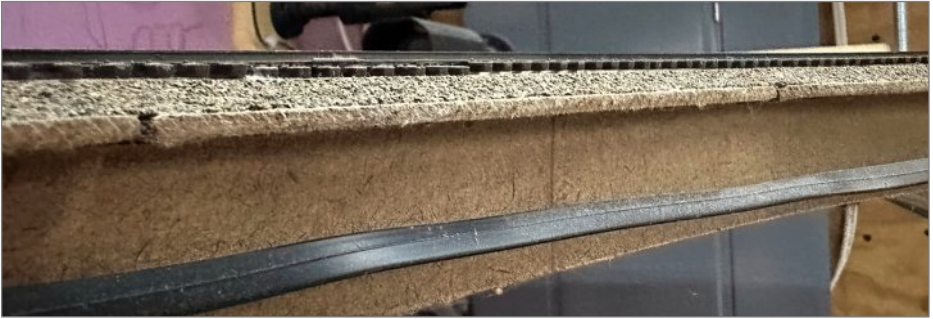
Forum

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THIS
MONTH

Model Railroad Hobbyist | December 2024

Compiled by **JOE FUGATE**



Cork roadbed on spline?

MRH forum member **gregc** asked if folks would recommend putting cork roadbed on top of spline, or did they have a better idea?

MRH forum member **amsnick** (Nick Santo) posted the photo above of his cork roadbed on top of his masonite spline. Nick also puts a layer of masonite on top of the spline to get a perfectly smooth gap-free surface to work with.

The forum members illustrating how they prepare their spline roadbed for the track. Read the full thread to see all the good ideas.



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

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



1. MRH forum member **dauidellinger77** (David E.) asked what's the best sound for a DC layout, and I (Joe Fugate) suggested the SoundTraxx Blunami.

Best DC sound option?

MRH forum member **dauidellinger77** asked for recommendations on the best loco sound for DC. Yours truly (Joe Fugate) made this recommendation:

“For my money, the best sound you can get to run on DC powered track is the SoundTraxx Blunami. You use a phone or tablet to control it. No DCC system needed. DC powered rails work just fine. This is a feature-rich motor controller with many great sound and lighting features, as well as a superb motor controller for either steam or diesel. Essentially, you get a top-of-the-line sound system inside your loco and it works great on DC track.”

To see all the suggestions, view the full thread!

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

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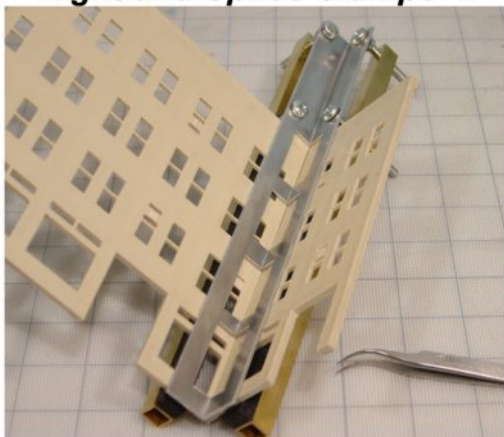


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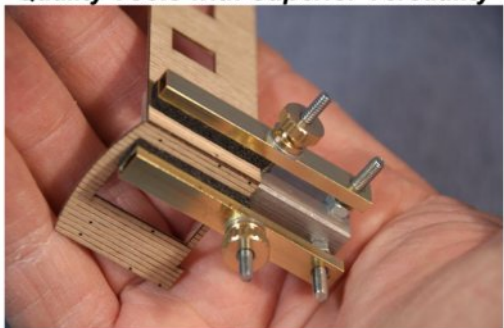
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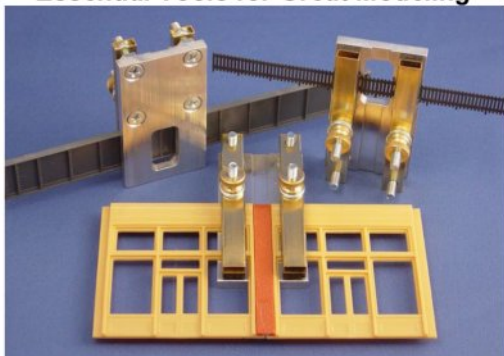
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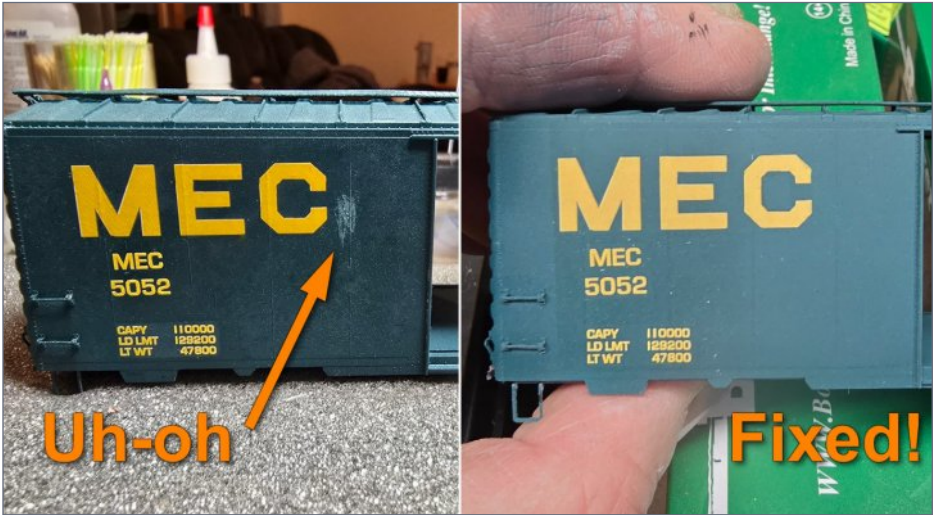


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3. MRH forum member **NorthWoods Bill** (William R.) asked for ideas on how to cleanly fix this painting blemish. Member **thewizard1** (Charles D.) provided the answer – and it worked like a charm!

How do I fix this nasty paint blemish?

MRH forum member **NorthWoods Bill** (William R.) posted a photo [3] of this rather nasty paint finish boo-boo he made and asked for ideas on how to fix it without a total repaint:

“I wound up repainting that area of the side using some expert tips from the Wizard. I applied a clear coat (after waiting a day or two) and then I took this final picture of the repair. I think it has disappeared 100% and I learned a couple new techniques to boot!”

The final result [3, right half] does look amazing! You would never guess there was ever a blemish in the paint job.

Read the full thread on the MRH forum for all the details.

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

Recent Weekly Photo Fun threads

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

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



4. *MRH* forum member [rjthomas909](#) (RJ) posted this cool photo without comment. We love the simple realism, finely crafted scenery, and the low camera angle.

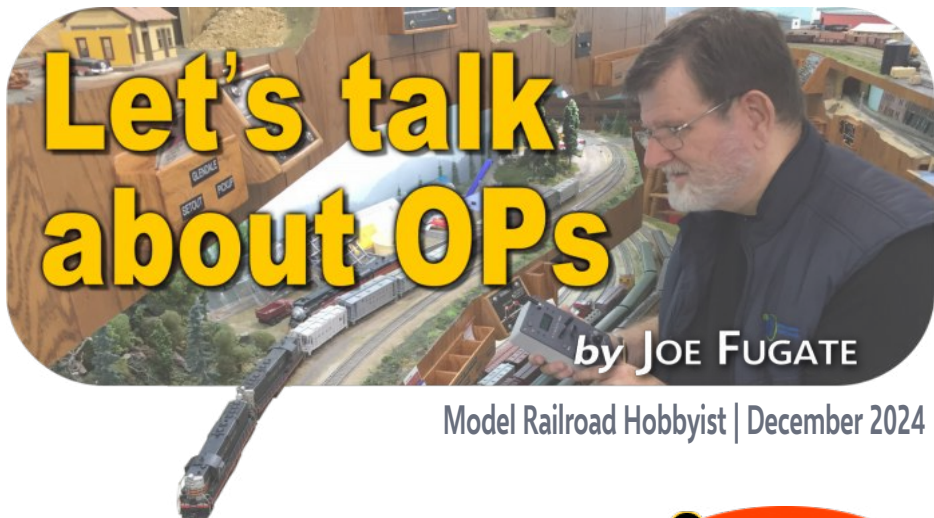


5. We would say there's been a slight mishap here! *MRH* forum member [thewizard1](#) (Charles D.) posted this photo without comment. Someone asked, "What's the story on that boxcar? Employee smoke break got out of hand? Flour explosion?" Charles replied, "Hobos smoking weed."

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Getting started with realistic ops: determining what trains to run, part 1



REALISTIC OPERATION, boiled down to its simplest form, means our model trains have a prototypical purpose for running. Once we know the train's purpose, we can add real-railroad-inspired train-running methods that minimize model railroad thoughts.

A model railroad thought reminds us this is just a toy train that's not real. For realistic ops, we want to imagine we're running a massive full sized train that needs to be handled with skill if it is to get where it's going safely and without mishap.

Let's start with the very basics. This train isn't running just because the engineer got bored and wanted to see some scenery. The railroad is transporting freight or people somewhere. This much should be pretty obvious.

But as we delve into the details, things may not be so obvious. What are the two most basic types of real trains that run?

THROUGH TRAIN: A through train is a train that runs from one yard to another yard many miles away.



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1. To illustrate the concepts in many of my ops columns, I'm using my Siskiyou Line 1 as an example. Here a guest operator is running the Coos Bay Hauler, a train that often used GP40 mothers and a TEBU slug on the head end, just like the prototype Hauler.



LOCAL TRAIN: A local freight train is one that runs from a yard to deliver cars to nearby industries. A local passenger train is one that runs from a yard to a terminating station stop nearby.

Many variations and exceptions of these two basic train types exist, but if you get these two down, you have a good foundation for more in-depth understanding of how to give your trains a realistic purpose.

An example of an exception to the above two types is a local train that runs from yard to yard. This is typically called a *TRANSFER RUN* and is used within major metropolitan areas to move a bunch of cars from one yard to another so the cars can then be sent out as a normal *LOCAL TRAIN* from the destination yard to industries.

As a first step to modeling prototype operation, it helps to get some idea of what through trains you want to run and what local trains you want to run.

Now that we've looked at the 50,000-foot level, to determine more precisely which trains to run, let's next look at things from the bottom up in part 2 – the basic flow of an individual railcar.

Then we will put these two perspectives together and get a realistic list of trains to run. ☑

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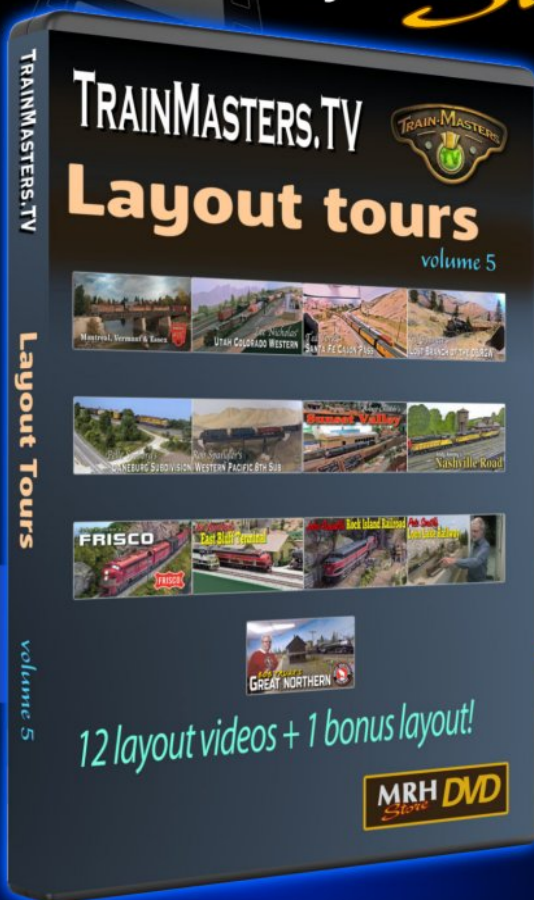




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WHAT'S NEAT

column



Model Railroad Hobbyist | December 2024



KEN PATTERSON COVERS THIS MONTH:

- BROADWAY LIMITED GP30 LOCOMOTIVES IN HO SCALE
- TESTING THE NEW GREAT STUFF PRO CONSTRUCTION ADHESIVE
- JOHN GOODHART'S LAKE ERIE, CINCINNATI & ST. LOUIS RAILROAD
- TRAIN SETS WITH BACHMANN'S TYLER HANEY



click to play video

PHOTOS AND VIDEO OF SUPERB MODELS

THIS MONTH, Ken shows some samples of BLI's latest run of GP30 locomotives in HO scale and visits a layout in the Chicagoland area. He also tests the newest product from Great Stuff and talks train sets with Bachmann's Tyler Haney.

Broadway Limited GP30 locomotives in HO scale



1. Broadway Limited sent Ken two of their new HO scale GP30 locomotives. Here is a Santa Fe locomotive in the “cigar band” scheme.

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

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2. Ken is holding the Reading version of the BLI GP30.
Info: broadway-limited.com

Testing the new Great Stuff Pro Construction Adhesive



3. Over the years, Ken has relied on Great Stuff Pro (the orange stuff in the red can) and Gorilla Glue to bond his foam layout bases together. Great Stuff has just released a new product in the Pro line – Construction Adhesive.



4. Ken's normal methodology includes making a butt-joint of two pieces of adhesive-coated foam, using weights to hold them together as they cure. Then he drops a 15-pound dumbbell on them until they fail.



5. Eventually they fail, but how much of a pounding they endure reflects the strength of the adhesive. Watch the video to see how the new Great Stuff Pro Construction Adhesive compares to the orange stuff and Gorilla Glue.
Info: www.greatstuff.dupont.com



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John Goodhart's Lake Erie, Cincinnati & St. Louis Railroad



6. In October 2023 Ken and the “What’s Neat this Week” crew took a trip to Chicago to visit Lombard Hobbies. They also got to visit several outstanding local layouts, such as John Goodhart’s Lake Erie, Cincinnati & St. Louis Railroad.



7. John’s layout was inspired by John’s desire for an operational railroad layout driven by what he had learned from the now-departed Batavia Model Railroad Club layout in Batavia, IL.



8. With a 725-foot mainline, the layout is contained in an 1,120 sq. ft. room, not including the staging area. The main layout room is 20-25 feet wide by 50 feet long.



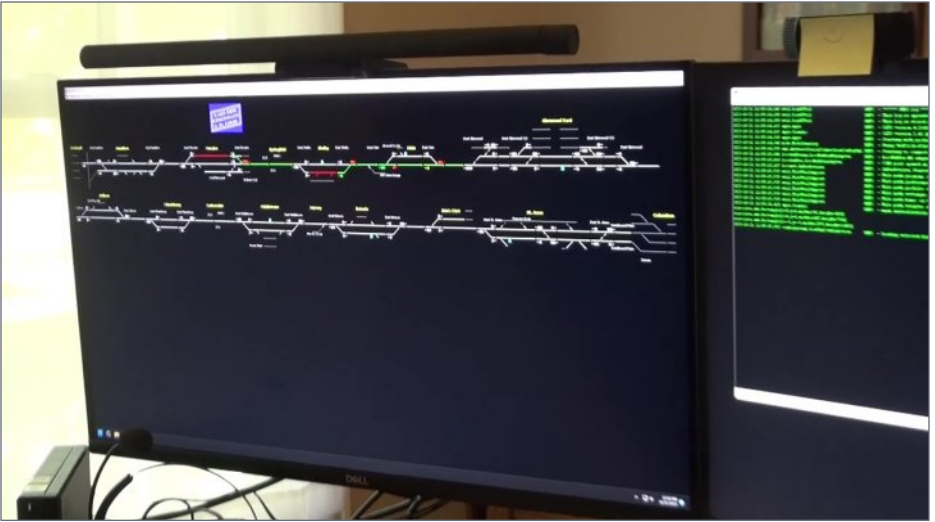
9. The double-deck layout is built at approximately 38" and 53-54" in height, with the layers connected by a helix built on 5/8" fire-code drywall.



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10. Operating sessions last from three to four hours and require a minimum of six operators plus a dispatcher, and frequently consist of 10-16 people.



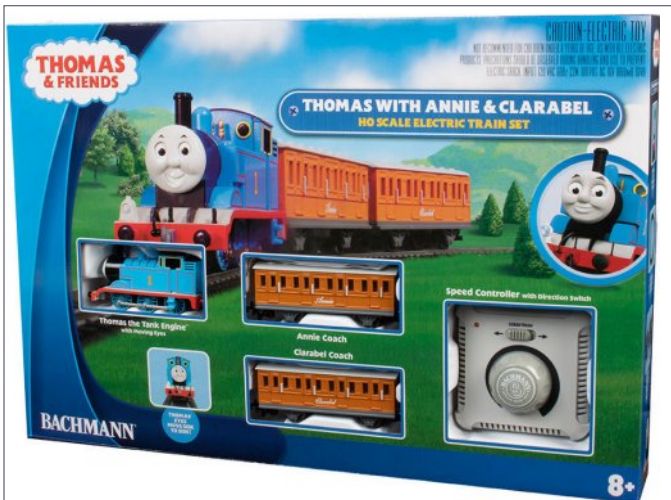
11. The railroad is controlled by a combination of NCE command station and throttles and Digitrax LocoNet for the detection, signals, and turnout control.

Train Sets from Bachmann Trains



12. Tyler Haney of Bachmann Trains joins Ken via Skype to introduce some of the train sets in N, HO, and On30 available this Christmas. The Redhawk and Heartland Explorer are available exclusively from Menards Home Improvement stores and their website.

Info: www.menards.com

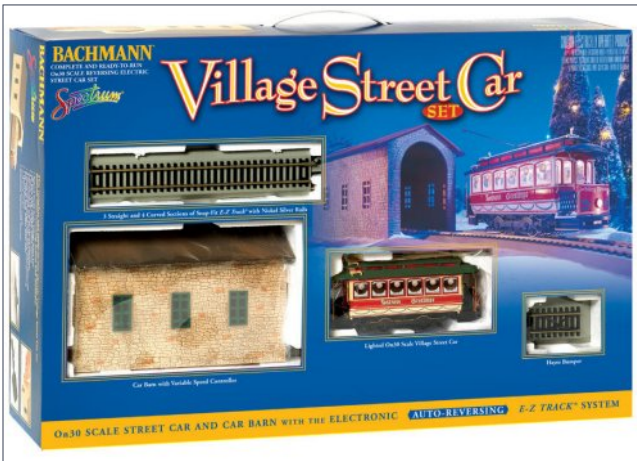


13. For Thomas and Friends fans, Thomas with Annie & Clarabel is available in both HO and N scales, along with Thomas Saves Santa's Sleigh in HO and Emily's Passenger Set in N scale.



14. In N scale, Tyler showed off two DCC Sound Value Train Sets, The Roaring Rails, which features a BNSF GP40, two freight cars, and a caboose, and the Whistle Stop Special, featuring a Baldwin 4-6-0,

two freight cars and a caboose. Both sets come with a 34"x24" oval of E-Z Track and an E-Z Command Plus Control Center.



15. In On30, Tyler highlighted the Village Street Car set, which includes a powered trolley, seven sections of straight and curved auto-reversing E-Z Track, one section of straight E-Z Track with a station house and

speed controller, a Hayes track bumper, and a power pack. Scaled to be displayed with Department 56 and similar Christmas village sets, the trolley automatically travels back and forth on the track.



16. For sound in HO scale, Tyler introduced the Thunder Chief diesel train set with a Santa Fe F7 locomotive and the Echo Valley Express steam train set with a Southern Alco 2-6-0 locomotive.

Both come with two freight cars,

a caboose, a 56" x 38" oval of E-Z Track, and an E-Z Command Plus Control Center.



17. The last two train sets Tyler presented were the Circus Spectacular set, produced in conjunction with Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey, and the Acela II train set, both in HO scale. The Circus Spectacular

train set features an F7 locomotive, two freight cars, and a caboose. Several different freight and passenger cars, as well as a USRA 0-6-0 steam locomotive, are also available for Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey. The Acela II has six add-on business cars that are separately available.

Info: bachmanntrains.com



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To see all of the photos of the new BLI GP30 locomotives, Ken's Great Stuff Pro torture test, the Lake Erie, Cincinnati & St. Louis; and all the Bachmann train sets, click on the video at the beginning of this article. ☑



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Adding all-wheel pickup to a brass steam loco



Electrical
Impulses

Model Railroad Hobbyist | December 2024

DOUG LOWING UPGRADES A BRASS STEAMER'S POWER PICKUP ...



IN THIS ARTICLE, I upgrade the power pickup on an HO scale PRR 4-8-2 Mountain type brass locomotive. I'm giving it wheel wipers on the insulated drivers and on the insulated tender wheels so both sides have all-wheel pickup. If you're not sure why this matters, see the sidebar, *Traditional steam locomotive power pickup*.

One way to think about electrical pickup when it varies per side is to see it as being only as good as the shortest length on a given side. Obviously, that limits the total circuit since the longer side having "better pickup" won't help if the other part of the circuit is shorter, and the pickup footprint isn't as great.



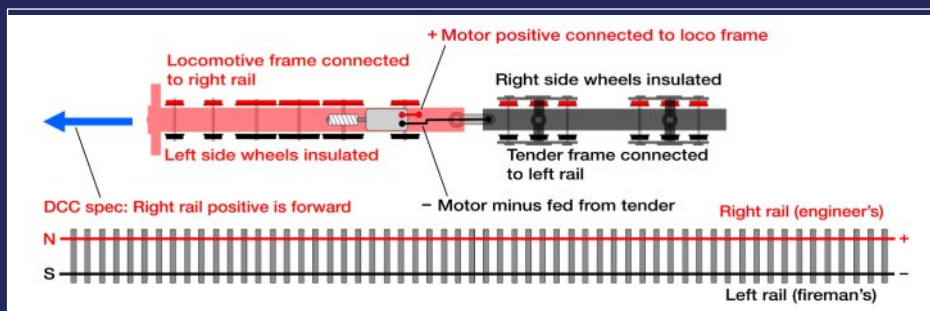
J. Fugate

TRADITIONAL STEAM LOCOMOTIVE POWER PICKUP

Traditionally, steam locomotive power pickup has the locomotive frame “hot” to one rail and the tender frame “hot” to the other rail. The steam locomotive has insulated wheels on one side, while the tender has the insulated wheels on the other side. This means you don’t want any metal parts touching the insulated driver rims on the steam loco since that will short to the frame.

You also don’t want the tender to accidentally touch the steam loco frame, since it’s the opposite polarity. While this kept the wiring simple, it means the total power pickup footprint is much smaller than you might think, since the shorter of the two power pickup wheel-bases limits the entire power pickup for the complete locomotive.

More modern all-wheel pickup can dramatically improve the reliability of a steam locomotive and make it much more stall-proof by greatly lengthening the total power pickup footprint. It is important to note that all-wheel pickup does not eliminate the shorting issues for the loco touching the tender unless the loco frame and/or the tender is completely isolated from the rails. ■



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On this HO loco, the drivers' pickup footprint comes in a bit less than 3", with the tender coming to about 4". With each side being a different rail, the shortest contact length rules, so the 3" contact length limits the loco pickup footprint to this length.

Adding pickups to both sides of the drivers and the tender trucks increases the pickup footprint to slightly more than 9". A pickup footprint of 9" has to be more reliable than 3".

MY APPROACH

I use printed circuit board ties and phosphor bronze wire to add all-wheel pickup to the brass loco and tender. I solder the PC board to the base of the loco and the tender truck, then solder springy wire wipers to the top of the PC board. The PC board fiberglass center insulates the pickup wires from the frame.

This method has been mentioned by many sources. In this article I show the method in some detail, and also how to overcome common mistakes.

THE LOCOMOTIVE FRAME

Adding wipers to the locomotive is easier than adding them to the tender trucks, so I'll start with the simpler job!

I use 0.0125" diameter phosphor bronze wire [1] from Tichy Train Group for the wipers.

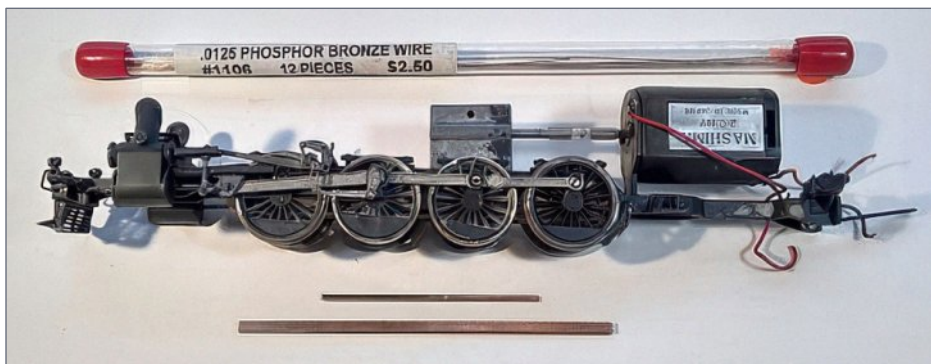
Wire 0.010" in diameter would also work. I've found the 0.015" wire is too stiff, and creates too much rolling resistance. The 0.008" wire is too fragile, and can get caught and bent while handling the loco.

I mount the wipers on PC board ties. I prefer either N scale or HO scale crossover ties [2] from Fast Tracks (handlaidtrack.com).

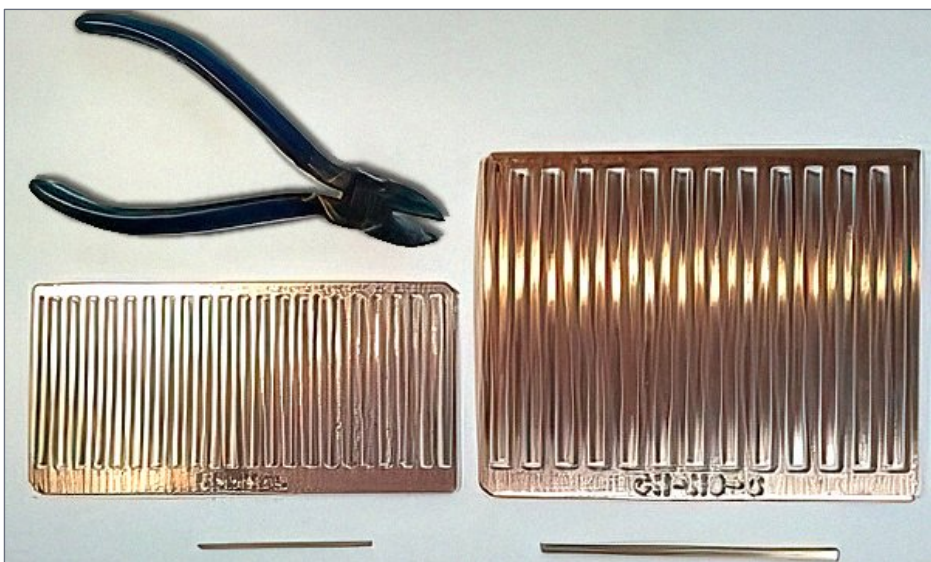
I like the crossover ties because they are longer, and I can cut one long PC tie to length instead of linking several shorter ties together.

ADDING PICKUPS TO A BRASS STEAM LOCO | 4

Fast Tracks makes HO scale ties 1/16" thick, and they make N scale ties 1/32" thick. The extra clearance of the N scale ties is helpful in rare cases on tender trucks, but I prefer the HO ties because there is less chance of the copper pulling away from the fiberglass when heated.



1. Phosphor bronze wire and example PC ties.



2. I like to use Fast Tracks crossover ties in N and HO scale.



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One crossover tie and one 12" length of wire is more than enough for one locomotive with up to four drivers in a row. Longer, and you may need to splice PC ties. Photo [1] shows both a full-length N scale tie and an HO scale tie.

I use coarse diagonal cutters to cut the PC board ties [2]. The fiberglass is abrasive, and can soon ruin fine flush-cutting pliers. You can also use a cutoff disk.

I measure the loco driver wheelbase to determine how long the PC tie should be. I like to run the PC board from front to rear axle. As you can see in [3], the wheelbase comes to about 3". It does not have to be exact since making the PC tie a bit longer allows for some slop in placement.

I scour the brass loco base plate with 220-grit sandpaper to clean it and give it some tooth. I coat the baseplate liberally with flux, then tin it with solder. Then I flux and tin the PC board tie on both sides [4].

I clamp the PC tie to the baseplate with a self-closing tweezer. I then use a broad tip on the soldering iron to deliver plenty of heat to the large chunk of brass, and flow solder under the PC tie [6].



3. I measure the driver wheelbase to determine the PC tie length.

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4. Tinning the PC tie.



D. Lowing

MY SOLDERING STATION

I'm using an Ayoue soldering station, lead free tinning flux, 1mm (0.040") lead-free rosin-core solder, and a copper-clad kitchen scrubby pad to clean the iron [5]. I normally use only two soldering tips – the broad tip for lots of heat, like soldering a PC tie to a large chunk of brass, and a fine oval tip for everything else. ■



5. My soldering tools and materials.



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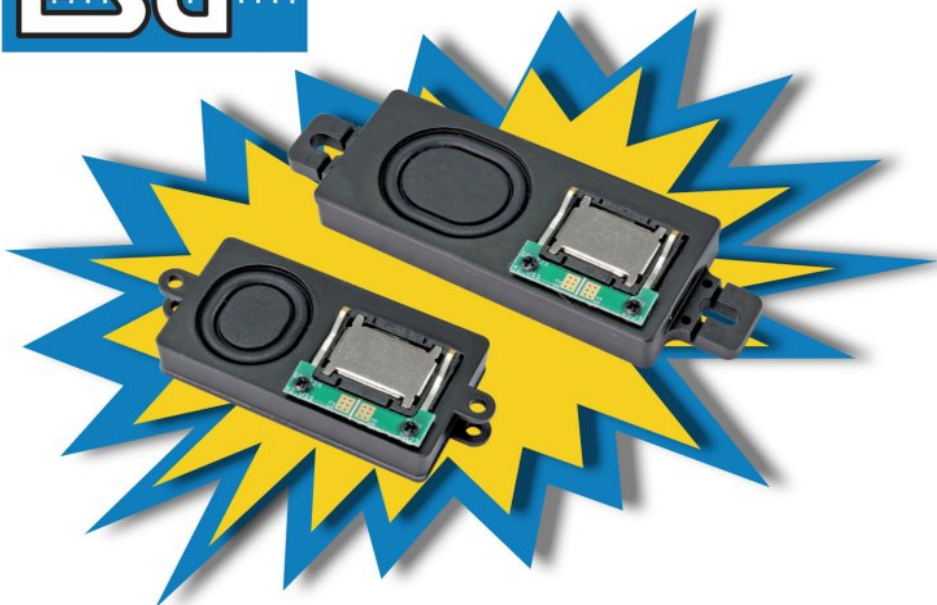
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Take care that the top of the PC tie remains insulated from the frame. I always verify no short-circuit between the top of the tie and the frame using the resistance setting on a multi-meter [7]. Later, after soldering on all the wipers, I check again to make sure I have not shorted anything to the frame.

I cut 0.0125" phosphor bronze wires to about the same length as the diameter as the drivers. Then I solder them to the top of the board at an angle [8]. This provides the necessary springiness to hold them onto the back of the drivers. You can bend them slightly to adjust the angle.

The wipers will be much too long. I trim them to length just beyond the driver flange [9], so they're long enough to do the job but remain unnoticeable. Riding on the edge of the flange is simple, self-cleaning, and keeps them high enough that they don't hang up on track ties.

This finishes the locomotive; on to the tender:



6. I clamp the PC tie to the base plate, then flow solder under the PC tie using a broad soldering tip to provide plenty of heat.



7. Checking the PC tie with a multi-meter to make sure the top of the tie is still insulated from the frame. “OL” means an open circuit.



8. I solder the 0.0125" wires to the PC board at an angle.



9. Trimming a wheel wiper to length.



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BRASS TENDER TRUCKS

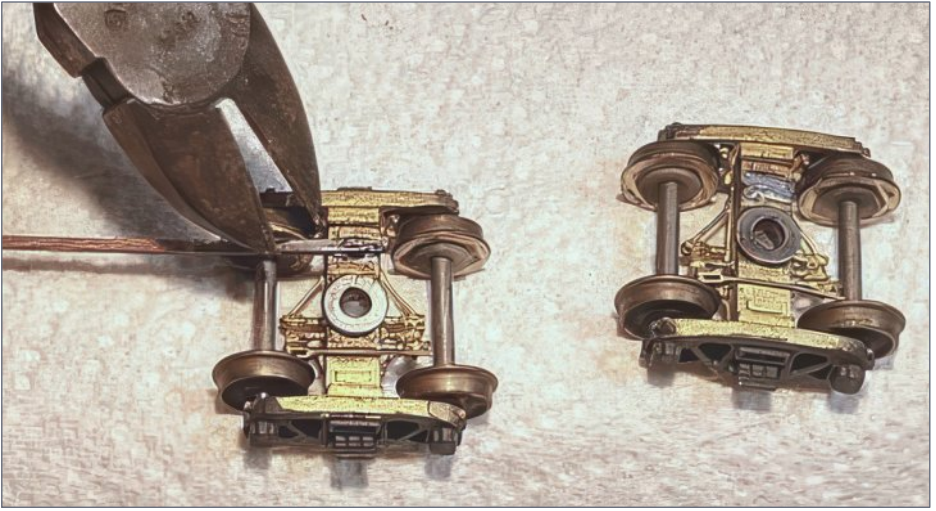
Before I added pickups to the tender, I had to decide if I wanted to reverse the insulated side of the tender wheels to match that of the locomotive. It is optional, but has some advantages: it prevents short circuits when the tender body touches the loco on small radii curves, the loco and tender can be more closely coupled for reality, and it allows metal footplate detail to bridge the cab and tender.

On this model the tender trucks were symmetrical, and were simply rotated 180 degrees to change the insulated side. For non-symmetrical trucks I have removed and reversed the wheel and axle sets before adding wheel wipers.

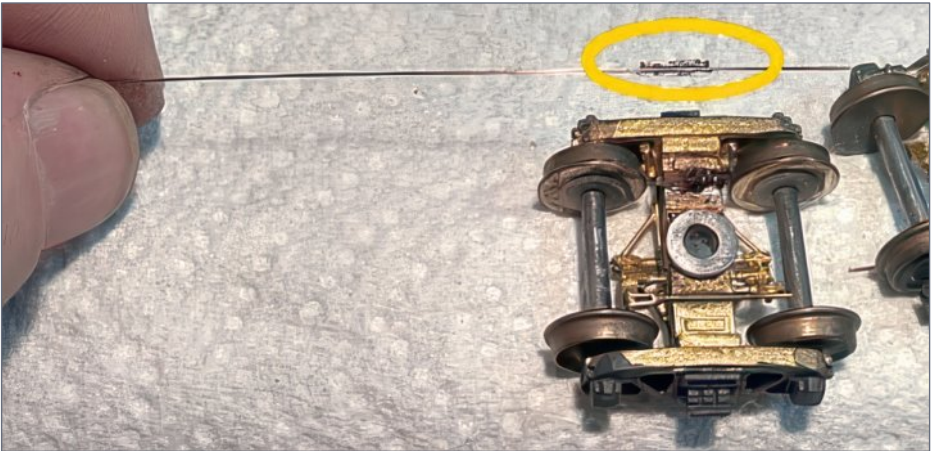
Normally it's easier to attach the PC board to the bottom of the tender trucks. In this case, the trucks had too much detail on the bottom, so I used a thinner 1/32" N scale tie on the top of the trucks.



10. Sanding the top of each tender truck with 220-grit sandpaper.



11. Clipping the PC tie to length after soldering it to the truck.



12. I used the broad tip on the soldering iron, but the PC tie copper foil de-laminated (yellow circle). The small tip is a better choice.

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Again, I first cleaned and added tooth to the brass with 220-grit paper [10], then I fluxed and tinned the spot where I will add the PC ties.

I tried first cutting the PC tie to length and holding the tiny piece in place, but found that to be difficult. Instead, I used the whole tie as a handle, soldered the tie to the truck, then clipped it to length [11].

Remember to use the broad tip only on the brass truck frame, then to switch to the smaller solder tip for soldering on the wire. Applying too much heat to the PC tie can cause it to overheat and delaminate the foil [12].

Once I had attached the wires, I bent them toward the wheels, then pressed the wire down behind them [13]. I checked to make sure all the wire wiper points made good contact. I also tested to make sure the wipers did not short to the truck frames, just as I did with the locomotive wipers.

I added a 30AWG wire to the top of the PC board.

Why did I use green wire? I had lots of that color left over from previous projects, and since you won't see the wire after the trucks are installed, the specific color is not critical. But it can be helpful to



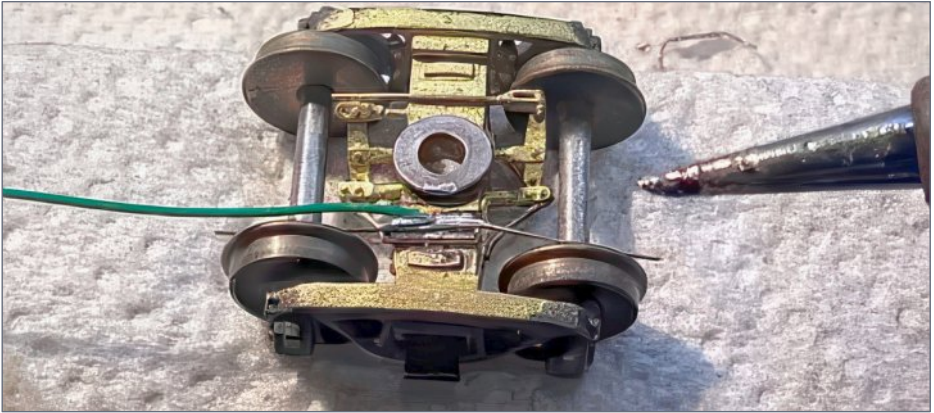
13. After soldering the wire wipers, I bent them to make contact.

ADDING PICKUPS TO A BRASS STEAM LOCO | 12

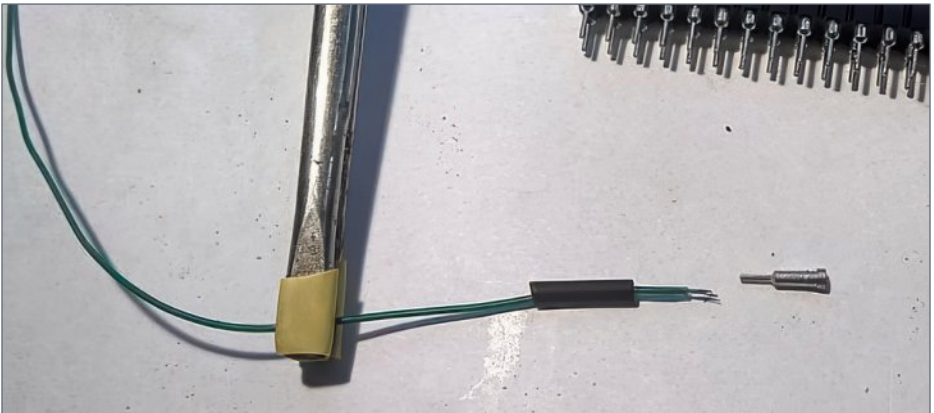
use a different color for the feeder wires coming from the tender frame, so you don't get them cross-connected.

Best practice is to use the NMRA standards of black for the left rail pickup and red for the right. -editor

I do not want to hard-wire the trucks; I want to be able to remove them for painting and maintenance.



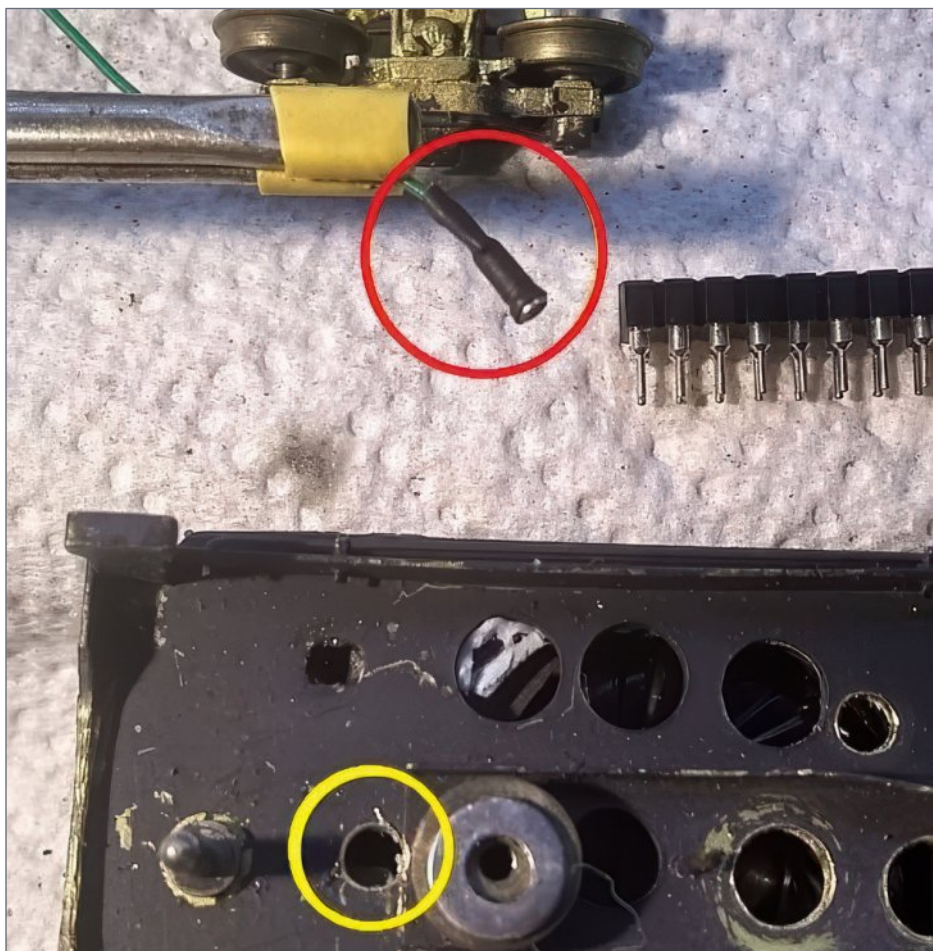
14. Adding a feeder wire to the truck PC board.



15. I made a connector for the tender truck wire, to allow me to disconnect the tender trucks as needed for maintenance.



I made a connector from a single pin cut from dual row pin connectors. To make this connector, I slipped on black shrink tubing before soldering the pin to the wire. Then I shrank the tubing with heat from the side of the iron.



16. The 5/32" hole (yellow circle) through the tender frame allows each truck wire to run into the tender. The red circle shows the completed connector from [15].

I drilled a 5/32" hole through the truck frame near each truck pivot point [16]. This allows the socket to slip through and completely detach the truck. You won't see the hole when the truck is on.

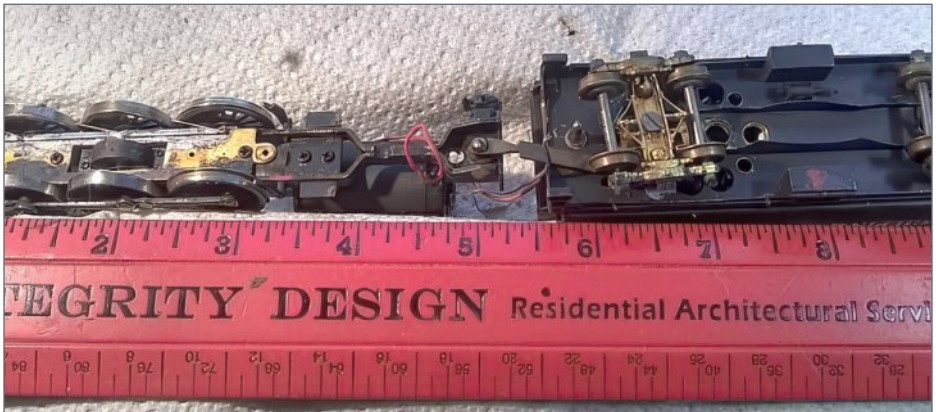
These connectors are called 2.54mm female header strips; see the shopping list at the end of this article for more.

I drilled a 5/32" hole through the truck frame near each truck pivot point [16]. This allows the socket to slip through and completely detach the truck. You won't see the hole when the truck is on.

FINISHING UP

In [17] the loco drivers and tender trucks now have all-wheel pickup. The drivers' wheelbase was the weak link, with less than 3" of power pickup footprint. Now from the front driver to rear tender axle, the pickup footprint has become around 9".

Next, the current has to get from the wheels to the motor. Since I'm mounting the decoder in the tender, but the motor is in the



17. Wipers complete, giving this loco a 9" power pickup footprint versus the previous 3".



locomotive, I need to run the decoder's orange and gray motor feeds to the locomotive through connectors. The connectors allow me to remove the tender for maintenance.

I also ran a wire from the loco driver PC board and from the loco frame and terminate them in plugs made from dual-row machine pin connectors so I can send them to the black and red feeds in the tender. I run a feeder from the tender frame to the decoder and the green truck feeders to the decoder, making sure to keep the polarity the same as the loco feeders.

You can see all this wiring in diagram [18].

FINAL THOUGHTS

Some have asked me how long I think these wire wipers will last.

They should last for many years.

I have run this loco for a year, and the wipers show no wear after many operating sessions.

As the wire wiper wears from the edge of the flange, because it's springy, it will still touch the back of the driver rim and make electrical contact. It will continue to make electrical contact until it wears past the driver rim to the uninsulated driver center, which is about 1/8".

If you would like to find out for sure, add the wire wipers to a loco, suspend the loco off its drivers, and let it run for a week, or until something is toasted. Someone should try it, but I don't have the patience.

The wipers work well for me, and I've not had any fail.

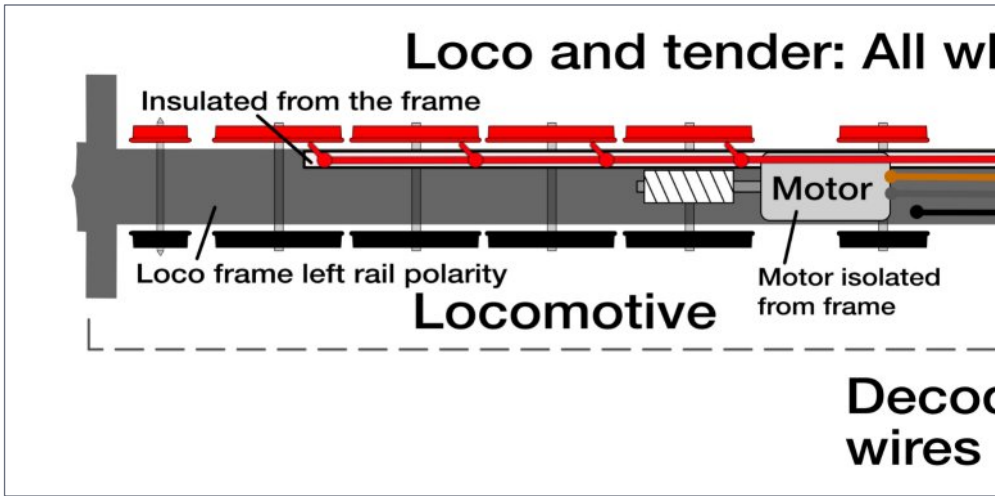
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18. With all-wheel pickup, wire things as shown with the motor in the locomotive and the decoder in the tender. The four wires going to the tender can use connectors to allow easily disconnecting the locomotive from the tender for maintenance.



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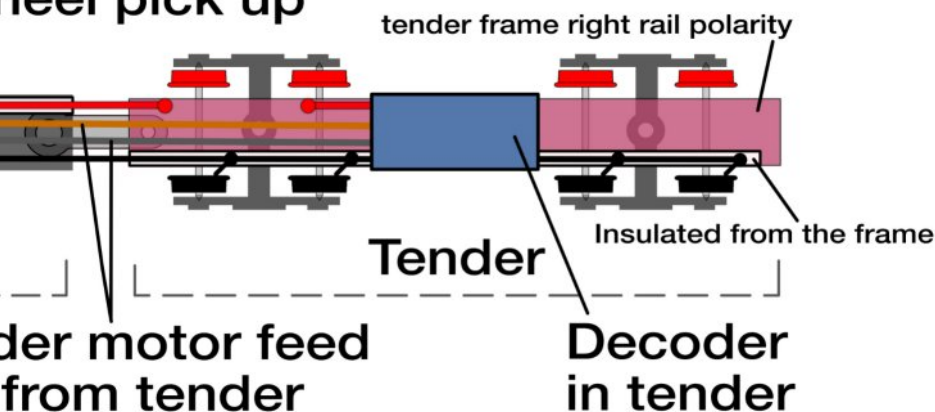


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Wheel pick up



DOUG LOWING



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As a young adult he built a 12x26 ft layout with L-girders, cookie-cutter plywood, Homasote, and hand-laid track.

At that time, Doug pursued a degree in Mechanical Engineering, and married his wife Karen.

Most recently Doug has a 13x13 ft room surrounded with rigid foam, flex track, DCC, and Arduinos. The layout preserves local historic model structures.

Doug is now retired, with he and his wife working as advocates for disabled people. They now live in Amherst, MA. ■

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MRH's Floquil / PollyScale Paint Equivalents Conversion Chart - 1

Floquil / PollyScale Color Name	Floquil #	Color Name	MRH #	MRH Color
Primer Gray	MRH 4262	WMA 71320	16-12	
Engine Black	MRH 4888	ML 29008 WMA 71201	16-01	
Stream/Brown Black	MRH 4260	WMA 71207	16-08	
Gray Black	MRH 4262	WMA 71201	16-07	
Woodland (Olive/Black) Black	MRH 4262	ML 29002 WMA 71204	16-05	
Railroad Gray	MRH 4887 MRH 4261	WMA 71205	16-04	
Railroad White	MRH 4823	ML 29004 WMA 71203	16-02	
Going Black	MRH 4887	ML 29002 WMA 71203	16-03	
Colours Red	MRH 4887 MRH 4833	MRH WMA 71202	16-06	MRH 4833 with 25% Golden Acrylics. Reddish brown to a purplish brown.

*Indicates color but not exact match. All WMA/ML paints are a sampling from the WMA/ML color chart. MRH 4887 is a white primer that can be used with Floquil/PollyScale Gray. MRH 4833 is a black primer that can be used with Floquil/PollyScale Gray. MRH 4833 is a black primer that can be used with Floquil/PollyScale Gray. MRH 4833 is a black primer that can be used with Floquil/PollyScale Gray. MRH 4833 is a black primer that can be used with Floquil/PollyScale Gray.

MRH's Floquil / PollyScale Paint Equivalents Conversion Chart - 2

Floquil / PollyScale Color Name	Floquil #	Color Name	MRH #	MRH Color	MRH #	MRH Color
Tussock	MRH 4887	WMA 71205	16-10			
Railroad Orange	MRH 4887	WMA 71205	16-09			
Railroad Yellow	MRH 4279	WMA 71205	16-10			
Railroad Brown	MRH 4883	ML 29009 WMA 71209	16-03			
Railroad Teal Brown	MRH 4883	ML 29009 WMA 71209	16-02*			
Railroad Brown	MRH 4887	ML 29005 WMA 71205	16-05			
Road	MRH 4825	ML 29005 WMA 71205	16-02			
Concrete	MRH 4825	WMA 71207 WMA 71211 WMA 71212	16-11*			
Light Concrete	MRH 4825	ML 29007 WMA 71207	16-04*			

*Indicates color but not exact match. All WMA/ML paints are a sampling from the WMA/ML color chart. MRH 4887 is a white primer that can be used with Floquil/PollyScale Gray. MRH 4833 is a black primer that can be used with Floquil/PollyScale Gray. MRH 4833 is a black primer that can be used with Floquil/PollyScale Gray. MRH 4833 is a black primer that can be used with Floquil/PollyScale Gray.

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Fireman's side view of the completed D&H U23B model.



Model Railroad Hobbyist | December 2024

NEIL SCHOFIELD UPGRADES AN ATLAS U23B TO MAKE IT MORE ACCURATE ...

A LONGTIME ALCO STRONGHOLD, the Delaware and Hudson departed from its allegiance with the purchase of General Electric's six-axle U30Cs in 1967 and four-axle U23Bs in August and September 1968. The GE units were immediately pressed into service across the system to supplement the Alcos.



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Modeling a D&H U23B

U23B production continued through 1977, with several documented phases during the 10-year period. Atlas released a U23B in HO scale about 20 years ago, but the model was of a later version with several spotting features that differed from the D&H version.

An avid D&H modeler for most of my life, I have only a single Atlas U23B I built 20-plus years ago. At the time, I knew of a few detail modifications that made the model closer to the D&H version, including the flaring along the top of the hood where it meets the radiator, the two-door compartment behind the cab on the fireman's side walkway, and the addition of a Mars light on the short hood.

When I started that project, I focused on those modifications, and unknowingly ignored the different raised radiator grill at the rear of the long hood. Fast-forward 20 years and a fellow D&H fanatic, Alec Herman of Bridge Line Design sent me a

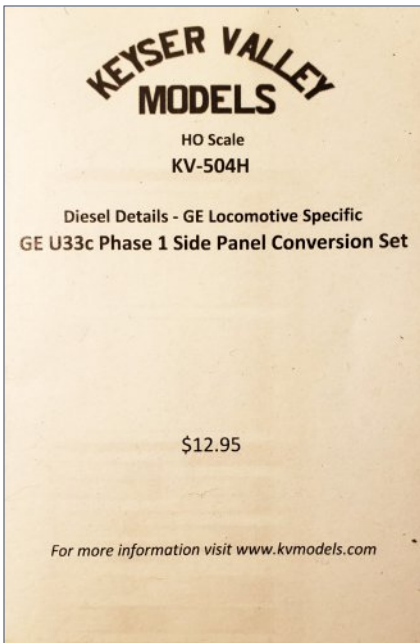
MODELING A D&H U23B | 3

U23B to weather for him that included both the Mars light and radiator flaring from his 3D design company.

Along with the weathering, I wanted to take the opportunity to upgrade the model beyond the changes I made to my own. In those 20-plus years since I completed mine, there's been a tremendous amount of prototype information and photos made available at a mouse click to assist the accuracy of the model.

GETTING STARTED

Before starting any modeling project, I spend a week gathering information and studying photos from various online sources, magazine articles, and books to see what parts are available and get an understanding of the modifications required to make an accurate model.



1. KV Models U33C Side Panel Conversion Set.



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In this case, that week turned into three years, but one of the key components of the project became readily available during that time. KV Models introduced a radiator upgrade kit for GE U-boats, specifically the Phase I U33C (Part KV-504H) [1].

The etched-metal kit included the correct grills, hood doors, and louvers to replace on the Atlas U23B. I picked up the kit not knowing if it was going to fit, but for \$12.95 it was definitely worth the price.

I opened the KV models kit and began comparing it to the Atlas unit for accuracy. The KV Models kit and the Bridge Line Design 3D parts gave me a jump start compared to my earlier attempt at modeling the U23B.

However, there are still several other details that can be added to the U23B to recreate an almost correct prototype and complement a realistically weathered model to run with the D&H's Alco and EMD power.

BODY MODIFICATIONS

Starting with a factory-painted model, I was hoping the body modifications wouldn't be so major that I could salvage the crisp lightning stripe scheme. In this case the major modifications involve the radiator section of the long hood, and thankfully the Atlas body comes apart in three sections including the body, walkway, and cab.

Complete disassembly included removing the handrails by placing a no. 11 hobby knife blade between the stanchion and the body frame and carefully prying the stanchion pin from the body. Fortunately, Atlas stanchions press-fit into the walkway, so this went relatively easily.

With the body disassembled, I studied photographs and took measurements of the KV Models U33C detail kit, comparing sizes to make sure the radiator grill would cover the entirety of the Atlas U23B radiator grill [2].

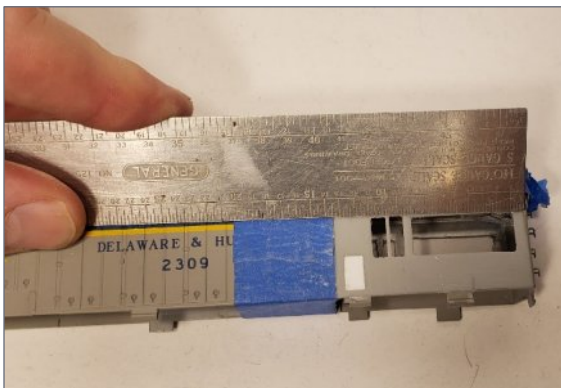
MODELING A D&H U23B | 5

I also measured the kit's etched doors and louvers to see how they compared to the model, both on the radiator section and the see-through grills behind the cab.

Once all the measurements were confirmed, I drilled out the perimeter of the radiator grill and louvers to accept the see-through grills from the KV Models kit. Once the sections were



2. Atlas shell next to the KV Models kit. The grills on the radiator section and behind the cab will be cut away to make way for the photo-etched parts in the bag.



3. Modified radiator section with grills and louvers filed to accept the see-through grills and louvers.



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removed, I used needle files to enlarge the openings so the louvers were completely clear of remaining body obstructions to enhance the see-through effect [3].

After the openings were filed to the correct dimensions, I used 400-grit, then 800-grit sandpaper on the long-hood radiator section to get a smooth surface for the KV models doors. Since the KV Models kit doesn't come with instructions, I studied photos to see how the outside frame fit over the grill, and prior to final assembly test-fit everything to ensure a snug fit.

Next, I carefully cut the KV models louvers and grills from the etched-metal sprues and placed them over the openings to test-fit. Using medium CA adhesive and a no. 11 blade as an applicator, I dipped the blade in a drop of glue and carefully applied the glue between the frame and the grill.

Similarly, I added medium CA behind the doors before gluing them in place, being careful to align them properly [4].

After assembly, I decided to change the KV Models louver located on the top of the radiator section, just beyond the step in the hood. I felt the louver wasn't deep enough, so I replaced it with the same part from an Athearn U33C hood.

Unfortunately, I had to sacrifice the Athearn shell for the part, but I had picked it up for a few dollars on eBay. Using a Dremel



4. Upgraded radiator section with etched KV parts and Bridge Line Design cowling.



tool, I cut the louver out, sanded it down to a thickness of about 0.040", and glued it in place, replacing the louvered section shown in [4].

Moving onto the other body modifications, I added D&H-specific details from Bridge Line Design including the flaring that transitions from the long hood to the radiator section, the side-mount bell on the long hood behind the cab, and the mars light on the short hood.

I also added the correct Nathan M3 horn available from Cal-Scale (#190-552) to the roof behind the cab.

I took out the Hi-Tech Details two-compartment door (HTH6032) that sits on the fireman's side walkway behind the cab. While positioning the part, I realized I had completely overlooked the battery box spacing on the fireman's side in studying the prototype photos.

The D&H version has six battery box doors abutting each other with no spacing.

The Atlas model also has six doors, but with a slight space between the fourth and fifth door along the long hood. This configuration



5. The grills/doors behind the cab were also replaced with the KV kit. The size was a bit off, but hidden by the two-compartment box on the walkway.



eliminates a handrail stanchion where the compartment was located. This ends up extending the battery boxes and the step in the walkway a foot farther down on the Atlas model.

I contemplated scratchbuilding new battery box doors from styrene and shortening the raised walkway, but realized I would have to re-bend handrails and do quite a bit of body work I wasn't prepared to do. I would also have to source GE handrail stanchions. I just didn't think the added effort would greatly improve the model, hence my article subtitle "more accurate."

While not 100 percent accurate I chose to trim the stanchion from the handrail set and fill in the remaining stanchion hole as shown in [5].

CAB UPGRADES

The cab upgrades were minimal. I replaced the factory windshield wipers with wipers from A-Line.

I also decided to open the engineer's side window like many prototype photos I've seen. I removed the existing window inserts and cut the window divider out. I then filed down the top and bottom frame, leaving a bit of the frame toward the front of the unit to represent the window being partially open.

I added a 0.010" x 0.030" strip of styrene to represent the window frame, and, after painting and weathering was complete, I cut a small piece of clear styrene to fit. One mistake I made was leaving the window frame on the front side; that would actually be hidden when viewed [6]. While I could have fixed the issue, I planned to paint it blue so it's less obvious.

PILOT MODIFICATIONS

The pilot modifications were minor, but improved the look of the model, particularly when viewed head-on.

The coupler lift bar was the most effort. I constructed it from a Details Associates standard coupler lift bar and brackets, but



6. Illustrates the open engineer's cab window. The silver frame toward the front side was later touched-up blue to hide where it would be hidden in the cab.



7. Up close and personal portrait of the U23B illustrating the pilot modifications and coupler lift bar.



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modified to more accurately reflect the prototype. I cut it in two where the loop extends over the coupler, and created return bends on each piece to support the lifting bracket.

I model this feature on most locomotive rebuild projects, as it looks much better than the Delrin cast-on part, and prototypically extends the loop over the coupler. I modeled the step handles separately with 0.012" brass wire, with one end drilled into the pilot and the other positioned on the coupler lift bar to make it appear welded.

I also replaced the Atlas drop steps with Details Associates version that includes better overall detail. I elected to keep the Atlas MU hoses, though they are a bit thin. They could be replaced with separate MU hoses from Detail Associates or the white metal version available from Details West [7].

TRUCK AND UNDERFRAME MODS

With most body modifications complete, I moved on to the underframe and trucks. Like Alco four-axle locomotives that



8. The bearing caps have been removed to allow installation of the Details West wheel-slip indicators.

ride on AAR trucks, the GE locomotives had speed recorders on each axle on the fireman's side.

This oft-overlooked detail is signature to me, and important for creating the busy look of the prototype. The part is fragile and easily damaged, particularly when the model is handled during a derailment or just placing it on the track.

For this reason, I've come up with a standard way to recreate this detail using the Details West wheel-slip indicators and 0.010" wire. Each axle journal is connected to a cable that is directed up to the underbody.

I start by drilling a no. 72 hole in the middle of the axle bearing and gluing the Details West part in place with medium CA cement, being careful to spin the wheels so they don't lock in place with the adhesive [8].

I then drill a no. 78 hole on the inside of the wheel slip journal and, use 0.010" wire to recreate the cable. I start with a 1/8" long piece of wire, and make a 90-degree bend as it comes out of a hole at the face of the Details West part. I continue rounding the wire with a pair of pliers up to the underside of the walkway, following prototype pictures.

Moving onto the fuel tank, I elected to remove the cast on fuel filler and replace it with a Details West GE-style fuel filler. I



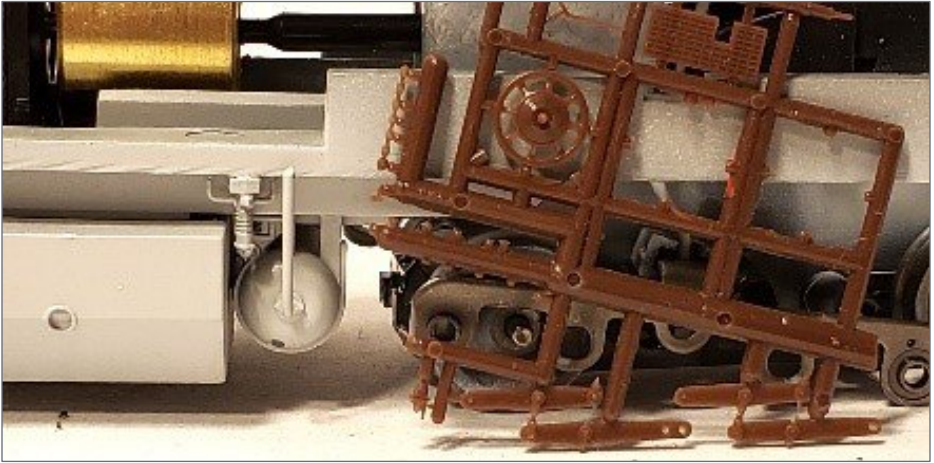
9. The modified fuel tank with air piping and fuel filler shaved off and sanded.



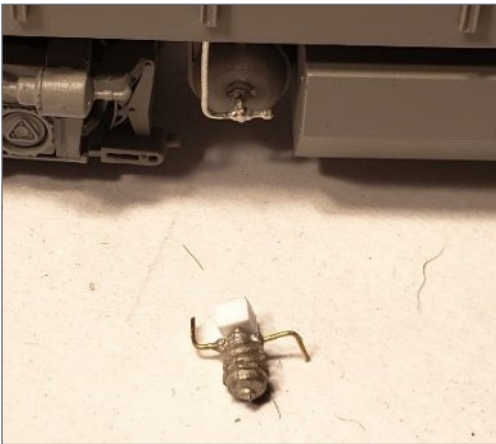
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also replaced the air piping to the air reservoirs with air piping from a Details West Air Filter #237, copying photos of the prototype [9].

I also added the small air filter from the Details Associates brake detail kit to the bottom of the air reservoirs. I partially



10. I drilled a hole in the bottom of the air tank for the air filter from a Details Associates AB brake gear set. Part is at lower left on sprue.



11. Details West Air filter drilled to accept 0.012" wire with a piece of 0.040" styrene mount.



drilled a #74 hole in the reservoir, pushed the filter into the recess, and secured it with medium ACC [10, 11].

The last detail added, before finishing the weathering was the engineers-side brake chain. I added this last because it connects the trucks to the walkway, and I didn't want to add it until the locomotive was completed and wouldn't require disassembly again. After installation, I painted it with a mix of D&H gray and grimy black [12].

SAVING THE CLASSIC LIGHTNING STRIPE SCHEME

I've generally been accepting over the years of the D&H gray on factory-painted models because in most cases D&H locomotives were in heavy mainline service, and the lighter gray quickly weathered to a darker gray. However, in studying freshly painted units, the gray is much brighter.

I find that if brighter gray is applied first, and then weathered, it looks much better. It helps bring out the color contrast between the light shade of gray and the darker weathered areas.

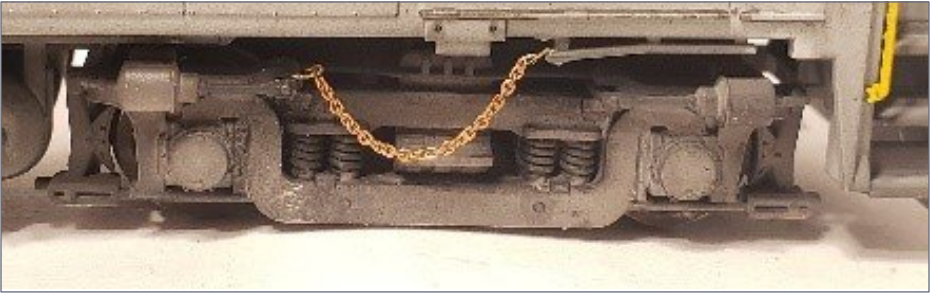
Out of the box, the D&H paint scheme is well-done and worthy of saving to the extent possible. I kept the paint lines intact, but I repainted the gray and touched-up the blue on the radiator section and behind the cab.

I started by masking off the lightning stripe and gray, and applying a mix of 80% Scalecoat D&H blue with 20% Conrail blue. Once that dried, I masked off the blue and yellow lightning stripe along with the D&H shields so I could repaint the D&H gray. To match the correct gray, I used an approximate 50/50 mix of Scalecoat concrete and white.

After removing the masking, I cleaned up a few areas where the gray had bled through the masking tape to the yellow lightning stripe. I used a small brush wetted with some mineral spirits, being careful to wipe the brush off on paper each time to avoid paint smear.

If careful, this method works better than trying to touch-up paint [13, 14].





12. A-line chain mounted with 0.010" hooks to the brake cylinder and brake guide.



13. Repainted hood and underframe. The gray is much lighter and accurate for the D&H gray. The D&H blue has also been touched-up, and yellow decal stripes will be added to finish off the D&H lightning stripe again.



14. The completed body with Microscale decals and lettering.

WEATHERING

Weathering is one of my favorite parts of the hobby. It's satisfying to turn a brightly painted model into a well-worn miniature version of the prototype, but I also understand the risk of making an irreversible mistake and ruining an expensive model.

My weathering philosophy isn't concerned with not making mistakes, so much as learning to fix them when they happen.

It all starts with giving the model a solid base coat on which to apply the weathering. I prefer Testors Dullcote or a mix of Testors Dullcote and Glosscote, depending on the final finish I'm looking for. This coating acts to seal the existing paint, and it acts like a chalk board so that incorrectly applied weathering, whether artist oils, pan pastels, or air brushed colors can be easily erased.

It is also important to know what works to remove excess weathering. Usually, a Q-tip dipped in mineral spirits will do the trick.

Before diving into a weathering project on an expensive model, I suggest experimenting on inexpensive models or even a plain piece of styrene to see how the weathering applications work and how easily they can be removed.

I use four primary methods for weathering, and I describe them in the order that I apply them.

My first step is applying a wash, which can be a great starting method to bring out the details, particularly on the long hood of locomotives. It creates the shadow effect where grime accumulates on the hood doors and in the hinges. This simple method instantly brings the locomotive to life, particularly on the lighter colored locomotives where the black contrasts with the lighter color.

I've found two methods for creating washes. One includes using artist oil paints such as those available from Windsor and Newton, and mixing a small amount of paint into a cup of min-



eral spirits to create a dark or light wash. The benefit of the oil and mineral spirit wash is you can vary the strength of the mix, and blend custom colors.

The other is using Tamiya's pre-mixed Panel Line accents. I've found that the Tamiya works great on factory-painted models before the application of Dullcote while the artist oil mixes are great after the application of Dullcote. Using a very fine brush to apply a drop to the surface will allow capillary action to disperse the wash around the detail particularly on louvers and doors.

After application, I use a mineral spirit-soaked Q-Tip to wipe away excess wash, leaving it in the detail crevices. There are countless videos available on YouTube or Trainmasters TV showing this method for both model railroad applications as well as military models.

After the application of washes, I move onto air-brushing. I learned long ago by reading Jim Six diesel detail articles, the most important aspect of air brush weathering is thinning the paint to about 20 percent paint/80 percent thinner, and applying it in layers that go on slowly.

For road grime, I prefer to spray the paint farther from the model and allow it to settle on the locomotive rather than applying it wet. This helps build up that natural grime effect slowly. I used this method to apply a base weathering to the trucks shown in [16].

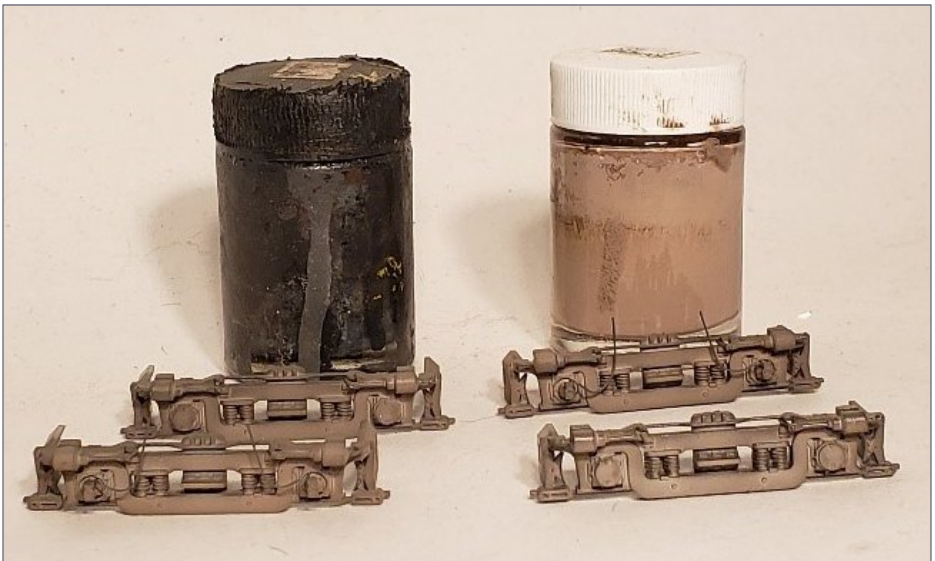
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MODELING A D&H U23B | 17

I've recently switched from my tried-and-true Scalecoat flat weathering colors to Tamiya acrylics, and I'm happy with the switch. I've learned the Tamiya dries much quicker and harder than traditional lacquer-based paints, including Scalecoat and Floquil.



15. This is the weathered model before final assembly.



16. The D&H gray trucks have a base layer of grime applied from a mix of Tamiya paints.



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Tamiya can still be successfully thinned, and the airbrush cleaned with standard lacquer thinner available at most home improvement stores. This was a real bonus for me, as I've not had much luck with other acrylics that clean up with isopropyl alcohol or water.

Regardless of which paints you use; I can't stress enough the importance of working in a well-ventilated area and having a fan system to create a negative pressure to draw fumes away from the point of application.

Another favorite weathering media is artist oil paints from Windsor and Newton that are available at most art supply stores. I use the oil paints for both dry brushing and rust streaks with the use of mineral spirits washes.

The key to using the oils is having a dry, hardened surface to apply the oil and mineral spirits that doesn't react with the underlying paint. The dry brushing technique is a great method for highlighting the raised surface details of locomotives.

The best way to accomplish dry brushing is using a flat end brush with almost all the paint removed. I test this by wiping on a piece of paper towel so that barely any paint shows up.

Then I apply the brush gently in a downward motion so that the bristles catch the edges of doors, louvers, and details, leaving the paint on just the raised surface highlighting the raised edges. This is particularly effective on lighter engines with darker paints and similarly on darker engines with lighter paints.

The final weathering usually is done with pan pastels. I typically apply these on trucks and pilots to represent the gritty road grime that accumulates along the underframe of locomotives. It can also be used on the roof of the locomotives, but I find that tends to wear away too often.

For that reason, I use this method sparingly with the understanding that every few months, some locomotives may need a second application after it wears off. ☑



17. Engineer's side view of the completed model. The article's lead photo shows the fireman's side.

NEIL R. SCHOFIELD



Neil lives in Charlton, MA with his wife, three children, and the family dog. He works in Holyoke, MA as the Office Manager and Licensed Site Professional for an environmental consulting firm.

This is Neil's fourth feature in *MRH* and he's an avid contributor to *MRH* through his blog CP Rail's Newport and Lyndonville Subdivision.

Thanks to his father, Neil has been interested in trains since he was 6 or 7. His childhood memories include many railfan trips throughout the Northeast, along with fond memories of operating modern piggyback cars on his father's steam-era layout.



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MODELING A D&H U23B | 20



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Growing up, he was a self-proclaimed rivet-counter when it came to rolling stock and locomotives, and he continues that practice on his HO layout based on CP Rail's operations in Vermont. He's now about nine years into the layout construction, and hoping to get video recording completed for Trainmasters TV in the next few months.

While he enjoys modeling CP's operations in Vermont, his second favorite railroad is the D&H, as illustrated by this article. He eventually plans to model a shelf layout based on D&H operations around Fort Edward, NY. ■



Building a starter 4x8 portable layout

Part 1



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Model Railroad Hobbyist | December 2024



TIMOTHY F. DUDLEY WAS BLESSED WITH A DONATION OF SOME HO SCALE TRAINS ...

IN EARLY JANUARY 2024, a member of our church had a bunch of old HO scale trains he wanted to give away. He asked if I wanted them, and of course I said yes!

A week later, *another* member of our church had some 2-inch beadboard left over from insulating his new workshop, and asked if I wanted it. I said, absolutely. Then I asked myself what I could do with this stuff.

The original owner of the HO scale trains said he and his grandpa intended to make a 4x8 western steam-era layout, but never got around to it. I wanted to honor their wish and put their trains to good use.

Follow this photo essay to see the steps I took to build this simple two-piece 4x8-foot layout.

The two sections of the layout are 2x8 feet, and only 10 inches in height, so they would fit nicely into the storage compartment on our fifth-wheel RV.

Here I cover detailing the first half of the 4x8; next month comes the second half.

Let's get started.





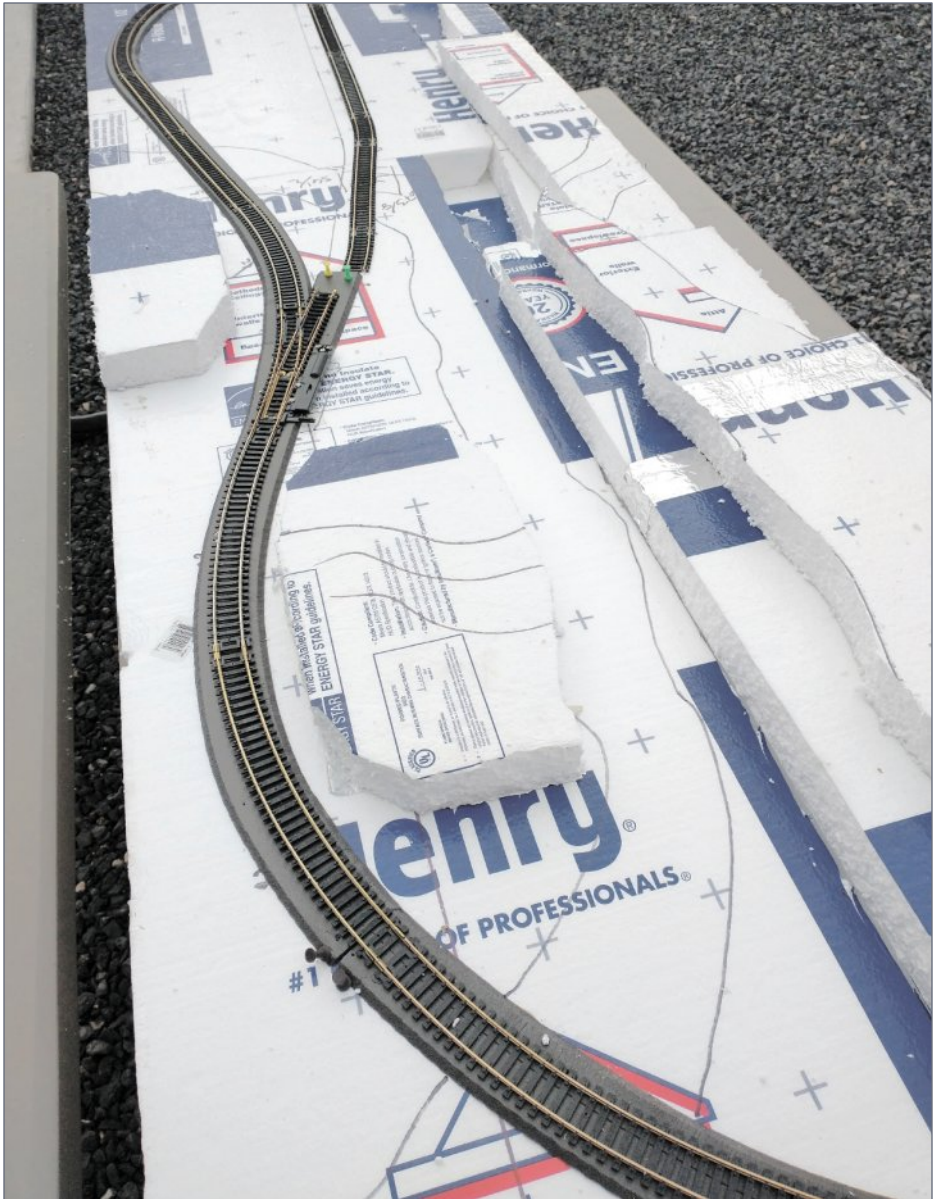
1. I devised a simple one-turnout track plan for the first half of the layout on the picnic table at our RV site. I envisioned a simple western desert farm scene for cattle car and coal hopper setouts.



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2. I glued the foam in layers using foam-compatible Liquid Nails for Projects. The sectional track and switches were old brass. I used Woodland Scenics foam roadbed.



3. After the foam glue dried, I laid the track with Elmer's glue. I coated the foam on all sides with latex paint. I carved a dry creek bed and basic mountain shapes into the foam.



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4. I covered the foam scenery with plaster cloth, and painted it with red-brown acrylic paint, except for the dry creek bed.



5. I applied dirt collected from our neighborhood as a foundation for other scenery materials. The trestle and bents were made from scrap wood.





6. At the other end of the dry creek bed I added an old Atlas truss bridge to bring variety to the scene. The spur with cattle cars in the background is for the farm scene.

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7. More scenic texture is added, including earth, rocks, ground foam, and pine trees.





8. The farm scene is developed with the addition of a house, a tractor shed, trees and details.

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9. Alfalfa fields are very common out west. Not only does alfalfa provide feed for animals, but selling it provides income for the folks at the farm.



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10. The farm scene finally is finished. More trees, a corral, horses, cattle, tractors, figures, and a simple scratchbuilt coal loading ramp were added.

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11. After adding more pine trees to the layout section (suggested by my wife) I must say, for a simple 2x8-foot layout section, things turned out nicely.





12. Closeup of the scratchbuilt coal loading ramp.

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13. The finished product.



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14. Next month in Part 2, see how I designed the second section of this 4x8-foot layout. This photo is a quick peek of that half.

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TIMOTHY F. DUDLEY



Timothy's dad gifted him a trainset when he was a boy. The rest was history.

He and his brother then built a 4x4-foot oval layout on a piece of plywood that barely fit under their bunk beds. Since then Timothy has built a dozen or so layouts in N and HO scales.

Timothy served in the US Navy from 1984-1990 and is now a licensed Assemblies of God pastor (www.newlifehurricane.com), in Hurricane, Utah. He enjoys playing on the worship team, train watching, and writing. ■



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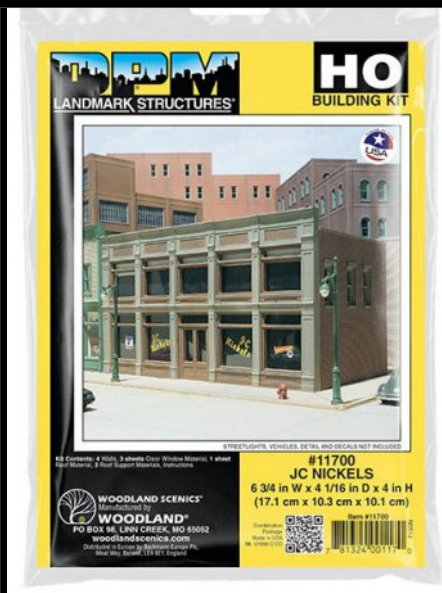


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Roomettes Part 1



1. Roomettes produced the Sporto's Outdoor & Athletic interior (left) to fit the JC Nickels building.

Model Railroad Hobbyist | December 2024



JEFF PALMER ASSEMBLES A DPM/ROOMETTES COMBO ...

SEVERAL MONTHS BACK, my publisher sent me a package that contained two items. The first was [Sporto's Outdoor and Athletic by Roomettes](#) (01-117-01). The second was the JC Nickels building kit from Design Preservation Models by Woodland Scenics (woodlandscenics.woodlandscenics.com/show/item/R4379).

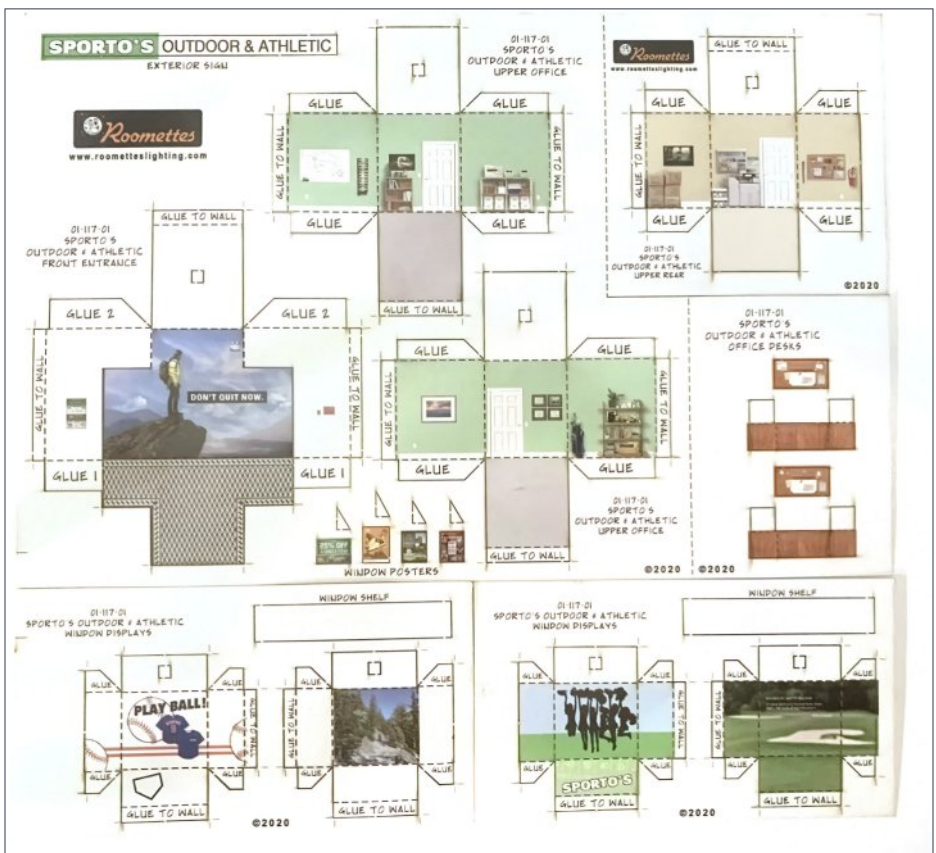
By practice, I'm a turn-of-the-20th-century, backwoods, narrow gauge, logging and mining modeler. Wood has been my construction material of choice for more than 30 years. It had been decades since I last built a plastic model, and the world has changed.

ROOMETTES PART 1 | 2

This was going to be a challenge. I opened the Roomettes bag to explore its contents.

I found a heavy cardstock sheet with four display window units, two offices, one supply room, and a foyer/entry way. There were fold-together desks for both offices. Signage included four window posters and a long exterior sign [2].

But that was not all. The package came with eight Woodland Scenics LED room lights that plug into the Just Play Lighting System



2. The cardstock sheet included cut-and-fold rooms, furniture, and signage.

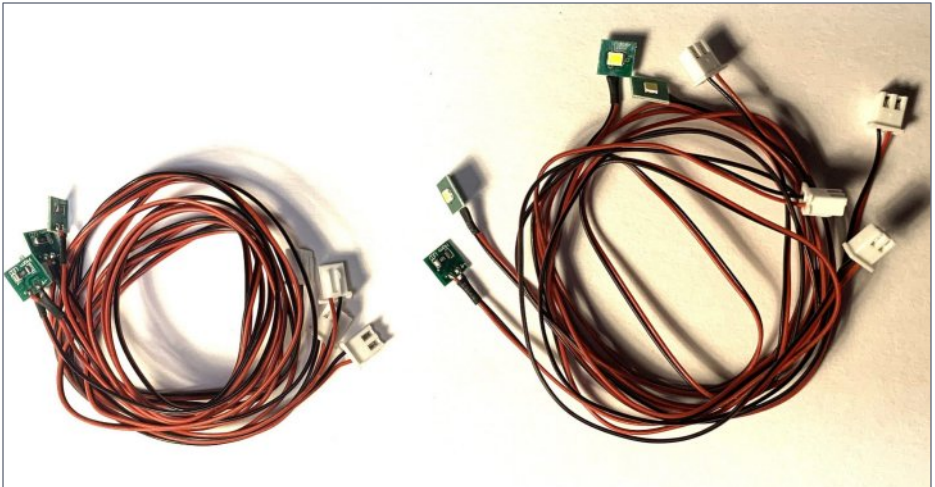
ROOMETTES PART 1 | 3

(woodlandscenics.com/show/category/JustPlugLightingSystem). Nice package!

Next, I turned my attention to the DPM JC Nickels building. First thing was to lay out all the major parts and take inventory. The kit comes four molded walls, a sheet of white styrene plastic for roofing, a sheet of clear styrene for windows, and some square styrene rods to mount the roof [4].

I thought a rank amateur like me should be able to build this kit. On closer examination, I noticed that the back wall bowed about $3/16''$ [5]. I hit Google to see what the current technology for straightening/flattening styrene is, and decided to give Woodland Scenics a call. They sent me a new, "flat" back wall.

With all of the parts in hand, the next step was to clean up the plastic parts [6]. I used a good pair of sprue nippers to remove all sprues, cutting them flush with the surface [7]. Then I sanded them smooth using a sanding block to prevent accidentally distorting the surfaces being sanded. I cleaned any flash from around the windows.



3. Woodland Scenics LED kits.



4. JC Nickels kit contents.



5. The back wall had a significant bow.



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ROOMETTES PART 1 | 5



6. All the parts in good order, ready for cleanup.



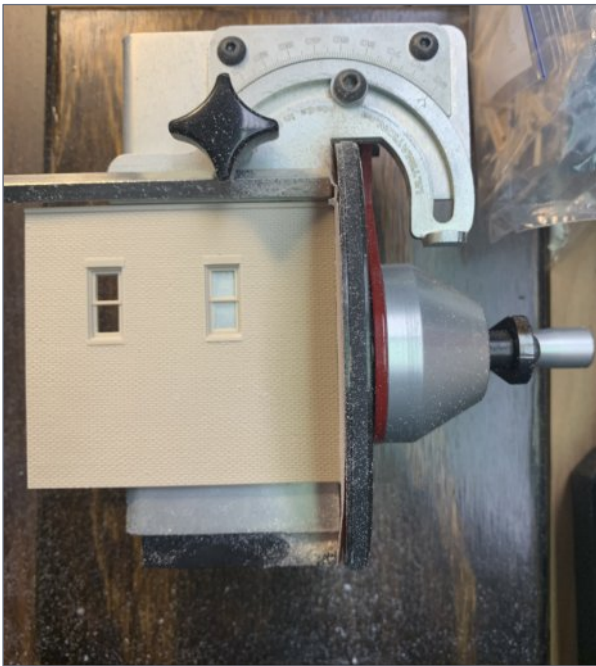
7. Removing flash with sprue nippers.

ROOMETTES PART 1 | 6

DPM's instructions note the need to square-up the bevel edge that mates to the other walls. Failure to address this issue results in an ugly, weak joint [8]. My Ultimition Sander (reviewed in December 2020 *Running Extra*) made short work of the task [9].



8. The corners are not square out of the package.

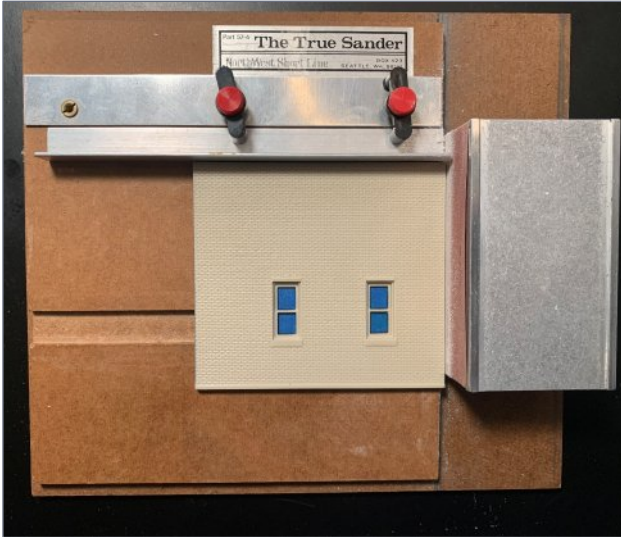


9. The Ultimition Sander makes selecting a sanding angle easy.

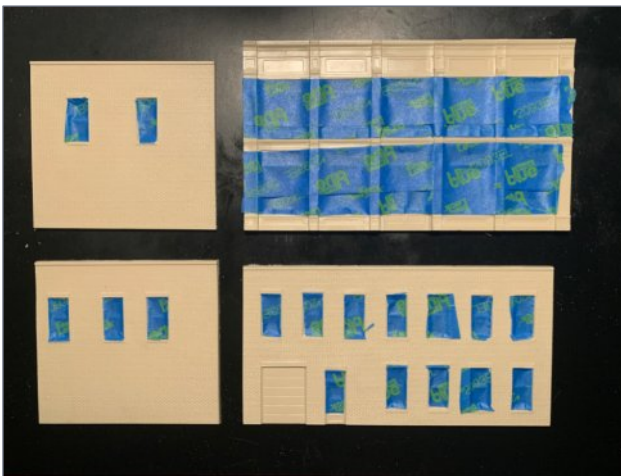
ROOMETTES PART 1 | 7

I had an aggressive 100-grit disc on the sander, which left the edge with a rough finish. I smoothed it with 220-grit paper on my North West Short Lines True Sander.

When truing the edges, pay attention to which edge you sand on the side walls. One edge is smooth with no brick pattern, while the other edge has a brick pattern. You don't want to sand off the brick pattern.



10. The True Sander proved a good finishing tool for the edges.

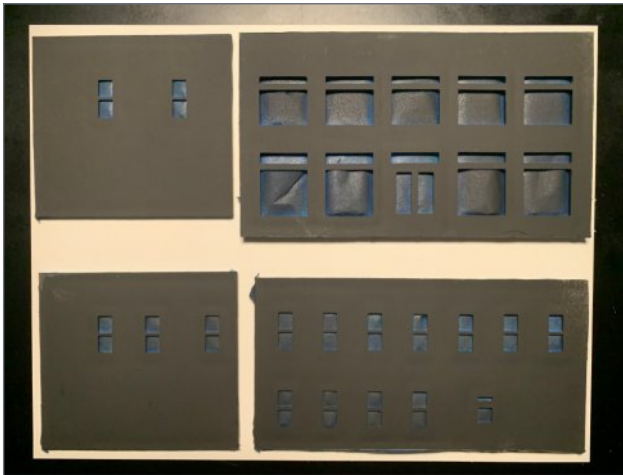


11. windows are masked to prevent the interior paint from reaching the exterior.

ROOMETTES PART 1 | 8

With the parts cleaned and squared, I was ready to paint. Since I knew LED interior lighting would be involved, I painted the interior a flat black to minimize reflection and light bleed. I didn't want to spray through to the brick up front, so I used painter's tape to cover each window to protect the sills and headers [11].

With everything masked, I laid the walls flat, and used my favorite can of Krylon Flat Black [12].



12. The interior black painting is complete.



13. The interior window openings and glue edges are masked.



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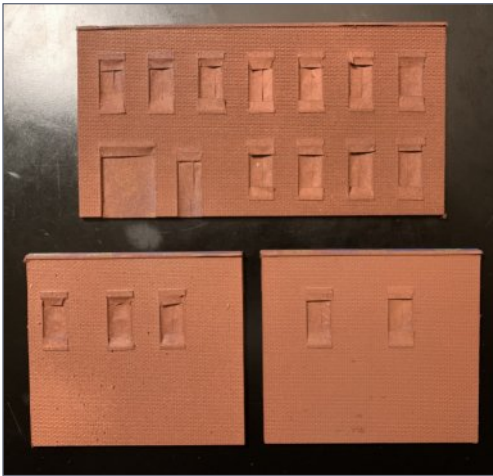
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ROOMETTES PART 1 | 9

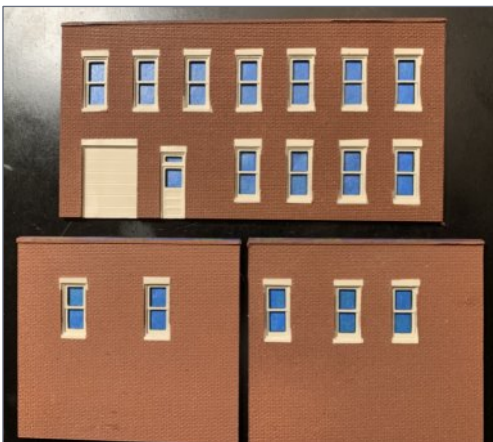
Once the black has dried, I re-taped the windows insides and turned over the walls, and removed the old tape [13].

With the back side of the windows protected, it's time to paint the exteriors. Three of the walls are brick. I like Rustoleum Sandable Primer Red for my brick [14].

Once dry, I removed the masking from the windows [15].



14. The exterior walls are painted with Rustoleum primer. The windows, including sills and headers, have been masked.



15. Removing the masking from the windows left an off-white color that contrasts nicely with the brick.

ROOMETTES PART 1 | 10

I repeated this process for the front wall using Krylon Matte River Rock. I wanted a color that looked like sculpted concrete, but I didn't want a sidewalk look, and I think this color achieves that old downtown look [16]. We'll dirty it up later with a little black India Ink, and add a few chips.

The building has three doorways: the front door, the dock door, and the rear entry. You can see my poor attempt at hand-painting the rear doors. No matter how thin I made the paint, it wasn't working [17].

So I taped off all but the doorways and sprayed them. That worked.

With the spray painting out of the way, I turned to the brick walls, which were still missing mortar lines. I, filled a one-ounce bottle with water and stirred in seven drops of Bombay White India Ink.

I used an eyedropper to place a drop of the solution on one of the walls, and it beaded without flowing into the crevices. I recalled that water has surface tension, so I loaded the tip of a toothpick with detergent, stirred it into the mortar mix, then applied another drop to the wall. This did the trick [18].



16. The painted store front.



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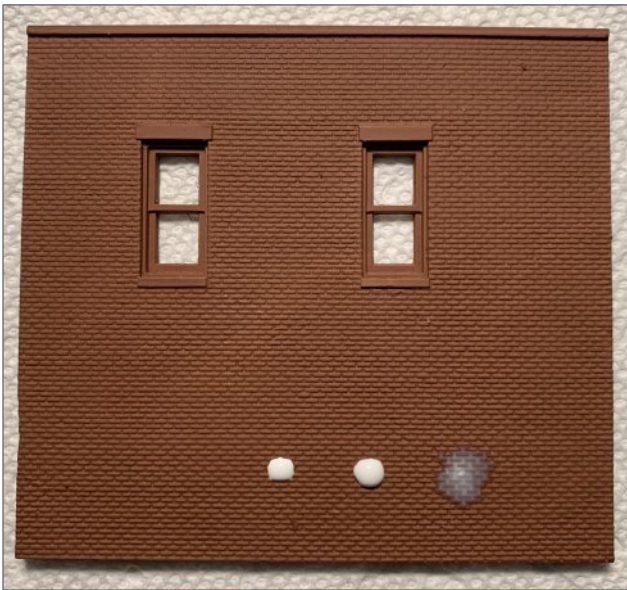
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ROOMETTES PART 1 | 11

Turning attention to the windows, I wanted to avoid crazing the clear styrene "glass" with the glue. I used Tamiya Extra Thin Cement with its wicking properties for this.



17. My efforts to hand-paint the doors were unsuccessful.



18. Testing mortar paint with a drop of white India Ink, and the diluted India Ink with a touch of detergent.

ROOMETTES PART 1 | 12

I laid the clear styrene sheets on each wall, and weighted them with paint cans, then applied the cement sparingly along the edges of the sheet. The very fine lip around each of the windows left over from painting prevented the cement from spreading to and crazing the window panes [19]. I made sure not to move or touch the clear styrene until the cement was completely dry.

The Roomette window scenes all go on the front wall. Since the windows on the brick walls have none, we don't want them lit. The next step was to cover those windows with black craft paper:

I cut enough black craft paper to cover each piece of styrene completely, extending just beyond the edges. I applied a 1/8" track of Aleene's Industrial Strength Glue Stick along the edges of the paper, and burnished it down [20].

The glue stick has several advantages. It doesn't run from where it is applied, and it doesn't react with the styrene to craze it. If some of the glue gets on the window glazing, it's easy to clean off.

The three brick walls were complete. As a final step before assembling them, I cleared the paint from the surfaces where I needed to apply glue.



19. I applied glue from the edges.



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ROOMETTES PART 1 | 13

I'm terrible at squaring walls, so I use the Micro-Mark Magnetic Gluing Jig to put them together. Using Tamia Extra Thin Cement, I glued two walls together into an L on the jig [21].

Once the "L" completely cured, I repositioned the assembly to add the third wall. I used a hobby square to maintain the square of the previously completed joint, and made sure that everything was aligned properly [22].

As the walls dried, I assembled the Roomettes. I punched them out of their cards, folded them into shape along the provided lines, and used the provided tabs to glue them together.

With that, the basic structural work of the building is complete, and the Roomettes are ready to install. In the next installment, I'll add the LEDs to the Roomettes, mount them to the back of the front wall, and mount the front wall to the building. I'll also discuss connecting the lights to the Just Plug Lighting System. (Please see the January issue.)

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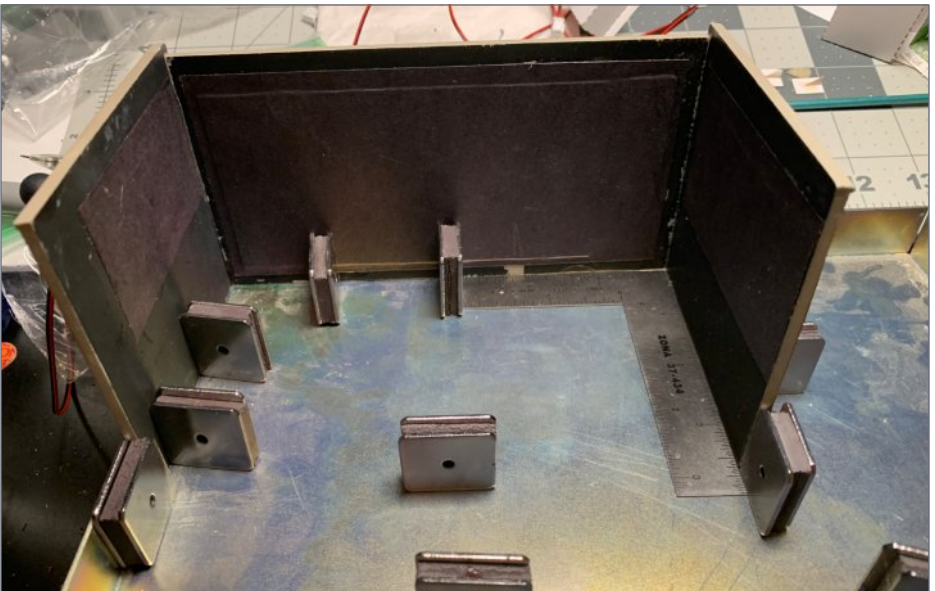
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20. The windows are blacked out.



21. The first two walls assembled. The magnets hold the walls in square against the frame. A clamp adds reinforcement to the joint.



22. The third wall added.



23. Roomettes are assembled, ready for installation.

JEFF PALMER



Jeff spent 50 years developing software, 25 of which were as a college professor. He loves to build structures, bridges, scenery, and locos. He enjoys narrow gauge logging and mining.

He is always on the lookout for new techniques, and tools that improve the hobby. Model railroading allows him to work with his hands, and share techniques with his friends.

About 2 years ago, he completed his MMR certificate. During that journey, he had the privilege of meeting many of the modelers he looked up to, like Gil Freitag, Duane Richardson, Chuck Ellis, George Sellios, Marc LaChey, Dave Revelia, Dave Frary, Scott Mason, and others. His goal is to be recognized in this group someday. ■

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Model Railroad Hobbyist | December 2024



Adding LED lights to any HO locomotive

YouTuber **Motown Models** shows how to install LED headlights into any HO loco. Motown sells LEDs as well, but MRH also has [links for prewired tiny SMD LEDs here](#).

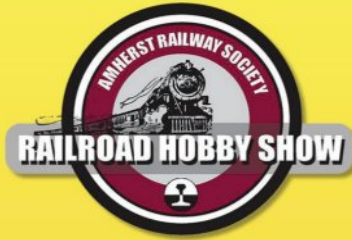


Motown's secret: he uses Details West #341 HO headlight lenses with the tiny LEDs to make them super easy to mount in most HO locomotive headlight or ditch light housings. This 5 minute video includes helpful install tips to make adding headlights to your locos into something that's super simple. ✓

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DECEMBER NEWS

column



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



CLUB NEWS

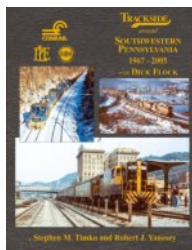
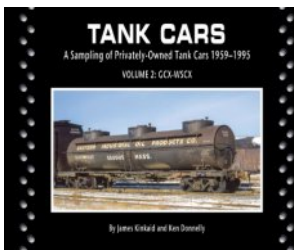


The **Northern Utah Division of the NMRA** is selling a series of HO scale Utah Oil Company (UTOCO) tank cars manufactured by InterMountain Railway. Featuring a

build date of 8/45 and a test date of 9/28/51, the cars are offered in six road numbers and are equipped with metal wheelsets and Kadee couplers.

Info: www.northernutahnmra.org/club-car

NEW PRODUCTS FOR ALL SCALES



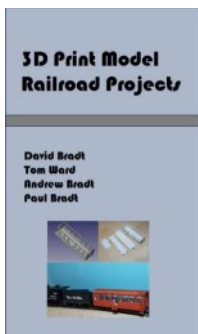
Morning Sun has released *Tank Cars Volume Two* in which co-authors James Kinkaid and Ken Donnelly document privately owned cars from GCX to WSCX. The book provides details

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on tank cars which were constructed under one of two regulatory authorities: the AAR or Federal Government.

Also new from Morning Sun is *Trackside Around Southwestern Pennsylvania 1967-2005 with Dick Flock*. Co-editors Stephen M. Timko and Robert J. Yanosey present the camera skills of Dick Flock who artistically documented Southwestern Pennsylvania's railroads including class 1, short lines, industrials, and trolley lines.

Info: www.morningsunbooks.com



New from **P&D Analytics** is *3D Print Model Railroad Projects* by David Bradt, Tom Ward, Andrew Bradt, and Paul Bradt, edited by Joanna Opaskar. Available in Kindle or Paperback, the book is a collection of 3D printing projects, along with what the authors learned developing models as they became more skilled at 3D printing. Examples of projects include buildings, rolling stock, details, and electronic enclosures.

Information and demonstrations of tools such as CAD software and 3D printing slicer programs are also included.

Info: www.amazon.com/3D-Print-Model-Railroad-Projects-ebook/dp/BODMMQGCCX

O SCALE PRODUCT NEWS



Berkshire Valley Models has a new On30/On3 body kit for a 22' wood gondola. The kit includes precision laser-cut wood and white metal detail parts. A

fixture is included to help align the stakes on the sides and the frame on its subfloor.



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The gondola is a freelance design patterned after numerous narrow gauge cars in use from the late 1800s into the early 1900s. Decals, couplers and trucks are not included.

Info: www.berkshirevalleymodels.com

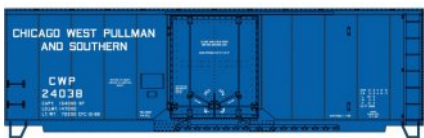
HO SCALE PRODUCT NEWS



New economy priced HO scale freight car kits coming from **Accurail** include this BNSF triple-bay ACF covered hopper. It will be available individually and in a 3-car set with different road numbers.



The kit for this Illinois Terminal steel boxcar represents a steel class XM car built in 8-58.



Also coming soon from Accurail is a kit for an HO scale steel plug door boxcar decorated for the Chicago West Pullman & Southern Railway.



The kit for this Philadelphia & Reading 36' wood boxcar follows a prototype car with wood sides, metal ends and a fishbelly underframe. All

Accurail car kits come with appropriate trucks with Delrin wheelsets and Accumate knuckle couplers.

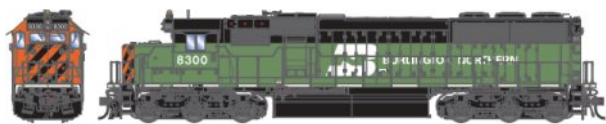
Info: www.accurailinc.com



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 710 prime mover, wheel slip control, and microprocessor controls. Nearly 600 SD60s were purchased by American railroads. If the cab on SD60 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.



Athearn will be accepting reservations until December 27, 2024

for several new models with an estimated release date of May 2026. Leading the list of new models is an Athearn Genesis EMD SD60 with an 88" nose. The feature-laden HO scale model will come with six-wheel high-traction or Flexicoil trucks with Hyatt or Timken bearings, accurate dynamic brake intake and exhaust grilles, single or dual conduit fans, rounded or blunt anticlimbers, 4,000 or 4,500 gallon fuel tanks, LED lighting, and operating class and number board lighting.



SD60s decorated for Burlington will have a Western Cullen beacon and HTC trucks with Hyatt bearings.



Soo Line versions of Athearn's SD60 will



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have a Xenon Beacon and HTC trucks with Timken roller-bearing axle caps.



front and rear classification lights with clear lenses, and HTC trucks with Timken roller-bearings. Conrail models will be similarly equipped except the rear class lights will be red.



Canadian National SD60s will also have HTC trucks. It will have ditch lights mounted on the anticlimber and blanked-out class lights.



Details unique to Norfolk Southern versions of the Genesis SD60 include clear rear classification lights, HTC trucks with Hyatt roller-bearings, and a 4,000 gallon fuel tank. All other road names will have a 4,500 gallon tank.

The Genesis six-wheel driveline features all-wheel electrical pickup and a 5-pole skew wound motor with machined flywheels. DC versions of the model will be DCC-ready with a 21pin NEM connector. Sound equipped models will feature SoundTraxx Tsunami2 sound and DCC decoder. A minimum track radius of 22" is recommended.





R. Bale

GE AC4400CW DIESEL LOCOMOTIVE

The GE AC4400CW, sometimes referred as AC44CW, is a 4,400hp diesel electric locomotive built by GE Transportation Systems between 1993 and 2004. A total of 2,834 were produced. Although similar in appearance to the Dash 9-44CW, the AC4400CW is equipped with AC traction motors instead of DC, with a separate inverter for each motor. Early AC4400CW were delivered with Hi-Adhesion trucks. Subsequently, the AC4400CW became the first GE locomotive to offer an optional self-steering truck, which was designed to increase adhesion and reduce wear on the railhead. Some railroads including CSX, ordered the AC4400CW locomotives with 20,000 lb. extra weight to increase tractive effort. As a result of more stringent emissions requirements that became effective in January 2005, GE replaced the AC4400CW with the ES44AC.



GE AC4400CW diesel locomotive for May 2026. Heading the list of seven road names are models decorated for Norfolk Southern and CSX Transportation with similar options including GE high adhesion trucks and three dynamic brake intakes. The NS version will be decorated in the Railroaders Tribute paint scheme unveiled at the Railroaders Memorial Museum in Altoona, PA in June 2024.



Athearn has also scheduled the release of an HO scale version of the

release of an HO scale version of the GE AC4400CW diesel locomotive for May 2026. Heading the list of seven road names are models decorated for Norfolk Southern and CSX Transportation with similar options including GE high adhesion trucks and three dynamic brake intakes. The NS version will be decorated in the Railroaders Tribute paint scheme unveiled at the Railroaders Memorial Museum in Altoona, PA in June 2024.

HO scale AC4400CW models decorated as a General Electric demo unit and the Central Maine & Quebec Railway will have Hi-Ad trucks and two dynamic brake intakes.



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dynamic brake intakes and a gull wing cab.



in 2026 are models decorated for Ferrocarril Mexicano and Western New York & Pennsylvania. Both road names will come with GE six-wheel steerable trucks.



lights and separately-applied wire grab irons. In an effort to keep the price as low as possible, Athearn will offer the AC4400CW as a DC/DCC ready model. A minimum track radius of 22" is recommended.

Athearn also plans to release an AC4400CW decorated in a fantasy BNSF scheme. Details include GE Hi Ad trucks, three

Completing Athearn's list of AC4400CW locomotives coming

All AC4400CW models in this release will feature illuminated ditch



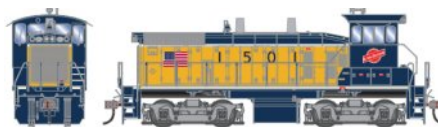
R. Bale

EMD SW1500 DIESEL SWITCHER

The SW1500 is a 1,500hp diesel electric locomotive built by General Motors Electro Motive Division from 1966 to 1974. EMD's SW series of locomotives share the same car body introduced on the SW7 in 1949. Dual stacks distinguish the SW1500 from the lower power SW1000/1001 which has only one stack. The SW1500 is further distinguished from earlier SW locomotives by its four-window cab and flatter cab roof. EMD delivered the SW1500 with Flexicoil B-B or AAR Type A trucks. The SW series, including the SW1500, was designed primarily for industrial yard switching, but they were frequently assigned to light road switching service.



Indiana Harbor Belt in orange and black. This version will have a snowplow pilot in front and AAR four-wheel Type A trucks.



An SW1500 decorated for the Alton & Southern Railway will also have AAR Type A trucks.



A second Indiana Harbor Belt SW1500 with an updated paint scheme will come with EMD four-wheel Flexicoil trucks.



SW1500 switchers decorated for Great Northern and Pacific Electric will both come with front and rear footboards and Flexicoil trucks.



An SW1500 decorated for Illinois Terminal will also have EMD's four-wheel Flexicoil trucks. All Athearn's SW1500 diesel switchers will come with MU hoses and road appropriate horns and antennas. DC versions of the model will be



DCC-ready with a 21pin NEM connector. Sound equipped models will feature a SoundTraxx Econami sound and DCC decoder.



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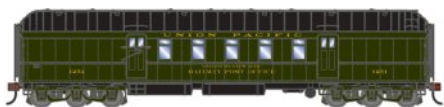
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R. Bale

ARCHED ROOF PASSENGER CARS

The arch roof for passenger cars originated as part of the common-standard designs for cars and locomotives created when Edward. H. Harriman controlled the Union Pacific, Southern Pacific, Illinois Central and Central of Georgia railroads in the early 1900s. Instead of the standard clerestory roof of most heavyweight cars, the Harriman common-standard arched roof was less expensive to build and handled rainy weather better than clerestory design. The common-standard specifications allowed economical bidding from suppliers for large quantities of equipment shared by all Harriman-controlled railroads.



Athearn is preparing new tooling for a 60' postal car with a Harriman common-standard arched roof. Delivery is planned for May 2026. Features on the HO scale model include a magnetically attached roof, window glazing, Pintsch gas and roof vents, diaphragms and six-wheel Pullman heavy weight trucks. The model will be available with optional wooden or pressed steel doors.

Road names in this release will be Illinois Central, MOW, unlettered and in two schemes each for Union Pacific and Southern Pacific.



A Genesis HO scale 50' PC&F boxcar with both 6' and 8' Youngstown plug-doors is also on the May 2026 schedule. The cars will have separate wire grab irons and coupler lift bars, etched metal coupler platforms, appropriate trucks with rotating bearing caps, trainline hoses and McHenry double-shelf knuckle couplers. The model will be available decorated for Southern Pacific, Southern Pacific Speed Letter, Golden West Service, and Wisconsin Central. Primed for Grime models will be Golden

West Service cars patched for Southern Pacific, and St. Louis Southwestern/Cotton Belt.



Also coming from Athearn in May 2026 under the Roundhouse brand name is a 40' gondola steel

gondola. The economy-priced injection molded gondola will have mostly molded on detail with roller-bearing trucks with 33" machined metal wheels. Road names will be Denver & Rio Grande Western, Milwaukee Road, Penn Central, MKT, British Columbia Railway, and Delaware & Hudson.

All Athearn models mentioned in this report will have McHenry body-mounted knuckle couplers.

Info: www.athearn.com

Atlas has scheduled the release of several new HO scale models for the 3rd quarter of next year. Pre orders are being accepted through January 8, 2025.



The list of new models begins with an Atlas Master Series C420 diesel locomotive. The HO scale model is based on the 2,000hp

Century series road switcher Alco built from June 1963 to August 1968. Road specific details include flat or step pilots, long hood with or without dynamic brake, 3,100 or 2,400 gallon fuel tanks, separately applied coupler cut levers, and directional lighting. Road names on this release include Conrail, Delaware & Hudson, Detroit & Mackinac (Bicentennial scheme), Nickel Plate Road, Norfolk & Western, Apache, and L&N Family Lines.



Also coming from Atlas during the 3rd quarter of 2025 is a GE B23-7/B30-7 diesel locomotive. Atlas's

Master series model is based on General Electric's Dash 7 locomotive line introduced as a replacement for the older Universal series locomotives built in the 1960s and early 70s.

Road specific details on Atlas' HO version includes pilots with and without anti-climbers, cab mounted headlights or low-nose headlights, cabs with two or four side windows, AAR Type B or Blomberg trucks, see-through sill step detail, etched metal radiator grilles, and directional lighting. Road names available on this release will be Central Maine & Quebec, BNSF, Conrail, Norfolk Southern, and SMS Lines for the B23-7 and Burlington Northern, CSX-YN2, and Southern Pacific for the B30-7.



A 36' tank car is listed in the 3rd quarter production release coming from Atlas next year. Carrying from 7,500 to 11,000 gallons, the prototype AAR T102 /T103 cars are just 36' long. They were

designed to carry extremely dense or heavy liquid loads such as asphalt, oil production chemicals, and molasses; however, their distinctive appearance earned them the nickname *Beer Can Car* – a commodity they seldom if ever carried. Road specific details for the Atlas *Beer Can Cars* include standard gravity or steam-jacketed outlets, photo etched details, separately applied grab irons, and Barber S-2-A trucks. Road names include Cargill, GATX, Hercules, Texaco, Detrex, and General Molasses.



Atlas has included an HO model of a Portec 3,000 cu. ft. twin-bay covered hopper in its 2025 3rd quarter production schedule.

Built between 1979 and 1984, the prototype Portec 3000 was designed to haul heavy bulk commodities such as sand, cement, salt and grain. In addition to Norfolk Southern, road names on this release will include ATEL Leasing, Chicago Freight Car Leasing, General American De Mexico, Norfolk & Western, and Winchester & Western.

An HO scale version of a steel caboose built in Canadian National's Pointe St. Charles shops is coming from Atlas next year. The prototype PSC cabooses were built from existing



boxcar underframes and side panels. Features on the Atlas model will include separately applied grab irons, interior and directional lighting, operating class lights, step lights and inspection lights. Road names will be Canadian National, Algoma Central, Lancaster & Western, CBNS, and Babcock & Wilcox.



An ACF general-purpose, single-compartment, 23,500 gallon, insulated, coiled, non-pressurized tank car is coming from

Atlas during the 3rd quarter of next year. Atlas' HO scale model represents cars built from 1969 and still in service today. Road names will include AMOX, Exxon Mobile, ADMX, GLNX, AG Processing, and two ACFX schemes.



Completing the list of new HO scale models coming from Atlas during the 3rd quarter of next year is a 1932 ARA boxcar. A goal

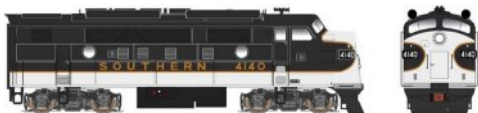
of the American Railway Association (ARA) in the early 1920s was to produce an all-steel box car that could be recognized as a standard by the member railroads. Several designs were submitted and while it was not the most popular design, the 1932 ARA Standard box car is considered one of the most important designs in railroad history. Road names available on Atlas's HO scale version will be Bangor & Aroostook, Chesapeake & Ohio, Canadian Pacific, Maine Central, Western Maryland, and Ferrocarriles Nacionales de México.

Info: www.shopatlasrr.com

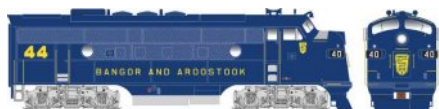


Bowser Trains continues to accept reservations for a group of HO scale EMD F units that are scheduled to arrive before the end of the

year. The models include F3 and F7 units with the difference between the two prototypes being mostly electrical, and F9 units that feature an extra car body filter ahead of the front porthole. EMD built all of the F3s and some of the early F7s with chicken wire side grilles. The balance of F7 production and all F9s were delivered with Farr stainless steel side grilles.



Bowser's F3A units decorated for Southern Railway will have roof mounted air tanks, a 5 chime horn, and nose mounted grab irons.



Details on Bangor & Aroostook F3A units include nose mounted grab irons, a firecracker antenna, and a bell mounted at the front of the roof.



Bowser's F3A units decorated for Boston & Maine represent Phase 4 units built in late 1948.



New Jersey Central F3A units will have roof mounted ladder safety rails, grab irons on the cab nose, and a hostler light.



Road specific details on Bowser's Spokane, Portland & Seattle F7A include a roof mounted oil cooler, steam generator, cut-away fuel tank skirts, a firecracker antenna, nose ladder grab irons on the fireman's side, and a dazzling SP&S paint scheme.



This Milwaukee Road F7A will have a single chime horn with a snow shield, modified exhaust spark arrestors, fan hood covers, grab irons on the cab nose and foot plate, and roof mounted oil cooling pipes.



EMD's F9A bumped the horsepower rating up from 1,500 to 1,750 and added an extra car body filter ahead of the first porthole. This UP version features a large branchline snowplow, roof mounted air compressor, a winterization hatch, a 48" dynamic brake fan, and grab irons on the nose.



This Rock Island F9A is an ex-UP unit and features the same details as its predecessor.



Rock Island's redecorated F9A units also have a large snowplow and a roof mounted air compressor. Additional details include grab irons on the nose, a firecracker antenna, and partial fuel tank skirts.



Details on this Santa Fe F9A in yellow Warbonnet scheme include spark arrestors, cab nose mounted grab irons, nose access steps, nose mounted lift rings, and a roof mounted air compressor and cooling pipes.



In addition to many of the road specific features on Bowser's Milwaukee Road F7 model, the F9 unit decorated for Milwaukee Road will have nose lift rings, a radio antenna, and a winterization hatch.

All of Bowser's F units feature air hoses, windshield wipers, coupler lift bars, operating headlight, window glass, can motor, knuckle couplers, and Bloomberg trucks with nickel silver wheels. Analog (DC) versions will come with an NMRA compliant 21-pin plug for DCC. DCC/Sound versions feature a LokSound V5 Dual-Mode decoder which allows the model to operate on DC as well as on DCC layouts.

Bowser has scheduled the release of an HO scale version of Trinity 53' RAF 33C and RAF 53C spine cars. The models will be available in 3-unit and 5-unit sets. Features of the ready-to-run





models include a diecast metal underframe, chemically etched walkways and adjustable hitches. Info: bowser-trains.com



During Trainfest 2024 **Broadway Limited** announced three new projects including an HO version of a Chicago & North Western streamlined 4-6-2 Pacific steam locomotive. The model is based on a class ES prototype built by Alco in 1930. Nicknamed Yellow Jackets, the hybrid models will have hand-crafted brass boilers, cabs, and tender bodies, and diecast locomotive and tender chassis.



The model will be available from three prototype periods with era-specific details and paint schemes including locomotives renumbered during the early 1950s. Broadway

Limited will also offer the model in two fantasy schemes: Seaboard Air Line and the Chicago & Eastern Illinois.

In addition to the Paragon4 models, BLI will also offer Stealth/DCC-Ready models. The order deadline for these locomotives is April 24th, 2025 with delivery planned for spring of 2026.



Also coming from BLI next year is the Fox River, a specialty car built in 1954 by

Pullman-Standard as a sleeper for the Canadian National Railway. The car was later converted to a theater inspection car that was purchased in 1985 by the Chicago & North Western where it was renumbered 420 and named Fox River. Following C&NW's 1995 merger with Union Pacific, the refurbished Fox River became a part of UP's heritage fleet.

BLI is producing an HO scale version of the Fox River as it appeared during its service with both Union Pacific and C&NW. Features



include individually controlled lighting, including ditch lights, marker lights, and spotlights.



Since the Union Pacific's locomotives lack on-board head end power generators, UP relies on Power Car No. 2066 to provide reliable power for the lights, plumbing, and air conditioning systems of its vintage Heritage Fleet cars. UP uses the Power Car in both steam and diesel powered excursion trains.

Broadway Limited is developing an HO scale version of UP power car No. 2066, a former ACF postal storage car rebuilt as a support vehicle with engine/generator compartments, a control room, a walk-in cooler, commissary storage, and a walk-in freezer. The order deadline for the Power Car is April 24th, 2025, and they are expected to arrive in the fall of 2025.

Info: www.broadway-limited.com



As part of BLI's next run of GP35 locomotives, two high short hood locomotives will be available exclusively from **Chase's Train**

Garage with the Wheeling & Lake Erie Kodachrome and Ohio Bicentennial paint schemes.



The GP35s will be available as Stealth DCC-ready and with an exclusive LokSound 5 with custom sound file. Paragon 4 sound with Rolling

Thunder will be available by special request.

Info: www.chasestraingarage.com



A new run of HO scale GSC depressed center flatcars is available for pre-order from **ClassOneModelWorks.com**. This



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second run includes new features such as road-specific curved deck hole fillers and load restraint types, wrap-around decking on curves as appropriate, single vertical brake stands on NYC and PC cars, diamond mesh upper decking on the Reading car, and full metal plate covers on the upper decks for the Southern Pacific car.



Three styles of three-axle trucks are now available: GSC

plain bearing, GSC roller bearing w/rotating bearing caps, and Buckeye F-36 plain bearing. Brake beams and brake shoe holders are included on all twelve wheels.



Road names in the second run include Atlantic Coast Line,

Central of Georgia, Delaware & Hudson, Lehigh Valley, Louisville & Nashville, New York Central, Penn Central, Reading Railroad, Rock Island, Southern Pacific, St. Louis Southwest, Wabash, Santa Fe, and Union Pacific.

Info: classonemodelworks.com



Home Shops has available Prairie Shadows HO scale Trenton Works 5250 covered hoppers in two limited edition freelance model railroad paint

schemes. Joe Bohannon's Chinook Lines imagines the western end of the Milwaukee Road becoming a separate railroad. The model comes with a built date of 8-95.



Stephen Reeves' Canadian Atlantic Railway is a regional network located in Eastern Canada. The built date on this car is 5-95. The Trenton Works 5250

models include brake details, Kadee #158 couplers, Barber trucks with 36" metal wheels, etched metal roofwalks and crossover platforms, separately applied grab irons and cut levers; and full end cage details.

Info: homeshops.net



Kadee's newest ready-to-run freight car is a PS-2 twin-bay covered hopper decorated for SSW Cotton Belt. The HO scale model is based on a prototype car built by Pullman-Standard in 1957. The model comes with roller bearing trucks with metal wheelsets.

Info: www.kadee.com



Rapido has announced the immediate availability of a new release of MLW FPA-4 and FPB-4 diesel locomotives. Four road number are available for the Canadian National versions and two road numbers for the VIA version with the unique blue nose logo.



Features on the HO scale models include operating class, back-up and head lights; multi-color interior; separate grab irons and handrails, MLW large-

capacity fuel tanks, improved 5-pole motor with dual flywheels and Canadian-cast Dofasco Type B trucks. The models are available for DC operation and DCC Sound with an ESU LokSound V5 decoder.

Rapido has announced the immediate availability of a large selection of HO scale USRA double-sheathed wood boxcars. The HO scale models feature an all-new body with correct fishbelly underframe. The models will be equipped with either KC or AB brakes as appropriate to the road name.



The accurately tooled models come with Andrews trucks with machined metal wheels. The models will be equipped with brake gear based on photographs, however, since brake



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equipment was not updated all at once, Rapido will include the other style of brake gear with each model when appropriate.



Two paint schemes will be available for Toronto, Hamilton & Buffalo and Northwestern Pacific. Additional road names include Atlantic Coast Line, Boston & Maine, Chicago & North

Western, Lackawanna, Florida East Coast, Grand Trunk Western, and Great Northern.



Rapido has scheduled another production run of its popular NSC ballast hoppers. The announcement included a February 17, 2025 preorder deadline with delivery planned for later next year.



The HO scale model is based on an all-welded open hopper National Steel Car developed in

the mid-1970s for ballast service. The design included four bottom chutes to spread the ballast along the rails. CN and CP purchased these cars in volume. Similar cars were utilized by many American railroads.



Road names include two schemes each for Canadian National, CP Rail and Union Pacific.

Additional schemes will be available for BC Rail, Amtrak, CSX, and Herzog. Painted but unlettered cars will be available in silver, yellow and orange. Each model comes with a removable load.



Rapido has also released a sound equipped HO scale model of the Canadian Pacific NSC 3294 cu ft mechanical reefer. Available

immediately, the prototype cars were built in 1968 only for Canadian Pacific and equipped with meat rails for moving hung

sides of fresh beef from western Canada to eastern markets. Well regarded by some, the cars served as late as 2002.



This release includes new road numbers, factory installed grab irons, wire stirrup steps, 100-ton Barber S-2 trucks with electrical pickup,

Rapido semi-scale metal knuckle couplers, a fully detailed underframe with piping and mechanical equipment, and factory installed sound. Canadian Pacific paint schemes are Script Logo (delivery) 1968+, Script Logo 1985+, and Multimark Repaint 1981+. The models are in-stock and shipping now. All images in this report are courtesy of Rapido Trains.

Info: www.rapidotrains.com

Tangent Scale Models announced the immediate availability of several prototype-specific C&NW bay-window cabooses at the recent Trainfest. The HO scale ready-to-run models replicate a series of steel cabooses built for C&NW by ICC in the late 1960s.



This red CNW caboose with an unpainted galvanized roof faithfully represents the cars as delivered in 1966.

Details include an Apex running board, screens on the side windows, a Klausung brake wheel and 70-ton Gould plain-bearing trucks. This version of the CNW caboose is available in eight road numbers.



In 1970 CNW removed the running board and end ladders and painted this series of cabooses yellow. The metal roof and appliances at each end of the car

were painted green. Six road numbers are available.



The side windows were plated over in 1981 and the body was given a coat of Zito safety yellow paint. A Waugh cushion underframe was installed and



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the Gould trucks were fitted with roller bearings and a Dayco belt-driven axle generator. This model is available in eight different road numbers.

All versions of Tangent's CNW cabooses have full interior details and LED lighting controlled by a wand included with each model. Undecorated kits are also available.



R. Bale

GREENVILLE 86' BOXCARS

During the 1960s, the most radical freight car designs employed the extreme height clearances offered by Plate F car designs. A prime example was the Greenville 86' purpose-built auto-parts boxcars that delivered components vital to the productivity of auto plants. While several car builders offered 86' auto-parts boxcars, the most prolific builder of the double plug door design was Greenville Steel Car Company of Greenville, PA. More than 4,400 of these cars were acquired by most major railroads. They were assigned to pools where multiple railroads' cars served a specific shipper or shippers. Original utilization of these cars was for Ford, Pontiac, and Chrysler, as well as deliveries from third party parts suppliers to the auto assembly plants. Greenville's 1964-1978 production was the longest run for this car type, with many still in service today.
David Lehlbach

Tangent Scale Models has completed another release of its HO scale Greenville 86' high-cube double plug door boxcar. Six new paint schemes are available including original delivery schemes as well as repaints and patchwork from the 1980s.



Leading the list of road names is this Detroit, Toledo, & Ironton car wearing the 1964 as delivered green scheme. Road specific details include a Miner brake wheel and 70 ton trucks with 33" wheels and Timken roller bearing axle caps.

Details shared by the Norfolk & Western and Seaboard System versions of the 86' Greenville boxcar include Apex crossover



platforms, Miner brake wheels and rotating Hyatt roller bearing axle caps on 70 ton trucks.



Tangent's Missouri-Kansas-Texas version of the Greenville auto-parts car is decorated in the 1969 as-delivered red scheme. The model rides on 100-ton low profile Barber S-2-C trucks with Hyatt rotating axle caps.



This ex-MKT car has been patched for Union Pacific which acquired a group of the 86' Greenville cars in

1984. A special detail on the UP car are the double pair of auxiliary crank arms on the plug doors.



In 1985 Missouri Pacific updated its fleet of 86' auto parts cars with Morton crossover platforms, 100-ton Barber S-2-C trucks and a Screaming Eagle paint job.



All of Tangent's HO scale 86' auto parts cars come with Kadee couplers, flexible rubber air hoses, see-through etched metal end crossover platforms and machined metal 33" or 36" wheelsets with tapered axles. Due to the car's size a minimum track radius of 24" is recommended.

Info: www.tangentscalemodels.com



Train Control Systems (TCS) has introduced a new WOWKit intended for easy installation in the HO scale Bachmann F7A locomotive. Included in the WDK-BAC-5 kit is a WOW121-Diesel 21-pin sound decoder, an AK-MB1 motherboard, a 28mm round speaker, a Motherboard Motor Mount, and double sided sticky tape. Aside from possibly some short



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lengths of wire and some glue, everything needed is included in the kit.

Info: www.tcsdcc.com/product-page/wdk-bac-5

Installation instructions: drupal.tcsdcc.com/installation/ho-scale/1855



Walthers is quoting a spring 2025 delivery date for a new series of EMD GP9 Phase II high

nose road switchers. Much of the surface detail of the economy priced Mainline series models will be molded on including drill starter points. Hobbyists wanting grab irons can add them using a GP9 Detail Kit #910-258 which is available as a separate purchase.

Road names on this release will be Central Vermont, Chesapeake & Ohio, Denver & Rio Grande Western, Soo Line, Illinois Central, Southern Pacific, Louisville & Nashville, and Union Pacific. DC models will be available as well as DCC units with ESU Sound and decoder.



A 45' Difco dump car is coming from Walthers later this winter. Road names for the Proto series model will be Southern Railway, British Columbia Railway, BNSF, Duluth, Missabe & Iron Range, Norfolk Southern, Helm Leasing, and two Union Pacific schemes.



Also scheduled for release during the winter of 2025 is a Walthers Mainline 50' AAR single door boxcar. Details include 8-panel riveted steel sides, 8' Youngstown sliding doors, 4-3-1 Improved Dreadnaught ends, a Stanray diagonal panel roof, Apex see-through running boards and an Ajax brake wheel. Like the prototype, Walthers HO scale model will ride on Bettendorf-type plain bearing trucks with 33" machined metal wheels. Road names on this release will be New York Central, Santa Fe, Baltimore & Ohio, Northern Pacific, Burlington, Pennsylvania, Erie, and Wabash.



Walthers winter 2025 production schedule includes a 61' wood chip gondola. Road names on the Mainline series model will include Southern Railway, Burlington Northern, Milwaukee Road, Columbia & Cowlitz Railway, Great Northern, and Union Pacific.



A 63' pulpwood flatcar with side racks is scheduled for release next winter. Road names for Walthers HO scale Mainline model include Canadian National, Canadian Pacific, TTX-TTPX, UNPX, Georgia Pacific, Wisconsin Central, and Southern Railway.



Hobbyists who model railroads that service logging areas will also be interested in Walthers new 45' logging flatcar. The HO scale Mainline model comes with four heavy duty log cradles and 12 logs. Road names will be Burlington Northern, Southern Pacific, Milwaukee Road, Georgia Pacific, Northern Pacific, and St. Maries River Railroad.



Walthers is producing new tooling for a Mainline series AAR 70-ton triple-bay coal hopper. The new HO scale Mainline series model is scheduled for release during the winter of 2025. Road names on the initial release will be Virginian, Baltimore & Ohio, Peabody, Burlington Northern, Penn Central, Chesapeake & Ohio, Reading, and Minneapolis & St. Louis.



Completing Walthers winter 2025 production schedule is a 40' 50-ton drop-bottom composite gondola. The HO scale model is based on a USRA wood side prototype that was updated with newer trucks and AB brakes. Road names for the Mainline series model will include Pennsylvania Railroad, Atlantic Coast Line, Santa Fe, New York Central, Chesapeake & Ohio, Milwaukee Road, and Southern Pacific.



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All Walthers models mentioned in this report will come equipped with Proto MAX metal knuckle couplers and appropriate trucks with machined metal wheels.

Info: www.walthers.com

N SCALE PRODUCT NEWS



Atlas has scheduled the release of several new N scale models for the 3rd quarter of next year. Pre-orders are being accepted through January 8, 2025.

The list of new Atlas models begins with a Master Series SD45 diesel locomotive. Road names will be Chicago & North Western, Conrail, Guilford, Santa Fe, Southern, Union Pacific, and a Great Northern Hustle Muscle scheme.



A C420 diesel locomotive is also scheduled for release during the 3rd quarter of next year. The Atlas Master series model is

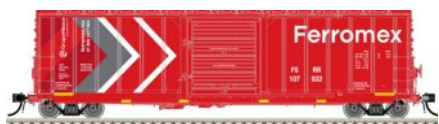
based on the 2,000hp B-B road switcher Alco built from June 1963 to August 1968. Road names on this release will include L&N Family Lines, Apache, Conrail, Erie Mining, FUS, Nickel Plate Road, and Ferrocarriles Nacionales de México.



A newly-tooled Alco FA-1 cab and FB-1 booster unit are coming from Atlas next year. Road names for the N scale Master series model will be Burlington Northern (ex-SP&S), Canadian Pacific,

Great Northern, Missouri Pacific, Spokane, Portland & Seattle, Soo Line, and Union Pacific.

The three Atlas N scale locomotives mentioned in this report will be available for DC operation (decoder ready with an 18-pin plug) and for DCC with a SoundTraxx Tsunami decoder.



This CNCF 5000 IPD boxcar is representative of the nearly 1,500 Mexican-built incentive per diem boxcars ordered by

U.S. railroads in the late 1970s. The new Atlas Master series model will have separately applied wire grab irons. Road names will include Ann Arbor, Canadian Pacific, Moscow, Camden and San Augustine, Rock Island, Columbus & Greenville, and two Ferromex schemes.



Also coming from Atlas during the 3rd quarter of 2025 is this 50' General American Corporation RBL boxcar.

Introduced by General American in the early 1960s, the RBL car featured all-welded body construction and wide variety of load restraining devices. Atlas's N scale version will have separately applied wire cut levers and etched metal running boards. In addition to Burlington Northern, road names on this release will include Denver & Rio Grande Western, Gulf Mobile & Ohio, Soo Line, and two Chicago Great Western schemes.



Atlas has included both 40' and 53' rebuilt well cars in

its 3rd quarter 2025 production schedule. As shippers began to discontinue the use of the once-popular 48' container, TTX had little need for its fleet of 48' well cars. Rather than scrapping the still-new 48' cars, TTX opted to shorten them to 40' or lengthen them to 53'. The rebuilding project resulted in well cars that could handle 20', 40' and 53' containers.



Atlas will issue 40' containers decorated for

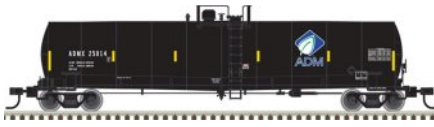
TTX (late reprint), TTX (TPEX patch) and TTX (early logo). Road names for 53' rebuilt well car will be Florida East Cost, TTX (Next Load Any Load), TTX (yellow), and Pacer Stack Train. Both the 40' and 53' N scale models require a minimum track radius of 12.5".



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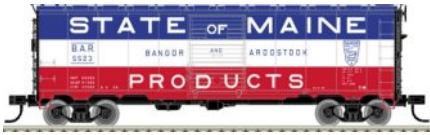
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An ACF general-purpose, single-compartment, 23,500 gallon, insulated, coiled, non-pressurized tank car is coming

from Atlas during the 3rd quarter of next year. Atlas's N scale model represents cars built from 1969 and still in service today. Road names will include AMOX, Exxon Mobile, ADMX, GLNX, AG Processing, and two ACFX schemes.



Completing the list of new N scale models coming from Atlas during the 3rd quarter of next year is a 1932 ARA boxcar. A

goal of the American Railway Association (ARA) in the early 1920s was to produce a standard all-steel boxcar. Several designs were submitted and while it was not the most popular design, the 1932 ARA Standard box car is considered one of the most important designs in railroad history. Road names available on Atlas's N scale version will be Bangor & Aroostook, Chesapeake & Ohio, Canadian Pacific, Maine Central, Western Maryland, and Ferrocarriles Nacionales de México.

Info: www.shopatlasrr.com



R. Bale

CLASS H-11 COAL HOPPER CAR

The Norfolk & Western H-11 100-ton triple bay coal hopper was designed in 1960 as an enlarged version of the PRR 70-ton class H-39 hopper. In 1964, the size was increased to 12' 3" high, cubic feet increased to 3,433 and weight capacity increased to 90-100 tons. Over 130,000 were built. Three distinctive characteristics highlight this class of hopper: roping eye with integral end buffers, end slope sheets are at a steeper angle than the hopper sheets, and 13 riveted side posts with the middle two panels wider than the rest. Other features on the prototype included Wine door locks and full height side ladder stiles. Pullman, Greenville Steel Car, and Trinity built similar cars. The cars were built by PRR, B&O, C&O, N&W and RDG. Bethlehem Steel and ACF supplied prefabricated kits to other railroads. *Lee English*



Bowser is accepting pre-orders for an accurate N scale version of an H-11 triple-bay coal hopper car through January 3, 2025.

Delivery is scheduled for September 2025.



The N scale model features a one piece plastic molded body with separate underframe. Additional details include interior and slope

sheet braces, brake wheel, air tank, brake cylinder, triple valve, knuckle couplers, roller-bearing trucks with metal wheels. A coal load is included with each car.



Road names on this release include Bessemer & Lake Erie, BNSF, Canadian National, B&O-Chessie System, Western

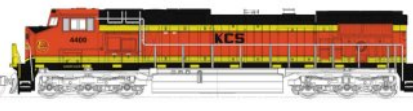
Maryland-Chessie System, Conrail, Norfolk Southern, Norfolk & Western Bicentennial, Pennsylvania, PPLX, Reading & Northern, Wheeling & Lake Erie, and Southern Pacific.

Info: www.bowser-trains.com



Kato USA has announced a run of N scale GE C44-9W locomotives for release in

summer 2025. Road names in this release include BNSF Warbonnet (patched Santa Fe), BNSF (swoosh), and KCS (ex-BNSF).



Available in DC only, DCC, and DCC/Sound, the models feature directional headlights

with illuminated ditchlights and number boards, Kato magnetic couplers, a five-pole motor, all-wheel electrical pickup, and blackened wheels. The DC model is drop-in compatible with the TCS K1D4 decoder.

Info: katousa.com



New N scale models from **Micro-Trains Line** include this Penn Central 50' boxcar with double sliding doors. Built in 1957, this former New York Central car was repainted following the merger of NYC and the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1968.



This TTX depressed center flatcar rides on heavy-duty six-wheel trucks.



Micro-Trains N scale version of a 40' USRA single-sheathed boxcar is decorated for Western Pacific. The model is equipped with Andrews plain-bearing trucks.

Info: Contact a dealer.



RailSmith is booking reservations for a limited run of uniquely decorated N scale 4-8-4 steam locomotives.



Decorating schemes in this project include National Park Lines and a fantasy Santa Fe & Disneyland Railroad. Delivery is planned for 2025. Reservations are expected to close soon.



RailSmith will soon release two N scale versions of Pullman-Standard lightweight fluted sleepers the Santa Fe assigned to the Texas Chief and the Grand Canyon Limited.



Shown here are the two Santa Fe name train cars with drumhead detail installed.

Info: www.lowellsmith.net



Rapido Trains has announced plans to produce an N scale version of a 72' Greenbrier 7780 cu. ft. reefer car.

The impressive Greenbrier reefer has an interior length of 72' 3" which gives it a whopping 82' over the drawbars. The storage capacity is massive and well-suited for shipping light or bulky frozen and perishable items.

Features on the all-new N scale model will include UP-specific body details, separately applied uncoupling levers, etched metal end platforms, underbody brake rigging, separately applied door latch mechanism. Decorating schemes on the initial release will be CRYX-Cryo-Trans (Orange end), CRYX-Cryo-Trans (Yellow end), Lineage, AOKX, Ontario Northland, and two Union Pacific schemes. Order deadline and delivery date are TBA.

Info: www.rapidotrains.com



Tangent Scale Models has released a newly tooled Trinity "Pullman-Design" 4750 covered hopper in N scale. After

Pullman-Standard closed up shop in 1981, Trinity Industries purchased design and production rights to the 4750 cu. ft. covered hopper, choosing to produce it over their own 4750 design. Thousands of the cars were produced by Trinity for Class 1 railroads between 1988 and 1995, with refinements in the design being incorporated during the production runs.



Currently in service with Class I, short line, and lease services, the initial release of the model is available decorated for CSXT,



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BN, UP, DGHX, GACX/GATX, BNSF, GACX (BNSF patch), GACX (BN patch), and INTX (UP patch). The cars include road specific details for each scheme including multiple brake layout configurations, brake wheel options, outlet gate options, original and replacement style roof hatches; see-through etched metal running boards and crossover platforms, wire grab irons, separate coupler lift bars, and flexible rubber air hoses.



Included on the models are Tangent's newly tooled N scale 100-ton Barber S-2 roller bearing trucks with machined 36" metal wheels and body mounted Micro-Trains compatible

couplers. The trucks are also available as a separate item.

Info: www.tangentscalemodels.com

STRUCTURES AND SCENIC SUPPLIES



Ahearn is developing a 48' wedge-style trailer with rubber tires and individual mud flaps. Decorating schemes will be

Yellow Freight, Pacific Intermountain Express, Roadway, Consolidated Freightways, and NW Transport. Unlettered models will also be included in this release which is scheduled for May 2026. The pre-order deadline is December 27, 2024.



Included in the 2026 release are paired 28' UPS trailers with a dolly. The paired trailers will

be available in 2-packs with different road numbers. Ahearn reports that some of the UPS trailers will have multiple logos and/or variations in the decoration scheme.

Info: www.athearn.com



New from **BPH Enterprises** is a series of SceniKing O, HO, and N scale Autumn Treeline backgrounds. Consisting of three linkable O scale scenes and two linkable scenes for both HO and N scale, the backgrounds are printed using long-life inks on glare-free 24-pound paper. Each linkable scene is six feet long, making backdrops of 12 (N, HO) and 18 (O) feet long possible.

Info: sceniking.com

Frenchman River Model Works has released an O/On3/On30



craftsman kit for a two-story brick firehouse. The structure is suitable for use in scenes from 1900 to the present. The structure includes a hose-drying tower that can be placed on either side of the main

structure. The assembled structure has a footprint of 4.25" wide by 7.5" deep without the fire escape. The hose drying tower is 7" tall. Assembly and painting are required.

Info: www.frenchmanriver.com



A kit for a Vintage Coal Dealer featuring three concrete coal bunkers is coming from **Walthers** next winter. In addition to the coal bunkers the new kit includes a brick office building, two coal

conveyors, a pump house, two vertical steel fuel tanks, an approach ramp, unloading trestle and wood fencing. Painting and assembly are required.



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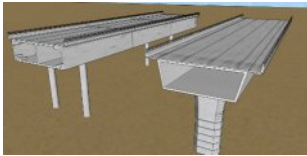


Walthers plans to release a load of 30 molded plastic logs next spring. The logs are ready to use and do not require painting.



Walthers has developed a foam-based beveled roadbed that is dimensionally compatible with most common cork roadbed. The new roadbed consists of dense closed-cell foam that provides a solid, stable foundation for track. The material will be available in 36" lengths for single track and double track in 5-packs. A 12" x 36" sheet for yards and multiple track locations will also be available. The new roadbed is scheduled for introduction in winter 2025.

Info: www.walthers.com



ZYX Creative is offering easy-to-assemble box girder bridge kits in HO and N scale. Box girders with square or angled sides are available for roadways with one, two or three lanes. The 3D printed bridges may be ordered curved or straight and are sold by the inch. Weathering and road striping can be accomplished using pastel pencils included in the kit.

Info: www.zyxcreative.com

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BRIEFLY NOTED AT PRESS TIME ...

Athearn has just released to dealers the HO scale SD40T-2 diesel locomotive announced in April 2023. Road names available now include SP, NECR, CFE, UP, D&RGW and BN ...

January 3, 2025 is the deadline for preordering **Bowers's** new N scale 100-ton triple-bay coal hopper ...

Roka Models has released another production run of its prototypically accurate HO scale GTC 16,600 gallon welded tank cars with road specific details for Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe, Chicago Great Western, Chicago & North Western, BNSF, BN and Montana Rail Link ...

New HO scale models coming from **Walthers** next spring include a 30' caboose, a 50' ACF 5250 covered hopper and a 50' PCF insulated boxcar. A Russell snowplow, an 86' P-S hi-cube boxcar and a 50' pulpwood flatcar are scheduled for release next winter...

New HO models coming to **Atlas** dealers late this month include NSC and BX-177 boxcars and U30B and Dash 8-40B locomotives. Additional late 2025 releases include an N scale 20,700 gallon tank car and a BX-177 boxcar. For O scale modelers a 40' stock car and an S2 locomotive should be available by the end of this month... ■

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Please submit your event information, including website, to [model-railroad-hobbyist.com/contact/News event - product announcement](https://model-railroad-hobbyist.com/contact/News_event_-_product_announcement)

Ongoing 2024

ONLINE, Zoom, dates vary, see website. Operation Special Interest Group Meetups – limited attendance available.

Info: www.opsig.org/Virtual

Archive: www.youtube.com/c/OperationsSIG

ONLINE, Zoom & YouTube, Wednesday & Saturday, see Facebook page. “New Tracks” Meetup, hosted by Jim Kellow, MMR.

Info: newtracksmodeling.com

YouTube: www.youtube.com/channel/UCMA_VhPb5pjdkAYTdXLceJA

ONLINE, Facebook & YouTube, dates vary, see Facebook page. “NMRax” organized by Gordy Robinson, Martyn Jenkins, Speed Muller, Jordan Kramer.

Info: www.facebook.com/groups/nmragroup

ONLINE, YouTube, every other Saturday. 4th Division, Pacific Northwest Region, NMRA hosts online layout tours and clinics.

Archive: www.youtube.com/c/4DPNRMovies

ONLINE, YouTube, March 17-20, 2025. NMRA Northeastern Region NERx annual virtual convention. <https://www.youtube.com/c/NMRAORGMModelRailroading>
Info: nerx.org

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

December 2024 - January 2025

FLORIDA, COCOA BEACH, January 9-11, 2025. 2025 Prototype Rails RPM Meet. Cocoa Beach Hilton Oceanfront, 1550 N. Atlantic Ave [Highway A1A].
Info: www.prototyperails.com

ILLINOIS, CALLEDONIA, January 5, 2025. Rock River Valley Division Monthly Meeting/Clinics. Paulsons Agricultural Museum, 6950 Belvedere Rd.
Info: rrvd-nmra.org

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

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

MARYLAND, CHESTER, December 14-15, 2024. Queen Anne's Railroad Society's Festival of Trains. 61 Piney Narrows Road.
Info: www.qarrs.org



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MASSACHUSETTS, ORLEANS, Saturdays through December 28, 2024. Nauset Model Railroad Club Annual Holiday Open House Days. 180 Rte 6A.

Info: www.nausetmodelrrclub.com

MASSACHUSETTS, 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, GRAND RAPIDS, January 4, 2025. The GRMRHS Train Show. American Legion Post 179, 2327 Wilson Ave SW.

Info: www.grmrhs.org

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

Info: www.cc-gc.org

SOUTH CAROLINA, FORT MILL, December 21, 2024. Fort Mill, SC Model Train Show and Sale. Clarion Hotel, 3695 Foothills Way.

Info: www.carolinatrainshow.com/#

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

Future 2025 by location

CANADA, ONTARIO, BURLINGTON, October 17-19, 2025. Real Rails 2025 Convention, sponsored by the Canadian Pacific Historical Association. Holiday Inn and Candle Wood Suites, 3060 South Service Road.

Info: www.cptracks.ca/realrails2025.html

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

Info: gasamuel@aol.com

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

COLORADO, COLORADO SPRINGS, February 22-23, 2025. The Train Expo Colorado (TECO). Colorado Springs Event Center, Hall B, 3970 Palmer Park Blvd.
Info: tecoshow.org

ILLINOIS, CALLEDONIA, February 2, March 2, April 2, May 4, 2025. Rock River Valley Division Monthly Meeting/Clinics. Paulsons Agricultural Museum, 6950 Belvedere Rd.
Info: rrvd-nmra.org

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

NEW HAMPSHIRE, NORTH SUTTON, April 13, 2025. 8th Dartmouth/Lake Sunapee Region Model Railroad Show. Kearsage Regional Middle School, 32 Gile Pond Rd.
Info: cvrr.railfan.net/cvmrr

OHIO, CANFIELD, February 15, 2025. Canfield Train & Toy Show. Michael Kusalaba fund of the Youngstown Foundation, Event Center, Canfield Fairgrounds, Gate 9 St Rte 46.
Info: www.facebook.com/canfieldtoyandtrainshow

OHIO, WOOSTER, March 15, 2025. Wooster Train & Toy Show. Wayne County Fairgrounds Event Center.
Info: www.facebook.com/events/2105028099952980

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

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



PENNSYLVANIA, MOUNT UNION, July 18-20, 2025. Central Pennsylvania Shortlines RPM. Bricktown Museum, 300 W. Small St.
Info: rpm.pennsyrr.com

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

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

UTAH, OGDEN, February 28, March 1-2, 2025. The Hostlers Model Railroad 2025 Festival. Ogden Union Station, Historic 25th Street & Wall Avenue.
Info: www.hostlers.info

WASHINGTON, SPOKANE, March 9, 2025. Spokane Spring Model Train Show. Spokane County Fair & Expo Center, 404 N. Havana St.
Info: shirleysample13@gmail.com

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



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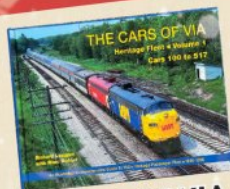
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