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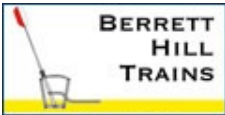
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Compiled by JOE FUGATE



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The Texas Western club layout

the MRH STAFF



First Look: Two new DVDs from Kalmbach

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Savvy Modeler online: DIY photo backdrops

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April 2023 news and events

RICHARD BALE and JEFF SHULTZ

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PUBLISHER'S MUSINGS



Model Railroad Hobbyist | April 2023

JOE FUGATE: REVISITS THE "ONE MODULE"
APPROACH TO BUILDING A LAYOUT ...



IF YOU'VE BEEN AN MRH READER FOR SEVERAL YEARS, THEN YOU MAY HAVE HEARD OF TOMA. TOMA stands for *The "One Module" Approach*.

TOMA started as an editorial column entitled "The 'one module' challenge."

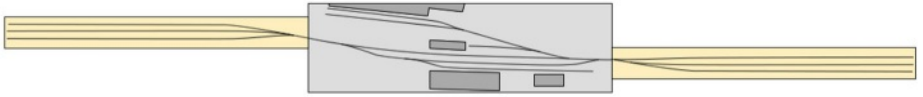
Basically, the idea was to give armchair modelers a kick in the pants to finally build something by limiting the scope and making it easy as well as making it operational (more on this later).

From there, the idea evolved into The "One Module" Approach contest, and ultimately, the TOMA contest. From there, the idea became building a sectional home layout using TOMA.

Why not "One Section" instead?

Since a TOMA section doesn't need to follow any specific modular standard, some feel it should be the "one section" approach instead.

The original editorial put "one module" in quotes to indicate it's a non-standard use of the phrase. It's a section of a model railroad that doesn't necessarily follow any modular standard.



Classic TOMA

1. The basic idea with TOMA started out being to build a single module section and hang some flat top staging off each end and then run trains. No more excuses!

It can follow a modular standard – or not. Hence, the quotes.

When I'm writing about a single piece of TOMA, I prefer to call it a TOMA *module section*. It's a bit redundant, but it's a reminder that each piece of TOMA can be any shape.

The original editorial recommended a 2' x 6' module section so it can fit upended through a door easily without smashing your fingers.

Experience has shown that for a curved TOMA module section, it's best to limit it to 4' long. Maneuvering a curved module section six feet long down a hall or around a corner tends to be quite difficult.

Classic TOMA

The idea behind TOMA from the very beginning has been to build something from start to finish, including running trains on it.

To facilitate that, classic TOMA hangs flat top staging off each end of the module section.

By keeping the scope small, it should be possible to build and completely scenic and detail a TOMA module section in weeks or months instead of years like with something larger.

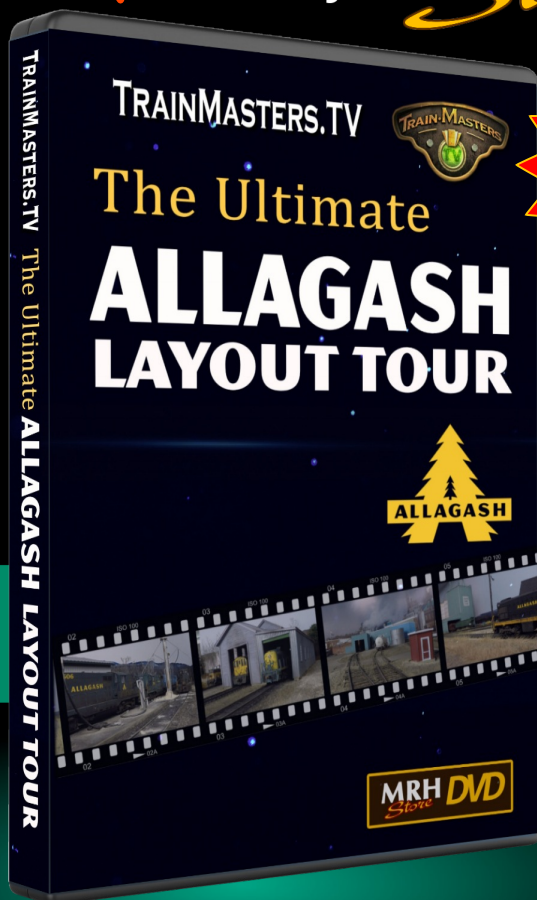
The small scope also keeps the cost down, further helping remove any excuses for not getting started building at least some piece of a layout.



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Once you've got your first TOMA module section completed and you're running some trains on it, you've now experienced the full scope of the hobby. But what if you would like something larger?

No problem. Build another module section, add it to the first, and so on. And so on. You eventually could have a nice room-filling layout, but you built it painlessly, a bite-at-a-time.

But that's not efficient

One downside we often hear when talking about building a home layout using TOMA is that it's more efficient to build a home layout in stages - buy all the lumber and build all the benchwork. Then buy all the track and lay it. And so on.



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Bulk buying can save money, but it also means you have to dig deep and make a much larger financial outlay up front.

I have to grin when someone suggests that a hobby should be “done efficiently.” Isn’t the main aim of a hobby to have fun? I say leave efficiency for the day job.

If efficiency really mattered all that much, then we should buy all the most expensive items in bulk, like locomotives.

Figuring out all the locomotives to get up front and buying them in bulk is definitely more efficient. But who does the hobby that way?

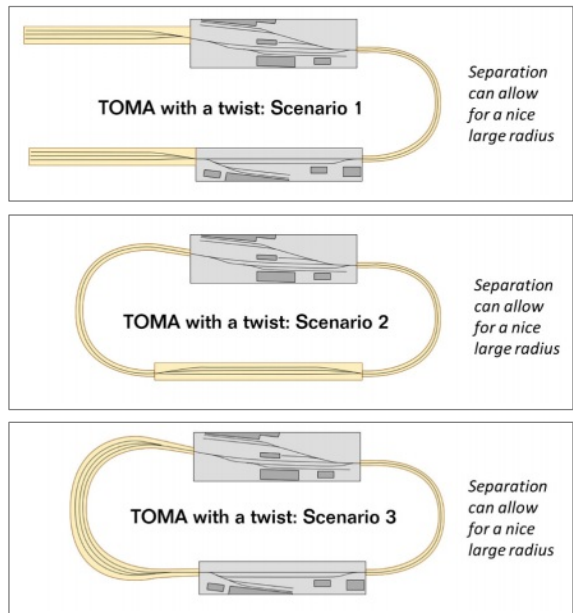
It’s far more fun to get locomotives one at a time as you see something you like. Plus it’s more affordable to buy locos onesy-twosey. Who cares if the total outlay for locomotives will be a larger aggregate amount? Buying locomotives piece meal is so much more fun!

TOMA with a twist

TOMA can be a very flexible way to build a layout. There’s nothing that says you can’t go beyond the classic TOMA idea and branch out to other configurations [2].

Scenario 1 shows that two TOMA modules can be separated with a temporary curved piece between them.

Scenarios 2 and 3 add continuous running to the options.



2. Various “TOMA with a twist” variations from the classic TOMA configuration.



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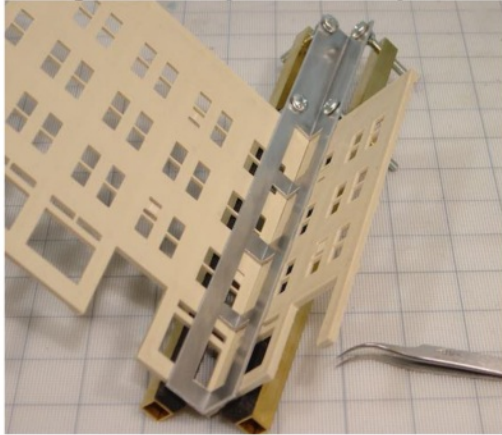
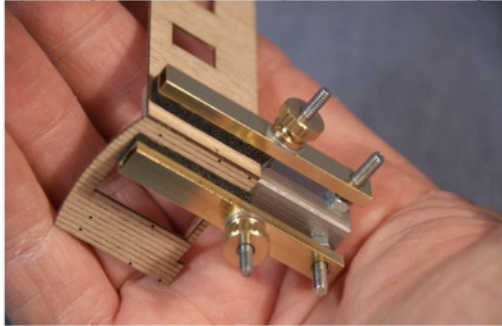
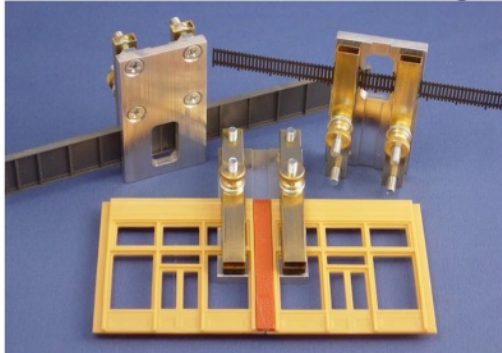


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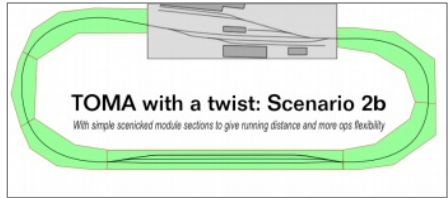
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Click Here**Visit our new Website:****www.coffmaneng.com****PUBLISHER'S MUSINGS | 5****TOMA with a twist: Scenario 2b**

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3. You can also use scenicked temporary add-ons instead of bare plywood ones with your TOMA module section, for a more finished TOMA layout look.

There's also nothing that says those temporary add-ons to your TOMA module section can't be fully scenicked instead of just bare plywood [3].

TOMA meets the 4x8

The old standby for getting into the hobby has been to build a layout on a 4x8 piece of plywood.

What if you could instead do the 4x8 as a TOMA and be able to evolve those pieces of layout into something more extensive later?

Basically, build a couple 2-foot by 4-foot module sections back-to-back and then add some temporary continuous running connections on each end [4].

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This allows for a lot more flexibility than the traditional 4x8. While a couple 2x4-foot module sections work okay, even better is to add a couple feet and build two 2x6-foot module sections back-to-back [5].

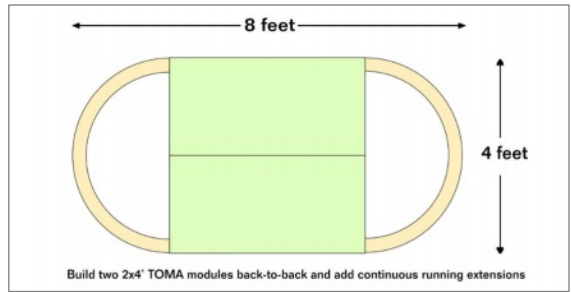
Since you're building these using TOMA module sections, you can evolve your layout later into an around-the-walls layout without missing a beat.

I'm thinking we need to evolve away from the rather limiting 4x8 into something that's got more future potential to it.

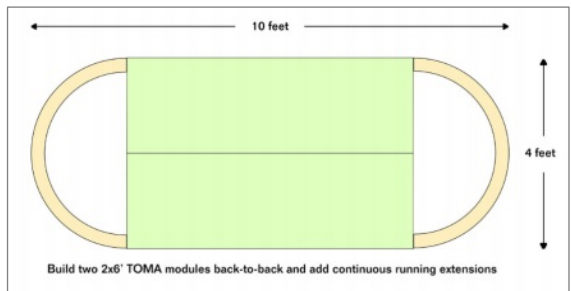
Moving to TOMA for Siskiyou Line 2

Now that I've dismantled my traditionally built Siskiyou Line 1, I'm exploring building Siskiyou Line 2 as a TOMA. And why not? MRH has been promoting TOMA as a good way to build a home layout, so it behooves me to put my money where my mouth is, as they say.

I can tell you I'm having a ball and learning first hand how to use TOMA for a home layout as well. The limited scope of building a large layout in smaller, finished chunks is far more fun than I ever imagined.



4. TOMA can also be used to make a 4x8 starter layout as two back-to-back TOMA module sections with continuous running temp extensions.



5. Or do the 4x8 one better and use a couple 2x6-foot TOMA module sections back-to-back.

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I'm totally re-energized about doing the hobby once again, just as it was in the early days when everything was new.

Don't forget the 2023 reader survey

The 2023 reader survey is still on, please visit this link if you haven't yet taken it:

WEB: mrhmag.com/mrh-2023-reader-survey

We're doing a free drawing at the end of the survey and giving away prizes. We're giving away three 10" Android tablets and a free lifetime subscription to *MRH Running Extra* and *TrainMasters TV*.

NOTE: Make sure you carefully read the important note on the first page of the survey – it tells you how to easily save your survey input as you go, just in case you get verbose and the survey times out on you (the survey assumes 10 minutes max after which it times out). ✓

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- 1st** Electrical Impulses: Sound decoder best practices
- 2nd** Mike Mackey's Texas & St. Louis
- 3rd** Crowdsourced hay bales

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- 1st** More realistic water scenes, take 2
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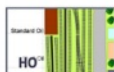
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**Publisher's Welcome: Black styrene can be a better choice**

JOE FUGATE

**Limited Modeler: Exploring layout design definitions**

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GREG BAKER

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Best of the

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THIS
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Model Railroad Hobbyist | April 2023

Compiled by **JOE FUGATE**



Corner gas station, store, and tavern

MRH forum member **thewizard1** started this thread about building this nice corner gas station combination. It's an Evergreen Hill Designs Shenandoah Crossing kit and he's giving us the full blow-by-blow of the build.

If you have ever wanted to look over the shoulder of a skilled modeler as they do a build, then this thread's exactly that!



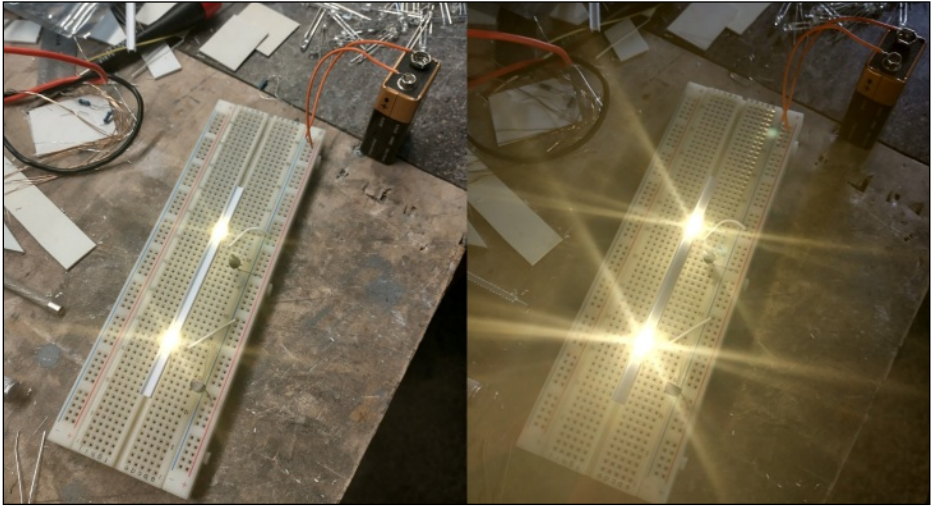
[View the full thread on the MRH website](#)

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

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1. *MRH* forum member **Craig Townsend** wanted to explore using resistors to control LED brightness versus using an LED driver IC component, so he started this interesting *MRH* Forum thread.

LED resistors vs CL2N3 drivers

MRH forum member **Craig Townsend** kicked off an interesting *MRH* Forum thread to explore using resistors to control LED current and brightness versus using an IC component like the CL2N3 deliberately designed to drive LEDs.

CL2N3 pros: Dummy proof. Hookup and connect power.

Cons: Not easily “dimnable” compared to a resistor.

Resistor pros: Can control individually and dim accordingly.

Cons: Requires experimenting to find right value for effect.

Both are super simple to wire in series or parallel.

Check out the full discussion for more.

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



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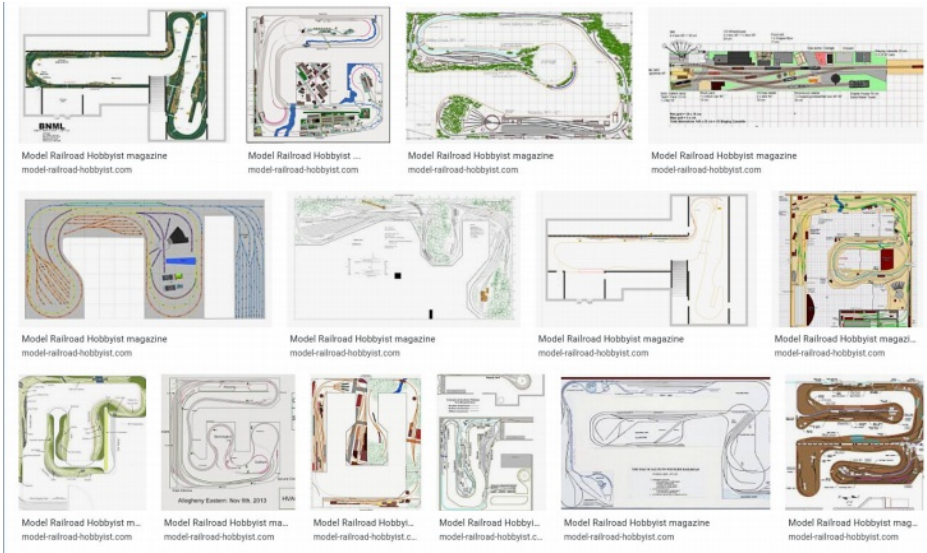
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2. *MRH* forum member **Bill Brillinger** kicked off the *MRH* track plan database and helps from the sidelines now and then with maintenance.

MRH track plan database

MRH forum member **Bill Brillinger** kicked off the *MRH* track plan database – it was his brainchild to start with, and we owe Bill a lot of thanks for his efforts with this great collection of track plans.

This track plan database has grown to the point now that we're seeking volunteers to help update the index to what is now several hundred track plans.

Bill built the original index, but with the move to our new forum, the index needs to be completely redone by hand. We've put the call out for volunteers, so we expect a shiny new index to come online with some help from forum members.

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

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3. MRH forum member **Bshoop** (Bryan S.) kicked off this thread with this post of this “game-changing” track change on his layout.

Layout game changers ...

MRH forum member **Bshoop** (Bryan S.) started a new thread asking for folks to post their layout game changes. He posted his here:

“For me, it was switching out a cross-over for a single slip switch at the east end of my harbor/float yard. Before the single slip, I had to saw through cross-overs and switch directions to get to my industrial track (right-most track) to switch out my 4 industries located along it.

Now I can make a direct shove out of my yard ladder to access it without the saw-back Z- shaped move. It GREATLY sped up and simplified operations, and made switching moves MUCH more efficient.”

Check out the full thread for more on Bryan’s improvement and read many more layout game changers in the full thread!

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



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Monthly *What's on your Workbench* thread ...

Each month, our forum has a monthly what's on your workbench thread. It's always fun to see forum members' workbench projects.

View the full thread on the *MRH* website

4. *MRH* forum member redP (Scott A.) is modeling Penn Central and early Amtrak in the summer of 1972. Here is one of several of his covered hopper projects on the workbench. Nice!



5. Every so often, a fascinating workbench project pops up on the workbench thread – and this one of musgrovejb (Joe M.) certainly qualifies. According to Joe's post, he built all these pop machines to use as a gondola load. He's done a great job modeling what looks to be several pop machines heading back to the factory for reconditioning.



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WHAT'S NEAT

column



Model Railroad Hobbyist | April 2023

KEN PATTERSON COVERS THIS MONTH:

- **KEN** CONTINUES A FOUR-PART SERIES ON BUILDING A NARROW GAUGE RAILROAD
- **KEN** INTERVIEWS BACHMANN'S **MATT STERN**



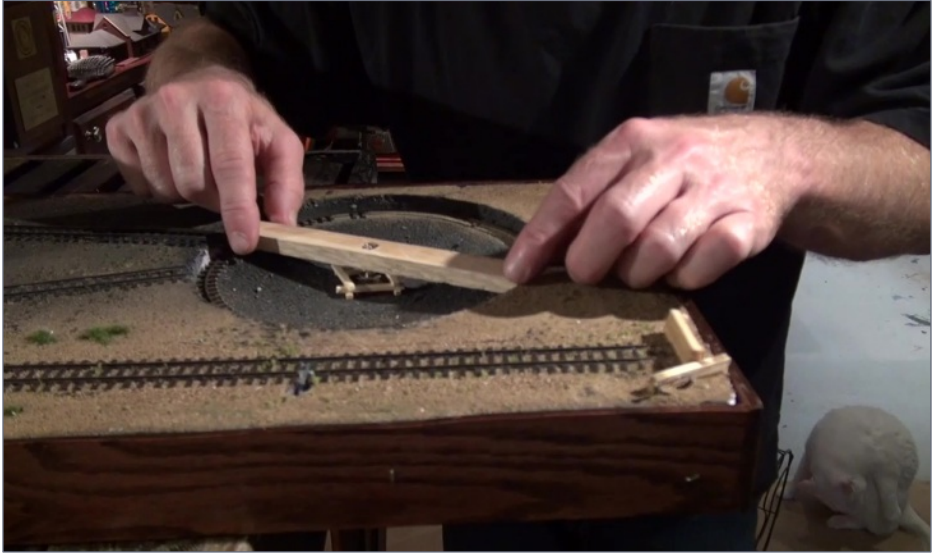
THIS MONTH CONTINUES A FOUR-PART SERIES ON BUILDING AN HOn3 shelf module and the layout it will fit in. Matt Stern joins Ken via Skype to show some new and upcoming products from Bachmann.



click to play video

PHOTOS AND VIDEO OF SUPERB MODELS

Building a narrow-gauge railroad, part 3



1. Ken starts Part Three by building the gallows turntable from scratch.

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2. Topping the base of the turntable seen in the first photo with ties, Ken glues the rails into place with contact cement. The longer ties will support walkways on each side of the turntable.



3. Ken solders the track feeders to the stereo plug used to support the turntable.



4. Ken used wire and brass U-channel to support the turntable like a suspension bridge.



5. Ties were glued into the wall of the turntable pit as a lining.



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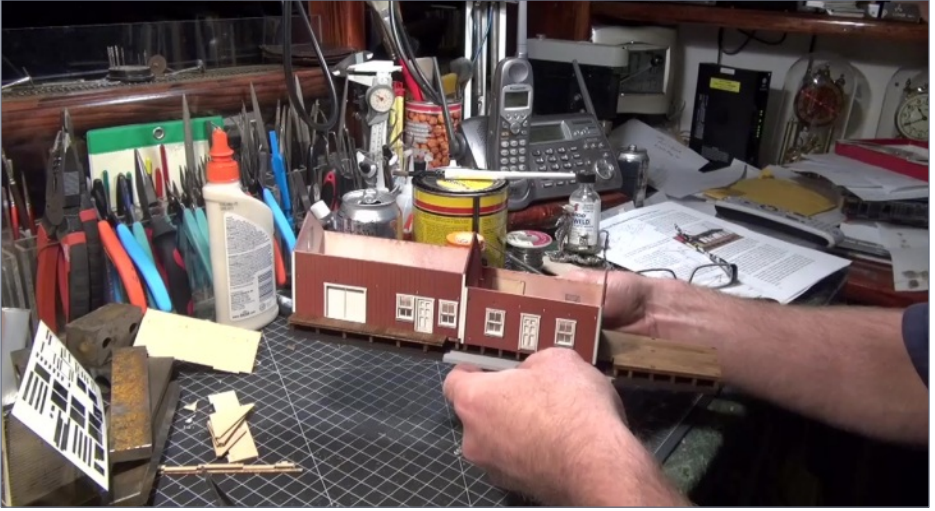
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6. Ken stacked stained ties around the stereo jack to both hide it and to hold the jack, which is the pivot point for the turntable, in place.



7. The turntable complete, Ken tests it by running a locomotive on it, turning it 180 degrees by hand, and running the locomotive off, after flipping the track polarity with the DPDT switch on the control panel.



8. Ken wanted a freight house on the module, so he selected B.T.S.'s W&W Deer Lick station kit for it.



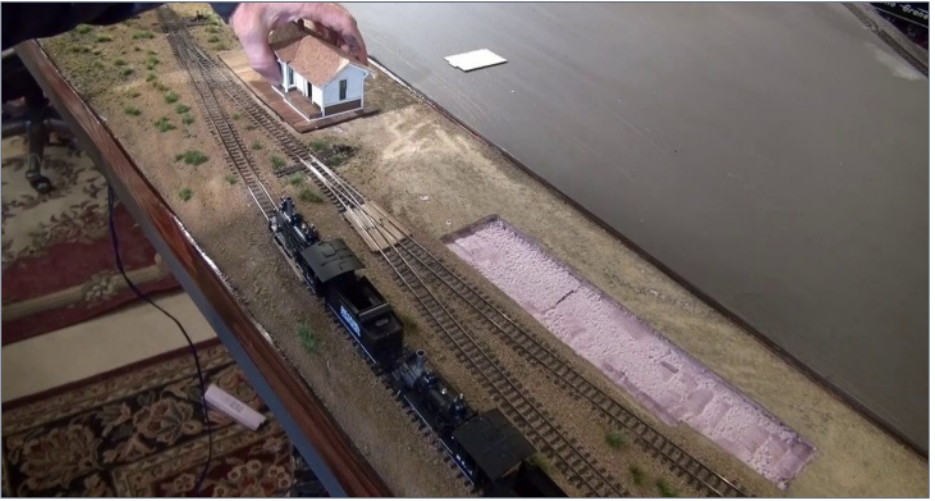
9. Like the other structures on the module, he mounted the freight house on a Plexiglas base that will be placed in a recess in the foam.



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10. For the passenger station, Ken used another B.T.S. structure, the DT&I Standard Station. For the exterior of the structure, Ken stained the lower part and painted the upper part.



11. To add a dirt road to the module, Ken spread sifted dirt from his yard.



12. Ken glued the dirt road down using his normal method of flooding the scene with wet water and scenic cement. In back is the base for Part 4 of the series, where Ken builds a 12' x 5' layout that will incorporate the module into it.

Matt Stern presents some new and upcoming products from Bachmann



13. Bachmann's Matt Stern shows off the new Daylight Special train set, which includes a Southern Pacific GS-4 locomotive and several passenger cars.



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14. Also available soon will be this five-bay roundhouse, with included nickel silver E-Z Track. It will work with the Bachmann DCC-equipped E-Z Track turntable.

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15. Bachmann has received the first samples of the ALC-42 in N scale, here Matt holds up the “First Day” paint scheme locomotive.



16. Matt is holding a CSX Wide-Vision Caboose that will be in the next release of that model.

To see all of Ken's construction tips and methods and the new and upcoming products from Bachmann, click on the video link at the beginning of the article. Next month Ken will finish the series by showing how to incorporate the module as a removable section in a full layout.

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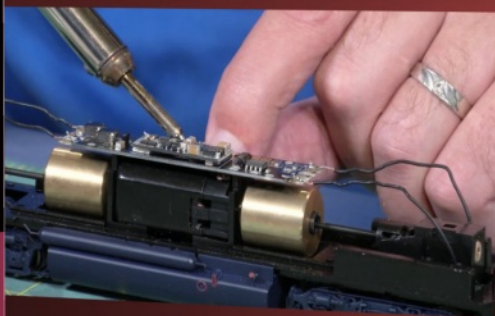
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Practical signals for DC block control layouts



Electrical Impulses

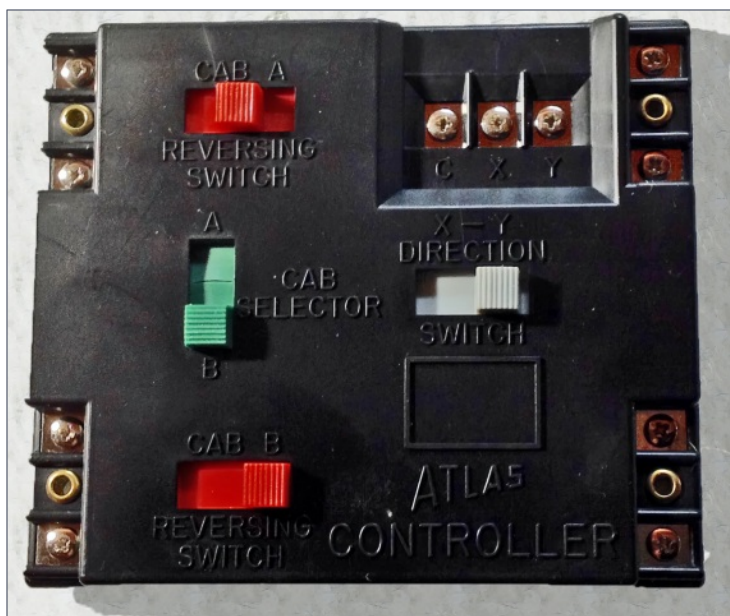
Model Railroad Hobbyist | April 2023

A green light clears CN 4700 to leave Marlayna Yard and take the main, heading west to Ariel Grain Terminal. The tall signal at left indicates upcoming block polarity, while the signals on the bridge inform oncoming trains of turnout alignment.



DOUG DYER SHOWS THE **LED** SIGNALS HE USES TO INDICATE BLOCK POLARITY AND TURNOUT ALIGNMENT ON HIS **SPIRITWOOD SUBDIVISION ...**

I OPERATE MY MODEL RAILROAD, the Spiritwood Subdivision of the CNR, with DC power and conventional block control. It has 30 electrically isolated blocks, each controlled by an Atlas 220 controller, divided among three separate control panels [1, 2].



1. Atlas 220 controller.



2. Atlas control panel.



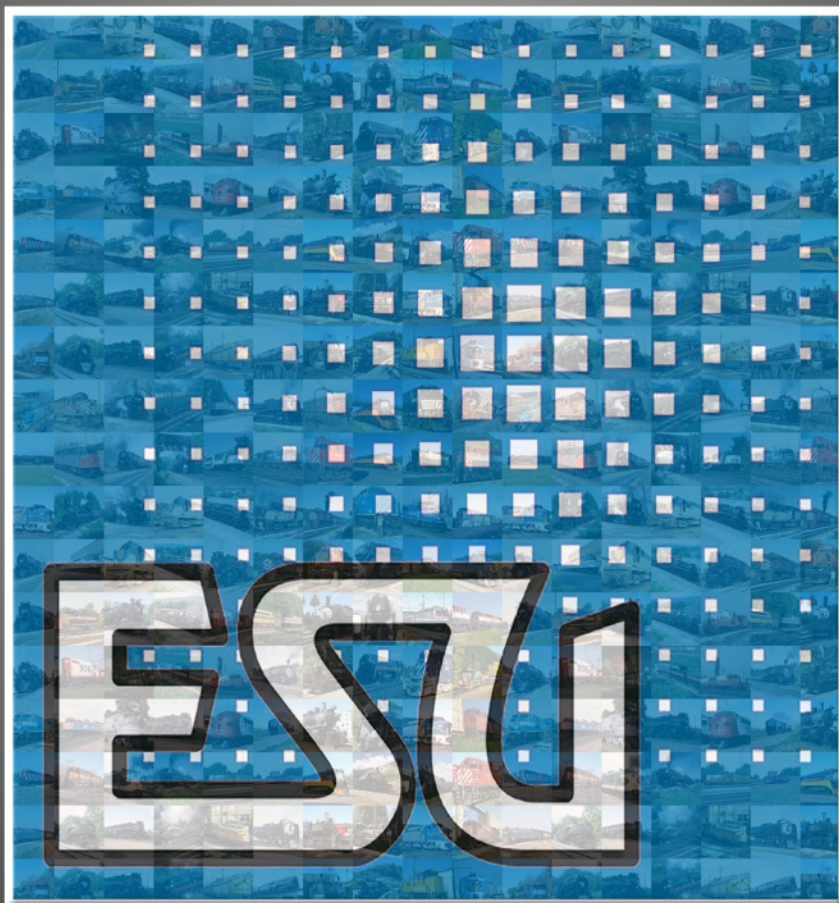
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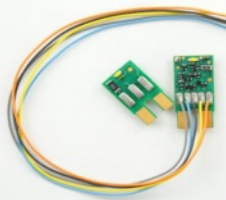
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While this allows individual direction and cab control of each block, remembering the set polarity for each block can be difficult. If a train leaves one block and the polarity of the next block is set against it, it will cause a short circuit. The train will stop, but the layout will also lose power.

To address this challenge, I developed a system of block signals to indicate polarity for each block. The signal shows green if the polarity for the block a train is about to enter is set correctly for the train's direction. It shows red if the polarity is set against the approaching train.

If the track signal shows red as the train approaches the block, stop the train before it crosses the gap and causes a short. Change the direction control (polarity) switch on the Atlas controller supplying that block.

The next block will then have correct polarity to proceed, and the signal will change to green. Not only do the signals provide a visible reminder of the upcoming track's polarity, but they also add an element of prototypical realism to the layout.

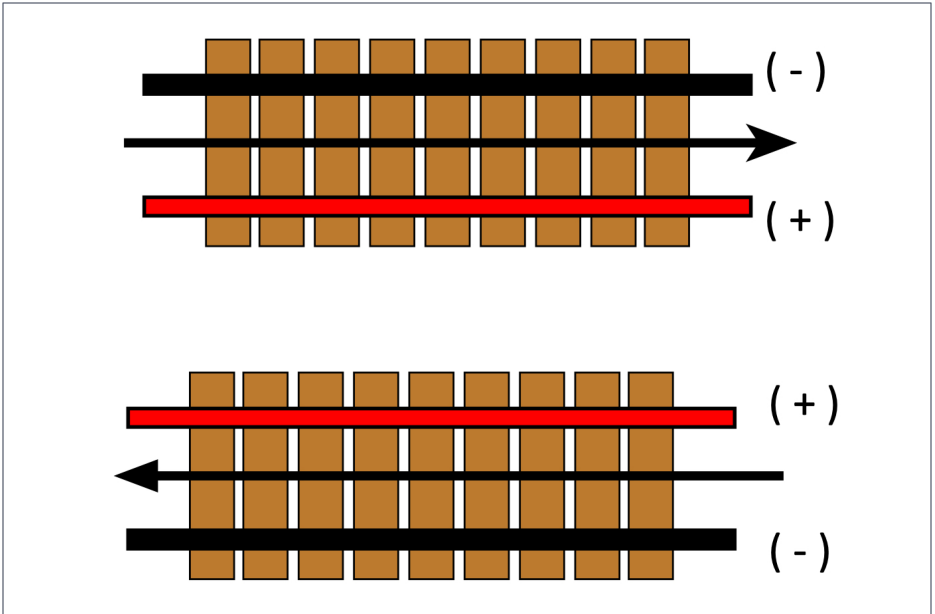
PRINCIPLES OF BLOCK SIGNAL FUNCTION

For a DC locomotive to move forward, the right rail (engineer's side) must be positive and the left rail negative [3]. Reversing the polarity will cause the locomotive to move backward.

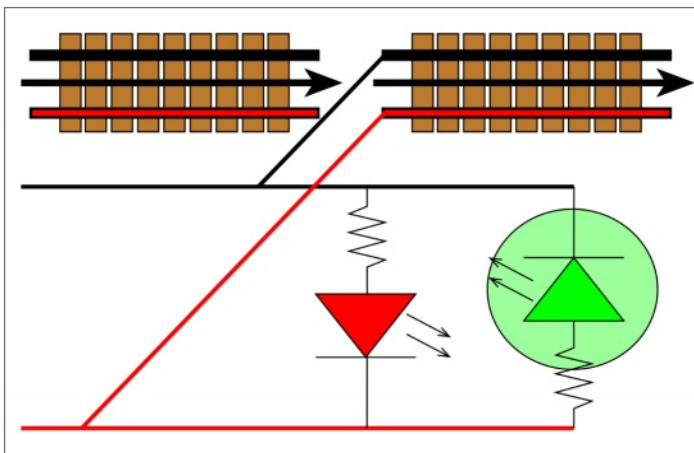
Light emitting diodes (LEDs) allow current to pass through in only one direction, anode (+) to cathode (-), producing light. I built my two-aspect signals using red and green LEDs, with one green and one red LED for each.

I wired the LEDs to the track wiring such that the green LED lights when the polarity is set for the train to move forward, and the red when the polarity is opposite [4, 5].

LEDs have a current and voltage rating that determines how much resistance is needed in the circuit to protect the LED from being damaged. I used 5 mm LEDs. These LEDs are rated for 3.5 V at 30 mA current.



3. Standard DC polarity settings for direction of travel. Positive is denoted in red, and negative in black.



4. The Atlas 220 controller is set so the polarity of the block at right matches that of the oncoming train. The green LED is oriented to illuminate with this polarity, but the red is not. The train may proceed.

polarity, but the red is not. The train may proceed.

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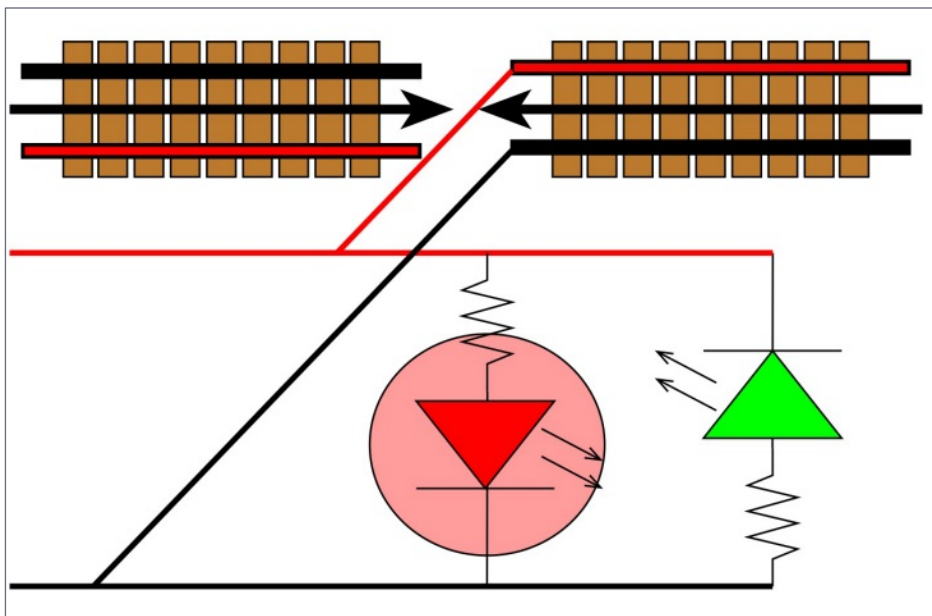
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5. The same here as in [4], though with the Atlas 220 controller set so the DC polarity of the block ahead is opposed to the oncoming train. The red LED is oriented to illuminate with this polarity, though the green stays off. The operator should stop the engine short of the block gap to avoid a short circuit, or else switch the block's polarity for a green signal.

Since I operate with track voltages approaching 17 to 18 volts, I decided to use 3K resistance for each LED. I did this by wiring two 1.5K resistors in series with each LED or by choosing a standard resistor value of 3.3K.

To alleviate wiring confusion, I standardize LED wiring by using black to the cathode, and red to the anode of each LED. I place a small piece of green masking tape on the wires to the green LED.

The short lead on the LED is the cathode. It helps to bend the short lead a little for easy identification when wiring. Use pliers as a heat sink to protect the LED when soldering.



6. A green signal clears CN 3533 for the approach to Maxwell Lake Curve.



J. Regier

KEEP THAT WIRING CODED!

Developing a good system for keeping your wiring easily traceable saves second-guessing and headaches. This allows you to leave a project and come back to it, or even redo the project later without having to reverse-engineer your previous steps.

The author recommends using green masking tape to denote the wires to the green LED. If the masking tape should fall off or be mistakenly removed, you must sort the wires again. Best practice is to use unique wire colors for each LED color.

Standard wiring colors are red for positive, black for negative. For two additional colors, I would borrow from the NMRA color standard for DCC decoder wiring, which uses orange for positive and gray for negative motor terminals. Red/black would go to the red LED, with orange/gray to the green.

Whatever color code system you choose, be sure to remember it and use it consistently.



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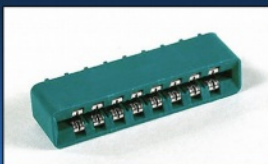
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TURNOUT ALIGNMENT INDICATOR

Turnout alignment is another area that can cause trouble, especially if the train is approaching from the frog end. If a train approaches the turnout from the normal route, and the turnout is set to diverging, that can cause shorts and derailments.

I developed a turnout-alignment indicator to let me know if the turnout is set correctly for a train to proceed, or if I need to set it differently. I use Atlas 56 remote switches to control my turnouts, and I wired Atlas 200 snap relays to control the signals. The snap relay functions as the snap turnout machines do, though instead of positioning a turnout, they activate a switch to send power alternately from the common terminals to terminal A and B [7].

In this case, I wire the anodes of one red and one green LED each to top terminals A and B, all oriented the same way. I wire the top common terminal to the 12VDC power supply.



7. Atlas 200 snap relay. From left are the A terminal, B terminals, and the common terminal. The Atlas turnout machine terminals are at left. The top A, B, and Common terminals are isolated from the bottom A, B, and Common.

Manufacturer photo

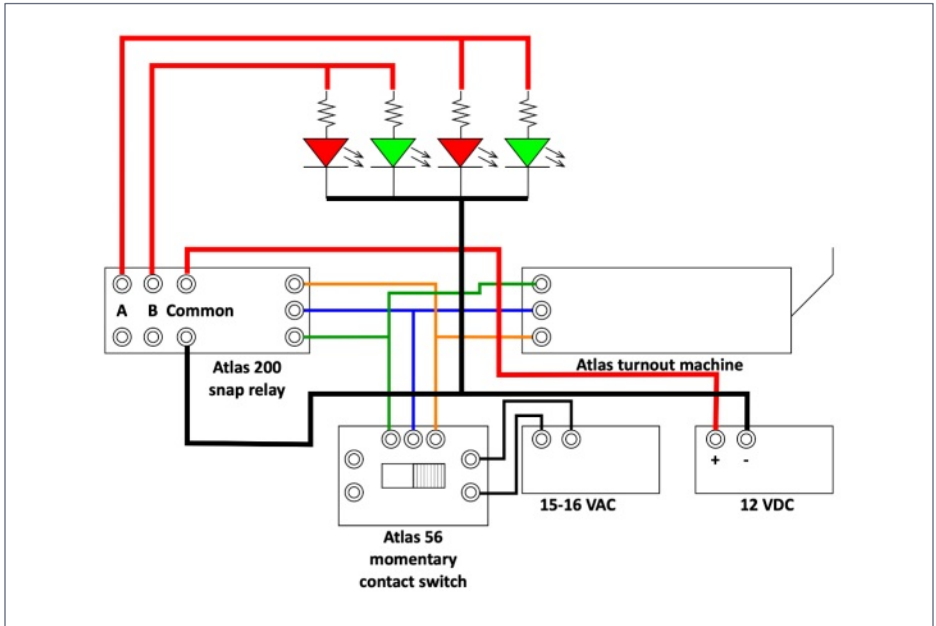
SIGNALS FOR DC BLOCK CONTROL | 8

The LEDs are wired in each signal such that the signal over the aligned track lights green, while the signal over the non-aligned track lights red [8, 9].

I hope this project lights up your railroad and your day just as it did mine! ☑

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8. The Atlas 200 snap relay is at left here. Slide the switch on the Atlas 56 and press it down to simultaneously activate the solenoid in the Atlas 200 and also in the Atlas turnout machine. This will set both the turnout and the overhead signals that indicate its position.



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9. CN GP38-2 no. 4700 is stopped waiting for track clearance and turnout alignment at the Squamish interchange siding.

DOUG DYER



Doug is a retired radiologist who has been a model railroader in HO scale since receiving an American Flyer train set at age 6 under the Christmas tree from Santa Claus.

He is currently CEO of his own Canadian National Railway, Spiritwood Subdivision. He and his wife Jan have six grandchildren and live in Victoria, British Columbia. ■

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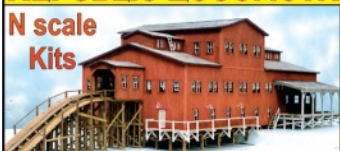


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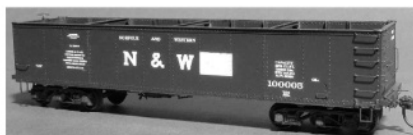
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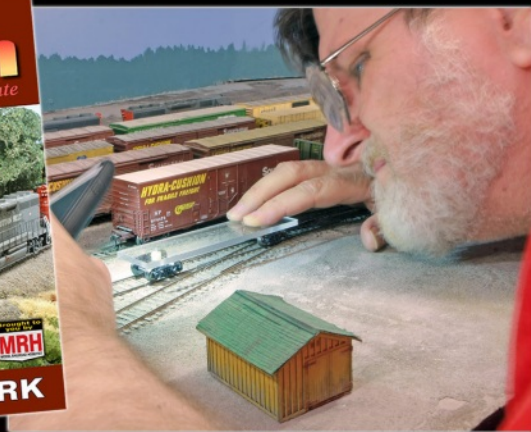
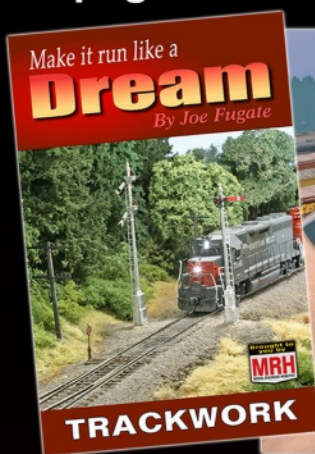
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This layout can be viewed at the
2023 Texas Express
NMRA National Convention
August 20 - 26, 2023



The Texas Western

**JOE FUGATE VISITS THIS FORT WORTH CLUB
LAYOUT ...**



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1. An M-K-T freight passes under the highway bridge over the SP Yard on the Texas Western club layout.



The Texas Western club layout in the greater Dallas/Fort Worth area will be open for tours during August 2023 as part of the 2023 Texas Express NMRA National Convention. To learn more about this convention or to register, please visit this website: 2023texasexpress.com.

I visited the Texas Western Club in late February 2023 and toured the layout, taking photos and video. I sat down with club president David Crumpton and talked about his journey in the hobby and the club's layout.

MRH: David, before we get into the details of this club layout, let's learn more about you. How did you first get started in the hobby?

David Crumpton: I started doing the hobby probably 30 years ago on a four by eight sheet of plywood, then graduated to a more sophisticated shelf along the inside of our garage. Later I built a shop out back that's 14 by 16 and moved all of the layout out there.

I re-energized myself in 2018 and got back into the hobby after several years of not being active. My son became a scout, so I was a scout master involved with him and took a hiatus for several years. One day I opened up YouTube video of an HO scale train with sound.

"Wow, they've got sound now! How did that happen?"

That got me interested in the hobby again.

MRH: How did you end up finding this club?





2. The Texas Western club is located in the Forest Hill suburb of Fort Worth. Their website can be found here: www.twmrc.org

David: I went to a hobby store in Dallas and was addressing some questions to the sales clerk. Close by stood the Lone Star Division One director of the NMRA, Mike Mackey. He followed me out to my car.

Mike asked, "Are you familiar with the NMRA?"

I said, "Mike, I don't even know what that is."

"Okay," Mike responded, "We're meeting this Saturday in a building in Forest Hill [2] where there is a train club. Why don't you come to the meeting, meet the people, and find out what the NMRA is all about."

So I went to the meeting, met some of the people with the Texas Western Model Railroad Club, sat in on the Division One meeting, and that got the ball rolling.

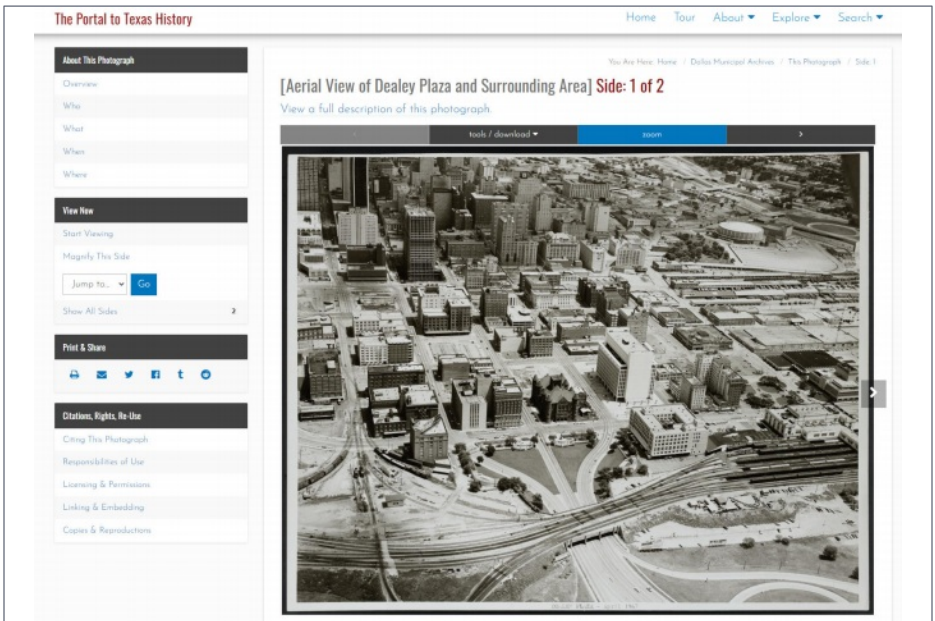
MRH: And you eventually became club president?

David: I was elected president and CEO of the Texas Western in December of 2019, and was installed officially in January of 2020.

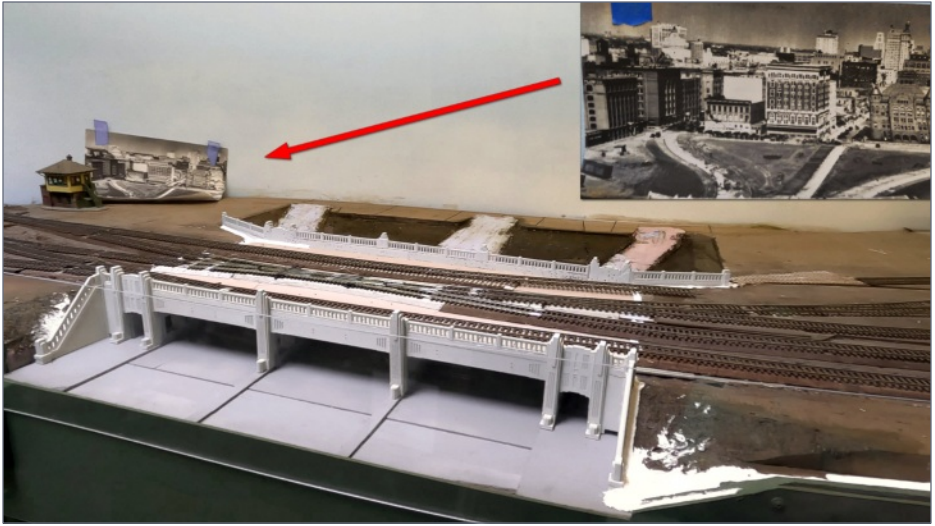
MRH: Wow, two years from re-entering the hobby to club president, not bad. How would you describe this club's layout?

David: When you come visit the Texas Western Model Railroad Club, you're looking at about 2,600 square feet on two levels. We have a 53-inch level [4] and a 28-inch level [5]. We're focusing our efforts on building the railroad Tower 55 and surrounds in Fort Worth, Texas, with our scenery set circa 1962.

Our scenery, our buildings, and our operational time period actually covers 1945 to 1962. I would tell people who come in the door: You're looking at scenes around Dallas Fort Worth.



3a. Here's an aerial view of the railroad overpass area where the 1963 Kennedy assassination took place in Dallas, TX. For more, visit: texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph1030229

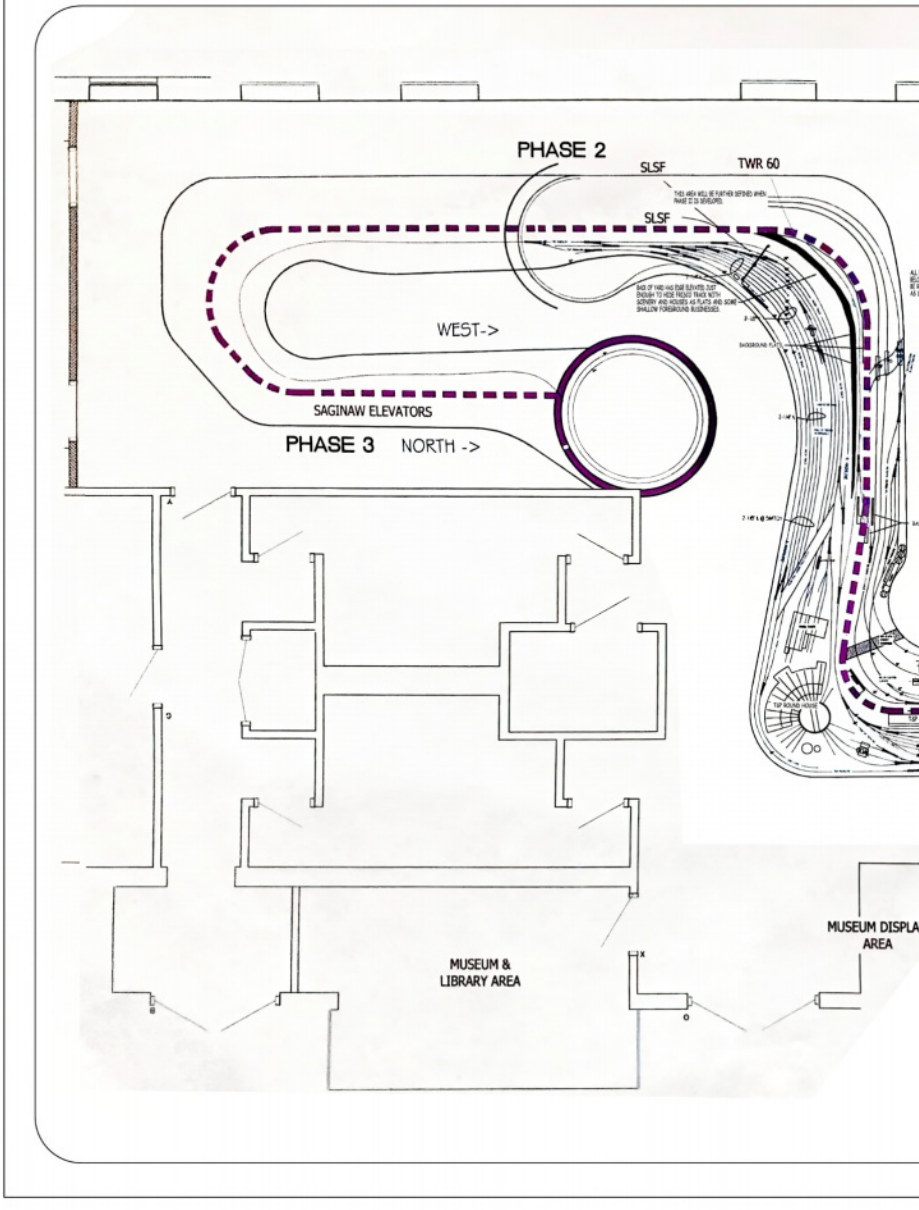


3b. Here's the beginnings of this prototype overpass scene as shown in [3a]. While selectively compressed, it should still be a stunning scene when it's finished!

For example, you will find the Arlington General Motors plant, and Dallas Union Terminal. You'll see other scenes that we've tried to duplicate around Dallas-Fort Worth – all the way down to Houston and out into East Texas, complete with a logging and mining operation.

MRH: I noticed you actually have the overpass in Dallas modeled near where President Kennedy was assassinated – have I got that right?

David: Since we're modeling the Dallas area, we have a mockup of the Dallas Union Terminal. Along with that, we're modeling the Commerce Main and the Elm Street Bridge [3a, 3b] that you see so prominently when you look at pictures of where President Kennedy was assassinated. This bridge has an overpass that the trains ran across. We're modeling that, and back behind that you will see models of the Dallas Courthouse



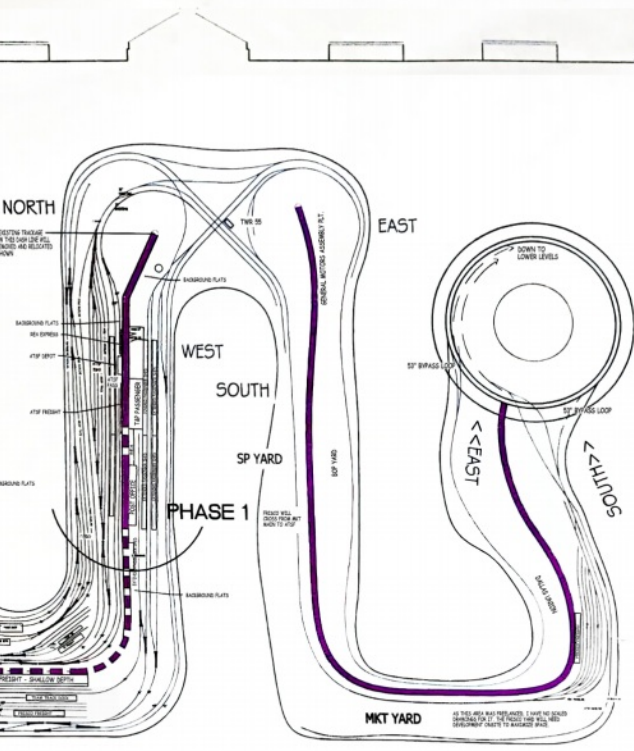
4. Texas Western Club layout track plan, upper 53" level.



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——— MAIN LEVEL BENCH WORK
 - - - - - MAIN LEVEL BACKDROP
 ——— MAIN LEVEL EAST-WEST TRACKS
 ——— MAIN LEVEL NORTH-SOUTH TRACKS (AT&SF AND OTHERS)

General Notes

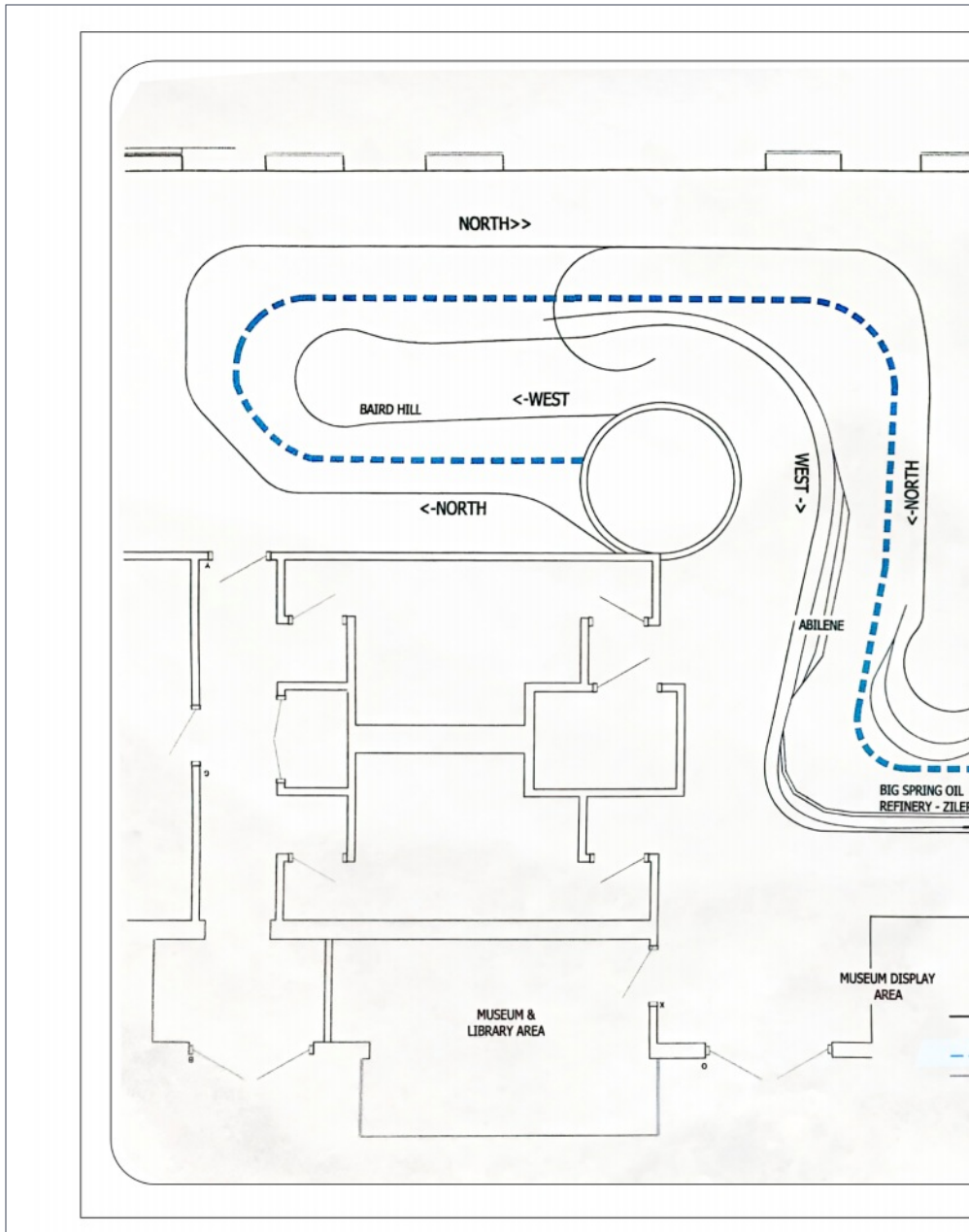
TEXAS WESTERN
 MODEL RAILROAD LAYOUT PHASE II
 6808 FOREST HILL DR., FOREST HILL, TX

No.	Revision/Issued	Date

File Name and Address

Project Name and Address
 TEXAS WESTERN MRC
 TEXAS WESTERN R.R. ASSOC.
 6808 FOREST HILL DR.
 FOREST HILL, TX

Title LAYOUT_P2	Sheet 53th
Date 04-22-2021	Scale 3/8"=1'-0"
LEVEL	



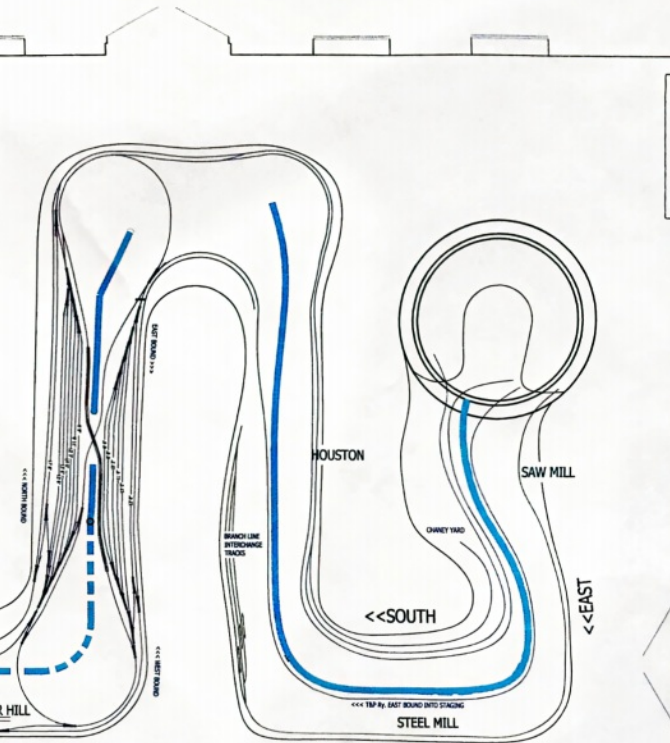
5. Texas Western Club layout track plan, lower 28" level.



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- LOWER LEVEL BENCH WORK
- - - LOWER LEVEL BACKDROP
- LOWER LEVEL VISIBLE TRACKS

General Notes

TEXAS WESTERN

MODEL RAILROAD LAYOUT

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1	TWMRCv4c	12/13
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 INFO- 817-475-9282

TAJ_PH2

04-22-2021

1/2"=1'-0"

28TH

LEVEL

and the schoolbook depository. So yes, you will see that area as it looked in 1962.

MRH: You also have a scene started that I rarely see on a model railroad – a downtown area with high-rise buildings. Tell us about that.

David: One of the areas on our lower level that we're proud of is downtown Houston [6]. This collection of buildings was built by one of our members who passed away a couple of years ago, Ken Markou. He built all of those tall buildings. Some are scratchbuilt or kitbashed from several different kits to produce the high-rise skyscrapers, the hotels, and tall business buildings. So, you get a flavor and look of what downtown Houston would've looked like in the time period that we're modeling.



6. Here's something you don't see on many layouts – tall skyscrapers, some of them over three feet tall. This scene models downtown Houston in the early 1960s and although it's not yet finished, it's already a real attention-getter.



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Those high-rise buildings actually sit on the lower 28-inch level, and because they're so tall, they extend well above the 53-inch level. We have a sky backdrop behind the buildings where upper level trains can go and be hidden. As you're looking at downtown Houston, behind it you just see a backdrop of sky and clouds. The trains on the 53-inch level run behind the backdrop, so you never see them.

MRH: To get between the 28 level and the 53 level, you have what most layouts do, you use a helix. However, you've made clever use of that space around the helix with more layout. Explain that for our readers.

David: An interesting feature around our helix which takes you from the lower level to the upper level is an area called Batson Hill [9]. This was done by one of our members, Joe Batson, who passed away a couple years ago also. This area features a logging operation and also has some narrow-gauge track on it. This all surrounds the helix and gives it some interest.

The backdrop has hills and mountains with pine trees hand painted by one of our members, Darrell Cowsls. It's a nice feature that provides something a lot more interesting than just fascia to cover up the helix.

MRH: Speaking of modeling interesting structures, you're also modeling an art-deco depot in Fort Worth. What can you tell us about that structure?

David: In our Fort Worth area, we have a structure that was scratchbuilt by our founder, Joe P. Williams. This building is the Texas and Pacific Passenger depot [7a, 7b], which still exists in the south downtown area of Fort Worth, Texas. It's a striking art deco style structure we credit to Joe and his talents of making bits and pieces to come up with an accurate representation of that Texas and Pacific Depot. Very iconic.

MRH: Can you tell us more about the history of this club?

David: I mentioned Joe Williams earlier. Joe had a compressor business and owned his own building close to where we are located now. The building had a warehouse and he loved trains. So, Joe and several others started a train club in 1996.

Like most train clubs, they started off small and kept growing in Joe's warehouse. For 18 years, the group worked on the layout and got it approaching 98% complete, I'm told. Unfortunately, Joe had a heart attack in 2010 and passed away [8].

His building and business were sold, and the club members had to go in and take out all of the buildings and structures and everything they could salvage. So, after that, things sat idle until they were able to find a new location, which is the location we're in.



7a. Prototype photo of the Texas and Pacific train depot in Fort Worth, Tx. Photo courtesy of Wikipedia.



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In 2013, this building came up for rent. The president before me, Darrell Cows, contacted the city of Forest Hill and asked how much would it be to rent your building? So, the city of Forest Hill and the club came up with a contract to give us a lifetime lease with an option to buy. In 2014 the club moved into this building and started planning a new layout.

MRH: And how did the development of the track plan go?

David: We developed the track plan [4, 5] based on voting by the club and what they wanted to see. Several members made presentations – we wanted a plan that was not just an arbitrary train layout. We wanted something that featured Dallas and Fort Worth and the area around it.

Several members drew up plans and we voted on the plan we have now. The winning plan is a two layered layout with Tower 55 as the centerpiece and trackage on the lower level going to



7b. Model of the Texas and Pacific train depot built by club founder, Joe Williams.



8. Glass case in the club entryway remembering club founder, Joe Williams. Sadly, Joe passed away in 2010.

Houston and a Lone Star Steel industrial complex that's there. So that's how the track plan came to be.

MRH: The track plan has phases on it [4, 5]. How do those work?

David: If you come into our club now and look at the layout we're developing, that's considered phase one. Phase one is basically tower 55, reaching through Dallas and Fort Worth.

Phase two will take the operation further south and also head some trackage out toward west Texas. Phase two will probably begin in roughly December-January of 2024. That's after the 2023 National Convention – we don't want to be starting a new construction phase while the convention folks are coming over to visit us.



9. Batson Hill wraps around the outside of the between-decks layout helix and features a switchback to a logging and mining area. This turns an otherwise unusable “helix fascia area” into added usable layout space.

Then later on, phase three includes more of west Texas, as well as the Fort Worth stockyards, which are very iconic.

MRH: How has the construction progressed so far? Has it gone as you expected? Have you encountered any unforeseen issues?

David: Our layout uses benchwork made in a cantilever design with aluminum and steel beams, so it’s a bit different than most L-girder construction you see for model railroad layouts.

We have found construction always seems to go slower than we would like. Members put in a lot of time during the week, and we have Saturday work days. Just getting the wiring done has been the biggest eye-opener, getting all the track wiring done, wiring all the switches, and building panels.

Now we're starting to put signals in [11], adding block detection, and all that, construction is actually going faster than we were a year ago. It was really slow then and we felt we were just not making much progress. So, it's beginning to pick up speed now.

MRH: Do you know about how many feet of mainline do you have, and how many turnouts you have? Any idea?

David: I have no idea how many feet of trackage or how many switches we've got. We've probably got 12-15 switch control panels. And there's probably 7-12 switches on each panel. So that tells you the sheer number of switches that we have in the club. *(Doing that math, that's 84-180 turnouts - ed.)*

How much footage of trackage? I have no idea. We have several yards and Tower 55 as a centerpiece feeding the Fort Worth area yards.



10. The club spent multiple years installing Tortoises and adding panels to control the turnouts across the layout, as seen in this view.



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Phase one is to have yards for the Frisco, Texas & Pacific/ Missouri Pacific, MKT, and Southern Pacific – all of them had yards in the Fort Worth and Dallas area. We've also got a yard on the lower deck in Houston, so there's a lot of switches and a lot of mainline trackage to go from place to place.

I couldn't even hazard a guess as to how much actual track footage we have. It's a lot already and will be a lot more once we add phases two and three.

MRH: What's the ruling grade on this layout? What kind of track and roadbed have you used?

David: Our grade is very flat. The Dallas Fort Worth area is relatively flat, so we really don't have much grade at all in most parts of the railroad. In our Batson Hill logging area, you'll see some pretty steep grades at places, well over 1%.

We have used Peco and Shinohara switches, code 83 nickel silver. The rest of our track has been Peco and some Atlas Code 83 nickel silver. It's laid on cork roadbed or homasote roadbed.



11. Recently, the club has started adding detection and signals.

When the Tortoise is thrown, use the contacts to route power to the frogs. We're using electro-frog Peco switches. On Shinohara switches, we have to cut some gaps and make sure the frog is isolated properly.

We chose to go with powered frog switches to avoid problems with short wheelbase switchers where you can go across the switch and lose power. We're making sure that all the frogs are powered – we didn't want to fight the stalls that can happen with dead frog switches.

MRH: What has been the biggest challenge in building this layout?

David: To me, the biggest speed bump has been getting all of the wiring done to all the switches, and to operate them off control panels [10]. It's a lot of work to build a control panel, put in the switches, install the panel LEDs, and then get everything hooked up to the tortoises that have been installed under the layout.

You would think that would go fairly fast, but it takes several days of work to get a single panel operational. You're not done when you finally have things all hooked up!

Typically, there's wiring that has to be changed on the back of the panel when the switch doesn't throw in the right direction. And sometimes when the LEDs don't light up, is the LED okay or did you wire it wrong and blow the LED? Wiring the panels has been one of the slower parts of the operation.

MRH: What control system are you using and why?

David: On our layout here at the Texas Western, we use Digitrax controls. We have Digitrax power boosters. We use handheld Digitrax controllers. Some members have iPhones and Androids, and we have a system in the building where they can connect to that and run their trains off their phones. But some people still like the old handheld controls and it's all Digitrax.



MRH: What are you all doing for backdrops? For instance, some people paint backdrops, some people just do blue sky. Some people like photo murals. What is the group's approach on backdrops?

David: On our layout, we have an interesting mix of backdrops. In many areas we have just blue sky with some trees in front. Then in other areas, we actually have photo murals. The first time I thought about a photo backdrop, I felt that it would not look very real.

But a photo mural backdrop can look very real if you scenic it right and put things in front of it for a 3D effect. Photo murals are a very good solution, especially in tight areas where we don't have a lot of room for depth.

So, we have a variety of backdrops. One of our members, Darryl Cows, is a long time member and is quite artistic. Darryl has painted all of our clouds. He's done a great job airbrushing in clouds in the Batson Hill area that wraps around the helix. He's been trying to put in cirrus clouds most recently, the more wispy and streaky clouds. He's our cloud guy.



12. Tower 55 (Fort Worth Tower) crossing on the club layout. Here, a Santa Fe train crosses during open operating night at the club.

MRH: Does the group host regular operating sessions and then tell us a little bit about them.

David: Here at the Texas Western, we have open run every Monday night. It usually starts at seven o'clock and most of our members will leave around 9 – 9:30. Some will hang around till 10 or 10:30.

Anything goes from any time period. Modern bullet trains, diesel locomotives, steamers, you name it. This is mainly to help us identify track issues, find wiring issues, and find dead spots, along with giving our members the opportunity to run their trains and have some fun.

Most of our members don't have layouts at home, so we constantly tell them, this is your layout, this is your club. So, on Monday nights, come and have fun running trains and just enjoying the hobby.

MRH: What do you like most about this layout?



13. Tower 55 (FW Tower) crossing on the club layout. A few minutes after the ATSF train previously passed by, a passenger train pulled by an MKT Pacific rolls through the crossing during open operating night at the club. Also see [12, 14].





14. Tower 55 (FW Tower) crossing on the club layout. Several few minutes later, a Missouri Pacific freight rolls through the crossing. On open operating night, FW Tower sees a lot of traffic, not unlike the prototype. Also see [12, 13].

David: I think what I particularly enjoy hearing from people is, “I know where that is.”

When they see the General Motors plant, for example, or when they see Tower 55 or they see the iconic Texas and Pacific passenger depot, and they remark, “Hey, I know where that is!”

That’s the biggest thrill to us. We want them to see the railroad sights in Dallas-Fort Worth area that everybody’s familiar with. The layout that we had before was just a nice layout with a lot of hills and mountains, and it was just a generic layout – you know, let’s put a bridge here, let’s put some mountains here.

A beautiful layout with 18 years of hard work and dedication but didn’t represent anything specific. This layout speaks to people when it’s things they know.

MRH: Is there anything about this layout you would say you like the least?

David: What I like the least probably on the layout is I look at some areas that haven't developed yet. We know what's going to go there, but like everything else, model railroading can go slow.. You have to come up with a good design, you have to get your materials, you have to get a plan and think about what you want to build there.

So, in some of our areas we've got track and we know what we want to go around it, but it just hasn't gotten started. I think what I like the least is looking at places where we know where there's something that's going to be there, but it just hasn't gotten started yet because somebody's trying to finish another area first.

MRH: *We're sitting in your layout storeroom, and I can see hundreds of structures, bridges, and railroad equipment on the shelves all around this room. You have a lot of goodies to draw from!*

David: All of these structures you see behind me were built by probably four to six people and over years of dedication and hard work, all of these buildings, bridges, and everything you see behind me came off the old layout. That's what I figured. Yeah. They came off the old layout.

We call this the structure room, and this is where we house all of our structure scenery, materials cars, trucks, people, you name it. This is where we go shopping to find something that will fit on the layout where we're trying to develop an area. So, we've got a real nice store to shop in.

MRH: *Looking back as to the direction of the club to this point, do you think you would have done anything differently with what you know now?*

David: You know, I joined the club in 2018 and my experience has been very limited as far as what happened before I came along. When I came along, the plan was already in place. The building was in place.





15. A Katy mixed freight runs past the club's model of the General Motors plant in Arlington, Texas.

The track plans were in place and, and I really didn't have any part in planning what we were going to do and how it was going to be done. I've just accepted what was already here, and I love what we're doing. I wouldn't change a thing. I wouldn't change a thing.

MRH: What are your thoughts about layout size? Can a layout be too large?

David: At times when I walk around the layout and I see what we've done, it looks small. But we have people that visit for the first time, and they walk around and say this just goes on forever. It goes up this aisle and down this aisle and up this aisle and down this aisle – so to them it's a large layout.

I guess it's gotten smaller to me over the last four years of working with it because it's become so familiar.

I look at our track plan for phase two and then phase three – and we'll eventually occupy the whole building, which is 4,600 square feet. So, it will eventually be a 4,600 square foot two deck monster when we finally get to phase three, but that's a few years down the road.

MRH: What's your philosophy on doing a club well? For instance, how do you narrow the focus and not have rebellion in the ranks?

David: [Laughs] One of the challenges of being the president of any organization is getting everybody motivated and keeping everybody motivated. Fortunately, in this club, everybody's excited about doing trains.

We have some people that are builders, and we have some people that are train runners – and we don't feel that's just because they're lazy and don't want to build. Sometimes they're timid and feel like their skills just aren't up to par with some of the more experienced modelers.

We offer one-on-one mentoring for interested members. We also hold classes often on some aspect of modeling to give members experience and help them feel comfortable in modeling on the layout.

Keeping everybody engaged is probably the biggest challenge that I have.

We see progress every week now that we're in a period of doing landscaping and putting in buildings. Members see changes every week, and that gets people excited.

Right before the end of the 2022, we had our first open house here and we invited the city of Forest Hill and surrounding train clubs. We invited people to come in, see the layout, walk around, and we had probably 120 people come to that.

We'll continue the open house annually. We might even do it every six months and have the community come in and see what we're doing.

We want this to be a place that when people come to the Dallas-Fort Worth area, they'll want to come here and see this thing called the Texas Western. We hope what we're doing helps develop our members as modelers, as well as offering the community something to be proud of.





16. A Texas & Pacific (Missouri Pacific) passenger train sits in front of the Ft. Worth T&P train station.

MRH: What do you hope the convention goers get out of seeing this layout?

David: In August of 2023, there will be a National NMRA Convention here in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. This Texas Western Model Railroad Club is on the layout tours.

We hope when people walk in the door, they see a layout that reminds them of the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

We'll have a lot of local people here. We'll have some people from across the state. We'll have some people from within the United States, and all of them may have heard of these landmarks we have on our layout.

We're hoping they see the layout and will say, "Hey, I know where that is." What thrills us the most is to have people recognize what we're doing and that it's not just a generic layout. It represents something that they've seen and they know about.

We hope they have a good time, and they enjoy getting to see a layout that features some of the major railroad sights you can see in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

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Model Railroad Hobbyist | April 2023



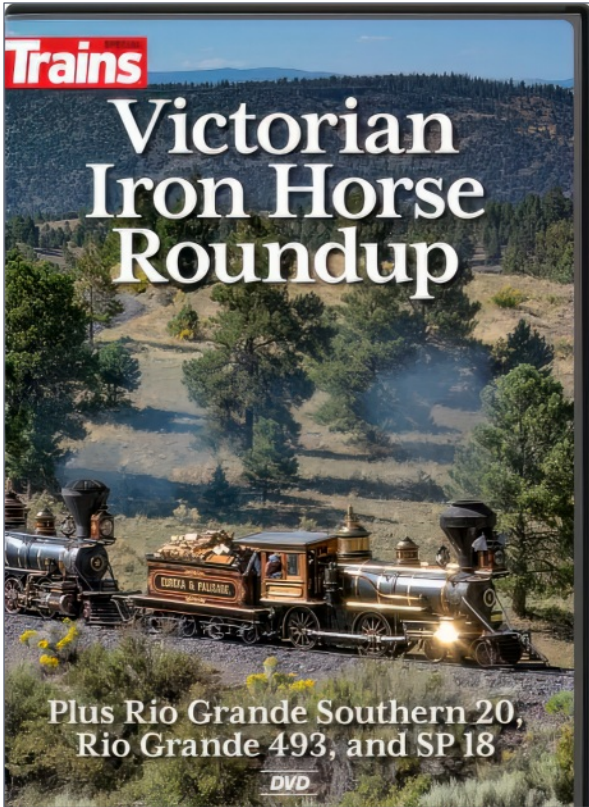
New to my DVD queue

JEFF PALMER REVIEWS *VICTORIAN IRON HORSE ROUNDUP* AND *JOURNEY TO PROMONTORY* FROM KALMBACH PUBLICATIONS...

TWO OF THE RECENT VIDEOS FROM *TRAINS MAGAZINE* (KALMBACH PRODUCTIONS) in my collection are *Victorian Iron Horse Roundup Plus Rio Grande Southern 20, Rio Grande 493 and SP 18* (kalmbachhobbystore.com/product/dvd/16119), and Rich Lukin's *Journey to Promontory* (kalmbachhobbystore.com/product/dvd/15207). Each is available for \$24.99 from Kalmbach.

VICTORIAN IRON HORSE ROUNDUP

The Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad (C&TS) hosted the Victorian Iron Horse Roundup from August 21-29, 2021, to



1. DVD cover of *Victorian Iron Horse Roundup* from Kalmbach Media. *Kalmbach photo*

celebrate its fiftieth anniversary. The once-in-a-lifetime event featured wood-burning locomotives Eureka no. 4 and Glenbrook (both built 1875), Denver & Rio Grande 168 (1883) and 425 (1896), and Rio Grande Southern 20 (1899).

Seeing these pre-1900 locomotives together was a narrow gauger's dream come true. *Trains* magazine sponsored the event, and was gracious enough to invite guests to tag along for a fee. I couldn't pass up the opportunity.

Marc LaChey, my C&TS Docent friend, and I were staying at the Vista Del Rio Lodge in Chama. We had a lot of early morning drives from Chama to Antonito on an excellent road through



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open range country. It was not uncommon for stray cattle, or even cowboys driving herds between pastures to delay our drive.

Trains documented the event in its *Victorian Iron Horse Roundup* DVD, which is divided into six sections.

The first chapter, "Iron Horse Roundup" opens in front of the engine house in Antonito, Colorado with a spectacular shot of all five engines. The five were available for public viewing starting Monday, August 23.

Most of the activity for the first seven days of the event took place in Antonito, Colorado. The event moved to Chama, New Mexico, for the last couple of days.

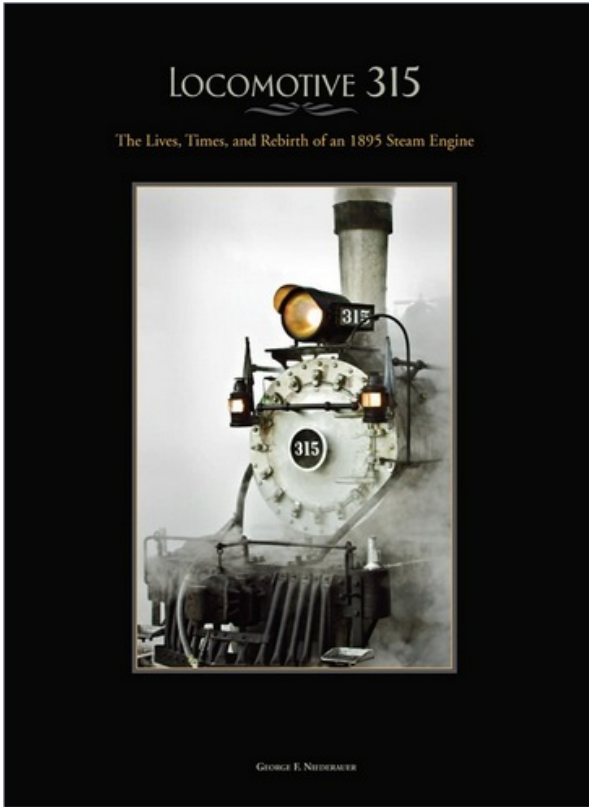
A passenger double header left Antonito for Big Horn or Osier each morning of the roundup. On the 21st and 24th, Rio Grande 168 and 425 ran lunch excursions to Osier and back. Eureka no. 4 and Glenbrook ran lunch excursions to Big Horn on the 22nd and 25th, and to Osier on the 26th. The video documents the excursions with beautiful scenery shots, and the narrator offers insight into the history of the Eureka and Glenbrook.

Back at the engine house, the Rio Grande Southern 20, not part of the roundup, did several break-in runs before its *Trains Magazine*-sponsored charters scheduled for after the Roundup. Check out the late afternoon/early evening shots in Antonito yard.

The narrator turns the viewer's attention to the Rio Grande 425, Rio Grande & Western 315. Additional information and a more complete history of the 315, along with photos, documents, and plans can be found in the book George Niederauer's *Locomotive 315: The Lives, Times, and Rebirth of an 1895 Steam Engine* [2].

After a week of excursions and photo ops in Antonito, the four engines went to Chama on the 27th for their final tours. The videographer follows the Eureka and Glenbrook for the move.

His presentation about firewood classifications was informative and fascinating. Did you know there are different classes of wood such as



2. Cover of *Locomotive 315: The Lives, Times, and Rebirth of an 1895 Steam Engine.*

“atomic wood”, “up-hill wood”, “down-hill wood”, and “dead wood”? That was a distinction that had eluded me.

As you listen to the video, you can hear the wood burners struggling in the background with wheel slippage. You will see some great shots of Osier, Cascade Trestle, Los Pinos, and Tanglefoot Curve, all the way to Cumbres.

At Osier and again at Cumbres, the video documents how the tenders were reloaded with wood using a “bucket line.” From Cumbres, it’s all downhill to Chama. In the early evening of the 27th, the Eureka and Glenbrook arrived in Chama and started preparations for the next day’s run to Cumbres.



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The morning of the 28th, the Eureka and Glenbrook had an inauspicious start to the day, leaving Chama for their run to Cumbres an hour late. The chapter opens with the Eureka and Glenbrook exiting the Chama River bridge, just north of the Chama Yard and approaching Jukes Tree.

The excursion continued over Labato Trestle on its way to Cresco tank. Listen carefully to the struggles of the engines as they make their way up the grade. As the consist pulled in to take on water at the tank at Cresco, the Eureka suffered a broken pipe that left it unable to make steam.

The video shows the attempt of the Glenbrook trying but failing to continue alone. The video doesn't show the five hours spent on a siding waiting for a rescue. For those of us on this run, it became known as the "Inaugural Run of the Cresco Turn".

The 425 became our rescue train, returning us back down the 4% grade to Chama. The sun was setting as the 425 got us back to the yard. The Dinner Train was also behind schedule, since the passenger cars needed for the dinner run were with the Eureka and Glenbrook train.

The C&TS scheduled a night train to end this roundup for the evening of the 29th. 425 and 168 pulled out of Chama about 10PM, with a scheduled arrival in Antonito for 8 AM. This photo special went off with minimal delay.

One of the amazing parts of this portion of the video is the fireworks of burning cinders exiting the smokestack. This special is only a couple of minutes long on the DVD but worth the time. This marks the end of chapter 1 and the first 54 minutes of the DVD.

Chapter 2, "Sunset on the Reno Grande Southern," documents a series of photo specials for *Trains Magazine* over four days beginning August 31. The Rio Grande Southern 20, trucked in from the Colorado Railroad Museum, began its action with the end of the roundup. The history and restoration of engine 20 is

discussed and opens with the Colorado Railroad Museum roundhouse in Golden, Colorado.

After a brief history of the 20, the scene switches back to Antonito and the early departure of the train with engines 20 and 455 doubleheading to Osier. Upon leaving Antonito, the shot sweeps to Ferguson's, a.k.a. Hangman's Trestle, and then travels up Gravity Hill toward Lava Loop, then on to Whiplash Curve. The scenery changes as we make our way past Big Horn headed to Sublette where there are more trees and less flatland.

The narrator discusses 455's history. The 455 is a K-27, part of a locomotive class known as "Mudhens". The locomotive was featured in TV shows like *Gunsmoke*, and *Last Days of Steam*.

There are some spectacular shots of the train making its way from Sublette along Toltec Creek, Rock Tunnel, past the President Garfield monument on our way to Osier for lunch. Late afternoon/early evening in the mountains is spectacular, and it ends the chapter.

Chapter 3 "Durango & Silverton Rio Grande 493" shifts the scene to Durango to document a two-day photo shoot *Trains* organized, beginning September 2, 2021. The scene opens with engine 493 heading up to the High-Line to Tacoma, Tank Creek, Needleton, and Elk Park, laboring as it makes the grade. This chapter is 14 minutes of scenery overload all the way to Silverton.

The fourth chapter "Durango & Silverton Southern Pacific 18" documents the run of Southern Pacific 18 the next day, beginning at the Animas River Bridge out of Silverton. On the way to Elk Park, the narrator provides a brief history of the 18, accompanied by some spectacular scenery shorts.

"Rio Grande Southern 20 Solo" returns to the Cumbres and Toltec to show the 20's September 5 solo run from Ferguson Trestle in Antonito to Lava, then on to Whiplash Curve before turning around on the Big Horn wye for the return. The segment provides seven minutes of engine 20 action.



The final chapter, "Rotary OY on Cumbres and Toltec" documents a two-day photo special run of steam rotary snowplow OY from Chama to Cumbres February 2020, the OY's first run in 23 years. 387 and 484 double-headed to push the steam rotary to clear C&TS trackage. The first day cleared the track between Chama and Cresco, with the second day completing the run to Cumbres.

The action on day one was impressive, but seeing OY clear Windy Point on its way to Cumbres was spectacular. Just seeing OY pull into Cumbres was worth the price of the video.

This two-hour DVD is a spectacular trip back in time for wood burning steam locomotive enthusiasts. The camera work is top notch, the soundtrack nearly perfect, and the narration enough to keep you informed. This was one of this year's best buys.

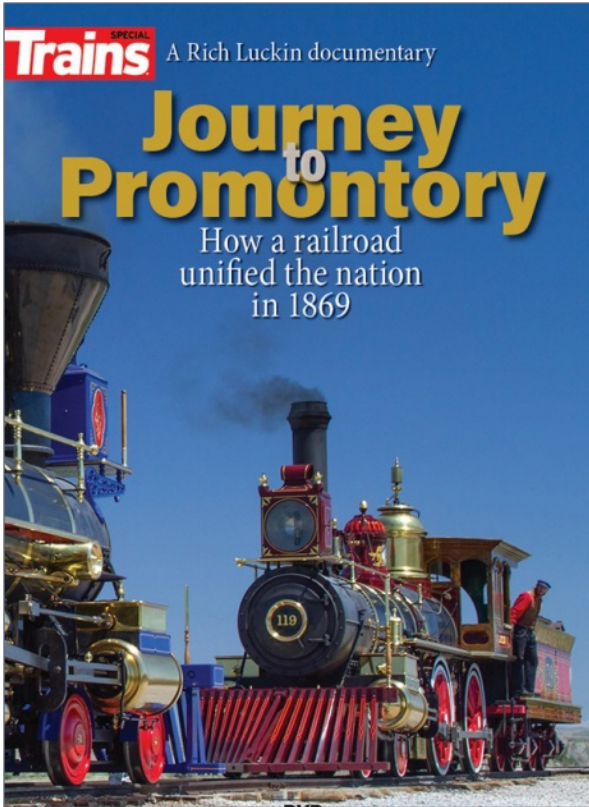
JOURNEY TO PROMONTORY

The narration opens with a black/white photo of Samuel S. Montague, and General Grenville M. Dodge shaking hands at Promontory, Utah, on May 10, 1869. It was just four years after the Civil War ended, but the journey began well before then. Sit back with your favorite beverage and a snack and witness a well-done documentary of how it all happened.

The main documentary on this DVD is divided into sixteen chapters. The first chapter after the introduction is entitled "Before the Railroad: The Long Journey."

Pre-Civil War, the railroads were concentrated in the east, building from Boston, New York, Pittsburg, and Philadelphia. The

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3. Cover of *Journey to Promontory*.
Kalmbach Media,
photo

furthest points west were Chicago, Saint Louis, and Memphis. The Mississippi River still presented an unconquered national barrier.

The narrator discusses that the transcontinental railroad built in the United States was not the first North American transcontinental railroad. That was built in Panama to carry travelers the 45 miles across the isthmus between ships on the Caribbean and the Pacific.

The second chapter, "Selecting the Route," discusses the growing need for a faster, more reliable route connecting California and the west coast with the eastern United States. In 1853, congress appropriated the funds needed to explore possible routes.



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In 1862, while the Civil War was raging, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Pacific Rail Act. This set a northerly route for a transcontinental railroad to connect St. Louis, Missouri, Salt Lake City, Utah, and Sacramento, California. The Union Pacific Railroad was born.

The third chapter, “Surveying the Route,” traces the three phases of surveying effort to establish an exact route for the transcontinental railroad. A reconnaissance or plane survey set a possible route. Land surveying refined the plane survey with topology, existing settlements, forts, and so on. Finally, a chain survey measured and laid out the final path.

Building a transcontinental railroad through vast, unsettled regions was beyond the means of any single company in the 1800s. The 1853 Pacific Rail Act authorized the government to issue bonds and provide land grants. The next chapter, “Land Grants,” discusses how the railroads used these land grants to raise cash, settle areas along the line, and generate a local customer base.

“Men of Vision” talks about Leland Stanford, Charles Crocker, Mark Hopkins, and Collis P. Huntington of the Central Pacific, whose drive made it possible to conquer the Sierra Nevada Mountains and join up with the Union Pacific in Utah. Oakes and Oliver Ames were major investors in the Union Pacific, and they completed the team of visionaries to get the job done.

The next chapter is “Credit Mobilier.” To help fund the Union Pacific Railroad and line his own pockets, Thomas Durant formed the Credit Mobilier company to sell stocks, bonds, and shares. Congressman Oakes Ames sat on the board of directors of both Credit Mobilier and Union Pacific. At that time in history, money was slowly coming in, but with the added impetus, fund raising got creative.

The seventh chapter, “Building the Railroad,” contextualizes the construction of the transcontinental railroad with the digging of

the Suez Canal, the laying of the first transatlantic telegraph cable, the discovery of oil in Pennsylvania, and the American Civil War, all of which were happening at the same time.

The chapter describes the difficulty of getting through the Sierra Nevada mountains, and the sacrifices and feats. China Wall, for example, was a colossal engineering feat to carry the line between tunnels 7 and 8 below Donner Summit (sylvester.faculty.geol.ucsb.edu/WALLS/WALLS-Pages/China_wall.html).

This chapter also introduces us to John Stephen “Jack” Casement, who created the “City on Wheels,” a 40-car work train with sleeping quarters, dining cars, tools, and all materials needed to build one mile of track. About 13 minutes long, “Building the Railroad” contains a wealth of insight. It is worth your time to learn some of the details of how the Transcontinental Railroad was built.

The eighth chapter, “The Chinese and the Irish” discusses the workers who made up the bulk of the labor crews who built the railroad. These two groups were very different in their views and lifestyles, but they managed to coexist and work together to accomplish a monumental task.

“Hell on Wheels” discusses the large contingent of camp followers that provided the goods, services, alcohol, prostitution, gambling, and entertainment needed to help railroad workers to part with their wages. The photos in the section are priceless and provide an insight that words can’t express.

As the railroads approached Utah, Brigham Young saw an opportunity for economic growth, but wanted to restrict the encroachment of Hell on Wheels towns in his religious territory. The chapter “Mormons and the Railroad” talks about those times and how those challenges were met.

“Native Americans and the Railroad” talks about the tenuous relationship between the Indians and the railroad. This included loss of territory, invasion of native hunting grounds, and the needless slaughter of the buffalo.

One of the wagers was about how many miles of track crew could lay in a day. The bet was between Thomas Durant of the Union



Pacific and Charles Crocker of the Central Pacific. "10 Miles in One Day" outlines the strategy and the victor.

The black and white photo of Samuel S. Montague and General Grenville M. Dodge shaking hands on May 10, 1869, at Promontory, Utah, was originally scheduled for May 8. "May 10, 1869" discusses the drama behind the delays.

"Comanche Crossing" argues that the true completion date of the transcontinental railroad was August 15, 1870, when the Kansas Pacific connected with the Union Pacific in Strasburg, Colorado. The Kansas Pacific's Hannibal Bridge across the Missouri River in Kansas City finally made it possible to travel by rail all the way from Sacramento, California to New York by rail.

The final chapter of the DVD, "Today's Railroad" provides a photo documentary of the modern Union Pacific Railroad. It is also a great lead-in to the Bonus material.

This video and its narration are excellent. The guest commentators and historians bring this material to life. If you are into steam engines, great historical photos, and beautiful and varied scenery, then this video needs to be on your shelf. ☑

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JEFF PALMER



Jeff spent 50 years developing software, and 25 years as a college professor. As a modeler, he has an interest in logging and mining (narrow gauge). He loves structures and scenery.

About two years ago, he completed his MMR (Master Model Railroader) certificate from the NMRA. ■



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Make your own home-grown photo backdrop

YouTuber **Model Trains** shows the process he uses to make his own photo backdrops. Basically, he builds a nice panorama in Photoshop, then arranges it to be tiled onto 8.5 x 11 pages and prints them out on a laser printer or an ink jet. Simple enough.

This simple method makes it possible for just about anyone to make their own photo backdrop. The results speak for themselves, that photo backdrop looks quite good.



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APRIL NEWS

column



Model Railroad Hobbyist | April 2023

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



INDUSTRY NEWS

Harry Brunk 1940-2023

Harry Brunk, commercial artist, famed author, and gifted modeler, passed away at his home in Cheyenne, Wyoming February 27, 2023. He was 83 years old. Harry gained a large following through his popular *Up Clear Creek* column that appeared over an extended period in *Narrow Gauge & Short Line Gazette* magazine. His superb Union & Northern HOn3 layout is preserved at the Cheyenne Depot Museum. Harry Brunk was elected to the Narrow Gauge Hall of Fame in 2012.

Malcolm Furlow 1947-2023

Malcolm Furlow, a colorful artist and modeler best-known for a series of creative layouts published in *Model Railroader* magazine during the 1980s, died in early March from COVID. He was 77 years old. Malcolm's distinctive modeling style influenced a wide range of model railroad hobbyists. Among his most inspiring projects was the San Juan Central HOn3 layout created for *Model Railroader* magazine in the 1980's. The layout is now part of the NMRA exhibit on Scale Model Railroading at

THE LATEST MODEL RAILROAD PRODUCTS, NEWS & EVENTS

the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento. Malcolm's final layout was the Ferrocarril de Rio Mantañas, a G scale project constructed in an outbuilding at his ranch near Taos, New Mexico. In addition to becoming a highly influential model railroader, Malcolm Furlow's varied career included nearly 20 years playing saxophone in various rock bands, building models and movie sets at Walt Disney Studios, writing photo how-to books for Kodak, and finally gaining international recognition for his bold acrylic paintings of Southwestern themes including Native Americans.

NEW CLUB CARS



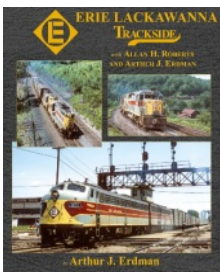
The **Carolina-Piedmont Division of NMRA** is selling HO and N scale models of Norfolk Southern 70-ton triple-bay hopper cars with offset sides.

The HO version is from Accurail

and is available now. The N scale car is being produced by Bluford Shops and is scheduled for release this fall.

Info: www.cpd13.org/club-car

NEW PRODUCTS FOR ALL SCALES



Morning Sun will release *Erie Lackawanna Trackside* by Arthur J. Erdman on May 1st. The title will delight Erie Lackawanna fans as author Arthur Erdman takes readers on a striking photographic tour of the short-lived line. During its 16-year existence from 1960 to 1976, the Erie Lackawanna attracted a loyal base of railfans. Those same fans suffered painfully as their beloved EL faded into history when it was



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absorbed by Conrail.

Info: www.morningsunbooks.com

O SCALE PRODUCT NEWS



Atlas O has released a model of a railroad crane with a positionable hook and crane. The model comes with cast metal six-wheel trucks. Road names include Clinchfield, Kansas City Southern, Nickel Plate, Rio Grande, Santa Fe and Western Pacific.



An O scale crane tender has also been released. It is available decorated with the same road names as the crane. Both the crane and the tender are available with trucks and couplers for 3-rail operation.

Info: shop.atlasrr.com

S SCALE PRODUCT NEWS



Scale Trains is taking preorders for an S scale 40' USRA rebuilt steel boxcar that is scheduled for release this fall. The model is equipped with American Flyer-compatible wheels and operating couplers. Scale wheels and couplers will be included with each model. Road names will be Atlantic Coast Line, Frisco Line, Charleston & Western Carolina, Chicago & North Western, Rock Island, Elgin, Joliet & Eastern and undecorated.



Two schemes each will be available for Santa Fe and Detroit, Toledo & Ironton.

Info: www.scaletains.com

HO SCALE PRODUCT NEWS



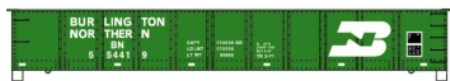
New economy priced HO scale freight car kits from **Accurail** include a 40' Union Refrigerator Transit car assigned to the Minneapolis, St. Paul & Sault Ste. Marie Railroad Company – aka the Soo Line. The model is based on a prototype class RS ventilated refrigerator car built in 1931.



Accurail has released kits for ACF twin-bay covered hopper cars decorated for two different railroads. A car decorated for The Rock represents a circa 1970 prototype fitted with a Center Flow discharge system.



The second version of the twin-bay car is based on a Southern Pacific prototype ACF built in March 1975.



Accurail has released a three-car set of Burlington Northern 41' steel gondolas with random road numbers. Individual kits are also available. The HO scale model represents an AAR 11-panel car built in 1947 for the Great Northern Railway.



A kit for a 40' Pennsylvania Railroad class X23 six-panel wood boxcar built in 1913 with steel Dreadnaught ends has also been released by Accurail. Additional models available individually and in three-car sets with random numbers include a New York Central & Hudson River 36' double-sheathed wood boxcar and a Norfolk & Western USRA twin-bay hopper. All Accurail HO scale car kits come with appropriate trucks with



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Delrin wheelsets and Accumate knuckle couplers.

Info: www.accurail.com



R. Bale

EMD SD60E

In 2010 Norfolk Southern launched a program to upgrade its 20-year-old 3,800hp SD60 units to 4,000hp. In addition to work on the prime mover, new traction motors were installed along with EM2000 microprocessor controls that required extensive rewiring and new electrical cabinets. A new split-cooling system helped the SD60E meet Tier 0+ emission requirements and reduce fuel consumption. The rebuilding program increased the SD60E's tractive effort from 96,320 to 109,000 pounds. The principal exterior change to the SD60E refit included a larger and safer cab that offered crew members better crash protection. The original SD60 cab weighed 3,800 pounds compared to 12,500 pounds for the all-new cab.



Athearn has announced plans to release a group of Genesis SD60E diesel locomotives in August of

2024. HO scale models depicting road numbers 6908, 6913 and 6915 from the early rebuild program have Sinclair antennas, a 4,000 gallon fuel tank and oval* cab windows. *(According to Athearn, the preliminary art work shown here is incorrect.)



During a later phase of the SD60E rebuild program, NS units numbered 6986,

7000 and 7002 had rectangular cab windows and a full PTC antenna array. All are in standard NS black scheme except 6920 which honors veterans.



Jersey Central unit which has a PTC antenna array and a 4500-gallon fuel tank.

Legendary Liveries schemes for Athearn's SD60E include this New



heritage scheme rides on EMD HTC high-traction trucks with Timken roller-bearings. Athearn has acknowledged that the Monon is a CSX predecessor road, via L&N, not Norfolk Southern. The locomotive does not carry any NS markings.

Like all of the SD60Es in this release, this NS unit in a Monon



Completing this release is an EMD SD60E in a faded Norfolk & Western paint scheme.



R. Bale

TUNNEL MOTORS

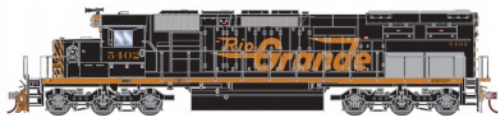
The SD40T-2 is a six-axle 3,000hp diesel locomotive built by EMD between 1974 and 1980. The SD40T-2 is popularly called a Tunnel Motor, because they were designed for better engine cooling in mountainous areas. The spotting differences between an SD40-2 and an SD40T-2 are the radiator intakes and radiator fan grilles located at the rear of the locomotive. The original owners of the SD40T-2 Tunnel Motors were Southern Pacific (229 units), SSW-Cotton Belt (10 units with an extended nose), and Denver & Rio Grande Western (73).



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Athearn has included an HO scale version of EMD's SD40T-2 diesel locomotive in its August 2024 production schedule.



Models decorated for D&RGW, Burlington Northern and Union Pacific (ex-DRGW) will all have

standard cabs, small EMD front plows and 4,000 gallon fuel tanks.



Southern Pacific, New England Central, and Union Pacific (ex-SP) units will have a cab modified with L

windows, a large EMD plow up front and 4,500 gallon fuel tanks.



An SD40T-2 decorated for the Chicago, Fort Wayne & Eastern railroad will have both front and rear ditch lights.



Both Union Pacific versions (one ex-DRGW and one ex-SP) will be available in Athearn's faded Primed for Grime paint scheme.

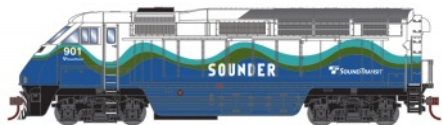


Athearn's August 2024 production schedule includes EMD's F59PHI diesel locomotives decorated in Amtrak California and Amtrak Surfliner schemes.



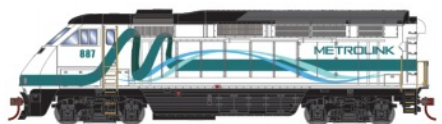


Athearn is offering its F59PHI in New Mexico Railrunner, and Utah Front Runner liveries as a stand-in for the roads' MP36PH-C.



Sounder Transit units, operating in Washington's Puget Sound region, correctly represent the 11 F59PHI

locomotives rostered by the Washington State Transportation Authority.



Two Metrolink schemes serving the southern California region are included in this release. All Athearn's

HO scale F59PHI units feature LED lighting, clear window glazing, and see-through radiator and dynamic brake fans.



Athearn is developing a basic HO scale EMD F7 A unit to be marketed under the Roundhouse brand.



Features include flush window glass in the cab and portholes and a revised diecast frame to

accommodate a DCC decoder.



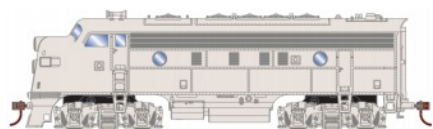
Road names will be Santa Fe, Southern Pacific, Union Pacific, Canadian Pacific, Milwaukee Road, and Maine Central.



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An undecorated model will also be available. All units will have simulated stainless steel Farr-Air grilles at the top of the sides.



Athearn has included a 2-6-0 Mogul steam locomotive in its August 2024 production schedule. The popularity

of the 2-6-0 Mogul steam locomotive peaked around 1900 after which most were relegated to light rail and branch line service. Although few new 2-6-0 Moguls were built after 1920, there were several significant exceptions including Boston & Maine which kept 2-6-0s on its roster until the end of steam.



Athearn's HO scale Mogul represents a light 2-6-0 that, depending

on the road name and details added by the modeler, is suitable for any era from about 1880 to the early 1930s.



Road names will include Santa Fe, Maine Central, Canadian Pacific and Union

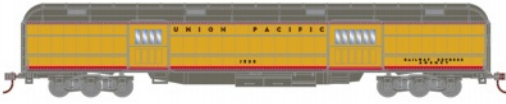
Pacific all applied on black locomotives and tenders.



Milwaukee Road and Southern Pacific versions of the Mogul will have fantasy

decorated tenders. The model features bi-directional LED constant lighting and traction tires on one set of drivers.

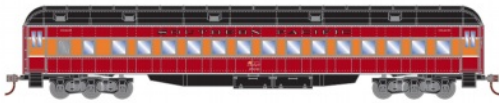
All non-Genesis Athearn diesel locomotives in this report will be available with and without sound. Sound units will have a DCC decoder and Onboard Econami Sound by SoundTraxx. The 2-6-0 Moguls are DCC-ready with a 21-pin decoder socket.



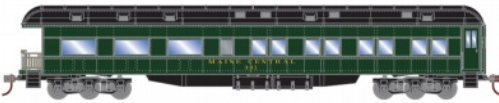
Athearn has included a group of HO scale heavyweight passenger cars in its August 2024 production schedule. The shorty passenger cars will operate on 18" radius curves. The models will be produced from steel tooling originated by Irv Athearn in 1960.



Updated features include six-wheel passenger trucks with machined metal wheels and body-mounted McHenry knuckle couplers.



The selection of heavyweight models includes a baggage car, RPO, a coach and a diner/observation. All will have clerestory roofs.



Road names will be Union Pacific, Southern Pacific, Canadian Pacific, Santa Fe, Milwaukee Road and Maine Central.



This Genesis 50' PC&F boxcar with exterior posts and plug doors is included in Athearn's August 2024 production schedule.



Features include wire grab irons, etched metal coupler platforms, coupler lift bars, brake and trainline hoses, and a detailed



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underframe that includes air brake reservoir, control valve, and brake cylinder with plumbing and brake rod details.



three Union Pacific schemes.

Road names on the this release will be BNSF, Golden West/DRGW (three schemes), Illinois Central, Nestle Foods, Missouri Pacific and



The model will come with appropriate roller-bearing trucks with machined metal wheels and rotating bearing caps.



Athearn has included this basic HO scale 40' boxcar with Youngstown sliding doors in its August 2024 release. It has full height ladders and running boards.



Road names will be Alaska, Bangor & Aroostook, Northern Pacific, Pennsylvania, Ferrocarril Del Pacifico and Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis.

Note that all of the Athearn models in this report will come with McHenry knuckle couplers.

Info: www.athearn.com



Atlas has released a group of Trainman series 70-ton, triple-bay, nine-panel coal hopper cars. The HO scale model comes with a removable coal load.

Road names include Santa Fe, Baltimore & Ohio, Alaska, Peabody, Chicago & Eastern Illinois, Western Maryland, Reading,



Virginian, and Minneapolis & St. Louis Railway. A video describing the Trainman series model can be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=xtwJzIo5UmE



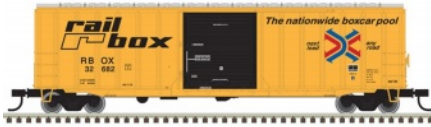
brake lines, and 100-ton trucks.

Also available now from Atlas is a 5250 cu. ft. covered hopper car. The HO scale model features etched metal roof walks, separately applied grab irons and



Decorating schemes include Pro-Fax, Citgo, Wisconsin Central, Seaboard Coast Line, Amoco, Cosden Chemical and Rocor Resins. To learn more about this

Atlas Master Plus model visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=9UpGmyibE2s.

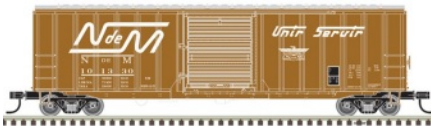


Atlas has just released this 50' 6" boxcar to its dealer network. The model is based on one of the more than 5,400 prototypes ACF

began building for Railbox in 1974.



Atlas's HO version features a diagonal panel roof, non-terminating ends and 10' Youngstown sliding doors.



Road names include Railbox, Pan Am, Canadian National, CSX, NdM- Ferrocarriles Nacionales de México, Union

Pacific and Burlington Northern.



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Also new from Atlas is 73' AAR designation FBC center partition car, also known as a centerbeam flatcar. The HO scale model is based on a prototype introduced in 1986. The car

was specifically designed to efficiently handle lumber, plywood, gypsum board and other construction products. Features on Atlas's model include etched cross-over walks, a flat floor, simulated tie-loops and cable slots, partition cable hooks, see-through top chord holes, and appropriate trucks with machined metal wheels.

Road names on this release are Iowa Northern, Norfolk Southern, First Union Rail, Willamette & Pacific, BNSF, Canadian Pacific, and TTX. A minimum radius of 22" is recommended. Atlas HO scale freight cars mentioned in this report come with Accumate knuckle couplers and appropriate trucks with machined metal wheels.



Atlas has released a 53' Jindo container in six new road names. The side

corrugations are in an 8-55-8 arrangement. The roof has a 6-54-6 pattern and the front wall has 10 vertical corrugations.



The HO scale model is available decorated for CSX,

EMP (ex-HUB), EMP (ex-Pacer), Ferromex, MLNU-Milestone (ex-Pacer), and Swift.



Atlas has also released three new 53' CIMC dry-van

containers. Decorating schemes available now are Norfolk Southern, Canadian Pacific, and EMP (ex-FEC).



Each road name of both the Jindo and CIMC containers

come in 3-packs with different numbers.

Info: shop.atlasrr.com



six 'steel coil' loads, the cars come decorated for BNSF, CSX, Norfolk Southern, and Union Pacific.



The Silver Series rolling stock includes blackened machined metal wheels with RP25 contours and needle-point bearings, body mounted EZ-Mate Mark II couplers, and Celcon trucks.

Info: bachmanntrains.com



R. Bale

MLW M630 LOCOMOTIVE

The M630 is a 3,000hp diesel electric locomotive built by Montreal Locomotive Works (MLW), a subsidiary of the American Locomotive Company (Alco) of Schenectady, NY. After Alco quit the locomotive business in 1969, MLW continued to build, under license, derivations of Alco units including the C630 road switcher which was identified as M630. The C630/M630 were among the first diesels to use an alternator rather than a generator. Between 1969 and 1973 MLW built a total of 105 M630 units. All of the Canadian-built M630s rode on six-wheel high-adhesion trucks manufactured by Dofasco.



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model include individual air hoses, windshield wipers, grab irons, coupler lift bars and window glazing.



Road names available in this release include PGE with face-mounted ditch lights in two tone green with lightning stripe. A BCR unit in the same green scheme is available with a yellow deck stripe.



Two of the BC Rail models have external air filters.



Three additional BC Rail versions are available in the red, white and blue hockey stick scheme. All have ditch lights recessed in the nose. Analog/(DC) models are DCC ready with 21-pin socket. Units with DCC/Sound feature a LokSound Select decoder.

Info: bowser-trains.com



Centralia Car Shops is preparing another production run of its HO scale NE-5 steel caboose.



In addition to Lamoille Valley, road names for the northeastern style caboose include three New Haven schemes, two Chicago Great Western schemes, and four Boston & Maine liveries.



The model features separate wire and etched metal details, metal knuckle couplers, and appropriate caboose trucks with machined metal wheelsets. Info: www.intermountain-railway.com



ExactRail has completed the third production run of its TTX Trinity 6275 cu. ft. plug door boxcar. Two FBOX decorating schemes are currently available. Features include steel nailable flooring, etched stainless steel cross-over walks, wire formed grab irons and separate door tracks and door bars.



The HO scale ready-to-run model comes with Kadee couplers and 100-ton ASF Ride-Control trucks with 36" machined metal wheelsets.

Info: www.exactrail.com



HomeShops has released limited edition freelance model railroad paint schemes on InterMountain HO scale PS-5277 50' boxcars. The three road names in the run are Allegheny Midland, Seaboard Central, and Washington Northern. Fifty cars in each of six numbers for each roadname were produced in this limited edition run.



The InterMountain PS-5277 boxcar is equipped with 33" InterMountain metal wheelsets and Kadee #178 metal knuckle



couplers. The Allegheny Midland and Washington Northern cars are equipped with Pullman doors and the Seaboard Central cars are equipped with Superior doors. The cars have a recommended minimum radius of 22".

Info: homeshops.net



InterMountain Railway is booking reservations through the end of May for HO scale models of four-bay cylindrical covered hoppers. The

Canadian-style wheat hoppers will have trough hatches and etched metal roof walks. The advance reservation period extends through the end of May, at which time InterMountain will determine if the interest is great enough to authorize production. Road names under consideration include CNWX-Canada, CPWX-Canada, ALBX Alberta, Mobil Grain (ex-Saskatchewan), WGR, Canadian National, Logimex, and Chicago & North Western-UP.

Info: www.intermountain-railway.com



Kadee's latest release is a 50' Pullman-Standard PS-1 boxcar decorated for Chesapeake & Ohio. The HO scale ready-to-run model accurately represents a

prototype built in 1956 with 9' Youngstown sliding doors. Features include running boards, full-height ladders, and Barber S-2 70-ton roller-bearing trucks with 33" smooth-back wheels.

Info: www.kadee.com

Rapido Trains is booking pre-orders through June 15, 2023, for another release of its HO scale Gunderson well cars.



Rapido's upgraded model of the Gunderson 53' single-unit double-stack well car is based on the latest iteration of the prototype Husky-Stack.

Rapido's upgraded model of the Gunderson 53' single-unit double-



Features include a newly designed diecast body that allows additional see-through etched metal walkways, injection molded plastic end handrails and brake detailing, metal knuckle couplers and 70-ton trucks with 33" machined metal wheels with separate brake shoe detailing.

Features include a newly designed diecast body that allows additional

Road names will be DTTX-Trailer Train (On Track for A Cure-pink), TTX-Trailer Train (as delivered), TTX-Trailer Train (patched logo), CP-Canadian Pacific, AOK-Arkansas & Oklahoma and FXE-Ferromex.



The well cars will be available individually and in 2- and 3-packs in combination with Rapido's 53' dry box containers. The

containers have a removable floor to simplify adding more weight if desired. The containers will come with an optional heater box and fuel tank, correctly decorated and installed as appropriate for each paint scheme. Paint schemes for the 53' dry box containers are expected to be announced soon.

\$5 from each sale of the On Track for a Cure DTTX car will go to Lionel Strang's One More Year campaign with the Princess Margaret Hospital Foundation to support the mental health of cancer patients.

Info: www.rapidotrains.com



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ScaleTrains has released Union Pacific GP30 units including both freight and

passenger versions of the cabless GP30 B units. The passenger versions of the B units have steam generator intakes, vents, and exhaust details on the roof. Additional road names now available for the Rivet Counter version of the GP30 include Chicago & North Western, CSX, Denver & Rio Grande Western, Pennsylvania and Norfolk & Western.



ScaleTrains has announced it is taking preorders for the Trinity 82' 7883 cu ft reefer. The

HO scale Rivet Counter model will be available only in BNSF in its first release. Three versions of the model will be available, with a late model Thermo King HVAC, early model Thermo King HVAC, and a Carrier HVAC system.



Each version will be available in eight road numbers, with each number available in both

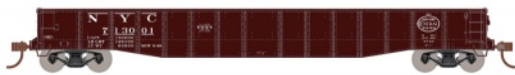
sound equipped and non-sound versions. The sound equipped versions will include an LED-lighted control panel on the HVAC unit, a capacitor circuit to avoid sound drops, and a magnetic reed on/off switch. The volume is controlled with a button on the bottom of the car.



All models feature a 12' plug door with a recessed top section and separate door rods and

door handle, cylindrical fuel tank with end cage, refrigeration unit access platform with photo-etched metal platform deck, underbody wire form brake rigging and components matching

the prototype, factory applied ladders, metal grab irons, tack boards, cut levers, and trainline hoses with silver glad hands. Detailed ASF 100-ton trucks with raised foundry data and separately mounted brake beams, 36" machined metal wheels with a .110" wide tread, and rotating Timken three-sided roller bearing caps are also included. The model will be equipped with body mounted die-cast metal semi-scale lower-shelf Type E couplers.



Also announced is a Kit Classics HO scale 52' 6" 70-ton mill gondola. Designed to be assembled with a small Philips screwdriver and glue, the kits feature cast stirrup steps, end ladders, grab irons, underbody and brake system details. The brake wheel is separately applied, and the model includes 33" machined metal wheels and plastic semi-scale Type E Kadee-compatible knuckle couplers.



Road names in the first run include CB&Q, Erie, New York Central, Nickel Plate Road, and Western Pacific, with three road numbers available for each road name.



Finally, ScaleTrains has also announced a new run of HO scale Rivet Counter GE C39-8 locomotives in Phases Ib, II, and III. Paint schemes include Conrail, Conrail Quality, CSX/YN3, Norfolk Southern, Norfolk Southern ex-Conrail patch, Norfolk Southern black, and Pennsylvania Northeastern, both in ex-Conrail and ex-Norfolk Southern.

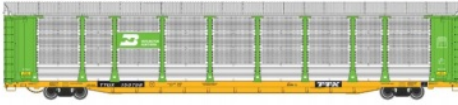


Road number specific details such as ditch lights, yellow painted plow, and horns are included, as are LED-illuminated ground lights, walkway lights, tricolor front and rear class lights with lenses, and printed and illuminated front and rear number boards.



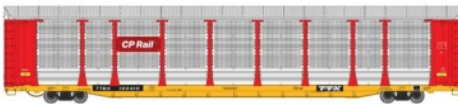
Preorders for the Trinity reefers, C39-8s, and mill gondolas are due April 24, 2023.

Info: www.scaletrains.com



New HO scale models coming from **Walthers** this summer include an all-new Proto series 89' Thrall enclosed bi-

level auto carrier. The HO scale ready-to-run model is based on a prototype design introduced in the 1970s to haul vans and light trucks. Road names include BNSF and Canadian National carriers mounted on a Grand Trunk Western flatcar.



Carrier road names on TTXG flatcars include Burlington Northern, CSX, Florida East Coast, Norfolk Southern, CP Rail and Union Pacific.



Additional new models coming from Walthers this summer include a Proto

series 68' Railgon gondola. Walthers HO scale version is based on an 18-panel prototype introduced in 2000. The ready-to-run model features see-through tie-downs on the top chords and 100-ton trucks with 36" machined metal wheels. Road names available on this release will be Railgon, BNSF, Southern Pacific and CSX.



A re-run of Walthers distinctive Greenville 7000 cu. ft. five-bay wood chip car is scheduled for release this summer. The HO scale Mainline series model

features interior bracing and 100-ton trucks with 36" machined metal wheels. Road names on this release will be Santa Fe, Meridian & Bigbee, CSX, Norfolk Southern, Seaboard Coast Line, and Union Pacific. Cars decorated for Southern Railway will be available in both Tuscan and black.



Coming from Walthers this fall is an all-new 68' bulkhead flatcar. The HO scale Mainline model is based on a

Bethlehem BSH71A prototype introduced in the late 1970s. Features include a nailable steel deck, heavy diecast underframe and 100-ton trucks with 36" machined metal wheels.



Road names will be BC Rail, TTX, Canadian National, Western Pacific, Illinois Central and Southern Railway.



Walthers has added three additional cars to the City of San Francisco name train project. Availability of the new 85' cars is scheduled for the summer of 2024.



The Proto series models include a Union Pacific dome diner and a UP dome coach. Both models are based on ACF prototypes.



The third car is a Southern Pacific sleeper built by Pullman-Standard to plan 4069H. It will be available decorated in the yellow COSF scheme.

Previously announced COSF cars due in the spring of 2024 include a Budd-built Milwaukee Road 10-6 sleeper. COSF cars scheduled to arrive in the summer of 2024 include a UP dome lounge, Pullman 5-2-2 double bed sleepers and a PRR 10-6 sleeper. Completing Walthers COSF project are an ACF club-lounge decorated for UP, an SP coach and an SP blunt end observation car.

Info: www.walthers.com



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N SCALE PRODUCT NEWS

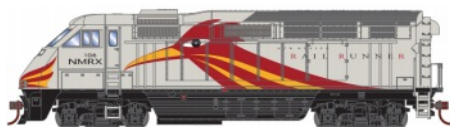


California and Amtrak Surfliner schemes.

Athearn's August 2024 production schedule includes an N scale EMD's F59PHI diesel locomotive decorated in Amtrak

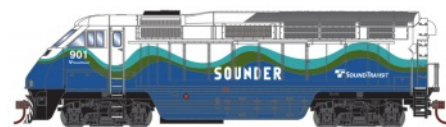


Additional road names include New Mexico RailRunner and Utah Front Runner liveries with Athearn's F59PHI standing-in for the roads MP36PH-C.

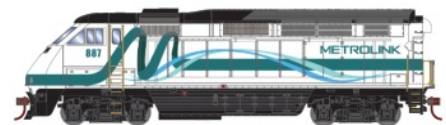


locomotives rostered by the Washington State Transportation Authority.

Sounder Transit units, operating in Washington's Puget Sound region, correctly represent the 11 F59PHI



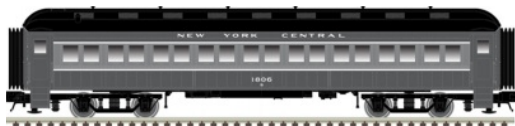
Two Metrolink schemes serving the southern California region are included in this release.



Athearn's F59PHI units feature LED directional lighting and clear window glazing. This N scale model will be available with and without sound. Sound units will have a DCC decoder and Onboard Econami Sound by SoundTraxx.

Athearn's F59PHI units feature LED directional lighting and clear window glazing. This N scale model will be available

www.athearn.com



Leading a short list of new models Atlas has recently released to its dealers is a 60' heavyweight clerestory coach.



Based on a C&NW prototype, the ready-to-run N scale model features interior detail, window glazing and working diaphragms.



Road names on this release include Lackawanna, New York Central, Wabash, Chesapeake & Ohio, New Haven and Toronto, Hamilton & Buffalo.



Atlas has released an N scale version of a 42' coil steel car with a removable hood. Inside floor detail includes an integral lengthwise trough. A spotting feature of the car is a pronounced fishbelly side sill.



Road names are CSX, DLRX-GE Railcar, Indiana Harbor Belt, Norfolk Southern and Inland Steel.



Completing Atlas' latest release of N scale models is this 50' 6" boxcar. The model is based on a prototype built by ACF in 1974 for Railbox. Road names include Railbox, Pan Am, Union Pacific, Burlington Northern, Canadian National, CSX, NDM- Ferrocarriles Nacionales de México.



Details include a diagonal paneled roof, non-terminating ends and a 10' Youngstown sliding door.



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All of the Atlas cars mentioned in report come with Accumate knuckle couplers.

Info: www.atlasrr.com

Broadway Limited plans to release a large selection of N scale EMD F3 and F7 diesel locomotives in June. A and B units will be available individually as well as in A/B sets with matching road numbers.



F3 units decorated in Santa Fe's Warbonnet scheme will come with dual headlights

and Farr-Air stainless steel side grilles.



Units with Farr-Air grilles and a single headlight will be available for Southern

Railway, Lehigh Valley and Main Central.



Union Pacific and Southern Pacific (Black Widow) F3s will have dual

headlights and chicken wire screening that extends from the top of the side down between the two portholes.

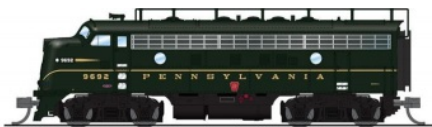


Missouri Pacific and Frisco F3s will have a single headlight and chicken wire screening.



EMD F7 diesels with dual headlights and Farr-Air grilles will be available decorated for

Denver & Rio Grande Western, ATSF (Bluebonnet), Chicago & North Western, Northern Pacific, Southern Pacific (Bloody Nose), Texas & Pacific, Union Pacific, Milwaukee Road, and Wabash.



Pennsylvania units and F7s decorated for Baltimore & Ohio, Rock Island, New York

Central and Reading Northern will have a single headlight and Farr-Air grilles.

Broadway-Limited's N scale F3 and F7 A units will be available with Paragon4 sound system and a dual-mode DCC decoder. Details including antennas, dynamic brakes, exhausts, winterization hatches, cooling fans and other roof top items will vary depending on the prototype road being modeled. Info: www.broadway-limited.com



InterMountain Railway is booking reservations for N scale models of four-bay cylindrical covered hoppers. The Canadian-style wheat

hoppers will have trough hatches and etched metal roof walks. The advance reservation period extends through the end of May, at which time InterMountain will determine if the interest is great enough to authorize production. Road names under consideration include CNWX-Canada, CPWX-Canada, ALBX Alberta, Mobil Grain (ex-Saskatchewan), WGR, Canadian National, Logimex, and Chicago & North Western-UP. Info: www.intermountain-railway.com



Heading the list of new N scale models coming from **Micro-Trains** this month is a PS-2 twin-bay covered hopper decorated for Baltimore & Ohio.

The model is based on an order of 600 cars Pullman-Standard built for B&O in 1957.

Micro-Trains 50' 14-panel gondola decorated for Norfolk Southern represents a prototype originally owned by the



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Southern Railway. NS repainted the car, adding the white ends and Do Not Hump designation. Note the Barber roller-bearing trucks.



This Micro-Trains N scale model represents a 40' Union Pacific class A-50-19 boxcar with double Youngstown sliding doors. The car rides on Bettendorf-type plain-bearing trucks.



The prototype of this Burlington Northern Santa Fe twin-bay covered hopper was built in 1975 by American Car & Foundry for the St. Louis-San Francisco Railway. BNSF acquired the car through several mergers.



Ferrocarriles Nacionales de México, also known as NdeM, designated this 56' tank car for diesel fuel service. Micro-Train's NdeM decorating scheme includes a build date of 1980. Info: See a Micro-Trains dealer.



RailSmith is accepting advance orders for two new lightweight Santa Fe coaches.



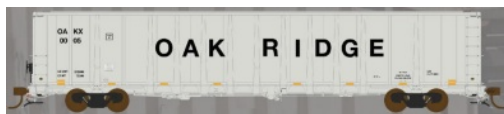
The N scale models include a coach for the Texas Chief that operated between Chicago and Galveston, and a Grand Canyon chair car with a roof top antenna.

Info: lowellsmith.net



Otter Valley Railroad has announced that they will be producing the NSC 6000 cu ft and 6400 cu ft

gondolas in N scale. The 6000 cu ft cars will be available in Triple M (TLPX), XRMX, and a black unlettered scheme.



The 6400 cu ft gondolas will be available in AIMX, CDEX, Cardella (CWSX), DEAX, IWXX, Oak Ridge

(OAKX), OFOX, WINX, and black and grey unlettered schemes.

Info: www.ovrtrains.com



The N scale Barrel Ore Hopper announced by **Rapido** late last year is in jeopardy of not being produced. Rapido reports that the number of preorders booked

during the introductory period was not sufficient to justify moving forward with the project. Before completely shelving the Barrel Ore Hopper project, Rapido will attempt to stimulate more interest by adding three new road names to the mix and extending the deadline of the pre order period to June 15, 2023.



The new road names are all 43' long barrel cars. They are GACX-black body with red conspicuity stripes, RMGX-black body with yellow conspicuity stripes and NIHX-black body with red conspicuity stripes.

Previously announced schemes include Canadian National both short (35') and long barrel versions, CN converted scale test car, Ontario Northern Railway green scheme on a short



barrel car, and an ONR Chevron scheme on a long barrel car. Undecorated versions of both short and long cars are also planned. For a brief history of the unique Barrel Ore Hoppers, including technical details, see the December 2022 issue of *MRH*. Info: www.rapidotrains.com

NEW STRUCTURES & SCENIC SUPPLIES



Athearn's future production schedule includes a group of HO scale Ford F850 pumper trucks. The model features a unique pumping apparatus mounted on the front bumper. Additional details include clear window glazing and rubber tires.



Railroad decorating schemes include Union Pacific, Santa Fe, Southern Pacific, Great Northern and Penn Central.



Commercial schemes include Penguin Ginger Ale, Firehouse Diner and Ford Motor Co. Availability is planned for August 2024.

Info: www.athearn.com



Berkshire Valley Models has released both HO and O scale kits for an Amish Buggy. The kit is comprised of unpainted laser-cut wood and white metal parts. Horses and drivers are available as a separate purchase.

www.berkshirevalleymodels.com



Comfort House has released a series of custom billboards for use with N, HO and O scales. Featuring realistic looking angle iron framework and decorative lattice, the customer can specify what is engraved on the billboard and select the size and color. The small billboard, intended for N scale, is 2" wide x 1-3/4" high x 1/16" thick, the medium

HO scale billboard is 3" wide x 2-3/4" high x 1/16" thick, and the large O scale billboard is 5-3/8" wide x 5" high x 1/16" thick. Eight color combinations are available. Some assembly is required.

Info: www.comforthouse.com/ho-scale-custom-billboard.html



Downtown Deco has released a new kit for Lennox Glass. Composed of nicely detailed Hydrocal castings, the new kit is available in N, HO and O scales.

Additional details include custom decals and laser-cut shattered glass. Unbroken glass is included for those wanting to

build the structure as an active enterprise. The assembly instructions include painting and weathering ideas. The vehicle and figure in the illustration are not included.

Info: www.downtowndeco.com



The **Great Northern Railroad Historical Society** has announced the availability of an HO scale kit of the world-famous Izaak Walton Inn in Essex, Montana. Designed using blueprints from the GNRHS archives, the kit by Hidden River Manufacturing

features all basswood and aircraft plywood construction and measures 8" wide by 16" long, including porches.

Info: gnrhs.myshopify.com



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Maple Leaf Trains has released VIA Passenger Train Crew set #2.

Although attired in VIA uniforms of the mid-2000s, the five HO scale unpainted 3D figures can be readily adapted to represent a wide range of occupations.

Info: www.mapleleaftrains.com



Mine Mount Models has announced the release of Randy's Auto Repair in S scale. Constructed of Mt. Albert scale lumber, laser-cut windows, doors, and roofing materials; and 3D-printed resin details, the model measures 8" x 6" and includes

a laser-cut billboard roof sign.

Info: minemountmodels.com



Heading a list of new 1:87th scale vehicles from **Oxford** is a 1954 Buick Century Estate Wagon. The model is decorated in black and Baffin Green. The interior is also dark green. Details include wide white wall tires and the Century series signature of three holes in the fender.



A second high-end wagon from Oxford is this 1942 Chrysler Town & Country wagon with wood sides. Details include Sea Blue paint, rear fender skirts and a roof rack.



This light green 1957 Chrysler Imperial two-door hardtop is now available from Oxford.



This half-ton B-1B pickup was built by Dodge from 1948 through 1953. Oxford's 1:87th version features a

chrome grille, heavy-duty wheels and wood side rails.

Info: www.walthers.com



Showcase Miniatures has introduced an N scale kit for a Fire Department Tanker. The kit can be assembled as a Chevy Kodiak or GMC Topkick truck. Features include photo-etched details, a vacuum formed windshield and positionable front wheels. Decals are included in the kit which requires assembly and painting.

Info: www.showcaseminiatures.net



New **Walthers Cornerstone** HO scale kits scheduled for release this summer include a three-structure Chocolate Factory. The large complex includes a two-story brick administration building, two steel industrial buildings and a tall storage tank. Placement of the buildings, which require painting and assembly, is optional.



Additional items coming from Walthers this summer include a modern communication antenna array. The HO scale kit includes parts that can be assembled into three different types of antennas for roof top or wall mounting.

Info: www.walthers.com

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BRIEFLY NOTED AT PRESS TIME ...

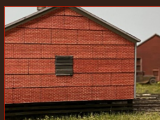
Bowser has released HO scale Wabash National 53' RoadRailers in seven TripleCrown decorating schemes ...

Morning Sun Books has released volume two of *Chicago Intercity Passenger Trains*, which documents Amtrak equipment and operations from 1971 to 1984...

Walthers is developing both standard and wide-cab versions of GE Dash 8-40B/BW diesel units. The HO scale Mainline series models will be ready in the winter of 2024. Coming this summer is a Proto series 54' UTLX 23,000 gallon Funnel-Flow tank car. Both single and five-unit sets of 40' Thrall rebuilt well cars and a 53' GSX flatcar will all be available this fall ... ■

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SELECTED EVENTS



Model Railroad Hobbyist | April 2023

APRIL

Please check with any organization hosting an in-person event for the latest status of the event.

Ongoing 2023

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

Info: www.opsig.org/Virtual

Archive: www.opsig.org/Virtual/Past

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, Gert 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



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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

April-May 2023

CANADA, NEW BRUNSWICK, SAINT JOHN, May 25-28, 2023, Fundy Rail Fest 2023 MFMR/ECD Convention, Best Western Plus Saint John, 55 Majors Brook Dr.

Info: www.fundyrailfest2023.ca

NEW ZEALAND, MOSGIEL, DUNEDIN, May 6-7, 2023, Dunedin Model Train Show. Taieri Bowling Club, Wickliffe Street.

Info: dunedinmodeltrainshow@gmail.com and dunedinmodeltrainshow.nz

UNITED KINGDOM, HERTFORDSHIRE, WATFORD, April 15, 2023. 41st Annual Model Railway Exhibition, sponsored by the South West Herts Model Railway Society. Queens School, Aldenham Road, Bushey.

Info: www.southwesthertsmrs.org.uk

UNITED KINGDOM, NORFOLK, NORWICH, April 15, 2023. Norwich Model Railway Club Railway Exhibition. Hellesdon High School, Middletons Lane.

Info: norhams.org.uk/wordpress/exhibition

UNITED KINGDOM, BRISTOL, April 28-30, 2023. 53rd Bristol Model Railway Exhibition, organized by Warners Exhibitions with the Association of Model Railway Clubs Wales and West of England. Thornbury Leisure Center, Alveston Hill, Thornbury.

Info: www.world-of-railways.co.uk/information/all-shows

CALIFORNIA, CROCKETT, April 22-23, 2023. Carquinez Model Railroad Society Open House. 645 Loring Avenue.

Info: cmrstrainclub.org

CALIFORNIA, HEMET, April 15-16, 2023. Model Railroad Festival of modular layouts, including California South Coast On30, Orange County HO, ZoCal Z scale, and Puerta Margarita mini-layout. Exhibits include Riverside and Chula Vista Live Steamers, SoCal Railroad Museum, and a Mini Car show. Four Seasons, 237 Seasons Blvd.

Info: Dave Balsler, on30man@gmail.com or 760-436-6139

CALIFORNIA, SACRAMENTO, April 26-30, 2023. Rails By The River 2023, Joint Pacific Coast Region/Feather River Rail Society Convention. Courtyard By Marriott Sacramento Cal Expo, 1782 Tribute Rd.

Info: pcrnmra.org/conv2023/index.html

GEORGIA, KINGSLAND, May 6, 2023. Kingsland Station Train Show. The Georgia Coastal Railway at Kingsland Station, 440 S Lee St.

Info: thegeorgiatrain.com

ILLINOIS, WAUCONDA, April 15-16, 2023. Lake County Model Railroad Open House. 107 S. Main St.

Info: www.lcmrr.org

MASSACHUSETTS, WEST SPRINGFIELD, April 28-29, 2023, Northeast Large Scale Train Show, sponsored by the Amherst Railway Society. Young Building, Eastern State Exposition (Big-E) Fairgrounds, 1305 Memorial Avenue.

Info: www.nelsts.org

MICHIGAN, MUSKEGON, April 29, 2023. Annual Model Train and Hobby Expo, sponsored by the Muskegon Railroad Historical Society. Cardinal Elementary School, 2310 Marquette Ave.

Info: 6ftwoody@comcast.net

MINNESOTA, BLOOMINGTON, May 18-21, 2023. 2023 Thousand Lakes Region, NMRA convention. Best Western Plus Bloomington-Mall of America, 1901 Killebrew Dr.

Info: www.thousandlakesregion.org/2021-bismarck-con



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MISSOURI, ARNOLD (St Louis Area), May 13, December 9, 2023. After the Storm Train Show. Arnold Eagles Club, 1725 Jeffco Blvd.

Info: Steve Mantia, (314) 369-3949

OHIO, DUBLIN (Columbus Area), May 17-21, 2023.

Pennsylvania Railroad Technical & Historical Society 2023 Annual Meeting. Embassy Suites Dublin, 5100 Upper Metro Place.

Info: prrths.org/AnnualMeeting2023

PENNSYLVANIA, ALLENTOWN, May 19-20, 2023. 26th Biennial Meet of the East Penn Traction Club. Agriplex, Allentown Fairgrounds, 17th and Chew St.

Info: eastpenn.org

PENNSYLVANIA, MARS (Pittsburg Area), May 4-7, 2023, Rails to Pittsburgh, Mid-Central Region NMRA Convention. Doubletree by Hilton, 910 Sheraton Drive.

Info: www.keystonedivision.org/convention/index.html

VIRGINIA, FISHERSVILLE, May 7, 2023. Shenandoah Valley Model Train & Railroading Show. Augusta Expo, 277 Expo Road.

Info: www.acrrm.org

WASHINGTON, TACOMA, May 10-14, 2023, Prairie Line Experience, 2023 Pacific Northwest Region Convention. Comfort Inn & Suites Downtown Tacoma, 2611 East E Street.

Info: pnrtacoma2023.org

Future 2023 by location

ARIZONA, FLAGSTAFF, June 7-11, Grand Canyon Special, Pacific Southwest Region Convention, High Country Conference Center, 201 West Butler Avenue.

Info: azdiv-nmra.org/psr2023convention/index.php

ARIZONA, PRESCOTT, July 29, 2023. Beat the Heat Model Train Swap Meet, sponsored by the Central Arizona Model Railroad Club. Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, 3700 Willow Creek Road.

Info: camrrc.com/bth

CALIFORNIA, CROCKETT, April 22-23, June 24-25, August 26-27, September 10, October 14-15, December 9-10, 2023. Carquinez Model Railroad Society Open House. 645 Loring Avenue.

Info: cmrstrainclub.org

COLORADO, DENVER, August 30-September 2, 2023. 2023 National Narrow-Gauge Convention. Crowne Plaza Denver Airport Convention Center, 15500 E 40th Ave.

Info: www.43nngcdenver.com

FLORIDA, TALLAHASSEE, June 24-25, 2023. Tallahassee Model Railroad Show & Sale. North Florida Fairgrounds, 441 Paul Russell Road.

Info: www.facebook.com/events/428051575813892

GEORGIA, CARTERSVILLE, September 14-17, 2023. Cartersville Express, 2023 South East Region Convention. Clarence Brown Conference Center, 5450 Ga-20.

Info: 2023serconvention.org

ILLINOIS, ST. CHARLES, June 11, 2023, Kane County Railroadians & Model Train Show and Sale. Kane County Fairgrounds (Front Building), 525 South Randall Rd.

Info: www.rrshows.com

INDIANA, FT. WAYNE, October 19-22, Fort Wayne Rails, 2023 North Central Region Convention. Holiday Inn Purdue Fort Wayne, 4111 Paul Shaffer Dr.

Info: div3.ncrnmra.org/fort-wayne-rails-2023

INDIANA, FRANKLIN, August 6-7, 2023. Franklin Train Show, sponsored by the Central Indiana Division/NMRA. Johnson County Fairgrounds, 250 Fairground St.

Info: www.cidnmra.org

KANSAS, OVERLAND PARK, July 27-29, 2023. 2023 Mid-Continent Region Convention. Holiday Inn, US69 & 87th St.

Info: www.mcor-nmra.org

NEVADA, SPARKS (Reno), June 14-18, 2023. National N scale convention, presented by the N Scale Enthusiast. Nugget Casino Resort, 1100 Nugget Avenue.

Info: www.nationalscaleconvention.com



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PENNSYLVANIA, ALTOONA, October 19-22, 2023, Round the Curve to Altoona, 2023 Mid-Eastern Region Convention. Altoona Grand Hotel, 1 Sheraton Drive.

Info: mer2023.org/index.html

PENNSYLVANIA, COLUMBIA, June 10, 2023. 4th Annual Columbia Railroad Day, sponsored by the Susquehanna Division NMRA, NHRS, and Columbia Historic Preservation Society. Multiple locations.

Info: www.facebook.com/events/5978270928900719

TEXAS, GRAPEVINE (Dallas Area), August 20-26, 2023. NMRA National Convention, Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center, 1501 Gaylord Trail.

Info: www.2023texasexpress.com

TEXAS, GRAPEVINE (Dallas Area), August 25-27, 2023. National Train Show, Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center, 1501 Gaylord Trail.

Info: www.nationaltrainshow.org/2023/ntsdfw.html

WISCONSIN, WAUPACA, June 17-18, 2023. 33rd Strawberry Fest Model Rail Show, sponsored by the Waupaca Area Model Railroaders. Waupaca Recreation Center, 401 School St.

Info: www.wamrltd.com

WYOMING, EVANSTON, August 4-6, 2023. 25th Annual Evanston Roundhouse Festival, sponsored by the Hostlers Model Railroad Club and Roundhouse Restoration, Inc. 1440 Main Street.

Info: hostlers.info ■

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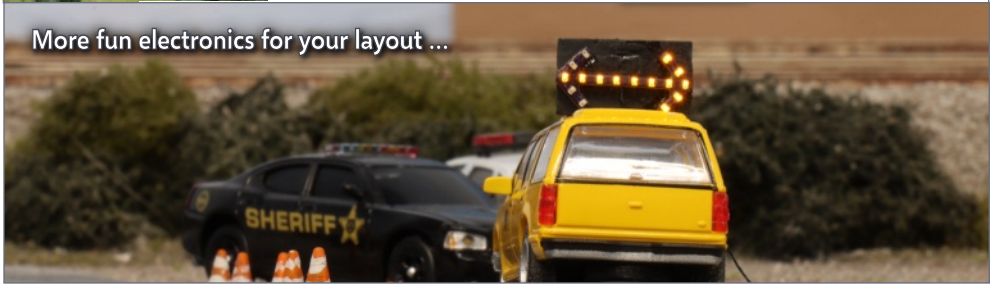
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