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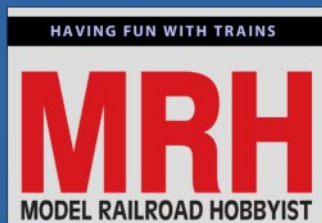


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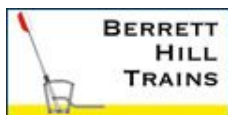
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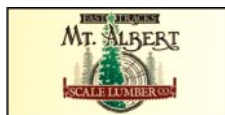
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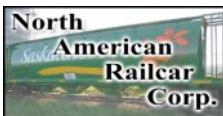
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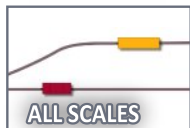
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April 2025 news and events
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PUBLISHER'S MUSINGS



Model Railroad Hobbyist | April 2025

JOE FUGATE DISCUSSES HIS ROAD TRIP TO SHOOT DETROIT AREA LAYOUTS AND REFLECTS ON THE UPCOMING CONVENTION ...



EACH SPRING, WE LIKE TO DO A ROAD TRIP TO ONE OF THE AREAS WHERE THERE'S GOING TO BE A NATIONAL CONVENTION and spend a week shooting layouts. This time, we went to the Detroit area and shot five layouts.

This year's NMRA National will be in the Detroit area from July 14-19. The convention hotel is actually in Novi, a bit more rural than past conventions, with a number of benefits such as free parking!

This year's convention committee is working to make this NMRA National Convention more affordable. First, they're using a hotel in the rural outskirts that's not as pricey as the hotels in the high rent district.

Second, they're making the convention six days long instead of eight like in prior years. They're also ramping back on bus tours and making many of the tours self-guided with a GPS. They're also cutting the train show down by one day, having it run just Saturday and Sunday instead of Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

We're excited to see these cost-cutting changes and we hope this bodes well for future conventions and their cost.

MRH's layout shooting trip

As I mentioned, we have recently shot five Detroit-area layouts and will be presenting them over the next several months in *MRH* and *Running Extra*.

The first layout we're covering this month is Jay and Brook Qualman's Michigan Lines.

Jay and Brook were gracious hosts and wow, what a layout! I would say their 3000 square foot layout is probably one of the largest home layouts in the country. The modeling is superb, with much of the structures and scenery modeled by Brook.

Brook has achieved a Master Model Railroader certification! Not a lot of the ladies are in the hobby, and even fewer of those that do model have gotten their MMR. We were enthralled by the story of Brook getting her MMR and totally impressed by the models she built to get it. You can read all about it in this month's cover story.

I want to comment on the Qualman's layout also. Jay is the brains behind the track plan and he's done an amazing job putting together a nice track plan graphic for their layout article this issue.

Jay used a tripod with an extension arm to get a camera up high over the layout so he could shoot "drone view" shots. Then he processed those shots to give them more of a graphic drawing quality in Photoshop, and stitched them together to create the track plan shown in [5] in the article.

When I study their track plan, frankly I'm amazed. Jay has managed to capture the complex railroad trackage in and around Detroit and get it all to fit into his layout space. Thanks to their 4-10 foot wide layout tabletop as well as many drop down bridges, Jay got it all to fit and make logical sense.

The planning and track laying skill needed to create this layout simply boggles my mind. When you see it in person, it not only looks very railroady with all the yards, crossings, slip switches, three-way and curved turnouts, it also runs quite well, too. I know "state of the art" in track planning says to do narrow



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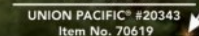
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Expanding Bachmann's line of modern-era rolling stock are two variations of the popular covered hopper; the GATX 4180 "Airlside" and the Trinity 5161. Debuted in 1963 for the shipment of flours, sugars, and other granular food products, Airlside cars used pressurized air to fluidize their loads, allowing them to flow more easily from the chutes when emptied. Today, GATX 4180 hoppers are still in operation, primarily in buffer use, serving as FRA-mandated spacer cars between the locomotive and consist on oil and hazardous material trains. A more recent prototype; the Trinity 5161 was developed in the mid-1990s and is today one of the most prevalent hoppers on the rails. Designed to haul various loads, the Bachmann model represents cars configured to carry grain, featuring the appropriate loading hatches for this purpose. Both the GATX 4180 and the Trinity 5161 arrive with authentic scale details, separately applied underside components, brake cylinders and piping, and multiple prototypical paint schemes.

GATX 4180 AIRSLIDE HOPPER



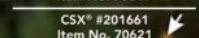
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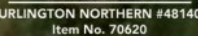
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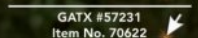
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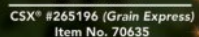


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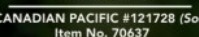
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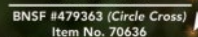
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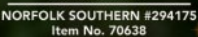
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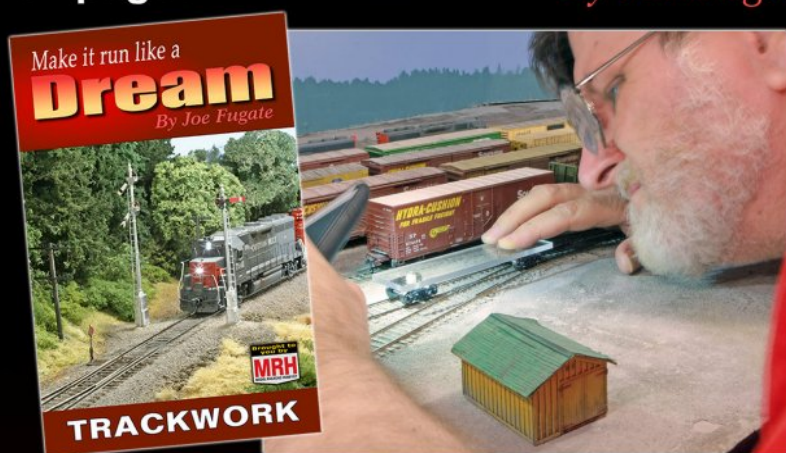
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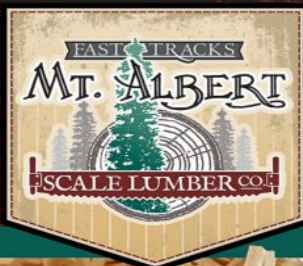
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PUBLISHER'S MUSINGS | 3

shelves of two feet or less, and to avoid drop downs or cross-aisle trackage.

But Jay threw caution to the wind. He basically said “phooey on layout design best practices” and the result is a masterpiece of complex urban railroad track planning.

I personally would never attempt to build a layout like this with such wide shelves and such complex trackwork, but I marvel when someone like Jay boldly attempts this – and then does such a superb job executing it.

If you get a chance to attend the Detroit Convention this summer, make sure you go see Jay and Brook Qualman's Michigan Lines. Better yet, sign up for the op session they will be hosting and run trains on this layout masterpiece!

More Detroit layouts coming

In May we have a double-hitter with both *MRH* and *Running Extra* featuring more Michigan - Detroit region layouts.

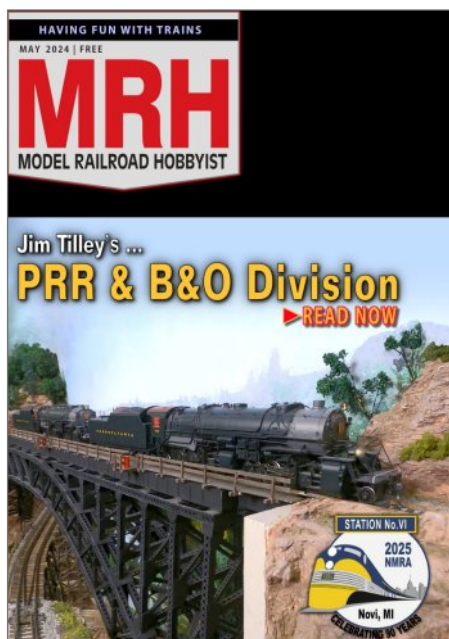
MRH will be featuring Jim Tilley's PRR & B&O Division layout. Jim's got some eye-popping dock modeling featuring ore-hauling. He's also modeling the 1950s with steam still very much in operation.

In *Running Extra*, we're doing something of a written Ops Live review of Andy Keeney's Nashville Road located in Lansing (about 90 minutes from the convention hotel).

We've featured Andy's Nashville Road layout before (see the December 2019 issue of *MRH*) and we've done a TrainMasters TV video on it.

The *Running Extra* piece will be unique because we're following the action on one of Andy's op sessions. If you've ever wondered what a larger layout op session is like, this cover story should give you some idea.

Andy starts out by giving us a walking tour of the layout so we can get our bearings as we cover the action taking place during the op session.



Also these articles:

- Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet
- Consectetur adipiscing elit morbi
- Vestibulum tempus vehicula
- Mauris tempor libero ipsum pellentesque

1. Layouts coming in May.



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THE UNION PACIFIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESENTS THIS COMMEMORATIVE EDITION OF THE 5077 PULLMAN STANDARD BOX CAR



The Union Pacific Historical Society is pleased to announce that North American Railcar Corporation will make a commemorative edition of the new 5077 Pullman Standard Box Car, for the Union Pacific Historical Society. Limited Edition - there are only 50 of these cars that were produced and they will not be released again once they are sold out.

Lot 9832 was Pullman's fourth order for their 5077 cubic-foot single door box cars, built at the Bessemer, Alabama plant 4=6/76. 600 cars were built for American Rail Box Car Company for general service and placed into series RBOX 21000-21599 (class XPF11A). In 1983, 360 cars from RBOX 21000-21359 were transferred to Union Pacific ownership and put into the UP 130800-131159 series, while RBOX 21360-21599 (240 cars) were transferred to UP 130400-130637.

This highly detailed replica of Pullman Standard's 5077 cubic-foot single door box car (Lot 9831) has been meticulously researched and designed and produced in plastic with accurate details in plastic, wire and etched metal. North American Railcar is pushing the technology envelope and offering model railroaders cars that they could otherwise never expect to be produced. The Lot 9831 PS 5077 cubic-foot box car is another example.

FEATURES:

PS 5077 Cu Ft - 50ft Boxcar - Lot 9832-3 - Union Pacific (UP) (Mineral Red with White Lettering / small UP shield)

Type 2 body with 10 side posts (5 on each side of the 10-foot centered door) with all 10 side posts being fabricated from hat-section channels

Type 2 side sill

Pullman's proprietary

15-panel "bow-tie" roof

Pullman's 5/5 "sine-wave"

corrugated ends

EZ-Roll replacement

7-panel sliding doors

Universal hand brakes

Type 3 stirrup steps

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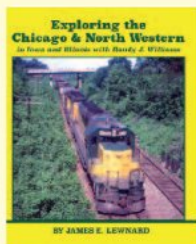
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In June, we're doing two more Detroit-area layouts: Ron King's Erie Railroad and John DePauw's epic Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railway.

The amazing thing about all the Detroit area layouts we visited, they're all well done layouts yet each is unique with their own character.

We hope to get that across with each of our layout stories and help you see how the layouts open at the Detroit NMRA National this summer will be a real treat to visit.

I believe John DePauw will be hosting an op session also on his impressive multi-deck layout, so if you're into getting experience operating on different layouts, John's layout op session will be one not to miss.

We need more articles

Our article backlog is getting kind of thin, so we could use more submissions.

We like scenery, weathering, and DCC/electrical articles the most, but we also could use more articles on structures, rolling stock, and locomotives.



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Its the photos that need to be done with the most care. A poorly lit photo or one that's poorly composed or poorly focused can be next to impossible to fix. An article with great text but poor photos will get rejected, so take your time putting together good photos for your piece.

Start your article with a photo of the finished project in a nice layout scene, if possible. What you want to do is illustrate to readers what the end product looks like as a way to tell them why what you discuss in the article is worth the effort. Leading with a nice final result shot does that.

These days, smart phone photos work just fine, with one caveat: *double check the full-sized image focus*. Don't trust the thumbnail – bring up the full-sized image and check that it's sharp and not blurry. Unfortunately, many articles we get have one or more blurry images in the collection.

We have AI software that can sometimes save a blurry image, but it's better not to chance it. Make double sure that image is sharp as you go. If it's not sharp, retake it until you get it sharp. If you rely on the thumbnail and then later find out the image is blurry, it may be too late – the project is done and you can't easily retake the in-process step image again.

Also, if you include any photos that have callouts in them (text and arrows pointing at something), please include the raw photo without the callouts in your submission as well so we can add callouts consistent with our formatting.

The August 2019 *MRH* has an in-depth article on writing articles for us. Check it out to get all the details:

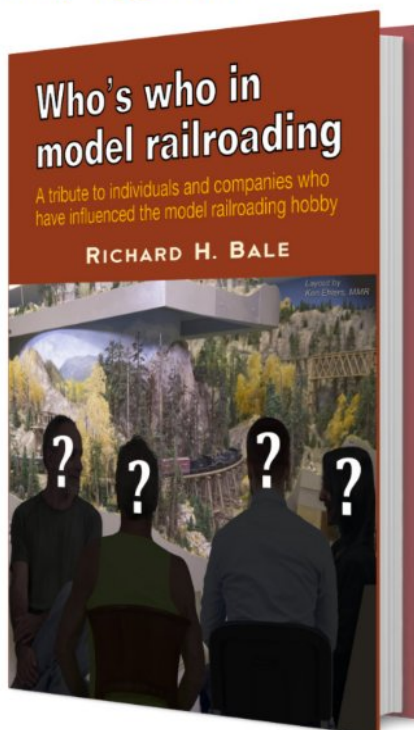
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If you've been in the hobby like me since the 1960s, you will find the information in Richard's book to be enlightening and entertaining. It also helps answer the question of, "I wonder what ever happened to ___" in the hobby.

Or if you're relatively new to the hobby, Richard's book will help you understand how far we've come and who we have to thank for where the hobby is today.

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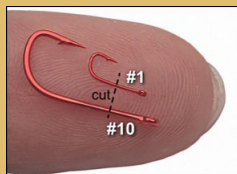
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Issue 77: April 2025

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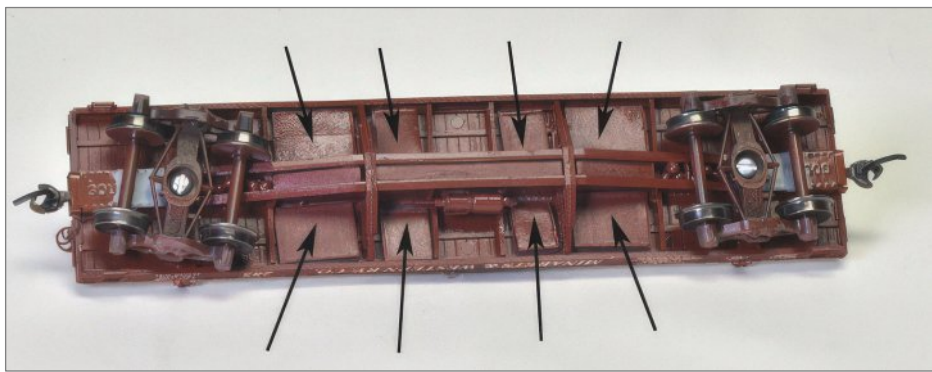
Best of the

MRH FORUM



Model Railroad Hobbyist | April 2025

Compiled by **JOE FUGATE**



Log flat weighty problem

MRH columnist **Jeff Johnston** recently started a thread discussing how to properly weight empty cutaway deck log flat cars. Jeff says,

"I recently started adding a few of the cutaway deck log flats to our Sugar Pine Lumber Company layout roster. The challenge has been including enough weight for the cars to track properly."

Jeff goes on to discuss one solution and asks other forum members for their thoughts. Several members provide helpful suggestions. See the full thread for details!



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

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



1. *MRH* forum member **Southland Modeler** (Chris B.) posted this shot of his home layout illustrating how he used a bump-out to enhance a scene.

Branchline in the rural south

MRH forum member **Southland Modeler** (Chris B.) has a long-running journal/blog on his layout. Recently he posted a discussion about this team track bump-out addition to his layout.

“The team track was an afterthought for this section of the layout. I had originally thought I would do a pulpwood yard in another section. However, putting a team track in this location allowed me to keep a section of my old layout and give it a makeover with plenty of negative space. One advantage of this team track is that several car types are right at home in what is essentially a bulk transfer station. When I shift the era around I have plenty of flexibility with this ‘industry’”

The visual aesthetics of this bump-out are outstanding, we really like how it looks. Read his full journal/blog for more!

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



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2. *MRH* forum member **Tim Moran** posted a series of photos about a recent “Free-mo-style” meet in Indiana where three variations on the basic Free-mo modular standard were all interconnected into one massive layout.

Three modular standards in one layout

MRH forum member **Tim Moran** posted a story about a recent modular meet that interconnected three different variations on the Free-mo standard. Tim says,

“Last week, modelers from Delaware, Ohio, and Indiana converged on Lawrenceburg, Indiana with their modules. After all the modules were clamped together and DCC connections made, the layout was available for both ‘free running’ and operating sessions.

The three modular standards used in this event were Speed-Mo, Free-mo, and Sipping and Switching Society.”

The special meet included interface modules between each of the standards, allowing them to interconnect. Read more about this interesting meet using the button below.

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



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Recent photos posted on the *MRH* forum

MRH forum member **Don Mitchell** posted these La Mesa club layout photos showing some great modeling of the Tehachapi Loop prototype.

View list of more **Don Mitchell** threads

3. Frequent *MRH* forum contributor **Don Mitchell** posted this shot on the La Mesa club layout in San Diego. Don says, “A Santa Fe freight waits in the westbound siding at Caliente for an out of sight eastbound SP freight.”



4. **Don Mitchell** also posted this nice La Mesa club photo of a beet train climbing through Allard. Don says, “Four F units grind uphill, helpers assisting, towards the Allard crossover with a heavy train of beets.” There’s few things that are such a treat for the eyes as a long lashup of SP black widow F units!



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Getting started with realistic ops: Facing/trailing point turnouts

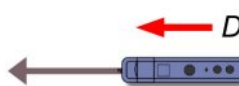
WHAT I'M COVERING IN THIS MONTH'S COLUMN IS A BIT of insight that will make you into a track planning and ops savvy "guru" unlike just about any other tidbit of knowledge. Once you get this concept down, you will be able to look at any track arrangement and quickly assess if it harbors any operational headaches.

This simple but profound railroading concept is trailing point and facing point turnouts. As you can see in [1], a trailing point turnout routes off the main behind the train, allowing for easy switching of the spur. Just drop the caboose and any cars not bound for this industry then back into the spur and pickup cars that are to go with your train.

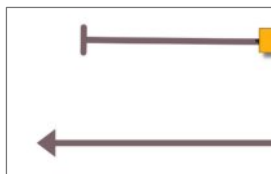
Of course you can also drop any cars destined for this industry easily as well.

When you encounter a facing point turnout [2], the situation is entirely different. Any cars on that spur are on the wrong side of the locomotive, and any cars destined for that spur are also on the wrong side of the loco. So how do you solve this?

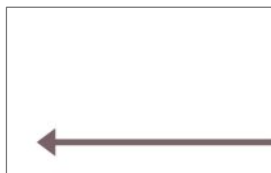
Trailing point turnout



1. Trailing point turnout



2. Facing point turnout



3. Runaround track



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LET'S TALK ABOUT OPS | 2

The answer: you need a runaround track [3]. The runaround gets the loco on the other end of the train, allowing you to switch cars in and out of a facing point spur. Once you're done, you just run your loco back around your train and continue on. Easy as can be.

Any industrial area with both trailing and facing point turnouts needs a nearby runaround track to enable switching, or you are hosed. That said, real railroad engineers may sometimes make what's called a flying switch to use momentum to switch a facing point spur without a runaround, but the railroad brass frown on that tricky maneuver.

Note why operating a local as a *turn* is so handy. Going one way, you switch all the trailing point spurs, then at the end of the route, run the loco around your train and head back where you came from. Now all the facing point spurs are trailing point, making switching easy! ☒

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Turnout

Direction of travel



out example. The train can drop the caboose and easily switch the spur.

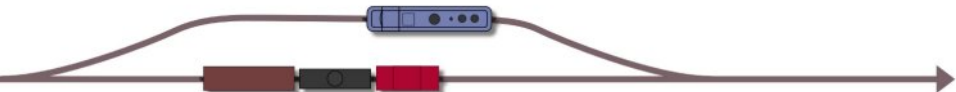
Facing point turnout

Direction of travel



ut example. The car in the spur is on the wrong side of the loco for switching.

Runaround track



xample. The solution for switching facing point spurs is a runaround track.

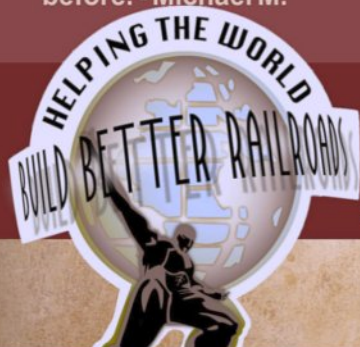
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WHAT'S NEAT

column



Model Railroad Hobbyist | April 2025

KEN PATTERSON COVERS THIS MONTH:

- HAILSTORM DAMAGE AND THE FUTURE OF THE GARDEN RAILROAD
- BLI AND BACHMANN PHOTO SHOOTS
- IN THE BASEMENT – REBUILDING A LAYOUT SECTION



VIEW READER COMMENTS

Brought to you by **MRH** MODEL RAILROAD HOBBYIST

APRIL 2025

chainsaw layout?

WHAT'S NEAT with Ken Patterson
Rebuilding a layout section

click to play video

PHOTOS AND VIDEO OF SUPERB MODELS

FOR APRIL, first Ken takes us out to the backyard to show us the damage from a recent hailstorm and the photo shoots he's doing for BLI and Bachmann. Then Ken goes back into the basement to show how he's renovating a corner of his layout to make it smaller.

Hail and photoshoots in the backyard



1. Spring has sprung in Ken's backyard, and with that come hailstorms and nearby tornadoes. Unfortunately, one of the hailstorms has severely damaged Ken's outdoor 45mm gauge layout, but he's planning on rebuilding it to make it smaller and more feature-rich.

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

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2. Broadway Limited sent Ken a selection of new sound-equipped N scale F-units to photograph. The F-units are available as A-B sets with some also available as separately numbered A units. The B units are unpowered.

Info: www.broadway-limited.com



3. Bachmann is having Ken photograph a 4-6-2 Light Pacific lettered for Baltimore and Ohio and a 2-8-2 Mikado decorated for Southern Railway.

Info: bachmanntrains.com



4. In HO scale from BLI are these lovely examples of the Union Pacific Business Car #119 Kenefick, with either the standard UP drumhead or the George HW Bush funeral train drumhead of the US Presidential Seal.



5. The Kenefick's lights are controlled simply by touching the roof in different spots, with the red and green marker lights, ditch lights, interior lights, and lighted drumhead (where applicable) all being controllable.

Info: www.broadway-limited.com



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New layout renovation



6. Ken has never really liked this back corner of the layout. He had to make it deeper than he likes to accommodate the narrow gauge freight yard, but now he's removed most of the narrow gauge and dual gauge trackage from his layout.



7. As a temporary measure, while he builds a new section to fit in the corner, Ken is cutting-down the current section and support structure to carry the three mainline tracks around the corner. As a bonus, Ken also shows his favorite chainsaws for cutting foam.



8. With the cut-down section back in place, and after some height adjustments, Ken will be able to reconnect the tracks so he can continue to use his layout for testing. The new section will be only about a foot wide, which should assist in adding detailed scenery.

To see Ken's methods of layout deconstruction and renovation, as well as photos of all the Broadway Limited and Bachmann locomotives and cars from the back yard, click on the video link at the beginning of this article. ☑

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






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Floquil/PollyScale stash running out?



**MRH has mapped the old familiar colors
to new readily-available acrylic paints.**

[illegible]

Color	Industry Color	Model Number	PolyScale	Hqlog Color	MIRR Color
Tan		MIRR 4082*	1989	17-056	10-15
Redder Orange		MIRR 4084*	1989	17-083	10-09
Redder Yellow		MIRR 4079	1989	17-070	10-10
Red Brown		MIRR 4086	MIL 20000	1989	15-176
Reddish Tan Brown		MIRR 4088	MIL 20000	1989	15-059 Other Colors: 10-14 10-19
Red Brown		MIRR 4090	MIL 20000	1989	15-175
Red		MIRR 4075	MIL 20000	1989	15-152
Cinnamon		MIRR 4076	1989	17-047	10-17*
Orange		MIRR 4077	1989	17-121	10-08*
Apple Green		MIRR 4078	MIL 20000	1989	15-050*

* Indicates a color that will exact match. All MIRR's are painted in a single stage. Colors that are not exact matches are listed in parentheses. 1 Gloss finish, 2 Semigloss finish.

Page 15 Chapter 2 Paint conversion chart

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HO Atlas/Roco Yellow-Box Alco S2 DCC - Sound Conversion Part 2



Electrical
Impulses

Model Railroad Hobbyist | April 2025



MIKE HUGHES CONTINUES HIS DCC CONVERSION FROM LAST MONTH ...

LAST MONTH, I began the process of upgrading an old Atlas/Roco Alco S2 with DCC and sound. I dismantled the locomotive, isolated the Roco motor, lubed the gear towers, and repaired the truck wiring. I also fixed some damage to the locomotive's cab.

This month, I walk through finding space inside the locomotive's small, crowded shell for the decoder, speaker, and other components to complete the upgrade.

Aside from the motor and trucks, a large, top-mounted weight occupies much of space under the model's shell [1]. Some weight would have to go, to create space for the new DCC sound

equipment, but I wondered how much weight I could remove without affecting the model's pulling power.

Weighing the locomotive, I found the locomotive weighed 398 grams (14 ounces) with the weight, and 366 grams (13 ounces) without it. Since the weight accounted for less than 10% of the model's total, I decided I could remove it completely without appreciable loss of tractive effort.

Removing the weight yielded ample space for a small, hard-wired decoder and speakers [2], though I wanted to use a SoundTraxx Tsunami 2, 21-pin decoder on a Decoder Buddy Mini. I liked that the Decoder Buddy had all the resistors I'd need for lighting, and I wanted to go beyond forward and reverse headlights.

I did some initial measurements to determine clearance above the motor without the weight. It seemed the shell had a bit too much space to hold the Decoder Buddy/decoder assembly securely without some sort of mount [3].



1. The weight occupied most of the shell.



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STREAMLINED BACKSHOP

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The screenshot shows the Streamlined Backshop website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links like HOME, SHOP BY DECODER INTERFACE, PRODUCTS & SERVICES, DCC TIPS, MORE INFO, CONTACT US FORM, and BLOG. Below this is a search bar and a welcome message: "Welcome to Streamlined Backshop... Your Virtual LCC & DCC Superstore!". The main content area features a section for "SPROG LCC Family of Products" with a "SHOP NOW" button. To the right, there's a collection of SPROG LCC modules and connectors, including Serial LCC Module, I/O LCC Module, USB LCC Connector, BatteryLED Test Board, Train LCC Connector, and PWM LCC Connector. A sidebar on the left lists various product categories like New Products, Opto Books, SBS4DCC Products, Mobile Decoders, and more.

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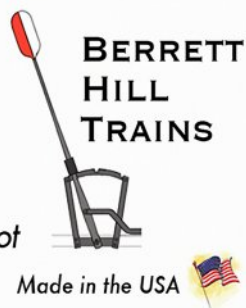
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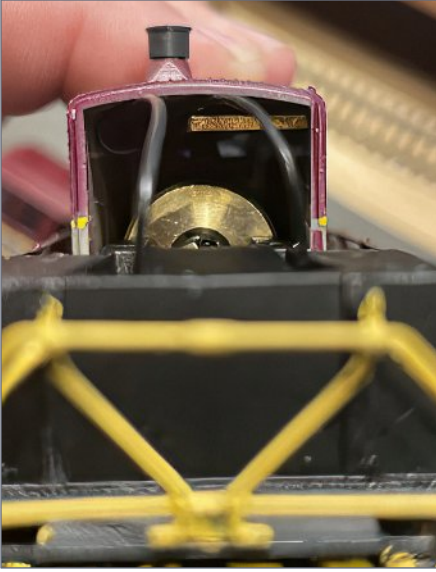
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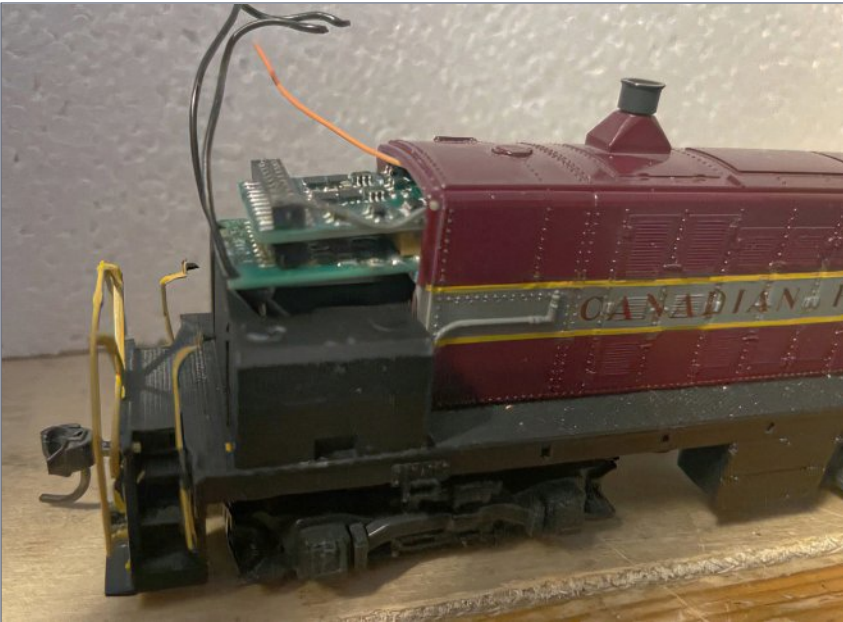
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2. View of shell without the weight. The locomotive's original PCB is still there.



3. Initial clearance check for the Decoder Buddy and the decoder.

I initially considered mounting the Decoder Buddy Mini/Decoder sideways across the floor of the cab. The Mini was too long to fit this way, but I tried a Decoder Buddy Mini I had filed to reshape for another project in my parts case [4].

My filed decoder buddy fit across the cab, but the decoder overhung the DB-Mini by about 1 mm. Although this approach would work (just), it would require even more aggressive filing of the Decoder Buddy, and it would still have to be mounted at a slight slant to fit [5]. Adding a crew would be challenging. This option was not promising.

I decided instead to mount the decoder/board assembly lengthwise on the locomotive toward the rear of the weight, extending into the cab. Laying the Decoder on the locomotive's weight, I determined that the assembly would be low enough that it wouldn't spoil the view of the cab interior, and there would be space on either side to add crew members to help hide it [6].



4. Comparison between the original Decoder Buddy Mini at top and my filed version at bottom.



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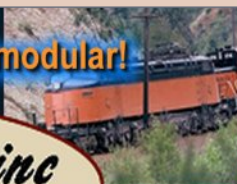
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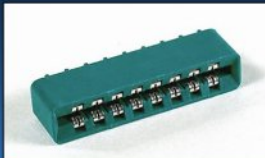
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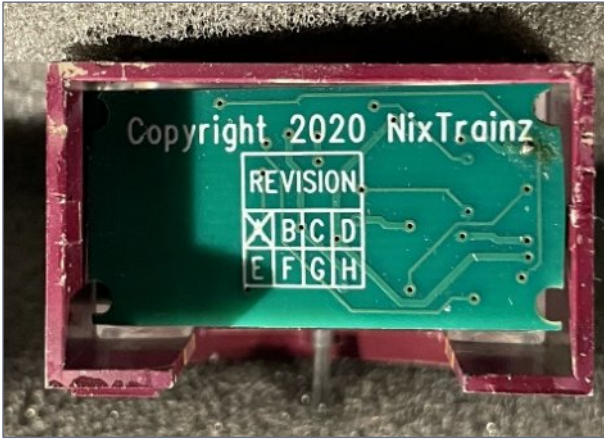
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5. The Decoder Buddy is crammed into the cab at an angle without the decoder.



6. Moving toward a solution. The board/decoder assembly could fit if mounted lengthwise extending into the cab.

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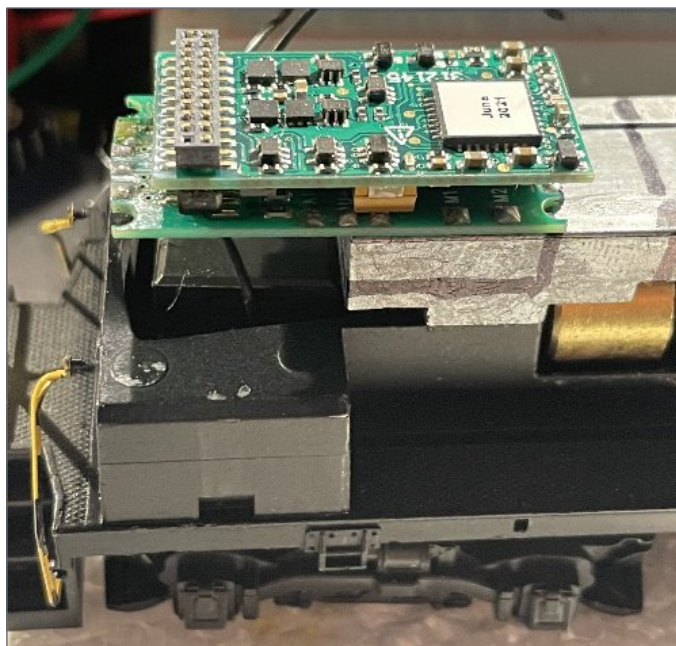


The decoder/board assembly was too tall to fit under the hood without modifying the weight, which required milling. I used my mill for the task, though with time and patience, the same task could be done with sawing and filing.

I began by eyeballing the decoder/board assembly against the weight, and drawing some guiding lines [7]. I then used my digital caliper to determine the exact measurements.

I paid attention to the underside of the weight as well as the top. I wanted to avoid milling into the flywheel recess, since this would cut off the rear end of the weight entirely. This also meant I could only use my shortened Mini Decoder Buddy, as its original length would have required cutting into the recess.

The 21-pin decoder overhangs the front of my chopped Decoder Buddy Mini by about $1/16''$, so I milled a shallower step into the weight to provide clearance for it. I took my time, milling only 10-20 thousandths of an inch at a time and remeasuring [8].



7. I roughed-in the area to be cut out for the decoder/board assembly.





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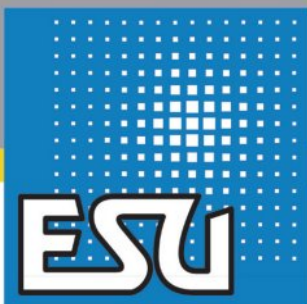
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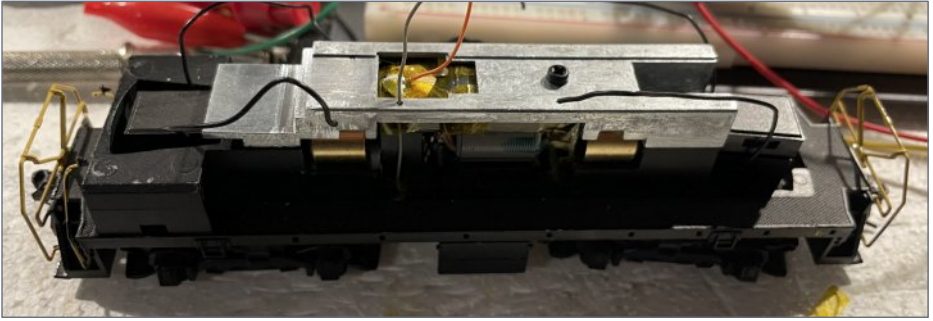


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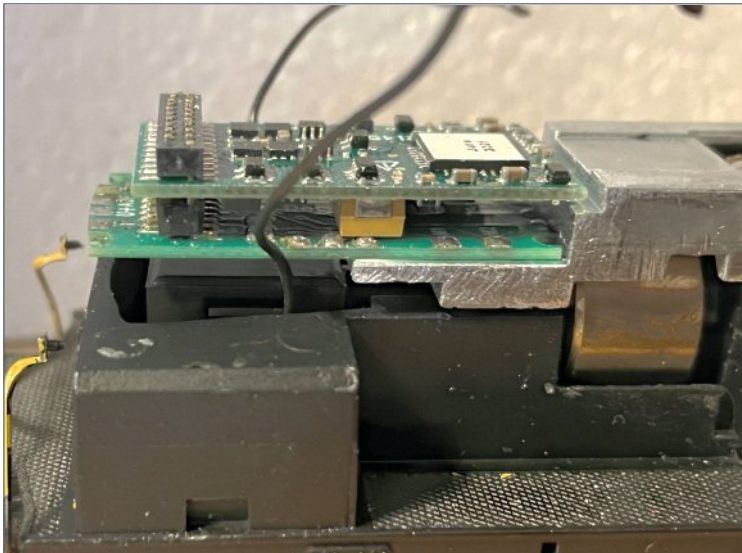
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When I finished, I had a shelf to accommodate the decoder/board assembly [9]. With a successful final test-fit, I was ready to begin working on routing wires and installing lighting.



8. The weight with its milled shelf for the decoder/board assembly. I also drilled a hole through the weight to accommodate the wire from the bottom of the motor.



9. A successful test-fit of the decoder/board assembly on the newly milled weight.

LIGHTING

My model came from the factory with no rear light in the cab, and had an incandescent bulb on the PC board to illuminate the headlight bezel and number boards through light pipes [10].

I cut off the light pipe flush with the shell, and drilled a 2mm hole in the front bezel for a 2mm tower LED. I made an identical hole in the cab headlight bezel.

I then test-fitted the front LED, marked my short LED cathode lead (-), and cut the leads to length for soldering them to blue (+) and white (-) decoder wires. I used matching heat-shrink to cover the exposed wires and leads. To control light inside the shell, I paint my LED bodies with black nail polish [11].

I prepared the rear headlamp using the same procedure I used for the front, although I used a yellow wire with matching shrink tubing to for the cathode (-). I blacked-out the portion of the LED that would extend into the cab [12].

My locos generally get rotating beacons. I used a 3mm amber LED for this, though recently purchased 2mm tower LEDs that would have been better. I used the same procedure for pre-assembling a wire harness, as it's best to avoid soldering inside the cab.

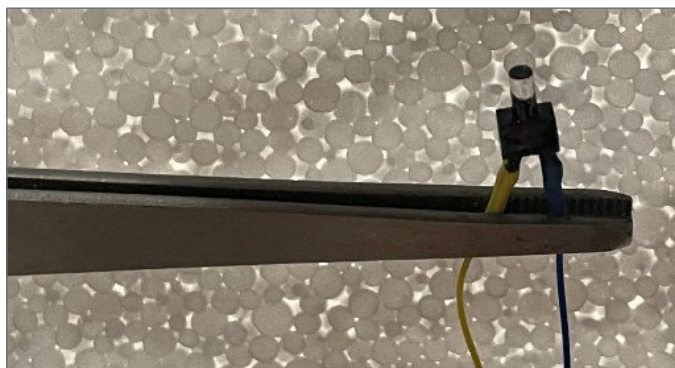


10. Headlamp and number board light pipes.





11. The front LED is in place, with the portion in the shell painted black to avoid light leak.



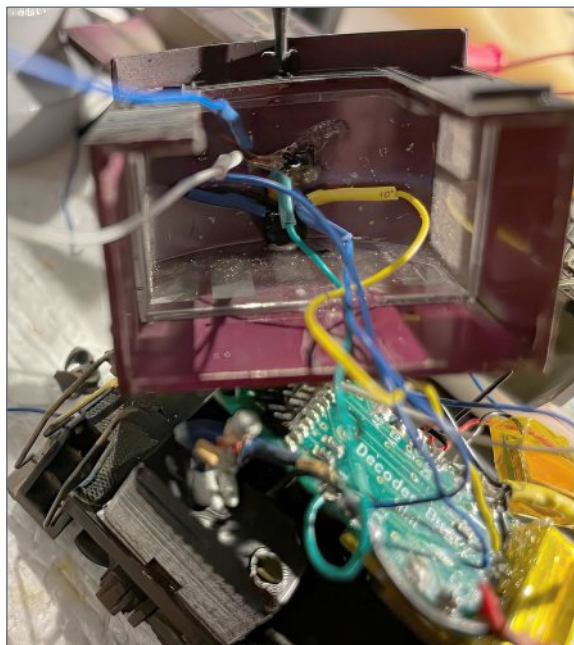
12. The rear assembly is ready to go.

I glued an SMD LED into the ceiling of the cab for the cab light. I coated it everywhere with a black marker to dim it, and then smothered it in Goop. I connected the wires to the Decoder Buddy for testing. After I was satisfied everything worked and fit well, I mounted the lights in the cab and shell, and cut the wires to their final length [13].

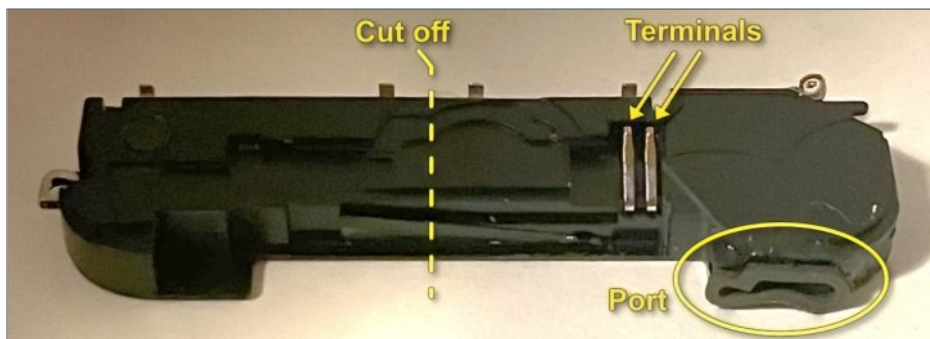
THE SPEAKER

I preferred the sound of the iPhone 4S speakers I had on hand over some more expensive options. I wanted to place the speaker

over the front truck, but making it fit required modifications to both the speaker and the locomotive's weight.



13. The cab light, rear headlight, and beacon are in place. This made quite the rat's nest of wires. Fortunately, the Decoder Buddy included all the needed resistors. Adding them separately would only increase the mess.



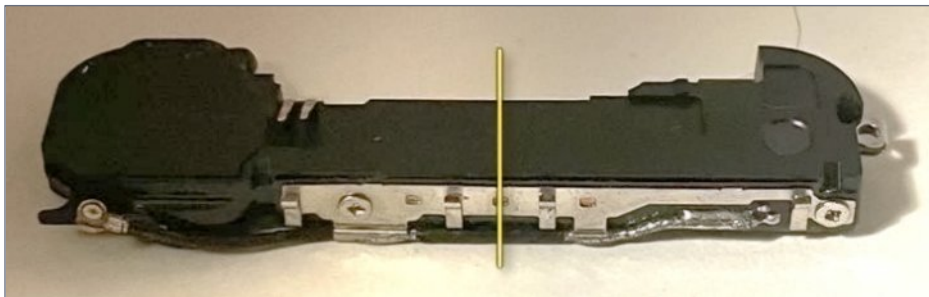
14. The unaltered front side of the iPhone 4S speaker. The yellow line is where I cut it off with a rotary tool. The speaker's terminals are to the right of center. The speaker's port is the oblong shape at lower right.



This took some planning. Again, I had to avoid cutting the weight so far back that I would get into the front flywheel cavity.

I decided to work on the iPhone speaker assembly, since it was much too long. It turns out that there were numerous components included in the assembly that did not have bearing on the speaker's sound or structure. However, since the speaker chamber runs the length of the assembly, cutting the speaker short did affect some of the sound depth [14, 15, 16].

Once I resized the speaker, milling the weight to accept it was easy. It already had a channel for the headlamp and wires from the front truck [17]. I just needed to lengthen the channel, keeping the edges just right to provide a shelf to hold the speaker up.



15. The unaltered back side of the speaker. All the metal on the visible side is for the antenna, and has no purpose for the speaker's sound or its structure. I removed the screws and peeled it off. The speaker portion kept is to the left of the yellow cut-off line.



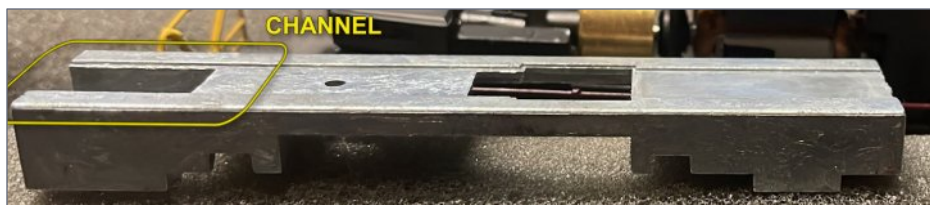
16. The modified iPhone 4S speaker is ready to install.



ALCO S2 DCC SOUND UPGRADE, PART 2 | 12

The speaker is not symmetrical, and the port side extends farther, so I needed to mill more on one side than the other. Although I used the mill for the task, a motor tool with appropriate cutter/grinder attachment would do the task just as well.

I made the modifications to the channel by eye. I worked conservatively, milling the weight, then testing speaker fit, then milling a bit more until I had a good fit. As it turned out, I could have left the speaker a little bit longer and it still would have fit [18, 19].



17. The front of the weight had an existing channel modified to accept the speaker.



18. The milled weight with the corners cleaned up.



19. Testing the fit of the speaker in its box.



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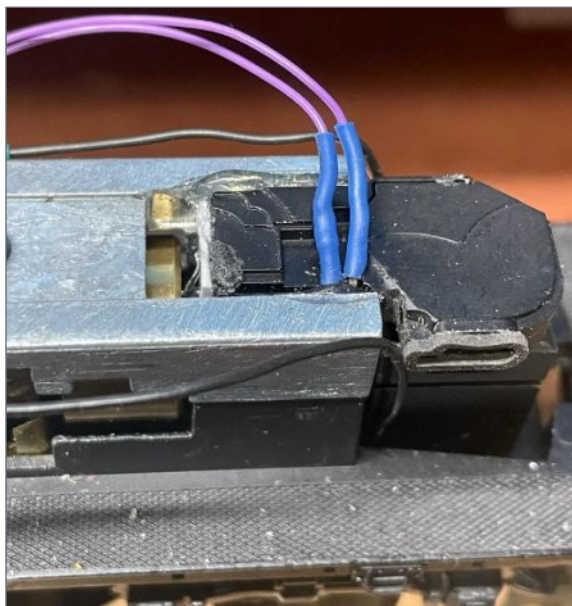
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Since I had cut through the speaker box, I had created a second outlet port, which made the sound lousy. Covering either port with my finger greatly improved the sound, so I covered the port I had created using styrene strip that I secured in place with Goop [20].

I also removed the rubber gasket from the original apple sound port as it fit too snugly against the shell, which muted the sound. Removing the rubber gasket left just enough space for the sound to resonate nicely in the shell, effectively making the shell a resonance chamber.

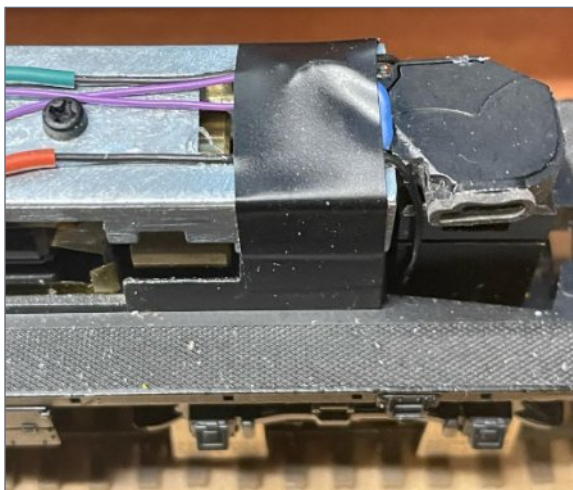
I am always worried about wires getting pinched and shorting, so when I glued the speaker with Goop, I made sure to put some up-top as well, and ran the truck and speaker wires through it, gently bending the speaker leads rearward at about 45 degrees.

I then covered everything with narrow electrical tape, making sure the truck wires had enough slack to pivot [21]. This completed the speaker installation.



20. The speaker is in place. To the rear of the speaker, I sealed the chamber hole I had created with styrene and Goop.





21. The speaker mount is complete.



22. Loco on rollers on the test track.



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TESTING AND PROGRAMMING

I took the locomotive to the test track to make sure everything was working. I was happy to see all systems were go [22]. For a video of the tests, follow this link: (youtu.be/4slaNO-hC4). I had not yet done sound programming, so don't let the default EMD 567 sounds throw you off.

I use JMRI Decoder Pro for the programming. I do the decoder read/identification on my programming track, then I put the locomotive onto rollers on my test track for further programming, testing, and sound adjustments.

I only use the programming track and rollers before the locomotive is fully assembled and the wires all tucked away. There is no point to dragging loose wires and components alongside a moving locomotive and risking a short.

The only problem I encountered was in programming the sound. I had set the master volume to maximum, which worked until I turned on the equalizer, quickly causing the speaker to fail.

Fortunately, I had more iPhone speakers on hand, and they were inexpensive to begin with. I replaced the speaker and continued, making sure I set the master volume to less than half of maximum and keeping the equalizer at micro levels.

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J. Regier

THE IMPORTANCE OF SPEAKER IMPEDANCE

It is very important during any sound install to familiarize yourself with the ratings and impedances of both your DCC decoder and the speaker you intend to use. Many decoders are rated for 8 ohms of impedance, and will function well with speakers rated for at least the same. Most older, conventional speakers are rated for 8 ohms.

iPhone speakers, sugar cube speakers, and other speakers derived from cell phones tend to be 4 ohms. As such, an 8-ohm rated output from a decoder at full volume can cause them to fail. To mitigate this risk, you can either halve the volume as the author did, or you can wire another 4-ohm speaker in series to bring the impedance up to 8 ohms.

ADDING A POWERKEEPER

After programming and running the model, I noticed the cab light was difficult to seal, and added nothing, so I decided to remove it.

I also noticed the model would stall at times on my test track. I had a few Iowa Scaled Engineering Run-N-Smooth PowerKeepers on hand, and the Decoder Buddy Mini had solder pads for them. So, I decided to install one to see if it would make a difference.

Installing the stay-alive was as simple as soldering two wires and adding some Kapton Tape. The tiny PowerKeeper went right on top of the Board/Decoder assembly [23].

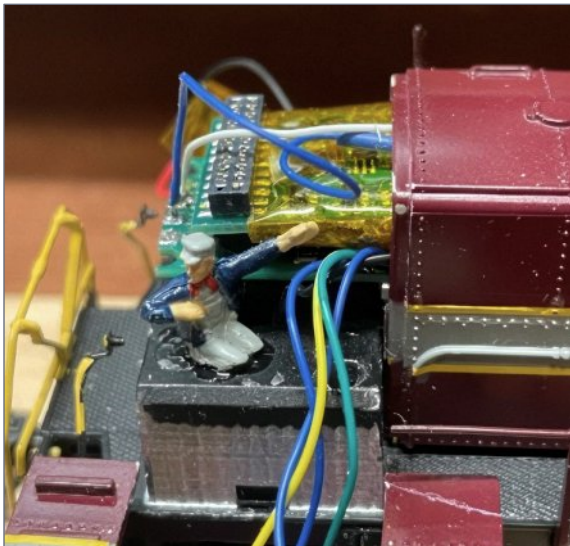
CREW

I added two crew members to this model to help bring the model to life and draw attention away from the electronics and wiring in





23. Installing the PowerKeeper.



24. This engineer sits in a very crowded cab. He can't see his conductor on the other side of the decoder, and the wiring gets in his face.



the cab. The PowerKeeper and all the wires made space an issue. I found it difficult to manage the wires to keep them clear of the crew's faces and to get the cab back on properly [24].

WEATHERING

After researching the prototype, I decided that my locomotive would have been painted most recently in 1954, so it would have undergone 14 years of extreme Canadian weather and soot by the era I model, the fall of 1968. I wanted it to look fit for the junkyard, with dirty injectors, lack of washing, or other plausible explanations.

I have been working my way through [Mike Confalone's weathering series on MRH's Trainmasters TV](#), so I borrowed Mike's technique of using a wash of turpentine and black oil paint to hit all the seams, raised parts, and louvers. Although my first attempt was a bit clumsy, I like how this technique makes the details pop [25].

I continued weathering using several techniques and materials, including acrylics and powders. I sealed everything in with coats of Vallejo Ultra Matte Polyurethane Varnish [26].



25. Initial black-washing.





26. The final weathering results. Rusting techniques helped mask some unfortunate breaks that occurred during the project.

CONCLUSION

While it took some time, this was a rewarding project, and I have a highly personalized S-2 that cost me about CAN \$250 total. It runs very smoothly and pull like a mammoth! ☑

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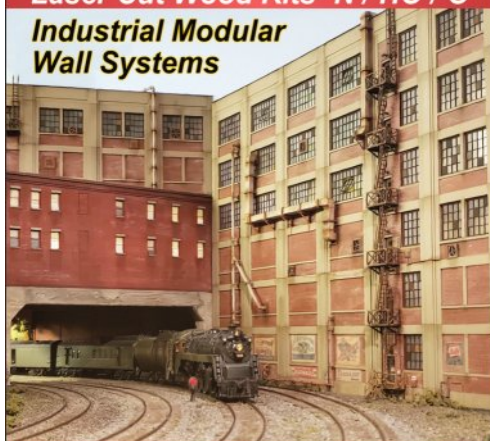
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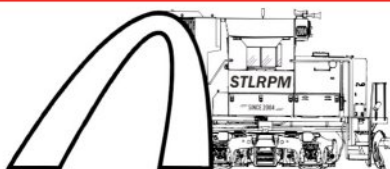
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Jay and Brook Qualmans'

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ard-working Ann Arbor FA-2 set crosses the Huron river
Detroit area on Jay and Brook Qualman's Michigan
layout. This layout will be open for tours at the NMRA
ntion this coming July.

Model Railroad Hobbyist | April 2025



JOE FUGATE VISITS THE QUALMANS' IMPRESSIVE LAYOUT ...

JAY AND BROOK QUALMAN HAVE A LARGE HO SCALE LAYOUT in the greater Detroit area that will be open for tours during July 2025 as part of the 2025 National NMRA Convention. To learn more about this convention/to register, please visit this website: nmra2025.com

I visited Jay and Brook and toured the layout, taking photos and video. Their layout is amazing, with many of the structures and much of the scenery done by Brook, who is a Master Model Railroader (MMR). Learn more about this layout as well as Jay and Brook in the interview below.

MRH: Jay, how did you first get started in the hobby?

Jay: Unlike many model railroaders, I've not been a lifelong model railroader. When I retired from 45 years in the auto industry, I knew I would need a challenge in retirement. Retirees like me typically gravitate toward collectible cars and becoming mediocre golfers.

I looked for a hobby I didn't know so much about. I recalled my Lionel layout, so I decided model railroading would be fun.



Brook and Jay Qualman.



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2. The Qualmans can look out their train room window and see the Lake State/CSX Railroad mainline 150 feet away. How cool is that?

I convinced Brook to locate our retirement home on an active railroad, and we designed our new house to accommodate a large HO layout.

Not having done any modeling in 45 years, I had a lot to learn, including how to create a suitable environment for a model railroad.

MRH: What about you, Brook? How did you get involved in the hobby?

Brook: When Jay and I first got married, we kind of knew we would have a train layout at some future date. We bought a couple of old Campbell kits, and some steam engines for that purpose. But it wasn't until we retired that Jay really got interested in doing the model trains and then got me involved.

In those early days we also took extensive trips by train and by car throughout the country, searching for what we might model.

MRH: So, tell us about this layout space and how you determined what to model.

Jay: We wanted to have a space uninterrupted by stairs, utilities, or other obstacles. A high clear-span ceiling with no columns seemed like a good approach. We located the layout in our lower-level which has a wall of windows overlooking the ex-Pere Marquette – now the Lake State/CSX Railroad mainline.

This space also has five-foot double doors for easy material handling in and out.

Given our large layout space of 3000 square feet, I thought I would like to model iconic locations in the eastern United States around the perimeter: Pennsylvania Horseshoe Curve, Lackawanna's



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Delaware water gap, and the New York Central Hudson River mainline. Iconic Western locations would fill the center of the room: Union Pacific west of Cheyenne, Santa Fe's route through Raton Pass, and the California Zephyr route through Colorado and Utah.

As research, I also collected books and videos of these railroads that we intended to model.

Sometimes the best thing is not doing something. While attempting to develop a track plan to accomplish all these scenes, I came to my senses, and shifted gears to what I knew best – Michigan railroads.

I decided to model a depiction of the railroads radiating out from the Windsor Detroit riverfront. In the early 1950s, this resulted in complex trackage with many junctions, four turntables and roundhouses, and a dozen yards. This included the Pere Marquette, the New York Central, and the Grand Trunk Western.

Capturing and preserving family history was a core goal. Portions of twenty cities meaningful to us

3. One of the big features of the Michigan Lines is how Brook and Jay model real towns and their associated structures. They live in Milford, MI, so of course they model that town, complete with a replica of the actual downtown area as it looked in 1950.



have been modeled, including family homes and businesses, schools, churches, and favorite stores.

With friend John Bussard's valuable contributions, we now have a structure-intensive layout with hundreds of unique scratchbuilt and kitbashed buildings.

Brook: Jay spent a long time planning our layout. I didn't know I was going to be involved at first. He decided once he got all the track down that maybe I could build some structures.



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He said, "You know, you could build some of the family homes!" I do like doll houses, and I like to build model houses, so I thought that would be fun. He handed me a picture of the Saginaw Train Station and said, "Here, build this."

I had no clue what I was doing! I ended up kitbashing a Milwaukee station from a kit where not one single piece was the same. It took me six months to build that station. And then he had me move on to building some houses.

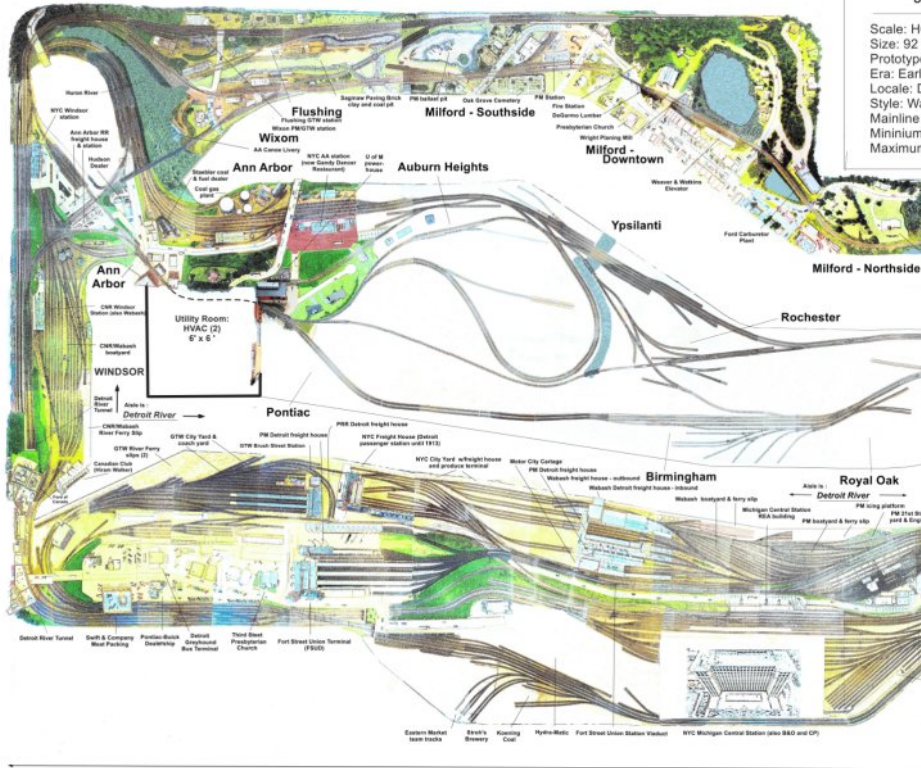
MRH: Before we go any further, let's address the elephant in the room: Brook is a *Master Model Railroader*! It's great to see a woman MMR – how did *that* all come about?

Brook: I joined a model railroading group called the Midnight Pocatello Yard Masters. They did not allow women at first, but they finally decided that I could join.

After I'd gotten a couple of NMRA Achievement Program (AP) certificates, Ken Chick, who's the NMRA AP person for our region said, "You know, Brook, you could get your



4. Since the Qualmans model Milford – of course they model their house as well! It's a bit anachronistic for 1950s Milford, but the front of the house has a 1950s look to it, and there's always modelers license!



5. Jay assembled this track plan by stitching together dozens of actual overhead photos he took of the layout. He processed each photo to make it look like an artist's rendering then overlapped each image to get this final plan. Much of the layout is scenicked, except for a left-middle section that's shown as gray. Zoom in to study the track arrangement – the trackwork is amazing with crossings, interchanges, and yards galore. You can also download a fully zoomable version of this track plan [in this month's bonus downloads](#).

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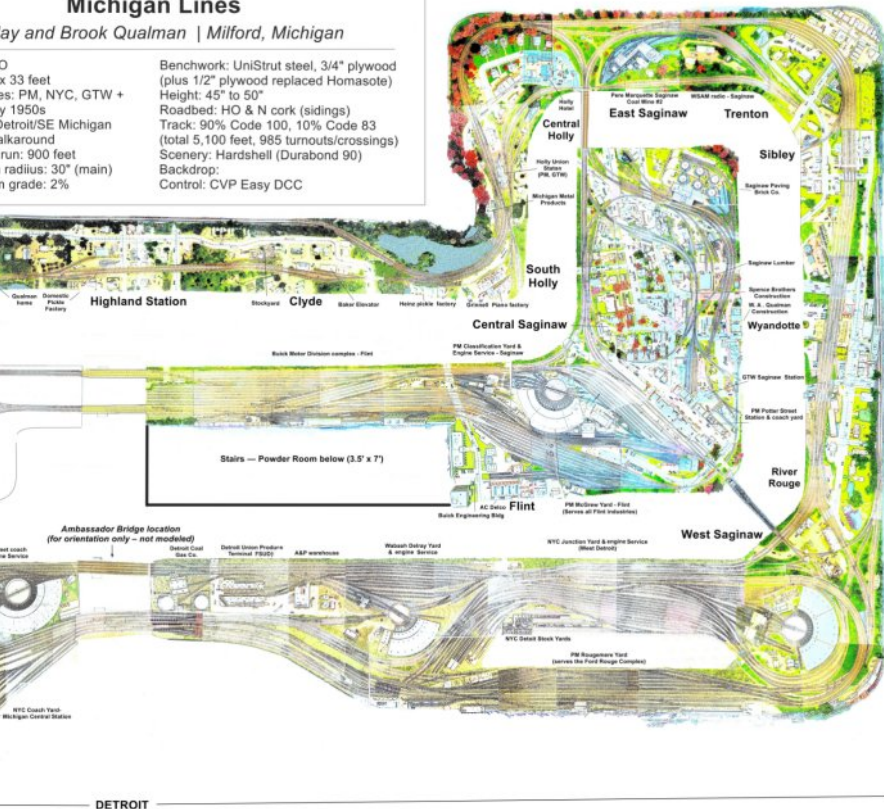
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Michigan Lines Jay and Brook Qualman | Milford, Michigan

Overall length: 33 feet
 Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"
 Materials: PM, NYC, GTW +
 Year: 1950s
 Location: Detroit/SE Michigan
 Track: 100' (main)
 Radius: 30" (main)
 Grade: 2%

Benchwork: UniStrut steel, 3/4" plywood
 (plus 1/2" plywood replaced Homasote)
 Height: 45" to 50"
 Roadbed: HO & N cork (sidings)
 Track: 90% Code 100, 10% Code 83
 (total 5,100 feet, 985 turnouts/crossings)
 Scenery: Hardshell (Durabond 90)
 Backdrop:
 Control: CVP Easy DCC



MMR!" That really encouraged me, and he gave me some tips on which ones to do, and how I could go about doing them.

The whole group was very supportive of me earning my MMR. Along with Jay, they kept encouraging me to move forward. So I just kept going, and I finally got it!

MRH: Well good for you, Brook. It's great to see women being a serious participant in the hobby! Jay, how does it feel to play second fiddle to an MMR?

Jay: Playing second fiddle to Brook as an MMR is something I immensely enjoy, actually. She would never lord that over me. I

think it's outstanding recognition for the kind of modeler she is across the broad spectrum of things you have to do to become an MMR.

Her scenery work is amazing. The structures she builds are unbelievable. One of the most impressive things about Brook is that she can get things done fast. Some people overthink things and take a long time getting anything done.

But Brook is just knocking the stuff out and doing an outstanding job!

Probably the most impressive of the AP certificates required for her MMR was the motive power. She had to build a locomotive from scratch. So she built the Detroit River Tunnel DRT electric from scratch. It's very intricate, with something like 150 pieces just in each sideframe for the trucks!

Then she had to do a steam locomotive. She built the 1014 on the Pere Marquette for us, which we needed. It was an important locomotive, and she did an excellent job there, too.



6. For her Master Model Railroader certification, Brook scratchbuilt this electric locomotive – that's right *scratchbuilt!*



Then she did another type of loco, an NW5 EMD switcher for the Pere Marquette. It's in Pere Marquette colors and it hauls the Detroit Fort Street Union Station Train that brings the passenger cars up and down the Union Station viaduct, because it was too light for the steam locomotives.

This locomotive wasn't built in quantity by typical HO model manufacturers. So she kitbashed it from a resin kit. We were able to get the decals for it and it turned out great – it's an unusual and unique locomotive.

Brook totally deserves her MMR, and I knew she could get it. I'm more of a procrastinator, so I'm not that far along – I've got three certificates, but I am no competition for her. She deserves the MMR and I am glad to see her get it!

MRH: Okay, back to planning your layout. How did you develop the track plan?



7. Brook also built this Pere Marquette steam locomotive as part of her MMR certification. Nice!



8. Brook kitbashed this Fort Street Union Depot NW5 diesel for her MMR as well. This loco is in dedicated service ferrying passenger cars to and from the Detroit Union Station across the steel viaduct [9]. Larger locomotives are too heavy for the viaduct, so this lighter loco gets the task.



9. This viaduct is too light for heavier locomotives to traverse, so the Union Station has an NW5 diesel [8] dedicated to ferrying passenger cars into and out of the station.



Jay: I grew up in Michigan and we lived close to the Grand Trunk Western when we were in Birmingham, Michigan. Later we moved to Ann Arbor and were not far from the New York Central. Once I decided to model the area I knew best, I looked at the railroads that branched out of the lower Southeastern Michigan area, radiating from the Detroit area Windsor River front.

Track planning is my favorite thing to do to try and develop to meet all our goals. I wanted to include memorable family locations that are important to us, and to blend them in so they make sense and we can run trains through these scenes and stay true to the prototype.

Putting that all together and actually fitting it in the basement, which is 3000 square feet – and even then, there have been times I wished it was larger! It took many iterations of the track plan to get everything we wanted in.

I found it very helpful rather than just working with a computer program to refine the layout, I sketch out the track plans on paper on the floor. Then I would take the turnouts and the flex track, and make sure it fit together in the best routing. That resulted in the final design and became the final routing of the track when I actually laid the track.

MRH: Tell us more about these towns you've put on the layout where you can model family memories.

Brook: Milford is one of the towns we've modeled – many of our modeled towns we've actually lived in. We are living in Milford currently. Modeling that was a lot of fun because downtown is small enough we could model main street and the buildings.

I could take a box of paints down to the actual town buildings and match the colors for the brick. We did do a little selective compression because there wasn't quite enough room for every building that's down there.

The process of researching Milford and checking out what's in those buildings today versus what was in those buildings in 1950 was interesting. You go back to an old telephone book, which the Historical Society had, and it tells you from the address what store was in what building. Those stores moved around a lot, and that was fascinating to learn about.

When working on the scenery section of my certificate, I built where I grew up, which I really enjoyed. Jay didn't give me anywhere near as much space as I needed for it [laughs]. Still, I had a lot of fun modeling the school I went to, the churches I went to, the restaurant we used to eat at, the candy store I'd take my nickel allowance to, and the family houses I lived in.



MRH: Are you modeling 1950 on the layout then?

Jay: We're modeling prototype-specific eras by the location, almost to an exact date. For instance, with our model of Saginaw, Michigan (my family's hometown) it's 1950 with my most memorable recollections from that era modeled. One of the most important things to delineate era is the automobiles – the one's we're modeling in Saginaw are not beyond 1950.

Another example is Detroit itself, which I knew better in the 1954 timeframe. We've got '54s era vehicles there. So yes, each location models a *very specific* year.

Brook: A lot of the houses are family homes, or they're homes that are really well known in the area where we're modeling.

People will look at them and say, "Oh, I know that building." That's gratifying to be recognized for modeling those.

We live in Milford, and we live on the railroad tracks, so I was able to build a replica of our house that we live in right now and to put that on the layout. We had to turn it around because the back of the house is all brick and very modern looking, but the front looks like an old farmhouse and fit in just great with the era we're modeling. *(Yes, they cheated on the era with their current house, but that's what modelers' license is all about! – ed.)*



10. This is one of the homes Brook grew up in. If you look carefully in the tree, you can see young Brook climbing it!

MRH: What are some specific features you worked into the layout plan?

Jay: The layout also has several special features: Unistrut steel benchwork construction, coved corners, illuminated structures, room lighting with ideal color rendition, a variable sunset effect, a seamless fascia, and five aisle lift bridges which eliminate the need for unrealistic 180-degree turn back loops.

We have a layout with a minimum of four feet width to a maximum of ten feet deep, which you can reach from either side. It is certainly deeper than most. We like having lots of depth for scenery.

Also knowing we have very complex trackage from the Detroit Metro area and beyond, we wanted to make sure we had the



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room do those crossings. You can't do 90-degree crossings on an 18 inch shelf layout.

Part of the layout design challenge was getting all that to fit and not have it be even wider. The other thing depth does for you – instead of splitting the layout tabletop up with an additional aisle or two, it gives you more total tabletop space.

In our 3000 square feet, we have approximately 2150 - 2200 square feet of layout tabletop.

That leaves about a thousand square feet for aisles, the shop area, the crew lounge, all without turnback loops thanks to the use of lift bridges across the aisles. Michigan railroads don't have turn back loops.

They'd be good for West Virginia, or Colorado mountain railroading. But to model the Detroit area, you just need as much tangent track as you can get.

Sooner or later, you do hit a basement wall and you have to put in a turn, but we don't have any curves greater than about 90 degrees on the layout.

11. This Saginaw station is the first structure Brook ever built for the layout. Jay suggested Brook might build some structures for the layout as a way to get her involved in the hobby, so she took the challenge. Brook has now built most of the structures for the layout, as well as done most of the scenery!





12. Brook built one of the four roundhouses on the layout from scratch, while Jay built the rest from kits. When asked, she says, “Oh, a roundhouse is easy. I prefer to scratchbuild them.”



13. Brook has a story to go with many structures on the layout. For example, this somewhat unique brick building with the rounded corners is a Buick facility where Jay once worked.



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What we've learned is, it's not so much the size of the layout, but the complexity. This is what really drives the time you're going to spend on a layout. I would say our layout is one of the larger in-home layouts in the country and it's probably one of the most complicated layouts in the country.

We are modeling a very railroad-intensive area, with multiple lines running out of it, and multiple railroads. We have the three primary railroads: the Grand Trunk, the New York Central, and the Pere Marquette.

We actually have locomotives for ten other railroads on the layout that use trackage rights. We are speaking of the Ann Arbor Railroad, the Detroit & Mackinac Railroad, the Canadian National Railroad, the Canadian Pacific Railroad, and even equipment from some lines on the east Coast where Brook's family lives.

We've got a lot going on down here. But the definitive measure is it's the number of structures and turnouts that defines your layout "size."

MRH: When did you start construction?

Jay: We started construction on the layout in 2008 after almost 10 years of research and track planning, and we've been building actively ever since. Brook and I primarily work on it. We have had some part-time help from a gentleman named John Bussard that's an exceptional model railroader. He has been a big help along the way.

In terms of the construction, we took a departure. I am not a carpenter, so I did some investigation of non-traditional materials. I discovered Unistrut framework, which is used in electrical and industrial applications. You can bolt it together like an erector set for your benchwork, and it has numerous advantages.

One is that Unistrut is dimensionally stable, it's very precise. You also have good clearance, even with the three quarter inch plywood base we have on top of it, plus another half inch of

plywood on top of the base, for a total of an inch and a quarter of total plywood depth.

The deepest of the longitudinal members of the Unistrut is 1.58 inches, so the total sandwich of support on top is about three inches.

MRH: How did construction go for you? Any nasty surprises you did not expect?

Jay: On top of the 3/4" plywood, we originally put Homosote.

Having not modeled in 45 years, when we re-entered the hobby again, we read everything that had occurred in those 45



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years and what was being recommended now. We found folks claimed homosote to be great for roadbed and to be a good sound-deadening material.

But in reality, that's not what we found. We can run a train right across the plywood onto a piece of homosote, and we find there's no difference in sound. Then once we put down our cork roadbed and glued the ballast down, it sounds the same. We found no lessening of sound whatsoever with Homosote.

Even worse, the homosote had issues for us because it was uneven, particularly at the edges. It was wavy. It was not really designed as a precision material – it's more of a pegboard material. Being compressed paper, we found it would peel off when you glued styrene onto it for a road, it would start to break loose.



14. The Michigan Lines has benchwork that's up to ten feet wide in some places, which makes for very deep urban scenes in HO such as the Saginaw peninsula here. This wide benchwork also allows for the complex Detroit area trackwork that's on most of the layout. The layout has very few access hatches – they have an overhead cantilevered “crawler” to access the middle of the scenes. In a few instances, Brook admits she has also very carefully walked on the layout!



15. To accommodate the layout's complex trackage yet still maintain access, the Michigan Lines has several cross-aisle drop bridges. Here Brook drops down this nice bascule drawbridge model across the aisle while Jay looks on. Most of the time, these drop bridges are stored in the up position, only dropped down briefly as needed for the trains to cross during sessions.

The styrene road pulls the homasote paper layers up, and you're stuck with a real mess on your hands. The homasote's waviness caused undulation in the track, and we wanted flat level track. We want the track to be smooth and consistent.

Consequently, we went to the agonizing process of pulling all the homosote out, lifting the track up, undoing the wiring, and replacing it. We needed the 1/2" thickness of the homosote, so we replaced it with 1/2" Lauan plywood, which works very well. You can actually put spikes in Lauan plywood if you have to.

Lauan plywood is not necessarily a mainstream way of doing track roadbed, but it's worked out quite well for us. We are very happy with it. The combination of the steel benchwork substructure plus 3/4" plywood with 1/2" Lauan on top is rock-solid.





16. A Pere Marquette passenger train rumbles across the bascule bridge drop down shown in [15].



17. A limited Pere Marquette passenger train races by Delray tower. Notice the complex trackwork in the distance – it's common to see multiple crossings, slip switches, three-way turnouts, and curved turnouts on the Michigan Lines to accommodate the complex urban railroading scenes on much of the layout.

MRH: Any other challenges doing the layout besides the homasote?

Jay: I think the greatest challenge is maintaining the motivation to keep working day after day; getting up and getting down to the basement to make progress. I would say that probably is the number one thing. You want to stick with it, because progress gets you enthused to continue working. It's very easy to put it aside, and then suddenly three or four weeks have passed, and you've missed out on that progress.

MRH: Once you had finished the track plan, what did you go with as to minimum radius, number of turnouts, total



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amount of trackage, ruling grade, and layout height – basically your layout design parameters?

Jay: We have a large layout! It has 5,100' of track, that's just a bit short of one actual mile of HO Atlas code 100 and code 83 track. I would say it's about 80/20, with most being code 100, the rest being code 83.

The turnouts are all Peco turnouts, and this choice was driven by a couple of things. First, we wanted bulletproof track. So, we needed the Peco turnouts to do the double-slips, single-slips, curve turnouts, three-ways, which Peco offered ready-to-go. Few other companies did. We did not have the time, really, to do a lot of track hand laying.



We did use a few Shinohara crossings, because we needed a lot of crossings too. They range from 12 degrees, to 24, 30-, 45-, 60-, and 90-degree crossings. All these are on the layout because of the numerous junctions. We needed a lot of crossings.

We are within 16 turnouts of having 1000 turnouts. We have 143 double-slip, single-slip, and three-way switches. We have tons of curved turnouts. We're within a hundred feet of having a mile of HO Atlas code 100 and code 83 track. So the trackwork is quite complicated.

18. While much of the Michigan Lines has urban scenes, there are a few sleepy 1950s rural town scenes like this one at Clyde.

As for minimum radius, there's some areas that are a little tighter than others going into sidings, but we try to make anything mainline or main branch line to be a 30" radius. We try to keep the curves as broad as we can.

The only grades we have are required for prototypical reasons. If the track goes up and down in reality, then it goes up and down on the layout. The ruling grade throughout is 2% at the max.

However, there is a situation in Ann Arbor, Michigan, we model an interchange track between the Ann Arbor Railroad and the New York Central that is very steep. On our layout, it is just a short stretch of track, but it's probably about 4%.

The layout height is an average of 45 inches. It does go up in certain areas, even on fairly flat areas; flat being the Michigan topography in this area. It still varies three or four inches.

A height of 45" seemed to be a good compromise between reach, and the physical appearance of the layout when viewed.

Also, we figured with the roll around seats we have, that puts you right at track level as if you are an HO scale rail fan. That way, we don't have to take the whole layout and put it at 55, 58, or 60 inches to get that rail fan view.

This height also provides enough room underneath for most common things that we would want to store. With the Unistrut steel structure, it's quite open. We've got carts that are up to six feet long, loaded up with a lot of boxes, cars, and locomotives that we put under there. So it really works well for us at that layout height.

MRH: Tell us more about your great looking scenery.

Brook: Scenery is a lot of fun. I especially like putting in flowers, things around houses, gardens and that kind of stuff.





19. Speaking of rural scenes, between Clyde and Holly, there's this interesting wetlands area. Note the bullrushes and the lilly pads – nicely done!

Other than the fact that you have to wait so long for the glue to dry between putting down the grass, and then putting down the dirt, then the putting in the flowers it's just like wallpapering. It's a big hurrah.

When you're done, you can really see that you've accomplished something. There are all the different kinds of rocks and hills. You can put in the weeds along the track, and those weeds are different than the weeds you would find in a field.

I think one time, we'd put a farm scene as in as a backdrop. I looked at it and I said, "You know, there's cows in that picture, and I think there's just enough space I could put a farm between the wall and the tracks." That was really fun to figure out how to do that.

Jay: What I like most about the layout is the quality of the modeling. It's definitely world-class. Brook has done an exceptional job on the scenery and structures. Duplicating

reality and replicating what was there, with some things now gone for 50-60 years.

Tracking all the details down using Sanborn maps and photographs; a lot of these urban areas we're modeling are now long gone. That all had to be pulled together through exhaustive research.

But in terms of the scenes we model, we especially have family memories we want to preserve. Fortunately, you can take photographs of towns like our hometown, Milford. All our hometowns are now modeled and accurate on the layout, at least the parts we lived in, and the associated railroad areas.



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So I'm very happy with the way it has turned out.

MRH: Do you host operating sessions?

Jay: Operating the trains properly is important to us. Because of the very complex trackage around the Detroit Metro area, you need some elaborate trackwork. You have to be careful with how you operate the layout because getting through those junctions and interlocking is tricky.

That's why we've come up with the interlocking tower concept, using a routing chart. This chart guides a tower operator, a locomotive operator, an engineer, or a road crew through some complex interlocking from point A to point Z and how to take the train through.

The way that works is the tower operator identifies what the train is first. Say it's the Twilight New York Central Limited, train, #303, coming into this junction. Once he knows what the name of the



20. During operating sessions, Brook loves to run trains. Even though she's running a passenger train here, she says she prefers local freights, finding the switching to be great fun. Brook also gets a kick out of restaging the layout after an op session – she gets to just run trains on the layout for hours!

train is and where that train needs to go, the routing charts tell him which turnouts and which derails need to be adjusted to get that train from point A to point Z.

That's something I find very interesting in terms of operation. It's quite different than most railroads that may use Timetable/Train Order to get cars across the layout. We use Train Orders and Switch Lists so that the operators can operate as they go run their trains.

We need about 15 operators on average for an operating session. However, the layout could easily accommodate 20 plus, because



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we do need tower operators at the junctions. That's a full-time job in addition to the road crews, and we have over 200 industries where you can spot cars. Yeah, it's complex!

We had been averaging four or five operating sessions a year. Right now, three per year because we're getting ready for the National Convention.

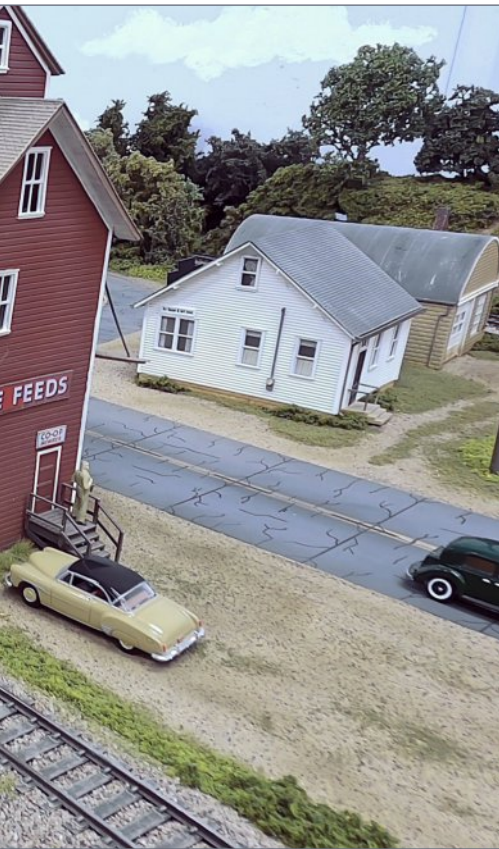
Because of the size of our layout and our desire to protect the scenery from dust, we keep the layout covered with plastic between operating sessions. It takes us a day to put the plastic over the layout to keep the dust off.

We do operate with the Midnight Pocatello operators on some excellent model railroads. It's a lot of fun.

Brook: During operating sessions, I really have a lot of fun with freight trains that stop off at industries. I like to do switching. Passenger trains to me are very boring, but the more I can switch, the more fun I have.

After we have an operating session, the next day is the best day ever, because I get to put all the trains back, and move all the cars back to where they started in the first place.

21. The Michigan Lines has plenty of industries to switch, such as this grain elevator in Clyde. Also note the layout's operating signals.





22. Thanks to the wide benchwork, the Michigan Lines also has several appropriately massive structures such as this postal service warehouse.



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MRH: So you basically run trains on the whole layout for hours and hours?

Brook: Yes! [laughs]

MRH: What DCC system do you use and why?

Jay: We use the CVP EasyDCC System. It was the predominant selection of other model railroaders in our area at the time. We are dealing directly with the CVP Corporation in Plano, Texas, and it turned out to be a very satisfactory experience. We talk right with the lead engineer any time we called them.

To my knowledge, it's still the most bulletproof of all the systems. So yes, we are happy with it.

MRH: Do you have a particular type of decoders you like to use?

Jay: We primarily use Tsunami decoders, depending on what year they were installed. We try and use the most recent Tsunami the company has. The sound is good.



23. In addition to several large industries such as the Buick Manufacturing complex here, the Michigan Lines boasts several large yards like this one at Flint. Note the industry trackage under the pipes that goes through the backdrop – those tracks go under the stairs. By lighting “the hole” and putting in some building flats rather than leaving it dark, the Qualmans have effectively disguised the hole.

Installation is one thing we do not do ourselves. The technician that installs our sound decoders leans toward the Tsunami. We have put stay alives in some of the locomotives, which causes a challenge for us.

With our aisle lift bridges, we put dead tracks about two feet on either side of the opening. If a train got loose, we want it to stop on the dead tracks. But any of our locos that have stay alive just keep going!



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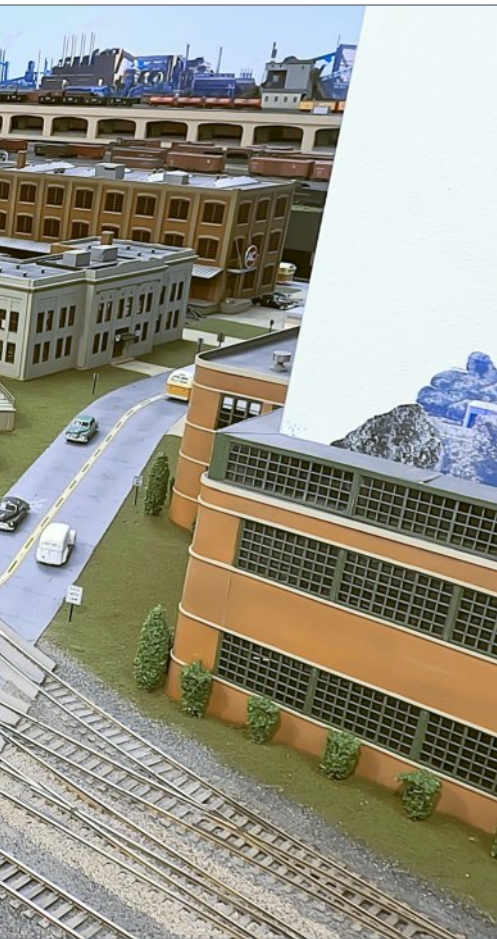
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So far, we have not had any hit the floor, but it is a concern.

MRH: What do you hope convention goers get out of coming to see this layout?

Jay: We certainly hope those that visit our layout get a good understanding and appreciation of what we've done here, and can see what Michigan looked like in the early 1950s. A good portion of our layout models Southeast Michigan from Detroit out to Saginaw and then out toward Lansing and along the Detroit riverfront.



They will see river ferries that would carry cars from the Detroit side to the Canadian side and vice versa. There will be quite a bit to see, but again, we hope they get an understanding of 1950s Michigan railroading.

And it's possible to see a real train appear at any time out the back windows!

Brook: I hope that they'll look at some of the buildings down here and say, "Oh, there's the

24. The Flint yard in [23] doesn't stop – walking about ten feet toward the upper left of [23] along the aisle reveals still more yard as you move toward Saginaw! Note we're also seeing the other end of the Buick office facility in [13] at the right. And across the aisle in the distance are still more yards!

powerhouse in Milford!" or "There's the Holly Hotel. I've been there, I've eaten dinner there!"

I hope to have the Michigan Central Station done by then. That should be a real show-stopping piece if I do get it done, just because of its size.

A couple of the other stations I have down here are very iconic. And The Gandy Dancer is a restaurant that many, many people



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have eaten at in the Ann Arbor Train Station. There's the church in that town that we've modeled also.

I hope they enjoy seeing that yes, you can model lots of stuff that really exists. ☑

In the [bonus download extras](#) this month, we provide Jay's "drone view" layout plan built from actual overhead photographs of the layout.



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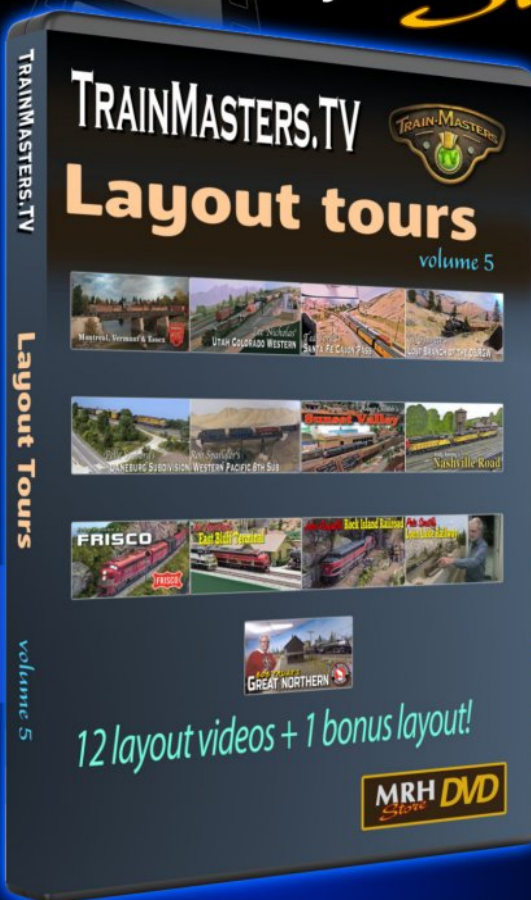
25. This Pere Marquette peddler freight crawls through Saginaw, MI, having finished its switching work on this side of town.



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What Detail!

Walthers REA Transfer Building



Model Railroad Hobbyist | April 2025



MIKE TYLICK MMR ADDS AN INTERIOR ...

I WANTED TO BUILD THE WALTHERS REA TRANSFER BUILDING (#933-3095) from the first time I saw it in a magazine ad. It looked typical of many urban Railway Express structures I had seen. It was available only in HO scale – I work mostly in O scale – and was far too urban for my model railroad.

An opportunity came recently when I was asked to build a fully detailed city Union Station. The Railway Express Transfer was a perfect companion, and also it would have to be completely detailed to match.

It wasn't until I opened the box and read the instructions that I realized why the structure was so compelling. The model was based on a prototype that existed in Jersey City, New Jersey. I had often visited the site with my father on railroad trips during my childhood. The old, dark brick monolith had somehow worked its way into my memories.

A detailed version of this kit would fit very nicely into a foreground location on any urban model railroad scene. The longest journey begins with the first step, so let's get started. ✓



1. The window arrangement on one of the structure ends made it obvious there was a stairwell. It took me a while and several repainting attempts to determine how to arrange the different flights, but I found something that would work.



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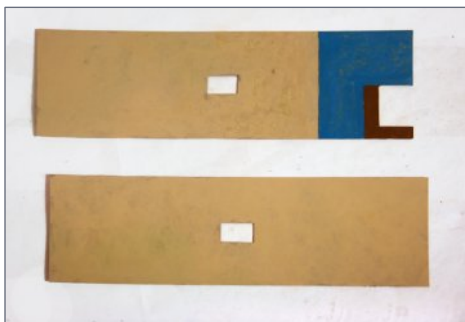


2. A dark green faux wainscoting on the lower walls is common in many industrial structures – likely done to hide dirt and wall damage. Since the interior will be seen only through the windows, I left the injection-molding contours and window castings alone. The brown represents wood wainscoting in the office.

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3. The opposite end wall and part of the side wall. I planned to light and detail the ground floor and the office areas (with the brown wainscoting and trim), and leave the other areas unlit, with less detailing.



4. I made the first, second, and third floors from 0.040" styrene. I painted the first floor and the warehouse spaces of the second and third floors to look like concrete. The office areas of the second and third floors were painted blue to represent carpet, with dark

gray in the stairwell to represent non-skid flooring. The foundation casting will hold the first floor in place. The second and third floor will be positioned using 1/8" square styrene strips as retaining guides. To facilitate sliding the flooring into place, the far end wall will not be attached to the model until all the flooring is in place.



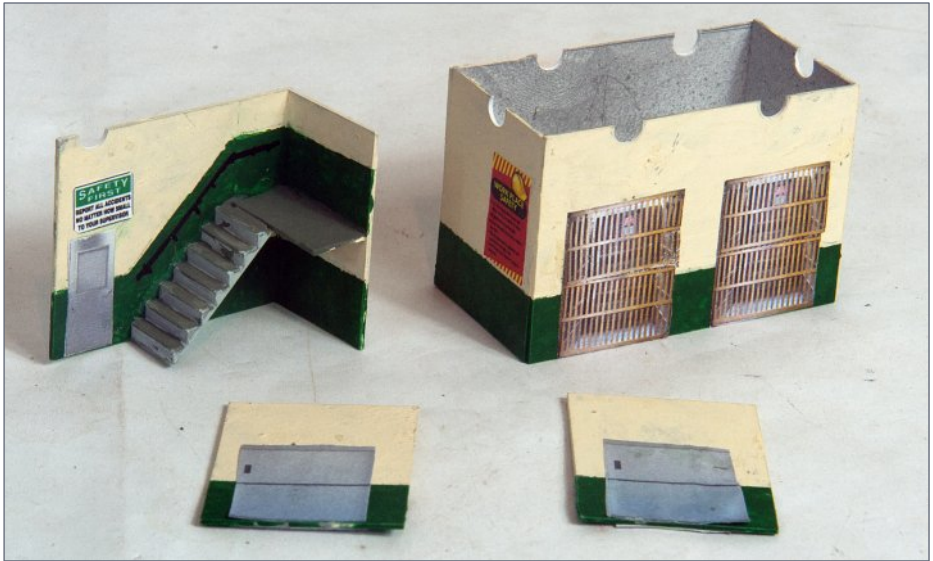
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5. The first floor is installed. The hole in the middle is to allow the light wiring to exit the building. I will be lighting the building using the Woodland Scenics Just Plug system. For a thorough description the techniques I used to light this building and a few other projects, see “Electrical Impulses: Woodland Scenics ‘Just-Plug’ Lighting System” in the March 2024 *Model Railroad Hobbyist* (online.fliphtml5.com/buups/bhyr/index.html#p=47).



6. The partition for the stairwell with the first level is at upper-left. The stairs are Central Valley detail castings. The box at upper-right is a central freight elevator system that will provide a wire chase for the lighting. The walls in foreground are firewall partitions to divide the building in half. This will make it easier to light sections of the building. The doors and signs are printed images from Bing Images. The notches will allow passage of the ceiling wires.

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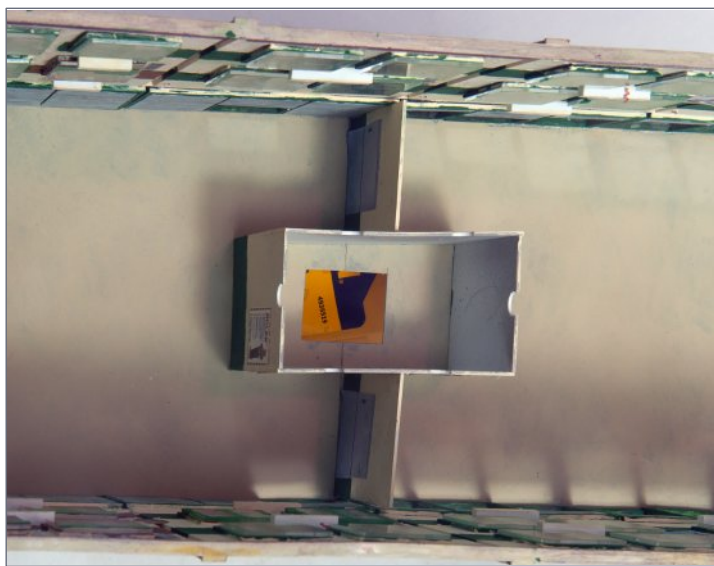
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7. First-floor walls are installed.

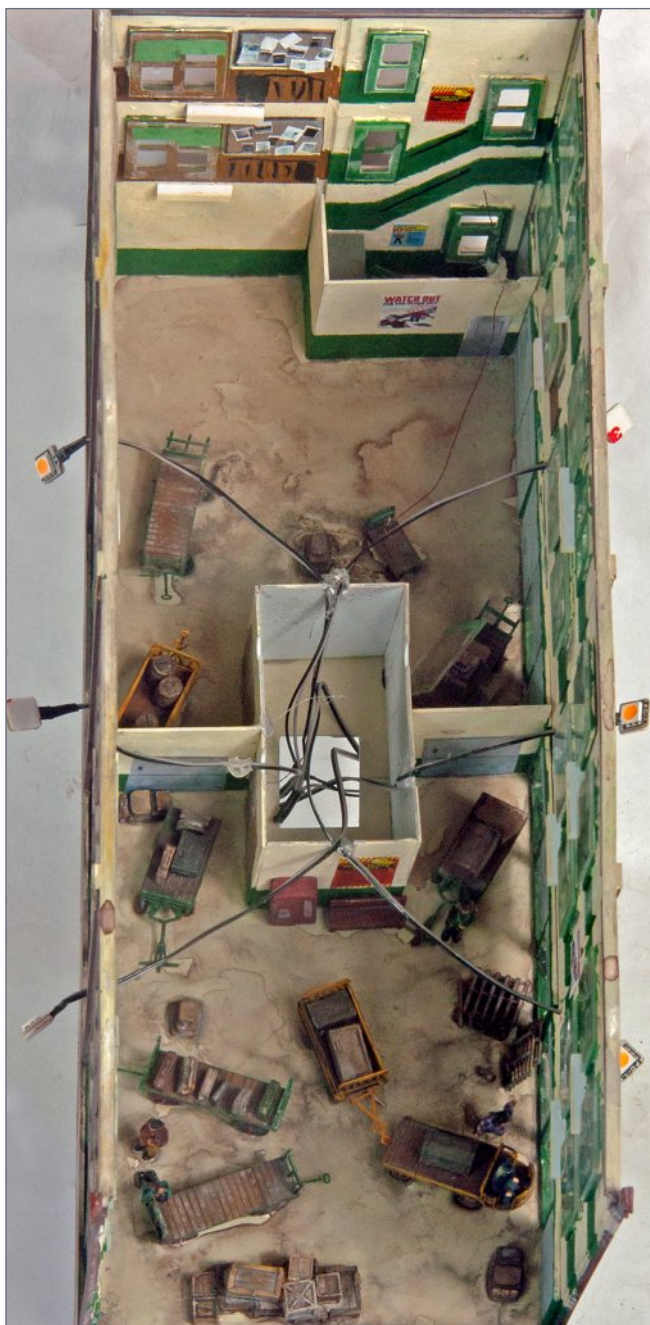


8. Looking down on the first flight of stairs and landing.



9. The elevator shaft from above, showing the wire access hole. Many factories and warehouses have a centrally located freight elevator to access upper floors. With a little thought, there is always a good place to hide wiring.





10. The interior of the main floor has looks like a gridlock of baggage-moving equipment. But I wanted to be sure something can be seen from each opening. I ran Woodland Scenics Just Plug “Stick-On” lamps to the outside platforms. LEDs permit many light sources without significant current demand, and they will likely never burn out. The prototype had many more lights than I installed, but I included enough to give the idea of a brightly lit, around-the-clock building.



11. The stairwell was a tedious project that had to be built floor-by-floor, but it looks good through the windows. It took planning to fit and line-up the stairs correctly with the windows. Central Valley stairs and railings make the work easier. The offices' wainscoting and bulletin boards are in place.



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12. From this angle, you can see the wall between the second-floor office and the stairwell.

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13. The office furniture and workers are installed.

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14. The second-floor with elevator, firewalls, and restroom walls added. Doors and safety signs are prints from Bing Images.



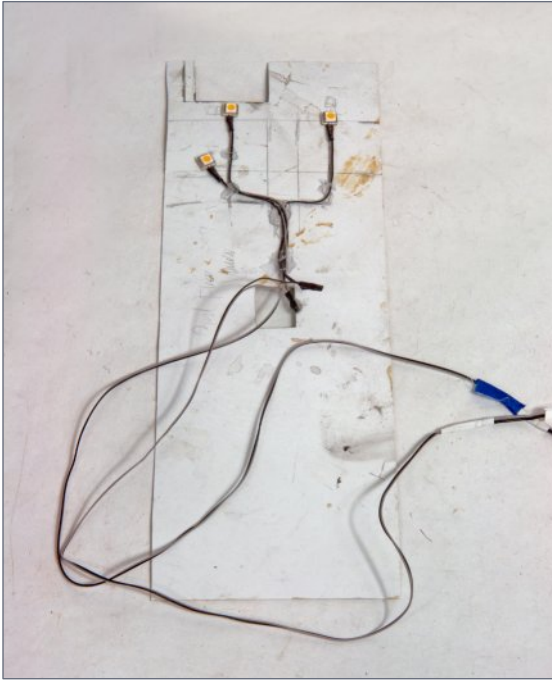
15. Half of the second floor will not be lit, but these quickly drawn crates will provide some dark detail and block the view between windows.



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16. This styrene sheet serves as the second-floor ceiling, with the concrete and carpeting of the third floor painted on the other side. I used self-stick wiring harnesses to light the building. One plug can power two or three LEDs. The ceiling will not be visible from most viewing angles.



17. The third-floor landing and office. A figure holding a step ladder adds detail.



18. Only the office and stairwell will be lit. I gave the unlit portion the same treatment as the second floor, with partitions and boxes to represent a busy interior.



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19. The third-floor office furniture and personnel have been added. That's one crowded bulletin board.

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20. The completed REA terminal in the daytime.

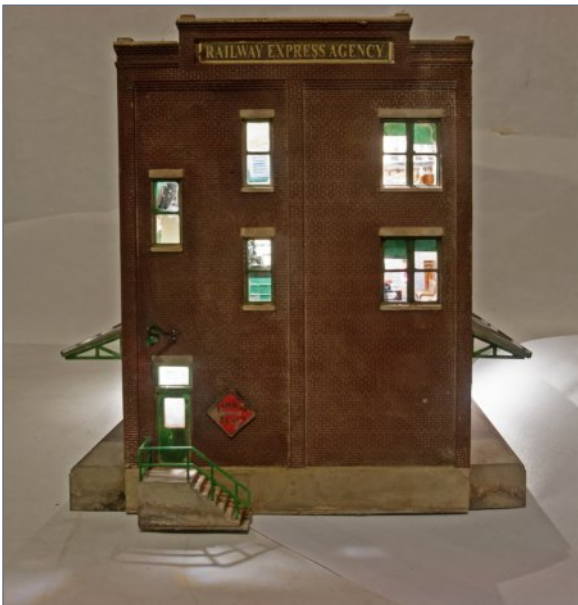


21. The opposite side.



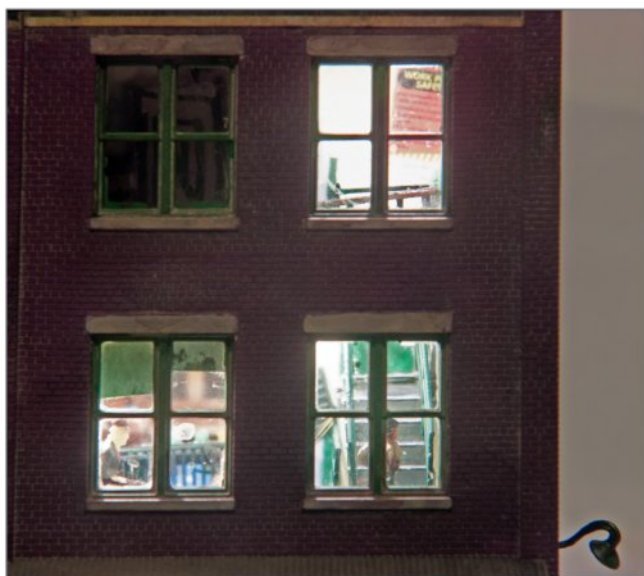


22. Offices and loading docks at night.

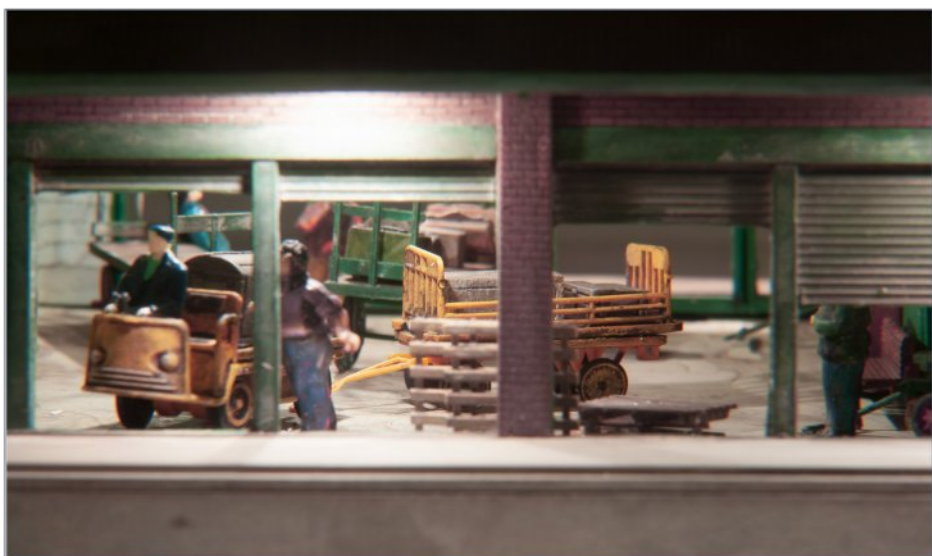


23. Lit end with stairwell and offices.





24. Closer view of stairwell.



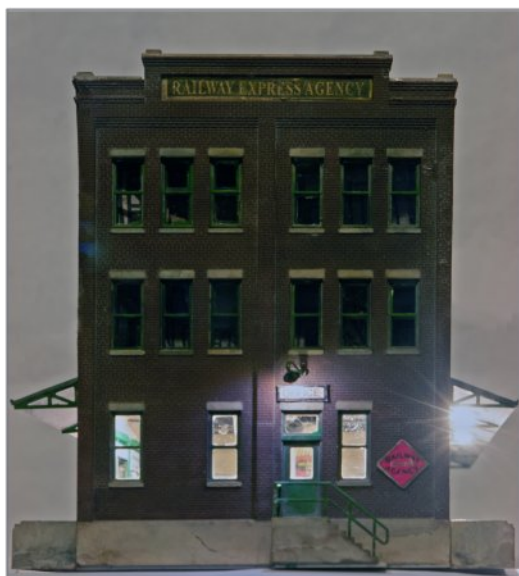
25. The platforms and main level at night. It looks busy, but not overly crowded.



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26. A shot from the opposite end.

MIKE TYLICK MMR



Michael has been fooling with electric trains for as long as he can remember. He has built a number of smaller layouts in different scales over the years.

He has been a long time contributor to many publications including *Model Railroader*, *Classic Toy Trains*, *Railroad Model Craftsman*, the *National Model Railroad Association national, regional and division publications*, and most recently *Model Railroad Hobbyist* and *Garden Trains Annual*. He also has delivered numerous clinics and presentations on various railroad and historical subjects on all levels in different parts of the country.

Michael now lives in eastern Massachusetts and is working on an On30 layout loosely based on the New Haven Railroad's Old Colony Lines. ■

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## Refurbishing an inexpensive passenger car

YouTuber **HO Scale Rio Grande** shares how to take an inexpensive swap meet ugly duckling passenger car and convert it into a nice beauty you can be proud of.



Don't let the passenger car theme fool you, **Rio Grande** covers some tips and tricks that you can use on any car upgrade project in any scale. The results speak for themselves – the upgraded car clearly holds its own in any passenger car fleet. This 15-minute video is well worth a watch. ☑

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REPORT THE LATEST HOBBY  
INDUSTRY NEWS ...



## CLUB MODELS

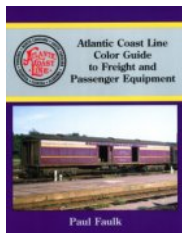


The **Soo Line Historical & Technical Society** is selling a kit for a 70-ton triple-bay coal hopper with offset sides. The HO scale model is based

on a group of 50 cars Soo purchased from the Belt Railway of Chicago in 1950. The special decorating scheme depicts repainted Soo Line cars with a faint hint of the original Belt Railway lettering and herald beginning to show through the black repaint. The HO scale kits were produced for SLHTS by Accurail. Info: [www.sooline.org](http://www.sooline.org)

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## NEW PRODUCTS FOR ALL SCALES



**Morning Sun** has released a digital reprint of *Atlantic Coast Line Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment*. Relying on a vast collection of vintage photos, author Paul Faulk documents the Atlantic Coast Line's purple, silver, and gold schemes that stood out in a sea of boxcar red and

**THE LATEST MODEL RAILROAD PRODUCTS, NEWS & EVENTS**

hopper black.

Info: [www.morningsunbooks.com](http://www.morningsunbooks.com)

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## O SCALE PRODUCT NEWS



**Bachmann Trains** is selling an On30 2-6-0 Prairie steam locomotive in four different paint schemes including Denver, South Park & Pacific;

Colorado & Southern, Christmas scheme, and black unlettered. The model features a completely hidden drive train, an operating headlight, and a sprung center axle for maximum traction and improved electrical pickup. Bachmann's 2-6-0 locomotive is DCC-ready with a factory installed speaker and a 21-pin NMRA compliant plug which simplifies adding an after-market DCC decoder.

Info: [www.bachmanntrains.com](http://www.bachmanntrains.com)

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## HO SCALE PRODUCT NEWS



New economy-priced HO scale car kits coming from **Accurail** include this Pacific Electric 40' wood stock car.



Also coming soon are kits for ACF twin-bay Center Flow covered hopper cars decorated for Texas & Pacific/Missouri Pacific, and Western Maryland.



Future easy-to-assemble HO scale kits scheduled for release by Accurail include a three-pack of western 40' double-sheathed wood boxcars. Road names will be Santa Fe, Western Pacific, and Union Pacific.



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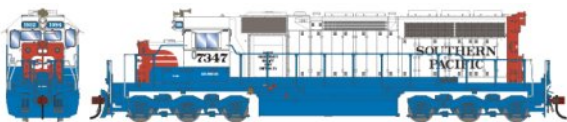
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All Accurail car kits come with appropriate trucks with Delrin wheelsets and Accumate knuckle couplers.

Info: [accurailinc.com](http://accurailinc.com)

**Athearn** has announced plans to produce four new EMD diesel locomotives for delivery in November 2026. The HO scale models include a six-wheel SD40 from the 1970s, medium powered GP39-2 and GP49 road switchers from the 1980s, and a high-speed 3500hp GP50 from the mid-1980s.



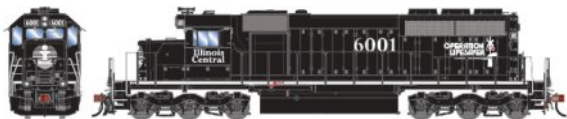
As an official sponsor of the 1984 Summer Games in Los Angeles, Southern Pacific

promoted the event with a special paint scheme applied to SD40R No. 7347. Rebuilt in the early 1980s, the locomotive featured L-shaped front windows, an SP light package, and a large front plow pilot.



SD40Gs decorated for Burlington Northern represent units rebuilt by GATX in early 1989.

The models will feature dynamic brakes, Leslie 3-chime horns, spare coupler knuckles on the rear pilot, and a standard EMD plow pilot.



Athearn's SD40 decorated for Illinois Central is based on a prototype built in

1967. Three road numbers will be available with No. 6005 having a cab air conditioner.



SD40s built by EMD for Southern Railway were configured with the long hood designated as the front.



Athearn's well-weathered version of a Maine Central SD40 will be available in a Primed for Grime scheme.



Additional SD40 road names in this release include Western Maryland, Baltimore & Ohio, Conrail, Detroit Edison, and Morrison Knudsen.



All Athearn SD40s in this release will have 4,000 gallon fuel tanks and six-wheel Flexicoil-

C trucks. Additional features include uncoupling levers, photo etched windshield wipers, wire grab irons, flexible MU hoses, and a detailed fuel tank.



Athearn's November 2026 production schedule includes GP39-2 Phase III

Genesis locomotives with operating number boards and classification lights. Road names include Denver & Rio Grande Western with a short snowplow, Sinclair antenna, and an oscillating light in the nose.



GP39-2s decorated for MKT represent prototypes delivered in 1984 with a clear strobe light and an A-200 horn.





Ex-MKT GP39-2s decorated for Cleveland Commercial Railroad will have ditch lights, a

firecracker antenna, and an S3L horn.



Two decorating schemes will be available for LTEX (Larry's Truck & Electric), an Ohio-based seller of rebuilt locomotives.



Decorating schemes for Genesis series GP49s

coming from Athearn late next year include Boston & Maine. Although attractive, this is a fantasy scheme since B&M did not own an GP49s.



To commemorate the nation's 250th Anniversary Athearn will offer a GP49 in a red, white, and blue paint scheme. The Genesis model features

front and rear ditch lights, cab wind deflectors, a Leslie RS5T horn, and a cab air conditioner.



Three road names will be available with high short hoods including N de M (Ferrocarriles Nacionales de México).

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Two of the high hood GP49s will be available in two Norfolk Southern schemes. They will have front ditch lights, operating classification lights, and large snowplows in the front and rear.



R. Bale

## EMD GP50

The GP50 is a 4-axle high-horsepower road switcher. Between 1980 and 1985 EMD delivered 278 of the 3,600hp diesel locomotives. The GP50 was the first production locomotive to be fitted with a microprocessor. It was also the first production locomotive to feature EMD's Super Series wheelslip control. The system used a Doppler radar under the front coupler pocket to measure the locomotive's speed and adjust the power to each axle to provide maximum adhesion. A unique spotting detail includes Q-type cooling fans to meet January 1980 Federal noise regulations.



Road names on Athearn's Genesis series GP50 include an ex-Frisco unit BN acquired primarily for high-speed piggyback service. Details the BN version shares with Toledo, Peoria & Western Railway locomotives include large front anticlimber, small EMD style front plows, and a Stratolite beacon on the cab roof.



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A high short hood Southern GP50s will have corrugated grilles and Q fans.

and C&O. The C&O unit will have a Chessie style “rock” pilot. All of Athearn’s GP50 models in this release represent Phase I prototypes with 3,600 gallon fuel tanks, and large front anticlimbers.



Features shared on all of the Genesis GP39-2, GP49 and GP50 models include walkway tread,

uncoupling levers, wire grab irons, lift rings, flexible trainline and MU hoses, photo etched windshield wipers, detailed fuel tanks, detailed cab interior, LED lighting, lit number boards, and etched metal fan grilles. Additional features include Blomberg four-wheel trucks, all-wheel electric pickup and drive, and McHenry knuckle couplers.





R. Bale

## ICC CABOOSE

Perhaps one of the strongest memories of American railroads is the caboose at the end of the train.

Caboose provided an office for the conductor and shelter for the rear end crew. From the cupola or bay windows, the crew could keep a lookout for shifting loads, damaged equipment, and overheating axles. As freight cars became larger in the late 1950s and early 1960s, there was a need for caboose crews to have greater visibility. In the extended-vision or wide-vision caboose, the sides of the cupola project beyond the side of the car body. This allowed the crew to see past the top of the taller cars that began to appear after World War II. One of the most popular prototype extended-vision cabooses was a steel bay-window car built by the International Car Company of Kenton, Ohio.



Athearn's November 2026 production schedule includes a Genesis steel bay-window caboose based on a Baltimore & Ohio C-26A class prototype built by International Car. Details applied to the plastic injection molded body include etched metal window screens, flush window glazing, wire grab irons, etched metal coupler platforms, uncoupling bars, and trainline and brake hoses. Underframe details include an air brake reservoir, control valve, and brake cylinder with plumbing and brake rods. B&O decorating schemes include a yellow Chessie System from 1975.



To call attention to its Careful Car Handling campaign, Chessie System painted six cabooses red and applied a *Handle With Care* slogan.



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In 1974, B&O caboose No. C-3718 was selected to be painted in one of the company's varied

Safety caboose paint schemes.



B&O caboose No. C-3707 was built in 1971 by International Car. It was retired in February 1986

having never been renumbered or repainted into the Chessie System colors. All of the Genesis cabooses in this release will come with caboose trucks with machined metal wheels, rotating bearing end caps, axle generator details and McHenry knuckle couplers.



Athearn's November 2026 production schedule concludes with a Trinity 5161 cu. ft. triple-bay covered hopper.

Athearn's HO scale Genesis model is based on a prototype built in 1995.



Road names on this release will be Union Pacific, Kansas City Southern, Crab Orchard & Egyptian Railway, GACX (Potash

Corp), SPSF, Missouri Pacific. The model will come with 100-ton trucks with 36" machined metal wheelsets and rotating axle end caps.

Info: [www.athearn.com](http://www.athearn.com)



**Bachmann Trains** has released its popular HO scale 4-8-4 steam locomotive in four

decorating schemes including two versions of Southern Pacific's historic Daylight livery. Additional paint schemes include American Freedom Train and BNSF Employee Special.



metal wheels. The ready-to-run model comes with Bachmann E-Z Mate Mark II knuckle couplers. Bachmann's 4-8-4 locomotive is DCC-ready with a factory installed speaker and a 21-pin NMRA compliant plug, simplifying adding an after-market DCC decoder. A minimum track radius of 22" is recommended.

Info: [www.bachmanntrains.com](http://www.bachmanntrains.com)

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Future HO scale locomotives coming from **Bowser** include an EMD SD40 road switcher. Road names will be Clinchfield, Pennsylvania, Conrail, Norfolk Western,

Norfolk Southern, Illinois Central, Chicago Great Western, Soo Line, Missouri Pacific, Santa Fe, Southern Pacific, Burlington Northern, and Montana Rail Link.



The feature-laden ready-to-run model will have LED front and rear headlights, number boards, classification lights, and ditch lights.



Additional details scheduled for this release include cab interior, control stand gauges, uncoupling levers, MU hoses, air hoses, walkway tread, windshield wipers, lift rings, and wire grab irons. They will be equipped

with six-wheel HT-C Flexicoil trucks with all-wheel electrical pickup and metal knuckle couplers.



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DC versions of Bowser's SD40s will have a 21-pin socket for easy installation of an aftermarket DCC decoder. DCC sound versions will come with a factory installed LokSound V5 decoder.

Info: [bowser-trains.com](http://bowser-trains.com)

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**Broadway Limited Imports** has announced plans to release a Pennsylvania Railroad class B6sb 0-6-0 switch

engine this June. The HO scale model replicates a popular PRR "shifter" that appeared throughout the Pennsylvania system from the early 1900s until replaced by diesel units in the early



R. Bale

## PRR B6 0-6-0 SWITCHER

The first B6 0-6-0 steam switcher was built in 1902 at PRRs Altoona Works. It had the Pennsylvania's trademark square shouldered Belpaire firebox, 56" drivers, and Stephenson valve gear. It proved to be a successful design with a total of 79 being built between 1902 and 1913 by Altoona, Baldwin, and Lima. Walschaerts valve gear replaced the Stephenson gear on 55 Class B6sa 0-6-0s built at Altoona during 1913–1914. Finally, during 1916–1920, 238 of class B6sb were built. They had a Belpaire firebox but were otherwise little changed from the B6sa. All B6sa and B6sb locomotives were retrofitted with a power reverse to make the frequent back-and-forth of switching quicker and easier. In terms of the number built, the B6 series 0-6-0 switcher was PRRs most successful locomotive. In 1939, toy train manufacturer Lionel introduced their version of Pennsy's B6 in several variations including a "semi-scale" version with scale couplers and smaller flanges.

1950s. In this first production run BLI will offer the PRR locomotive in three different decorating schemes plus an unlettered version. The post war scheme is shown above.



Broadway Limited's pre-war version of the PRR B6 locomotive has a lighter gray smokebox

and red cab window frames. The HO scale model will also be available with Futura lettering and painted but unlettered. A B6sa decorated for U.S. Army will be available exclusively from Trainworld. Hobbytown will offer the model decorated for Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore Lines.



The boiler, chassis, and tender body are all constructed of heavy diecast metal.

Separately applied details include handrails, grab irons, ladders, piping, cab windows, whistle, markers, and a brass bell. Engineer and fireman figures are factory installed in the cab. One set of drivers is equipped with a rubber traction tires. Lighting features include a separately controllable headlight, reverse light, cab light, and front marker lights.

BLIs B6sb switch engine will be available with Paragon4 Sound/DC/DCC sound system with synchronized puffing smoke and integral GoPack capacitors. A DC Stealth version with DCC socket and 8-ohm speaker pre-installed will also be available.

Info: [www.broadway-limited.com](http://www.broadway-limited.com)



**Intermountain Railway** is booking reservations until April 30, 2025, for a 100-ton Evans coil car. A firm release date is TBA.



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Four new road names will be available for this production run of the HO scale model including CSX (Blue and

yellow), Chicago & North Western, Burlington Northern Santa Fe, and Detroit, Toledo & Ironton. Previously released road names of Reading, Illinois Central, Conrail, and C&O will be repeated in this latest production.



Details include etched metal walkways, metal knuckle couplers, and appropriate

trucks with machined metal wheelsets. Each coil car will come with two coil steel metal weights. Additional coils will also be available for purchase in four-packs.

Info: [www.intermountain-railway.com](http://www.intermountain-railway.com)

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The newest HO scale ready-to-run model from **Kadee** is a 40' PS-1 boxcar decorated for the Akron, Canton & Youngstown Railroad. The model is based on a prototype built by Pullman-Standard in 1947 for the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad. ACY acquired, upgraded, and repainted the car in 1963.

Spotting features on Kadee's HO scale version include see-through Blaw-Knox steel running boards and latitudinals, Superior seven-panel sliding doors, and Pullman-Standard 4/5 riveted ends with a small top rib.



Additional details include separately applied grab irons, ladders, sill steps, handrails, Kadee metal couplers, and

Bettendorf-style plain-bearing self-centering trucks with metal wheels.

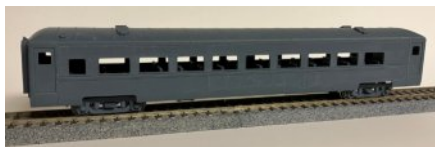
Info: [www.kadee.com](http://www.kadee.com)

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**Mass Transit Miniatures** has 3D-printed kits for Reading 63' class PBt and PBu steel coaches. The HO scale models are based on class PBm cars from 1922

that were rebuilt in 1948 with picture windows and modernized interiors. Some of the updated cars were assigned to Reading's push-pull commuter service.



The 3D-printed kits include a one-piece body shell and a one-piece underframe that incorporates the interior details. Additional components

include clear 3D-printed window inserts, pre-bent wire grab irons, Kadee-compatible coupler pockets, Reading decals, and appropriate 4-wheel passenger trucks with 36" wheels.

Info: [ihphobby.tripod.com](http://ihphobby.tripod.com)



**Moloco Trains** has completed a second production run of HO scale Brainerd-built Northern Pacific boxcars with double sliding doors. This release

includes seven decorating schemes including four new designs. The 1957 as-delivered scheme, shown above, features arched Northern Pacific lettering, an NP monad herald, and a promotional slogan for the Vista Dome North Coast Limited.



Also new on this release is a car decorated with an 8' monad, large NP reporting marks without a shadow, and the Vista Dome promo. A similar car with

small NP reporting marks is also available. Both schemes are from 1957.



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additional schemes and an undecorated kit are also available.



Stanray 3/4 ends, brake rods, air pipes, sill steps, rubber air hoses and the distinctive Brainerd eight-rung ladders are all accurately replicated in Moloco's HO scale model. The

selection of Ajax, Ellcon-National, Equipco, Klasing, or Universal handbrakes is car-number specific. All versions of this HO scale ready-to-run model come with Kadee Whisker couplers and 50-ton trucks with machined metal wheels.

Info: [www.molocotrains.com](http://www.molocotrains.com)

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**Rapido** has scheduled another production run of its HO scale NSC 73' Centerbeam flatcars. Both early (pre 2002) and mid (2002-2006) phases, with variations in the z-pattern open top

truss, will be available in this latest release. Other less obvious variations between the two phases of the Centerbeam design include the deck, side sill, and underbody.

Road names will be British Columbia Railway, BNSF, Canadian National International Service, Copper Basin Railway, Norfolk Southern, Ontario Northland Railway, Union Pacific, Wisconsin Central, and two TTZX-Trailer Train schemes.

Factory installed details include rubber air hoses, see-through etched metal crossover platforms, uncoupling bars, metal grab



irons, and full underbody details. The HO scale models come with a suggested minimum track radius of 22". The deadline for ordering is May 15, 2025.

Info: [www.rapidotrains.com](http://www.rapidotrains.com)

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**Tangent Scale Models** has released an impressive group of accurately detailed Southern Railway bay window cabooses. The HO scale models replicate prototypes delivered to Southern Railway by Gantt Manufacturing of Greenville, South Carolina between 1969 to 1974.



bearing caboose trucks with elliptical springs.



their assignment to local service.

Models depicting early units have 50-ton plain bearing trucks with elliptical springs while later cabooses are equipped with 70-ton roller

Authentic decorating schemes range from all red road service cabooses with axle generators to non-electric "dark" units with yellow bays indicating

Some local units repainted in 1979 were modernized with solar panels, FRA end lights, and interior lights.



Following the 1990 merger of Norfolk & Western and Southern Railway into Norfolk Southern, some bay window cabooses



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were painted orange and assigned to MOW ballast train service.



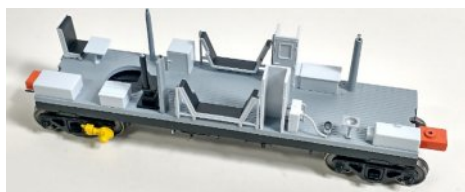
In 2008 NS prepared an all-red caboose for display in Norfolk Southern's DeButts Yard in Chattanooga. Rather than a number, the caboose received a

*"Your Choice, Our Future" slogan.*



NS decorated several heritage-schemed cabooses with Southern Railway and NW logos. The red repaints included black sills and steps

and conspicuity strips. Unpainted kits are also available.



All of the Tangent cabooses in this release have both exterior and interior rail-driven lighting operated by a wand included with each model.

Info: [www.tangentscalemodels.com](http://www.tangentscalemodels.com)

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R. Bale

## EMD GP9

The GP9 is a four-axle diesel electric road switcher built between 1954 and 1959 by General Motors Electro-Motive Division. The GP9 succeeded the GP7 as the second model of EMD's General Purpose (GP) line, incorporating an improved sixteen-cylinder engine which generated 1,750hp. Most GP9s were delivered with high hoods, but a low short hood for improved visibility became a later option. Other options included dynamic brakes, steam generators (located in the nose), and several sizes of fuel tanks. The largest tanks required air reservoir tubes to be moved to the roof. A few customers specified Flexicoil rather than EMDs standard Blomberg truck. EMD constructed 3,626 GP9s, including 165 GP9Bs. An additional 646 GP9s were built by GMD, EMDs Canadian subsidiary, for a grand total of 4,257 produced. Externally, the GP9 strongly resembled its GP7 predecessor.



Western Maryland chopped nose, modified skirt version.

**Walthers** is upgrading the tooling on its Proto series GP9. The project includes the development of a Phase II GP9 with a chopped short nose. Features on all versions

of the HO scale model include 1,600 gallon fuel tanks, wire grab irons, photo-etched lift rings, operating number boards, etched sunshades, Blomberg 4-wheel trucks, and Proto MAX metal knuckle couplers. Delivery is planned for early next year.



Different Roadrunner Show

Western Maryland Phase II GP9s will be available decorated in black and in the red, white, and black scheme



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shown here. In addition to the chopped short nose, both liveries will feature dynamic brakes, 36" roof fans, a winterization hatch, and Pyle dual sealed beam headlights,



set for short hood forward. Additional details on the PC unit include 48" dynamic brake and radiator fans, foot boards, and a modified skirt with a single fuel filler.



headlights, Nathan P5 air horn, and pilot plows. The C&NW units will not have a dynamic brake bulge.



dual sealed beam headlights, whip antennas, drop steps, and a modified skirt with a single fuel filler.



Each road name will be available with a choice of basic DC operation or with factory installed DCC with LokSound 5.



Walthers is planning a fall release date for two 85' heavyweight passenger cars: a paired-window coach and a 36-seat diner. The HO scale Mainline series models are based on steel prototypes built by Pullman in the 1920s and '30s.



Chesapeake & Ohio cars will be available in C&Os tri color scheme as well as in Pullman

dark green. Of special note is a diner decorated as C&Os Gadsby's Tavern; a historic car preserved today at Clifton Forge, Virginia.




New York Central cars will wear the road's traditional two-toned gray scheme. Union Pacific versions of both the coach and diner will be decorated in Armor yellow and gray.

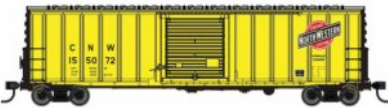


Details shared by both the paired-window coach and 36-seat diner include a detailed

interior with factory-equipped overhead LED lighting, sprung diaphragms, factory installed grab irons, and a detailed underbody with separate brake gear, steam traps, and generators. The heavyweight models come with appropriate six-wheel Pullman trucks with 36" machined metal wheels and all-wheel electrical pickup.



Walthers has scheduled a summer 2025 release for a new production run of 50' ACF exterior post boxcars. The model replicates a 15' 2" tall Plate B prototype with Dreadnaught ends and a Stanray diagonal panel roof.



Four road numbers for each road name will be available for cars decorated for Burlington Northern, Chicago & North Western, Conrail, Grand Trunk Western, and Norfolk Southern.



All Walther's HO scale models mentioned in this report come with Proto MAX metal knuckle couplers.

Info: [www.walthers.com](http://www.walthers.com)

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## N SCALE PRODUCT NEWS



R. Bale

### EMD SD80MAC

The SD80MAC is a 5,000hp C-C locomotive EMD built for Conrail in 1995-96. The 80-foot 400,000 pound prototype used EMD's 20-cylinder 710G3B prime mover, a huge diesel engine with an oil capacity of

510 gallons and a water cooling capacity of 342 gallons. The SD80MAC is recognized as one of the heaviest, longest, and most powerful single diesel locomotives ever built. In addition to its massive size, a key spotting feature of the SD80MAC is the wide radiator housing similar to GE locomotives. Additional details include rear number boards, the placement of the front number boards above the cab windows and recessed red marker lights in the nose.



**KatoUSA** has completed a new production run of its N scale EMD SWD80MAC diesel locomotive.



The N scale model is available decorated for Conrail and Norfolk Southern.

Info: [www.katousa.com](http://www.katousa.com)

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New N scale models from **Micro-Trains Line** include this 50' GATX 25,000 gallon General Service Tank Car.



Also available new from MTL is a 3-pack consisting of one 60' Centerbeam flatcar and two 61' bulkhead flatcars. Each of the three Burlington Northern models comes with a removable metal ingot load.



Micro-Trains has released a 2-pack of Burlington 33' rib-side twin-bay coal hoppers. The weathered models represent prototypes built in CB&Qs Havelock shops in 1945. Info: Contact a dealer

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**Rail Smith** has scheduled a late May release for three N scale small-window coaches. Northern Pacific coaches

numbered 510 and 511 will be available in designer Raymond Loewy's familiar two-toned green. The N scale models are based on prototype cars built by Pullman-Standard in 1947 for NPs North Coast Limited.



Great Northern versions of the small-window coach will be decorated in the Big Sky scheme.



In 1950 Union Pacific ordered 50 small-window chair cars from Pullman-Standard. The cars were

delivered in UPs classic Armor yellow paint scheme. Subsequent service included removal of the skirts. Rail Smith is preparing two UP cars without skirts: numbers 5400 and 5449.



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In other news, *MRH* has learned that Rail Smiths latest run of Northern Pacific dome coaches arrived from the factory with an unacceptable flaw. Correcting the mistake will delay the release until late May.

Info: [www.lowellsmith.net](http://www.lowellsmith.net)



**Rapido** is preparing another production run of its popular N scale VIA Rail

F40PH-2D locomotive. This new release will include decorating schemes from the initial 2019 release as well as several new liveries.



Rapido's N scale models are based on prototypes built in London, Ontario between 1986 and 1989.

The models feature a desktop control stand (hence the "D" in the designation), a unique fuel tank and underframe arrangement, a carbody design with custom panel and door locations, and numerous other Canadian-only details.



In 2010, VIA Rail Canada contracted CAD Railway Industries in Lachine, Quebec, to rebuild its F40

locomotive fleet. At the same time the locomotives were given VIA's green, grey, and yellow Renaissance paint scheme first seen on the P42DC locomotives in 2001.



Decorating schemes available in this new release will be VIA Rail original, VIA Rail Canada,

VIA Rail Operation Lifesaver, VIA Rail Telus, VIA Rail Kool Aid, VIA Rail Home Hardware, VIA Rail Renaissance, and VIA Rail *Love The Way* wrap.



Rapido's N scale F40PH-2D locomotive will be available for DC silent operation and for DC/DCC with sound.

The deadline for ordering is June 17, 2025.



F40PH-2D REBUILD  
PRE-PRODUCTION MODEL SHOWN



To link with the availability of the VIA F40PH-2D locomotives, Rapido has scheduled a new production run of N scale LRC coaches and VIA 1 first class cars. The LRC prototype coaches

were externally identical, with the first class cars wearing a VIA 1 logo without a Canadian flag. In 2013, VIA converted the VIA 1 cars to business class featuring two-plus-one seating, some blanked windows, and a new paint scheme.



lights, etched-metal sill steps, full interior detail, tinted windows, and track-powered interior lighting compatible with DC and DCC.

Rapido's N scale version of the cars will have working marker



scheme, Canada scheme (faded), Renaissance scheme, and *The Future is On Board* wrap.

Decorating schemes will include the original Canada



Rapido's N scale LRC cars require a minimum track radius of 14", however, that can be reduced to



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11" if the cars are retrofitted with long shank couplers. The deadline for ordering is June 17, 2025.



Rapido has scheduled another production run of its N scale NSC 73' Centerbeam flatcars. Both early (pre 2002) and mid (2002-2006) phases, with variations in the z-pattern open top truss, will be

available in this latest release. Other, less obvious variations between the two phases of the Centerbeam design include the deck, side sill and underbody.

Road names will be British Columbia Railway, BNSF, Canadian National International Service, Copper Basin Railway, Norfolk Southern, Ontario Northland Railway, TTZX-Trailer Train (two schemes), Union Pacific, and Wisconsin Central.

Factory installed details include rubber air hoses, see-through etched metal crossover platforms, uncoupling bars, metal grab irons, and full underbody details. The N scale models come with a suggested minimum track radius of 11".

Info: [www.rapidotrains.com](http://www.rapidotrains.com)

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## STRUCTURES & SCENIC SUPPLIES

**Athearn** November 2026 production schedule includes HO scale models of a Ford F-850 box truck. Features include clear window glazing and rubber tires.



Trucks decorated with railroad names will be available for Union Pacific, Rio Grande, Great Northern, Pennsylvania Railroad, and Penn Central.



Additional decorating schemes include Bekins Van & Storage, Penguin Ginger Ale, and Katsburg Brothers.

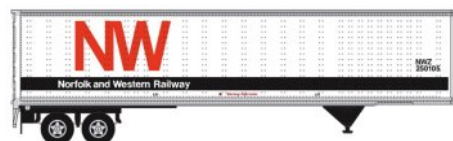


White and black unlettered models are included in this release.

Info: [www.athearn.com](http://www.athearn.com)



models will be available in this release. The models are based on prototypes developed by the Pines Trailer Company.



**Atlas** has scheduled a 4th quarter 2025 release for a new production run of 45' Pines trailers. Both N and HO scale

Decorating schemes will include Southern Pacific, Norfolk & Western, Montgomery Ward, National

Piggyback Service, Neshanic Trailer, and GLKZ. Each trailer will come with both extended and retracted landing gear sets.



Also coming from Atlas late this year is a 1993 Ford Explorer. N and HO scale models will be available for BNSF, Union Pacific

Wisconsin Central, Montana Rail Link, Norfolk Southern, Ontario Northland and Reading & Northern. Additional N scale schemes will include BC Rail and unlettered Explorers in white and yellow.

Info: [shop.atlasrr.com](http://shop.atlasrr.com)

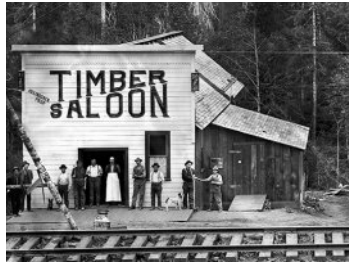
New structure kits from **BEST** include Timber Saloon, an HO scale model based on a rugged prototype that was once located in the ghost town of Timber, Oregon. As noted in the photo, the drinking establishment was conveniently located on the right-of-way of the Pacific Railway & Navigation Company



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Railroad. BEST's craftsman-style kit includes laser-cut wood walls, a cast metal chimney, injection molded doors and windows, and step-by-step instructions. The HO scale Timber Salon has a footprint of 4.5" x 5.5" including the wood sidewalk. Info: [www.besttrains.com](http://www.besttrains.com)

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Now available from **FOS Scale Models** are four new laser-cut kits in HO scale. Kastel Marine is a wedge shaped building constructed of laser-cut clapboard walls with plastic windows, laser-cut doors, and metal details. It has a 4" x 4" footprint. This kit was previously released as part of the Pelican Rock kit.



A narrow building with a footprint of 1.5" x 5.5", Knocko Nolan's Pub includes laser-cut walls and roof cards, color signage, and 3D-printed and metal detail parts.



A small wrought iron shop, Griffin Metal has a footprint of 3" x 5". Construction is laser-cut walls, roof cards, and fence sections. Color signage is included with metal and 3D-printed detail parts.



Finally, Greely's Bar includes laser-cut concrete block and wood walls, roof cards, roof sign, and lettering. Color signage and 3D-printed and metal detail parts are included. The footprint of the assembled kit is 4" x 4".

Info: [fosscalemodels.com](http://fosscalemodels.com)



**Frenchman River Model Works** has a new 1:48 scale Apex Bulk Unloader & Storage Yard Set, designed by Thomas Yorke. Combining four separate kits, the set includes one Scale Bulk Unloader, two APEX Storage Silos, a Yard Office Trailer, and a Grain Truck Body (truck not included). Each kit is available separately.



Based on a 1930s travel trailer, the yard office trailer consists mostly of resin parts. Including the swamp cooler the kit is 5" x 1.75" x 3".



The APEX Storage Silo consists of resin and styrene parts, decals, and wire. Suitable for many different industries, a single assembled kit measures 2.75" x 2.75" x 8.25" with an additional 3" for the auger extending out the side.



The Bulk Unloader is a vertical single leg elevator and track grate that includes resin, styrene, wood, and other parts. It measures approximately 3.5" x 1.5" x 11.75" when assembled. The grate is not included in that measurement.



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The Grain Truck Body converts a diecast 1:48 scale truck into a grain truck. The donor kit ought to have a wheelbase between 15 and 18 scale feet long. Several appropriate truck kits are available on The Frenchman River webpage for the Grain Truck Body. The box's approximate dimensions are 3.75" x 2.25" x 1.5".



A separate product, not part of the set, is a 1:48 scale 1930s Travel Trailer. As well as resin parts for the trailer, the kit includes campsite accessories: a resin fire ring, resin firewood stack, stumps, and a picnic table kit. The trailer measures approximately 5" x 1.75" x 2.25". Info: [frenchmanriver.com](http://frenchmanriver.com)



**Monster Modelworks** has introduced an HO scale craftsman-style kit for a brick manufacturing company. The structure is based on The Medora Shale Brick Company located in Medora, Indiana. The kit comes with two

separate buildings: one with Old Brick and one in newer Aged American Bond Brick. They are designed to be glued together, however, they can be built and positioned separately. The assembled structures have a combined footprint of 6.25" wide x 7.25" long. Shipping is scheduled to begin April 11, 2025.

Also available from Monster Modelworks is a 130' concrete insert for a Walthers HO scale turntable.



The turntable pit bottom is composed of .025" Lazerboard 3D-engraved to simulate cracked concrete, concrete segments, and drains. The 16.3" diameter kit comes in eight sections to simplify installation. Both kits mentioned in

this report require painting and assembly.

Info: [www.larkspurlaserart.com](http://www.larkspurlaserart.com)

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**Oak Hill Model Railroad Track Supply** has introduced two new turnout frogs in the Roadmaster Series collection. Made for use with handlaid track, the frogs are a #10 Rigid Bolted Frog and a #6 Solid Manganese Steel Frog in code 55. The #10 Rigid Bolted Frog is available in Code 70 and Code 83. Both frogs can also be

ordered chemically blackened for an additional fee.

Info: [ohrtracksupply.com](http://ohrtracksupply.com)

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New HO scale Cornerstone series structure kits coming from **Walthers** this spring include a modern plastic pellet plant with four 8.25"

tall storage silos. Details on the brick and metal processing structure include rooftop air conditioners, overhead walkways, and a loading rack with piping for two railroad cars. Decal signage is included. The main building has a footprint of approximately 15" wide x 10" deep.

A shallow background version of the plastic pellet plant is also available. The storage silos are full size, however the 15" wide processing building is just 1.375" deep.



Also coming from Walthers this spring is a Cornerstone plastic kit for a vintage brick warehouse. The brick tower, main building, warehouse, and loading dock are all separate



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components which allows positioning them in multiple configurations. Decals and printed graphics are included. Walthers plastic Cornerstone kits are molded in multiple colors making painting optional. Assembly is required. Info: [www.walthers.com](http://www.walthers.com)



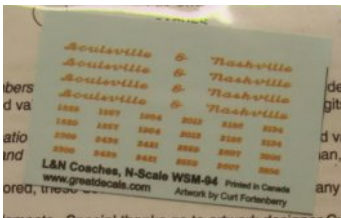
**Woodland Scenics** is preparing a fully-assembled Interlocking Tower for release later this year. The Built-&-Ready structure will be available in N, HO and O.



The exterior of the two-story Interlocking Tower features a weathered, shingled roof, an identification sign, and an upper deck with staircase to the ground level. Interior details include the interlocking machine in the center of the tower's upstairs cabin, an operator's desk, and a wood stove.

Info: [woodlandscenics.com](http://woodlandscenics.com)

## NEW DECALS, SIGNS AND FINISHING PRODUCTS



**Great Decals** has introduced new N scale deluxe gold decals for Louisville & Nashville lightweight passenger coaches. Preparation of the L&N decals is based on artwork created by Curt Fortenberry.

Info: [www.greatdecals.com](http://www.greatdecals.com)

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## ! BRIEFLY NOTED AT PRESS TIME ...

A combination of low pre-orders and new import tariffs have forced **Eastern Seaboard Models** to postpone indefinitely the second release of its HO scale Magor/PC&F XIH boxcar...

**InterMountain's** recently retooled N scale Trinity 3281 covered hopper has been released to dealers ...

The scheduled April release of **Kadee's** HO scale ACY PS-1 boxcar has been delayed due to production issues ...

**Rail Smith** N scale passenger cars scheduled for release between now and the first of May include NP dome coaches, and IC and NYC baggage cars ...

**Walthers** is working on an EMD SW1 switcher for release next winter. New HO scale models coming this year include a 40' wood reefer, a 50' waffle-side boxcar, and a Trinity 25,400 gallon tank car ... ■

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## Ongoing 2025

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

Info: [www.opsig.org/Virtual](https://www.opsig.org/Virtual)

Archive: [www.youtube.com/c/OperationsSIG](https://www.youtube.com/c/OperationsSIG)

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

Info: [newtracksmodeling.com](https://newtracksmodeling.com)

YouTube: [www.youtube.com/channel/UCMA\\_VhPb5pjdkAYTdXLceJA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMA_VhPb5pjdkAYTdXLceJA)

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

Info: [www.facebook.com/groups/nmragroup](https://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](https://www.youtube.com/c/4DPNRMovies)

**ONLINE, YouTube**, March 17-20, 2025. NMRA Northeastern Region NERx annual virtual convention. [www.youtube.com/c/NMRAORGMModelRailroading](http://www.youtube.com/c/NMRAORGMModelRailroading)

Info: [nerx.org](http://nerx.org)

**ONLINE, Zoom**, Second Tuesdays, 8pm Eastern. "Off the Beaten Track" featuring Narrow Gauge layouts, clinics, and manufacturers.

Info: [groups.io/g/NNG](https://groups.io/g/NNG)

**AROUND THE USA, IN-PERSON**, Various dates. ScaleTrains.com Road Trip.

Info: [www.scaletrains.com/roadtrip](http://www.scaletrains.com/roadtrip)

## April - May 2025

**CANADA, BRITISH COLUMBIA, BURNABY (Vancouver)**, May 23-25, 2025. Railway Modeller's Meet of British Columbia. Simon Fraser University.

Info: [railwaymodellersmeetofbc.ca/wp](http://railwaymodellersmeetofbc.ca/wp)

**CANADA, ONTARIO, HAMILTON**, April 25, 2025. Steel Town RPM, sponsored by the HO Model Engineers Society. Eva Rothwell Centre, 460 Wentworth St N.

Info: [steeltownrpm.wordpress.com](http://steeltownrpm.wordpress.com)

**NEW ZEALAND, MOSGIEL**, May 3-4, 2025. Dunedin Model Train Show. Taieri Bowling Club, 12 Wickliffe Street.

Info: [dunedinmodeltrainshow@gmail.com](mailto:dunedinmodeltrainshow@gmail.com)

**COLORADO, DURANGO**, May 15-18, 2025. NMRA Rocky Mountain Regional Convention. Durango Doubletree, 501 Camino Del Rio.

Info: [www.rmr-nmra.org/2025%20Convention/Home.html](http://www.rmr-nmra.org/2025%20Convention/Home.html)

**ILLINOIS, CALLEDONIA**, May 4, 2025. Rock River Valley Division Monthly Meeting/Clinics. Paulsons Agricultural Museum, 6950 Belvedere Rd.

Info: [rrvd-nmra.org](http://rrvd-nmra.org)



**MAINE, TOPSHAM**, April 26, 2025. 2025 Great Falls Model Railroad Club Train Show. Mt. Ararat High School, 68 Eagles Way.  
Info: [www.greatfallsmodelrrclub.org/events/event/2024-gfmrrc-train-show](http://www.greatfallsmodelrrclub.org/events/event/2024-gfmrrc-train-show)

**MASSACHUSETTS, SPRINGFIELD**, May 30-June 1, 2025. New England/Northeast RPM, in association with the Amherst Railway Society. Springfield Sheraton Monarch Place, One Monarch Place.  
Info: [nerpm.org](http://nerpm.org)

**MINNESOTA, WOODBURY**, April 26, 2025. Newport Model RR Train Flea Market. Woodbury High School, 2665 Woodland Dr.  
Info: [www.newportclub.us](http://www.newportclub.us)

**NORTH CAROLINA, HIGH POINT**, May 3-4, 2025. RPM Carolinas: School of Railway Prototype Modeling. 4050 Premier Drive.  
Info: [www.facebook.com/groups/1895473627515807](https://www.facebook.com/groups/1895473627515807)

**NORTH CAROLINA, SPENCER**, May 17-18, 2025. Historic Spencer Shops Train Show. NC Transportation Museum, 1 Samuel Spencer Drive.  
Info: [www.nctransportationmuseum.org/train-show](http://www.nctransportationmuseum.org/train-show)

**OHIO, DUBLIN (Columbus)**, May 15-18, 2025. The Buckeye Express, NMRA Mid-Central Regional Convention. Dublin Embassy Suites, 5100 Upper Metro Pl.  
Info: [buckeyeexpress.div6-mcr-nmra.org/Main.html](http://buckeyeexpress.div6-mcr-nmra.org/Main.html)

**PENNSYLVANIA, HARRISBURG**, May 14-18, 2025. Pennsylvania Railroad Technical & Historical Society 2025 Annual Meeting. Sheraton Harrisburg-Hershey Hotel, 4650 Lindle Road.  
Info: [prrths.org](http://prrths.org)

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

**TENNESEE, MEMPHIS**, April 26, 2025. Memphis Model Railroaders Open House. 4445 Malone Road.  
Info: [www.memphismodelrailroaders.com/events.html](http://www.memphismodelrailroaders.com/events.html)

**WASHINGTON, PASCO**, May 9-11, 2025. The Ainsworth Connector, NMRA Pacific NW Regional Convention, Red Lion Hotel, 2525 N 20th Ave.

Info: [pnr5d.org/pnr-5th-division-home-page/2025-pnr-convention](https://pnr5d.org/pnr-5th-division-home-page/2025-pnr-convention)

**UTAH, SANDY (Salt Lake City)**, April 24-26, 2025. 2025 Sn3 Symposium. Best Western Plus Cotton Tree Inn, 10695 S Auto Mall Drive.

Info: [sn3symposium.com](https://sn3symposium.com)

**VIRGINIA, FISHERSVILLE**, May 4, 2025. Shenandoah Valley Model Train and Railroading Show. Augusta Expo, 277 Expo Road.

Info: [www.acrrm.org/events/2025trainshow](https://www.acrrm.org/events/2025trainshow)

## Future 2025 by location

**AUSTRALIA, QUEENSLAND, BRISBANE**, August 22-24, 2025. Brisbane 2025, NMRA Australasian Regional Convention. Flight One, Qantas Drive, Archerfield.

Info: [nmra.org.au/nmra-ar-convention-2025](https://nmra.org.au/nmra-ar-convention-2025)

**AUSTRALIA, QUEENSLAND, TOOWOOMBA**, June 9, 2025. June 2025 Model Railway Open House, sponsored by the Toowoomba Model Railway Club, Inc. Toowoomba Showgrounds, Glenvale Road.

Info: [www.facebook.com/toowoombamodelrailwayclub](https://www.facebook.com/toowoombamodelrailwayclub)

**AUSTRALIA, QUEENSLAND, TOOWOOMBA**, September 13, 20, 27, 2025. 2025 Carnival of Trains Open House, sponsored by the Toowoomba Model Railway Club, Inc. Toowoomba Showgrounds, Glenvale Road.

Info: [www.facebook.com/toowoombamodelrailwayclub](https://www.facebook.com/toowoombamodelrailwayclub)

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

Info: [www.cptracks.ca/realrails2025.html](https://www.cptracks.ca/realrails2025.html)

**COLORADO, ESTES PARK**, September 20, 2025. Rails in the Rockies XXVIII, Estes Park Events Complex, 1125 Rooftop Way.

Info: [railsintherockies.org](https://railsintherockies.org)



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**ILLINOIS, COLLINSVILLE (St. Louis, MO)**, July 24-26, 2025. St. Louis Railroad Prototype Modeler Meet. 1 Gateway Center Drive.  
Info: [stlrpm.com](http://stlrpm.com)

**INDIANA, INDIANAPOLIS**, June 14, 2025. Naptown & White River Model Railroad Club Summer Open House and Yard Sale 2025. 1115 McDougal St.  
Info: [www.facebook.com/NaptownRR](https://www.facebook.com/NaptownRR)

**INDIANA, INDIANAPOLIS**, October 4, 2025. Indianapolis Train Show @ Garfield Park. Garfield Park Burello Family Center, 2345 Pagoda Dr.  
Info: [www.naptownrr.org/shows](http://www.naptownrr.org/shows)

**LOUISIANA, BATON ROUGE**, June 26-29, 2025. Blues Express 2025, NMRA Lone Star Regional Convention. Holiday Inn Baton Rouge South, 9990 Airline Way.  
Info: [bluesexpress2025.com](http://bluesexpress2025.com)

**MARYLAND, LINTHICUM (Baltimore)**, September 11-14, 2025. Mid-Atlantic Railroad Prototype Modelers Meet. DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Baltimore-BWI Airport.  
Info: [www.marpm.org](http://www.marpm.org)

**MICHIGAN, NOVI**, July 14-19, 2025. Station No. VI, 2025 NMRA National Convention. Sheraton Hotel, 21111 Haggerty Road.  
Info: [nmra2025.com](http://nmra2025.com)

**NEW HAMPSHIRE, CONCORD**, September 11-14, 2025. Concord Flyer - North Eastern Region NMRA Annual Convention, hosted by the Seacoast Division NMRA. Grappone Conference Center, 70 Constitution Avenue.  
Info: [conventions.nernmra.org/home/home-2025](http://conventions.nernmra.org/home/home-2025)

**OHIO, MIDDLEBURG HEIGHTS (Berea)**, October 4-5, 2025. 51st Annual Great Berea Train Show, hosted by the North Coast Division, Mid-Central Region, NMRA. Cuyahoga County Fairgrounds, 19201 Bagley Rd.  
Info: [thegreatbereatrainshow.org](http://thegreatbereatrainshow.org)

**OREGON, CHILOQUIN**, June 14-29, 2025. Train Mountain Triennial 2025. Train Mountain Railroad Park, 36941 South Chiloquin Road.

Info: [trainmountain.org](http://trainmountain.org)

**PENNSYLVANIA, MOUNT UNION**, July 18-20, 2025. Central Pennsylvania Shortlines RPM. Bricktown Museum, 300 W. Small St.

Info: [rpm.pennsyrr.com](http://rpm.pennsyrr.com)

**TENNESSEE, GATLINBURG**, September 17-20, 2025. Smoky Mountain Rails Convention, sponsored by the Southeastern Region of the NMRA. Glenstone Lodge, 504 Airport Rd.

Info: [2025serconvention.org](http://2025serconvention.org) ■

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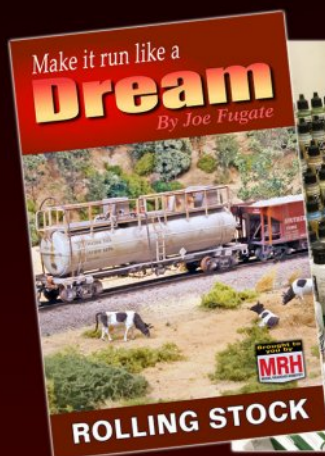
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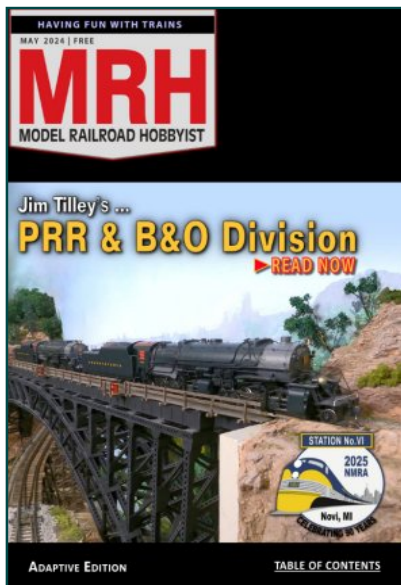
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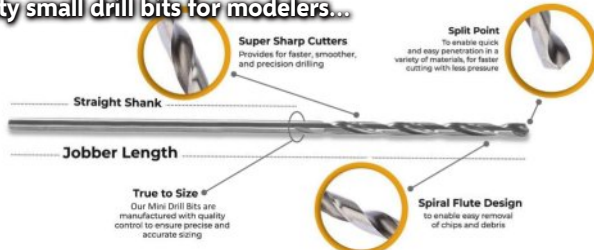
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