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AUGUST 2025 | FREE

MRH

MODEL RAILROAD HOBBYIST

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- Yard limits by the rule book
- Modeling urban area third rail
- Tom Thompson's ATSF layout

... and more inside!

Rick Bosma ...

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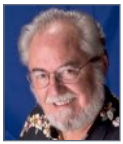
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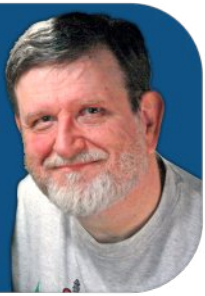


Model Railroad Hobbyist | August 2025

JOE FUGATE LOOKS AT THE HEALTH OF THE HOBBY AS OF 2025 ...

VIEW READER COMMENTS

I HAVE RECENTLY COME ACROSS SOME USEFUL INSIGHTS ON HOW THE MODEL RAILROADING HOBBY IS DOING. The concern that the hobby is dying keeps coming up on forums every so often. Let's take a look at some recent developments that allow us to judge how the hobby is doing as of 2025.

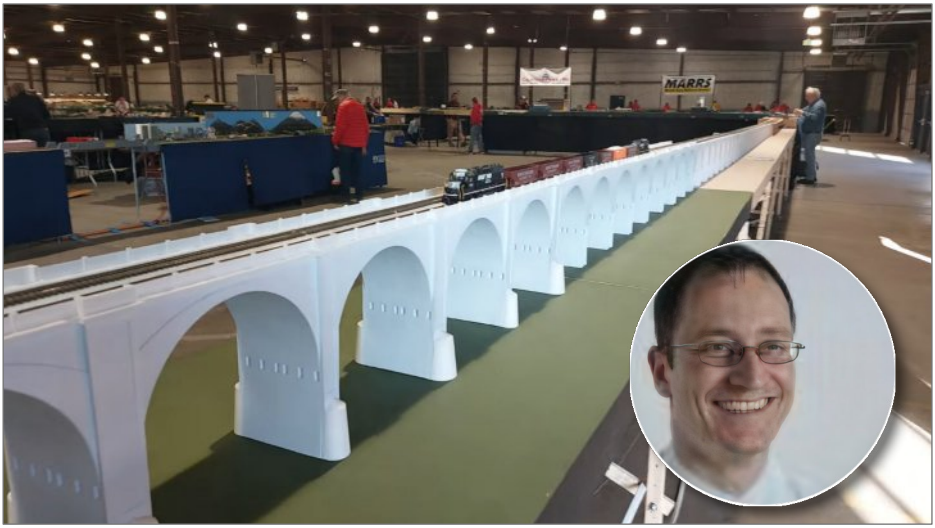
Along the way, I'm going to take a look at plastic kit modeling, a cousin to our model train hobby.

One big fear is that the hobby is aging and younger modelers are not entering the hobby any longer.

The 2025 NMRA National Convention

You may be aware that the NMRA has a social media person on staff and that they've been working to increase the NMRA's visibility on social media. One interesting statistic shared at the 2025 NMRA National in Novi, Michigan a few weeks ago suggests this strategy is working: fully 30% of the NMRA membership is now under 40.

I was surprised at this statistic, and I find it very encouraging. Gordy Robinson, current NMRA President, also shared that the organization is setting a goal to have this number reach 50% by 2035. By the way, 2035 is the 100th year



1. MRH forum regular Yaron Bandell brought his extensive Susquehanna Free-Mo bridge modules to the NMRA National Train show in Novi, MI. Some of Yaron's observations on Free-Mo membership trends show the hobby could be changing for the better.

anniversary of the NMRA and that would be great news at the NMRA Centennial to hear that they've achieved this goal. Even if they miss this goal and say they only get to 45%, that would still be great news.

I was talking with *MRH* forum regular Yaron Bandell at the NMRA National Train Show a few weeks back. He had taken his impressive Susquehanna bridge modules to the train show as part of a Free-mo layout there [1].

Yaron told me that he's been noticing the number of new members bringing Free-mo modules to the National Train Show now as compared to say 2020. He said there's been a dramatic increase in guys under thirty bringing Free-mo modules to the show in recent years.

ADVERTISEMENT

Yaron speculates that many younger modelers want to do the hobby but they don't have space for a layout. They discover Free-Mo and decide to build a module or two to satisfy their urge to do the hobby. He says approaches like Free-Mo or *MRH's* TOMA make doing the hobby a lot more achievable than the old traditional "fill-the-basement" approaches to having a layout.

So here's yet another data point that there's fresh new blood entering the hobby and we may have good reason to take heart. The hobby may be changing for the better as to age distribution.

Other age-related hobby anecdotes

Our news column editor, Richard Bale, has told me about the club he belongs to in southern California. Richard says

it has a number of new members, several of them in their 40s or younger.

Richard noted that most of them are modeling steam-to-diesel transition. This flies in the face of what I've seen discussed on modeling forums that folks tend to model what they see.

Richard asked these modelers why they're modeling steam-to-diesel transition. The answer?

Because it's the most interesting time in railroading. That seems to run counter to what many folks have said. It seems the ways you used to pick what to model may not always be true these days.

Take military modeling and plastic model diorama modeling. The most popular era remains World War II, even though none of those modelers ever saw the prototype in service. How can this be?

I have a theory about this: the reason is YouTube. There are hundreds of thousands of World War II history videos on YouTube. You can get deep dives on just about every specific kind of military equipment built for that time period.

The content from that period of military history is so extensive you can "vicariously experience" seeing this equipment in operation even though much of it was in operation before you were born. The ability to research and learn about this time period can be extremely engaging.

I can see wanting to experience this equipment in all three dimensions via military modeling with plastic model kits to be a very compelling option.

With today's tech of 3D printing, it's more possible than ever to explore modeling just about anything you may have interest in.

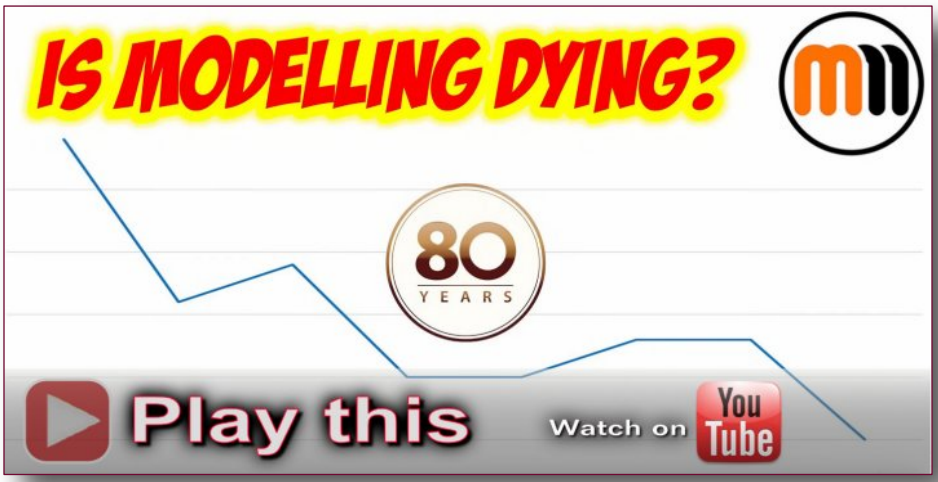
How is the hobby of plastic model kits doing?

Speaking of plastic model kits, Don Hanley (previous *MRH* Assistant Editor) sent me a YouTube video exploring the health of the plastic model kit hobby by **Mann's Model Moments**. See [2] if you want to watch it – the video runs for 33 minutes in total.

In this video, he explores the history of the plastic model kit hobby for the last 80 years. He looks at how many manufacturers there have been globally and how many total model kits have been made by decade.

Let me point out that if you go into various stores that used to have extensive plastic model kit sections, the size seems to have dwindled to a mere fraction of what it used to be.

That would lead you to believe the plastic kit hobby worldwide is on the skids and not doing so well.



2. This video discusses the health of the plastic model kit hobby based on trends over the last 80 years and explores whether or not it's dying.

Well, prepare to be surprised, even stunned!

Thanks to the internet, the plastic model kit business is thriving and it's larger that ever by a good measure.

If you look at the number of plastic model kits available in say 1985 to 2025, the number of kits has grown by almost 300%. The number of kit manufacturers worldwide has also grown dramatically since 1985.

In short, by all appearances, it looks like the plastic model kit business is thriving and doing better than ever. You can't look at what's available in local stores as any indication of how this hobby is doing. Thanks to the internet, it's a global market that's mushrooming.

The hobby looks like it's doing fine

Then we have the recent National Train Show in Novi, Michigan. For MRH, this has been our best train show ever. Several vendors I talked to said the same thing - the sales as the Novi Train Show blew the doors off almost every recent train show, including the

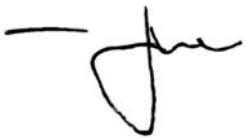
amazing Amherst Train Show in West Springfield, MA each January. That speaks volumes and bodes will for future NMRA National Train Shows.

All this anecdotal data taken together suggests the hobby in 2025 is doing just fine.

Setting the record straight

I need to correct something I've said in recent years regarding turnouts that have an NMRA Specs Compliance seal. Not only do Central Valley turnout ties and the Fast Tracks jigs have this approval (which I have stated previously), but the Proto:87 Stores turnout kits by Andy Reichart *also* have this NMRA Specs Compliance seal.

I wanted to set the record straight and give Andy credit where credit is due. All three of these firms' products help you build turnouts that completely comply with the NMRA turnout specs, yielding top-notch performing turnouts for your layout. ☑



Last issue likes

Most liked articles in **July 2025 issue** of *MRH* are:

1st Let's talk ops: All about yard limits
2nd Electrical Impulses: DCC dual power breaker: 2
3rd Tale of two water tanks: Water tank 1

Most liked articles in **July 2025 issue** of *Running Extra* ...

1st Limited Modeler: Upping your modeling game
2nd Getting Real: 10 lbs of ops in a 5 lb layout
3rd Atlas HO C-424 DCC sound conversion

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

Best of the MRH FORUM THIS MONTH

Forum MRH mrhmag.com

Model Railroad Hobbyist | August 2025

Compiled by JOE FUGATE

Car cards vs a switch list?

VIEW READER COMMENTS

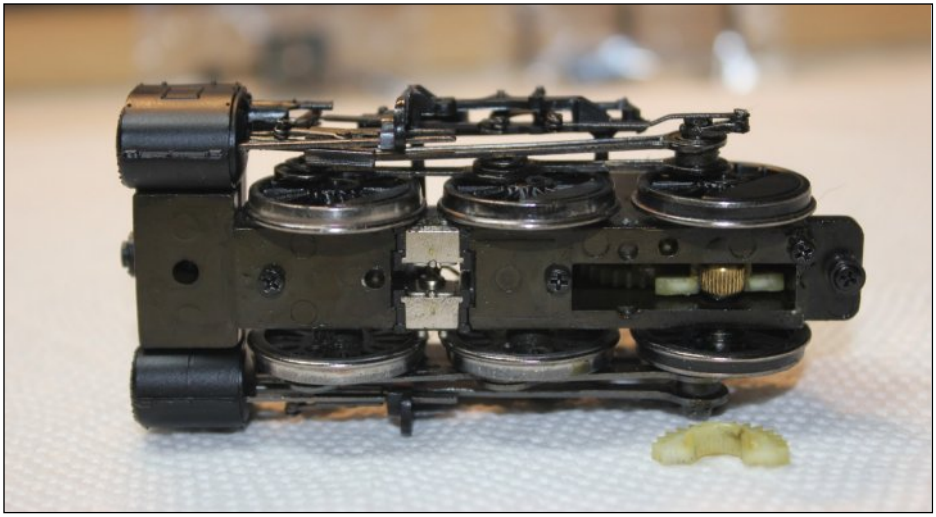
On a thread by MRH staffer Jeff Shultz, *MRH* Author Rob Spangler posted his take on car cards vs a switch list.

Rob says, "I don't view the fact CC&WB paperwork itself isn't 'realistic' as any more of a barrier to realism than the fact a prototype crew isn't using a bamboo skewer or a handheld throttle. Whatever's in the aisle is in the aisle."

See the full thread for the entire switch list vs card cards discussion.

View the full thread on the MRH website

▶ *MRH'S* MONTHLY GREAT MODELER POSTS



1. MRH forum member **Drewrail** (Andy Hauser) posted this photo of an articulated steamer with a broken gear. He describes the entire process of getting to the problem and how to replace the (now out of production) broken gear by making his own gear.

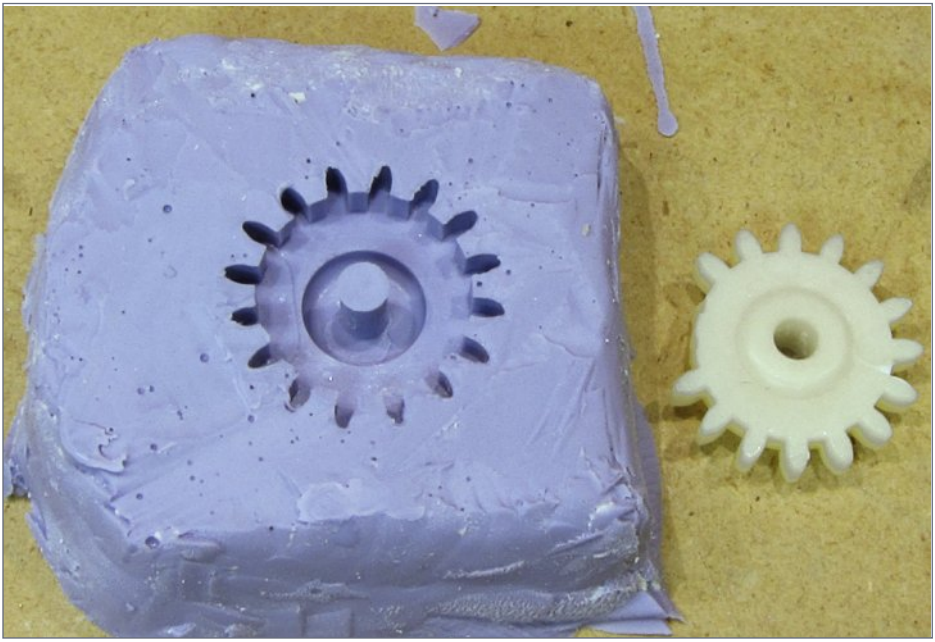
3D printing a main drive gear replacement

MRH forum member **Drewrail** (Andy Hauser) started a thread on disassembling and repairing his Broadway Limited N&W Class A 2-6-6-4 with a broken main drive gear. This gear is out of stock at BLI, so he needs to fabricate his own gear.

Andy shows how he removed one driver, then pushed the axle as well as the remaining small gear and drive off the frame. He also marked the drivers so they went back on quartered properly.

Seeing the entire process in step-by-step photos is helpful. Andy designed a replacement gear using CAD and 3D printing. Read the full thread for all the juicy details!

View the full thread on the MRH website



2. MRH Author Bernd Fanghanel presents us with a problem: a gear with broken teeth. He then proceeds to document his solution in photos! He shows how he used a clever casting trick to rotate the gear and get a master with all the teeth in place.

Casting a replacement gear instead?

MRH Author Bernd Fanghanel points out in another thread that he doesn't have the ability to 3D print a replacement for a broken gear like Andy, so he shows how he instead generated a master of an intact gear from the broken one and then cast a replacement gear [2].

Bernd uses a very clever process and documents it with step-by-step photos. If you don't have the ability to easily 3D print a gear as Andy Hauser does back in [1], then Bernd's tips for getting an intact master and casting a replacement gear could be your answer.

View the full thread on the *MRH* website

Recent photo fun thread

These images posted on a recent *MRH* forum Photo Fun thread show some some fun "just passing by" photos.

View list of recent Photo Fun threads

3. MRH forum member **NSCedartownDistrict** (Baxter B.) says, "Modified a Rapido GP38 to model one of the NS ex-SOU GP38ACs. The blower housing and dynamic housing were 3D printed to match 2846."

4. Forum member **gmpullman** (Edmund T.) posted this eye-catching night photo of the boss "just passing by" in the railroad's business car. We love a well done night photo: kudos to Ed for his superb modeling, lighting, and photography. ☑

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Railroad Standard Operating rules and yard limits

My last column on yard limits generated a lot of good discussion as well as some critical comments. In this column and the next one, let's dive deeper into yard limits and provide additional insights for those new to more prototype-based operation.

Several mentioned I should have quoted rule 93 on yard limits by explicitly referencing railroading's *Standard Code of Operations.*

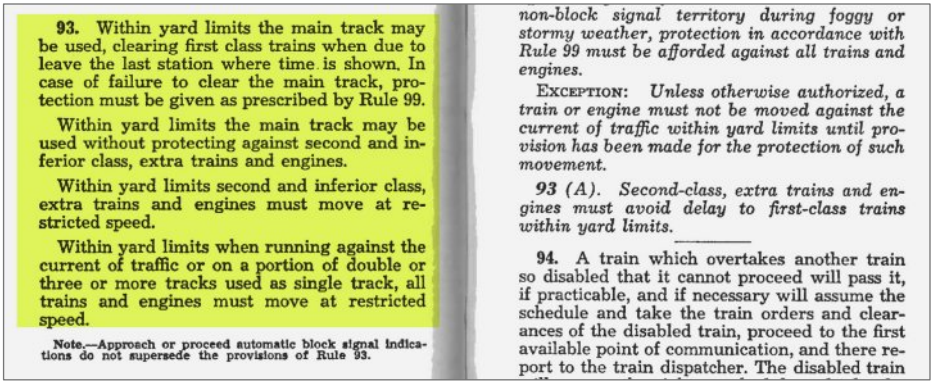
Newbies to realistic operations may not know about this rule book.

During the early years of railroading (1850s -1870s), a lot of railroad operation was conducted with just a few loose rules.

Each railroad developed their own operating rules and as long as the railroads remained regional, they could manage. But by the 1880's, many of the nation's largest railroads had grown to a thousand miles or more. Traffic increased and with it came serious pile ups injuring or killing thousands of people each year in railroad mishaps.

By 1887, the American Railroad Association used its collective wisdom to issue a *Standard Code of Train Rules.* At first, some railroads resisted adopting these outsider-imposed rules, but all the nation's railroads fell in line by the mid 1890s and adopted the rules.

The rule numbers varied across the early editions until they were fully standardized around 1906. These rules lasted until 1985 when sev-



93. Within yard limits the main track may be used, clearing first class trains when due to leave the last station where time is shown. In case of failure to clear the main track, protection must be given as prescribed by Rule 99.

Within yard limits the main track may be used without protecting against second and inferior class, extra trains and engines.

Within yard limits second and inferior class, extra trains and engines must move at restricted speed.

Within yard limits when running against the current of traffic or on a portion of double or three or more tracks used as single track, all trains and engines must move at restricted speed.

Note.—Approach or proceed automatic block signal indications do not supersede the provisions of Rule 93.

non-block signal territory during foggy or stormy weather, protection in accordance with Rule 99 must be afforded against all trains and engines.

EXCEPTION: *Unless otherwise authorized, a train or engine must not be moved against the current of traffic within yard limits until provision has been made for the protection of such movement.*

93 (A). Second-class, extra trains and engines must avoid delay to first-class trains within yard limits.

94. A train which overtakes another train so disabled that it cannot proceed will pass it, if practicable, and if necessary will assume the schedule and take the train orders and clearances of the disabled train, proceed to the first available point of communication, and there report to the train dispatcher. The disabled train

1. Rule 93 on yard limits from a 1950 edition of the Standard Code of Operating Rules used by many railroads.

eral operating officers from various railroads met and produced the modern General Code of Operating Rules (GCOR).

The GCOR rules have completely rewritten these rules, ending the familiar rule numbers common in the Standard Code and its variations.

This brings us to rule 93, the Yard Limits rule. From the old Standard Code:

Yard limits are sections of main track, typically identified by signs or special instructions, where Rule 93 applies.

Under Rule 93:

- *Trains do not need a train order or dispatcher's permission to operate within yard limits.*
- *Trains must operate at restricted speed, prepared to stop within half the range of vision, unless the main track is known to be clear by a green signal indication. Trains operating under Rule 93 must clear the time of first-class trains.*
- *Trains are relieved of flag protection against other trains and engines.*

Basically, Yard Limits expedites regular switching and movements performed on the main track without requiring direct intervention by the dispatcher for each movement or use. More next month! ☑

WHAT'S NEAT column

Model Railroad Hobbyist | August 2025

KEN PATTERSON COVERS THIS MONTH:

VIEW READER COMMENTS

- PENNSY B6SB 0-6-0 FROM BLI
- BACHMANN'S PLASTICVILLE GAS STATION
- TOM THOMPSON'S HO SCALE ATSF ALBUQUERQUE DIVISION, 3RD DISTRICT LAYOUT
- MODIFYING THE BASEMENT PAINT BOOTH

click to play video

PHOTOS AND VIDEO OF SUPERB MODELS

FOR THE AUGUST "WHAT'S NEAT," Ken shows a new Broadway Limited B6sb 0-6-0 he's been photographing and running on his layout, begins a build project involving Bachmann's Plasticville Gas Station model, visits Tom Thompson's HO scale ATSF layout, and moves the ventilation fan for his paint booth outdoors.

Broadway Limited's Pennsylvania RR B6sb 0-6-0

1. Ken's been enjoying photographing this BLI Pennsy B6sb 0-6-0 steam locomotive in natural sunlight in his backyard.

VIEW READER COMMENTS

2. He's also been running the locomotive around his layout, pulling a short train around at 9 mph all day.
Info: broadway-limited.com

Bachmann Plasticville Gas Station build project

3. Ken's been asking for photos from modelers who have built the Plasticville Gas Station model, which probably dates from the 1950s or 1960s, and made it look realistic or turned it into some-thing else entirely. Here is a model that was built and detailed by Rick Covert.

4. Mike Budde turned it into an abandoned gas station, all boarded-up.

5. As a snap-together kit, it's a good starter kit for young hands, with no gluing required, as Ken's girlfriend's son Landon demonstrates. Ken is asking for more photos of builds using the kit to be messaged to the "What's Neat this Week" Facebook page.
Info: shop.bachmanntrains.com
Info: www.facebook.com/WNTWPodcast

Tom Thompson's ATSF Albuquerque Division, 3rd District

6. The "What's Neat" crew traveled to the Chicago area some time ago, and Tom Thompson's ATSF Albuquerque Division, 3rd District is one of the layouts they visited. Tom, a lifetime railfan, is attempting to model the exact passenger train consists of the Santa Fe trains running in 1954.

7. A signature scene on the 3rd District is the Canyon Diablo bridge, built by another modeler, donated to a club that couldn't use it, and acquired by Tom. Just to this side of it are the pilings for a previous version of the bridge.

8. Tom's operating sessions include TT&TO operations with car cards and a fast clock, and involve up to 20 operators. Here the trains line up in Gallup staging for his next operation session. Some of the passenger trains have second sections.

9. The 3rd District was originally envisioned as a single-deck layout, but as its popularity grew with local modelers operating on it, a second deck was added.

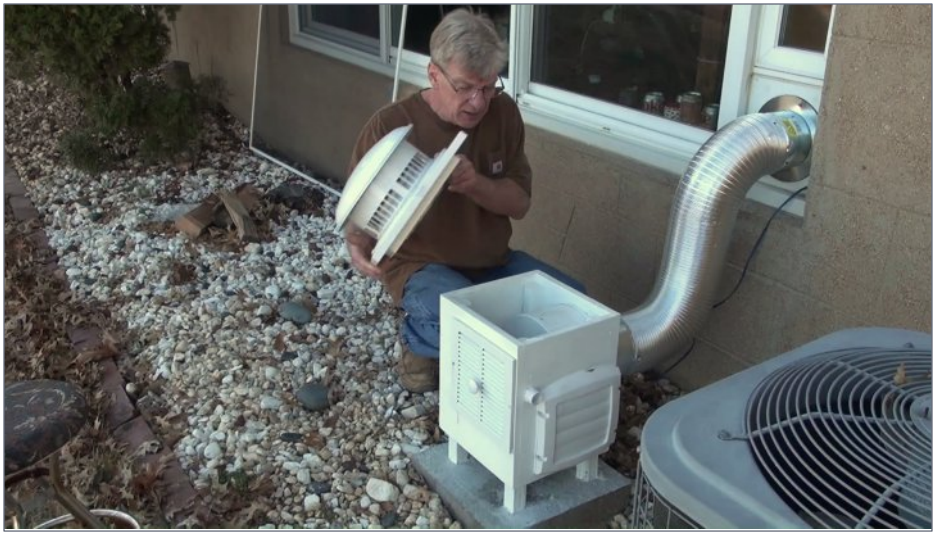
10. An animated cinder mine at Winona models one on the prototype that ships cinders to Phoenix for use in making cinder blocks.

11. Ken was impressed with the accuracy of the colors used in the scenery.

Modifying the basement paint booth

12. While Ken's 600-800 cubic-feet-per-minute (CFM) squirrel-cage fan on his paint booth has been working fine, it is noisy. So, Ken decided to move it back outside where the noise won't be as much of an issue.

13. While visiting a local home improvement store, Ken discovered a 160 CFM fan that is mounted inside a piece of ductwork. He wondered if it would pull enough air to be useful. The results of his testing indicated that it might work for a small paint booth, but its open motor design was a potential fire risk with solvent-based paints.



14. Ken uses six-inch ducting for his paint booth, and he built an attractive box with lots of vents for use outside. Most of the vents and the ductwork are attached with magnets for ease of access in maintaining the fan.

Click on the video link at the beginning of the article to see several views of the Pennsy 0-6-0, several different versions of the Bachmann Plasticville gas station, a full tour of Tom Thompson's Albuquerque Division, 3rd District layout, and Ken's project to exile his paint booth fan outside of the basement. ☑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LED lighting for DCC locomotives

Electrical Impulses

1. With the methods here, you can install LED lighting in any DCC locomotive from Z to G scale. These methods apply for diesel, steam or electric locos.

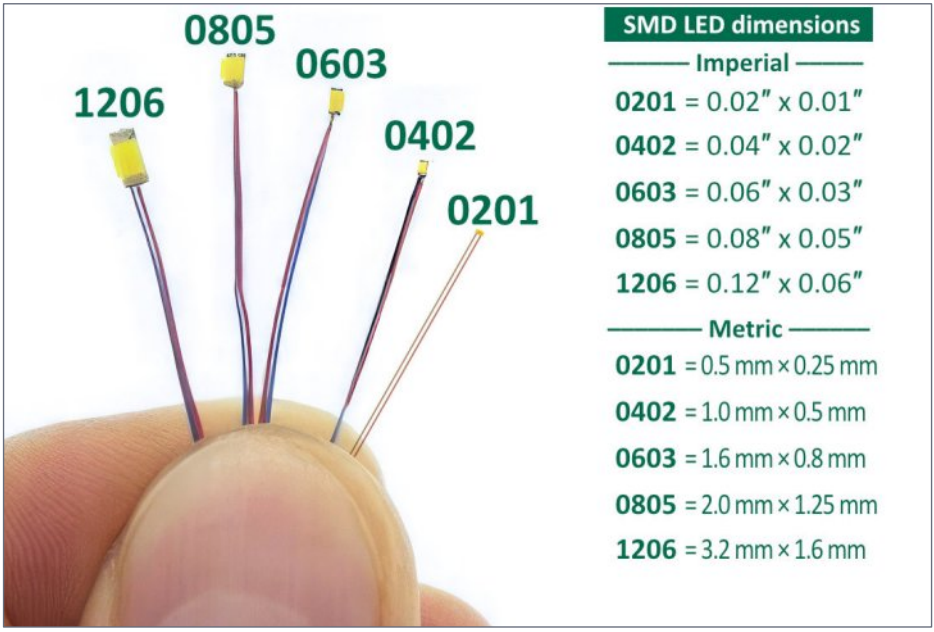
VIEW READER COMMENTS

Model Railroad Hobbyist | August 2025

All photographs and diagrams by the author

JOE FUGATE SHOWS UNIVERSAL METHODS FOR MAKING LED HEADLIGHT LENSES FOR ANY LOCO IN ANY SCALE...

ONCE TINY SMD LEDS APPEARED, it became practical to finally install LED lighting even in Z and N scale. Looking at [2], you can see the tiny 0201 SMD LED can allow doing working headlights even in Z scale. Of course the larger LEDs (0402 to 1206) work great from HO to G scale.



2. Common pre-wired SMD LED sizes. Always get pre-wired!

SOURCING HEADLIGHT LENSES

The trick has been adding a nice headlight lens to these tiny LEDs. I showed a technique for gluing SMD LEDs to resin MV lenses in the April 2020 *Running Extra*. An MV lens is a static "reflective lens" simulating a headlight. Modelers from model cars to model airplanes to model railroaders use these lenses.

MV lenses make great SMD headlight lenses since they come in a lot of different sizes and colors – you can find a size that fits nicely into just about any headlight hole or casting. Of course they are static and do not light up unless modified.

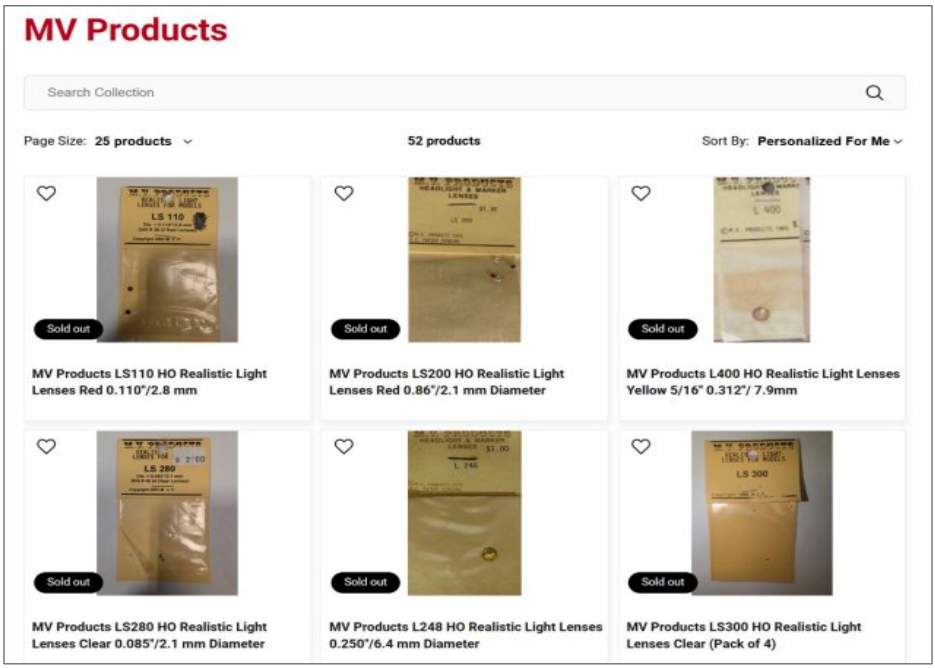
Unfortunately, MV products went out of business several years ago and these lenses are no longer made. You can still find them on eBay now and then, but they're getting harder and harder to find [3].

After a lot of searching, I finally found a good alternative: half-round clear rhinestones [4] and half-round tiny silver "pearls" [5]. These tiny stones are used to decorate apparel and even to add glitz to fingernails.

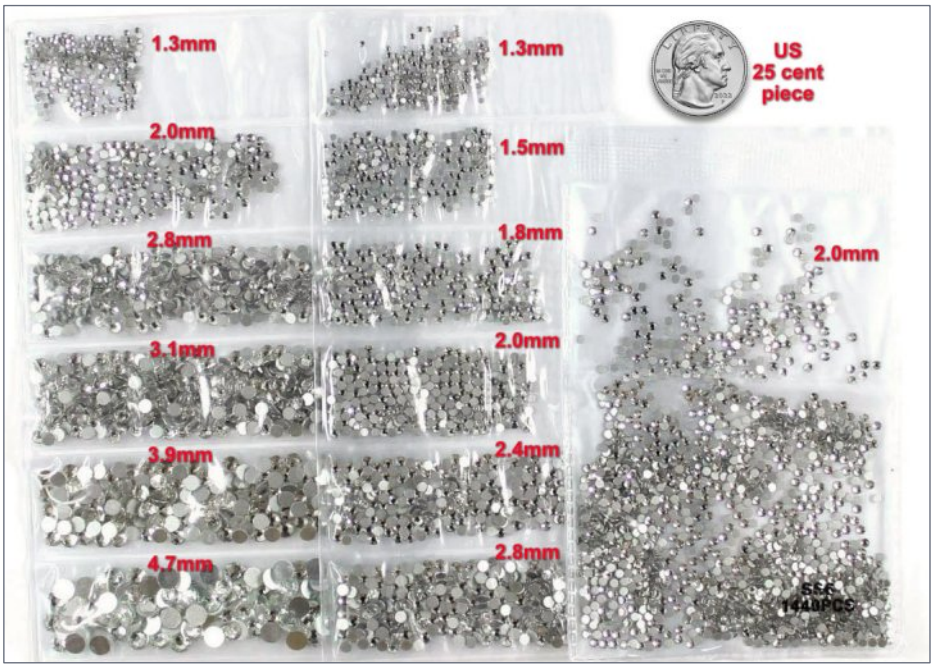
The nice thing is they're available in a lot of sizes all the way down to 1mm. Thanks to their widespread use as decorative additions to attire and so on, they are quite affordable, often sold in quantities of a hundred or more for a few dollars.

In the shopping list to this article, I provide sources for these tiny resin stones. Let's look at the process I use to add the SMD LEDs to the back of these "lenses". These methods work in any scale, just get the size lens you need, and you're good to go.

Article text continues on page 5 ...



3. MV lenses used to be a great source of headlight lenses, but they have been discountinued and are getting hard to find.



4. This rhinestone kit includes sizes from 1.3mm to 4.7mm, which should work for N scale and up as headlight lenses.

5. These half-round dome "silver pearls" work superbly as dummy headlight lenses, coming in suitably small sizes (and larger). However, they are opaque, so they won't work as SMD LED headlight lenses.

PREPARING THESE TINY LENSES

Of the two types of small lenses that I found as possible headlight lenses, I use the rhinestone lenses [4] because they are clear. The half-round silver "pearl" lenses [5] are opaque and work as dummy lenses only – I cover working with the dummy lenses in the next section.

Working with these tiny rhinestones can be tricky, so I've developed some techniques that make handling them easier.

I get a scrap of wood (6″ piece of 2x4) and apply a 2" long piece of white foam double-stick tape to it. I place the lenses round side down and flat side up on the foam tape [6].

I also make a tool for manipulating these lenses by applying some masking tape sticky side out to a small paintbrush handle end [6].

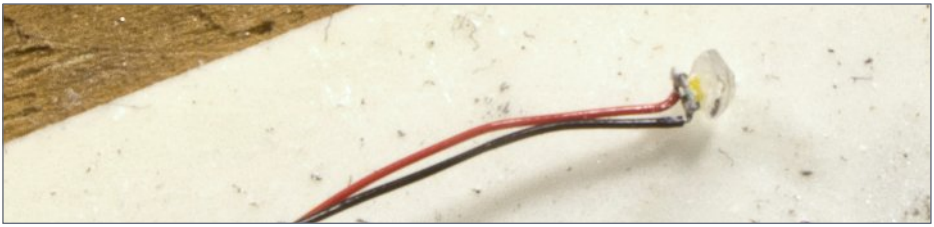
6. When working with the rhinestone lenses, I apply some white double-sided sticky foam tape to a small scrap of wood. I also add some masking tape sticky side out to the end of a paintbrush to make a placement tool. This tool easily picks up the lenses and places them wherever I want. You can see four 1.8mm rhinestone lenses placed flat back up. The two lenses on the right have the silver scraped off the back.

I find it helps to remove some of the masking tape's stickiness by pressing it against my hand several times before using it. If the tape is too sticky, it can be hard to get the lenses to come loose when placing them on the model. Ideally, you want the tape just sticky enough to pick up the lens, but not so sticky that it won't release easily.

If the lens won't release easily, keep pressing the paint handle's tape end against your hand to remove still more stickiness. Once you find the sweet spot of minimal stickiness, this tool makes it a real pleasure placing these lenses on the model because the lenses can be easily picked up and will release easily from the tool end.

Take the rhinestone lenses you want to use for LED headlights and place them round face down and flat side up on the double-stick tape [6]. To make them easier to work with, I like to take the flat end of a microbrush handle and press them hard down into the foam tape.

7. When gluing the LED to the back of the lens, I use these tools: a glue looper applicator and a small plastic sqeeze bottle with a needle end containing small amount of superglue accelerator.



8. Here I have superglued an 0402 SMD LED to the back of a 1.8mm rhinestone that has had the backside silvering scraped off with a hobby knife blade. See the text for details on how to do this gluing job with relative ease.

Next, I take a hobby knife blade, and carefully scrape the silvering off the back of the lens. Sometimes the silvering will be a bit stubborn, just keep scraping and most of it will come off. While getting it all off is preferred, a few stubborn flakes around the edges don't hurt anything as long as the center is clear. See the two lenses on the right of [6].

Adding the SMD LED to the Lens

Next comes gluing the LED to the back of the lens. For my HO SD9, I selected 1.8mm lenses backed by 0402 LEDs.

I use thin superglue, a Looper glue applicator, and some superglue accelerator put into a small plastic squeeze bottle [7]. Put just a quarter-inch of accelerator into the bottom of the squeeze bottle so it doesn't flow out too fast. The shopping list link at the end of this article has where to get these.

I prepare the LED by bending the LED end at a right angle to the wire leads. If you look carefully at [8], you can see the right angle bend. This positions the LED face for gluing to the back of the lens.

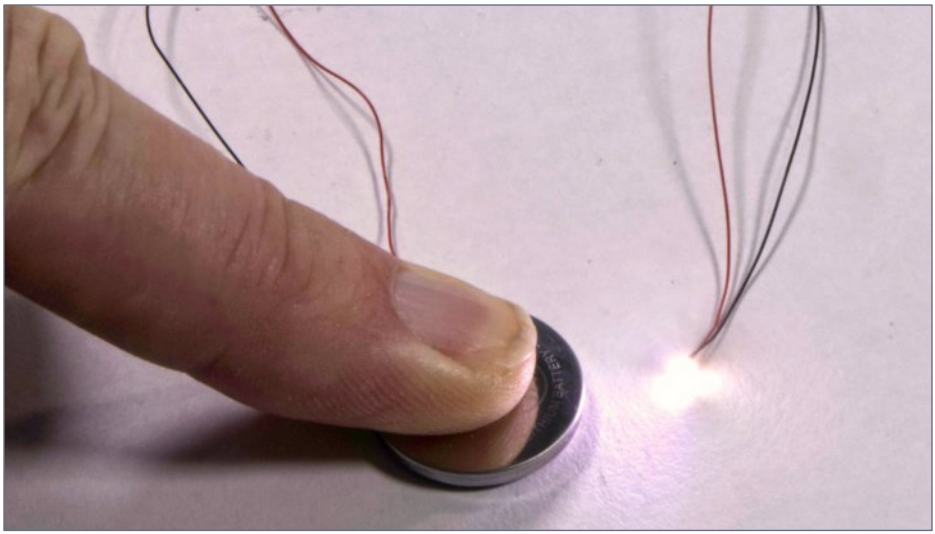
I put some thin superglue onto a scrap plastic bag and use the Looper to apply a drop to the back of a lens. With one hand, I grab the squeeze bottle of accelerator. While wearing my Optivisor, I use the other hand to carefully place the LED right in the middle of the flat lens back and then add a drop of accelerator. Done! See [8].

Don't worry about getting the LED perfectly in the center. Even if it's slightly off-center, that won't hurt anything.

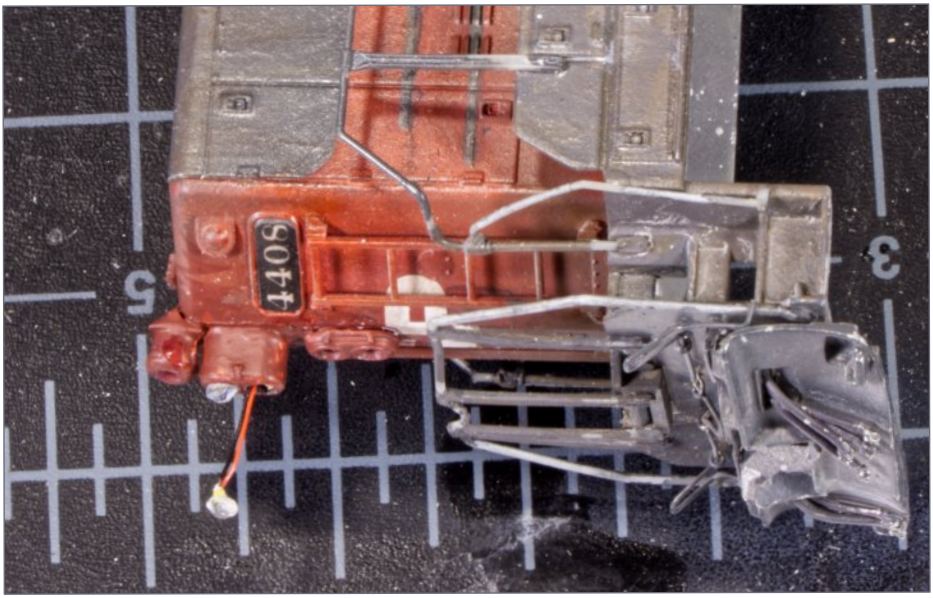
I repeat this process until I get all the lenses I'm going to need for my locomotive. Once I'm done, I paint the back of each headlight with some silver paint to restore the silver lens backing look and to somewhat disguise any of the yellow SMD face.

Once I have completed all the lenses, I take a 3V coin battery, and apply the red lead to the top plus (+) side of the battery and the black lead to the bottom minus (–) side of the battery to make sure each LED headlight works.

For 1.8mm lenses, I drilled a #51 (1.7mm) hole for each light in the casting. Then I slipped the wires through each hole and dry-fit each lens into the casting [8]. Once I'm happy everything is going to fit fine, I apply a drop of canopy glue to the hole and press the lens into place.



9. Once I've glued the LEDs to the backs of the lenses, I take a 3V coin battery and test each headlight to make sure it works. I find warm white LEDs look the most natural.



10. Dry-fitting the lenses into the loco's gyralight housing.

11. Here are the headlight lenses installed in the nose of the loco. I still need to install the dummy red lens in the top Mars light. In a super closeup you can just barely see some of the yellow LED faces among the silver painted back of the lens. From a short distance away, you can't see these at all. And these lenses look great when lit [1].

I like to use canopy glue because it remains flexible, and forms a soft but firm bond with the lens and the headlight casting – and it dries totally clear. If I ever need to press the lens out to replace it, it comes out easily. Once all the lenses have been placed, I once more check the loco to see that it looks good.

If you look up close with a camera as in [11], you may barely be able to see the yellow LED face on the back of the headlight lens. Painting the back of the headlight lenses with silver paint before installing them makes it hard to see any of the yellow LED faces from a short distance away. And when lit, the LED lenses look great [1].

This method will work for any headlight, whether on diesels, steamers, or electric locos. It will work for headlights in Z, N, HO, S, O, and G scales.

With Z and N, you will often want to use 1.3mm lenses and 0201 SMD LEDs for your headlights.

The other option in these smaller scales when you need a still smaller lens is to install a 0201 LED into a small ~#70 hole drilled in the center back of the headlight depression and to fill the depression with a "lens" from a small drop of canopy glue, since it dries clear.

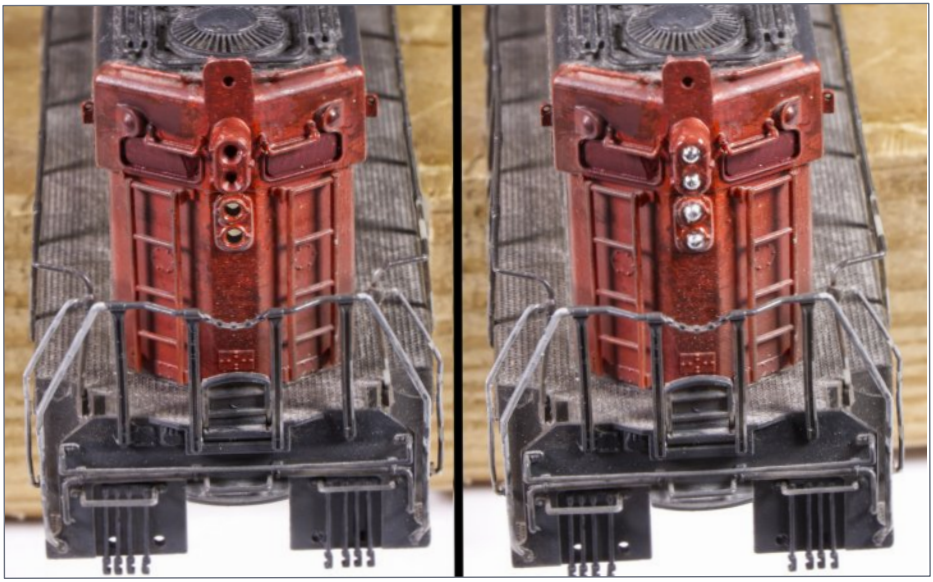
Doing dummy headlights

On the rear end of most of my locos, I usually install dummy lenses for any headlights, since I tend not to run my locos rear end forward. For dummy lenses, I use the tiny silver "pearl" lenses since they do a great job replicating the defunct MV lenses.

I use the same placement tool – masking tape sticky side out on the end of a paintbrush handle. I also put masking tape sticky side up to hold the lenses in place and keep them from getting lost on the workbench [12]. I press on the masking tape several times with my fingers to remove most of the stickiness so it's easy to pull the lens from the tape for placement.

To install these lenses, I drill out the headlight casting with a #54 drill, then install 1.5mm lenses in the hole with canopy glue [13].

12. To work with the dummy headlight lenses, I use the same placement tool, but I just use ordinary masking tape sticky side up to hold them.



13. I have drilled out the castings with a #54 drill on the left, and then glued 1.5mm “pearl” lenses in place with canopy glue on the right. Per prototype photos, the top Mars light is missing on the rear of 4408 in the era I model.

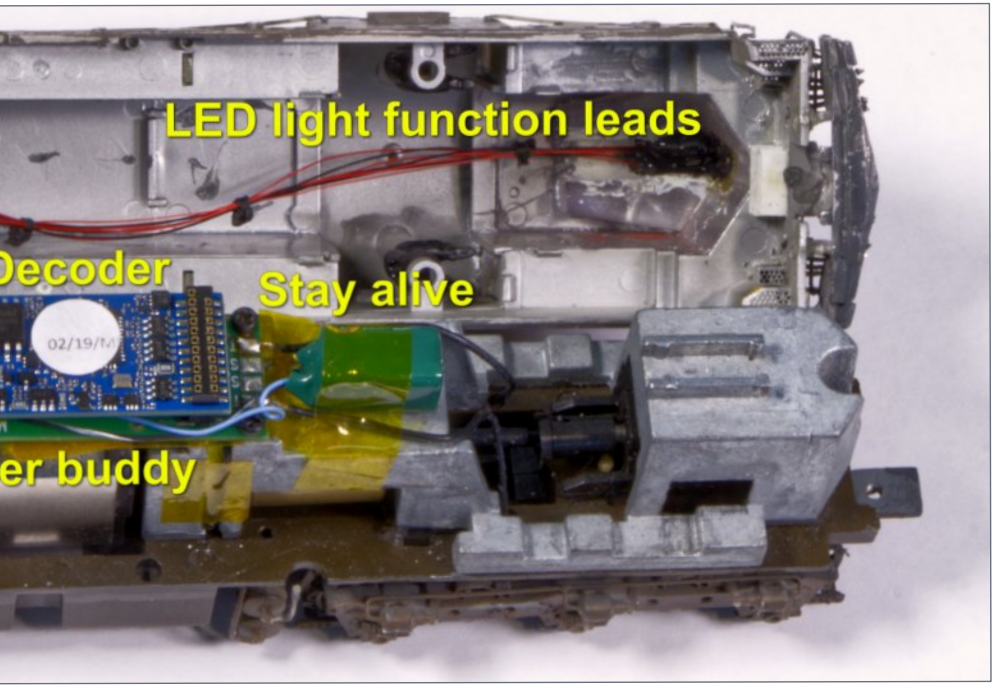
14. To manage unruly headlight function lead wires, I like to use a Decoder Buddy on the install and tie the function lead wires into a nice little cable.

TAMING UNRULY WIRES

When doing a headlight install in a locomotive, I like to use a Decoder Buddy with a 21-pin sound decoder. The Decoder Buddy has a nice removable function lead plug, making it easy to separate the shell from the chassis when needed.

I use waxed black thread to tie off the LED leads into a nice cable as you can see in [14]. I also like to add black liquid electrical tape along where the leads penetrate the shell. This blocks out any light leaks, and it secures the leads in place so they won't easily pull the LED lose from the back of the lens if accidentally tugged. ☑

Get this article's shopping list here.



15. The final result is some nice looking warm headlights when lit. I set the LED option in my ESU Loksound loco decoders for a better look, and I also adjust down the brightness as needed, especially for the steady-on lower headlights. I adjust the upper gyralights to give a satisfying bright flash as they oscillate.

MRH MARKETPLACE

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Crossing the scenery divide with a practice module

Rick Bosma demonstrates a strategy for overcoming scenicking anxieties ...

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GEXR 3393 rumbles across a well-scenicked rural crossing on the GEXR Guelph Subdivision.

Model Railroad Hobbyist | August 2025

When I first decided to model the Goderich and Exeter Guelph Subdivision, I knew many model railroaders attempt to model real trains running through specific settings. The availability of exquisitely detailed locomotives and rolling stock from many manufacturers easily meets this goal. The great structure kits make that portion achievable with a few evenings spent with sprue cutters, glue, and paint.

However, even with supplies from Woodland Scenics, Noch, and others, creating a realistic scene can still be challenging and intimidating. I've been astonished with the realistic scenery of many layouts, but left with no clue on how to achieve such results myself. It's no surprise that many in-progress model railroads are stuck in a continuous state of modeling the plywood-Pacific region, with only wood and wiring visible, and no trees.

My own railroad has been in a state somewhere between these two extremes. It has ground cover and green static grass, but the results were not very convincing. To try to overcome this, I undertook a module project to understand what I was missing.

My project started with carefully examining prototype photos and asking what's actually there. Let's take a look [1, 2, 3, 4].

1. Grade crossings involve more than just a road. Both the track and the road have ditches on either side for drainage. These oft-overlooked features give a lot of character and realism when incorporated in modeling.

2. Fills on the corners where the road and the track meet give space for crossing bucks, power lines, and a utility shack housing the control circuitry. There is also space to park a signal worker's truck.

3. A closer look reveals that, while the pavement continues between the rails, there are rubber spacers between the asphalt and the rail to control the gap for the train wheel flanges.

4. Here we can see that the road and track are both several feet higher than any of the surrounding fields. There is gravel between the pavement and the grass.

To recreate this scene, I started with a piece of ½″ plywood measuring 14″x24″. In the center, I glued a piece of ¾″ plywood that was 2″ wide to form the sub-roadbed [5].

The utility shack in [2] was set back far enough from the road and track that a railroad service truck could be parked there. This area was incorporated when the pieces for the road were cut and placed.

Since the road sloped up from its main grade, I used ½″ plywood, cut 3½″ wide [6]. This is just slightly wider than a country road, but allows for the small shoulder and the gravel that is usually present between the pavement and the grass.

I cut ¼″ plywood for the fields since they were all lower than the road. I left 1″ gaps between the field cutouts and the road and track pieces to allow for drainage ditches [7]. Finally, I cut rectangles of ½″ plywood to provide a level base for crossbucks.

5. The module base with sub-roadbed installed.

6. The ½″ plywood cutouts for the roads and railroad service truck easement are in place.

7. Field cutouts are in place.

Finally, small rectangles of ½″ plywood were cut to provide a level base for the eventual installation of crossbucks [8].

I used Fusion 360 to design 3D models of the rubber spacers between the pavement and the code 83 track, and printed them with my 3D printer. (If you don't have a 3D printer, you could achieve the same things with a few strips of styrene.) I painted them with Tamiya flat black (XF-1), and used CA to glue them to the ties [9, 10].

To prepare for pouring the "asphalt," I made a dam from scrap pieces of styrene [11], and then filled the remaining rectangular box area using Woodland Scenics Smooth-It. I used a cotton swab to clean any excess off the rails or in the wheel flange gap while the Smooth-It was still wet.

8. Blocks of ½″ plywood for crossbucks are in place.

9. Painted 3D-printed “rubber“ inserts.

10. The 3D-printed rubber spacers glued to the track.

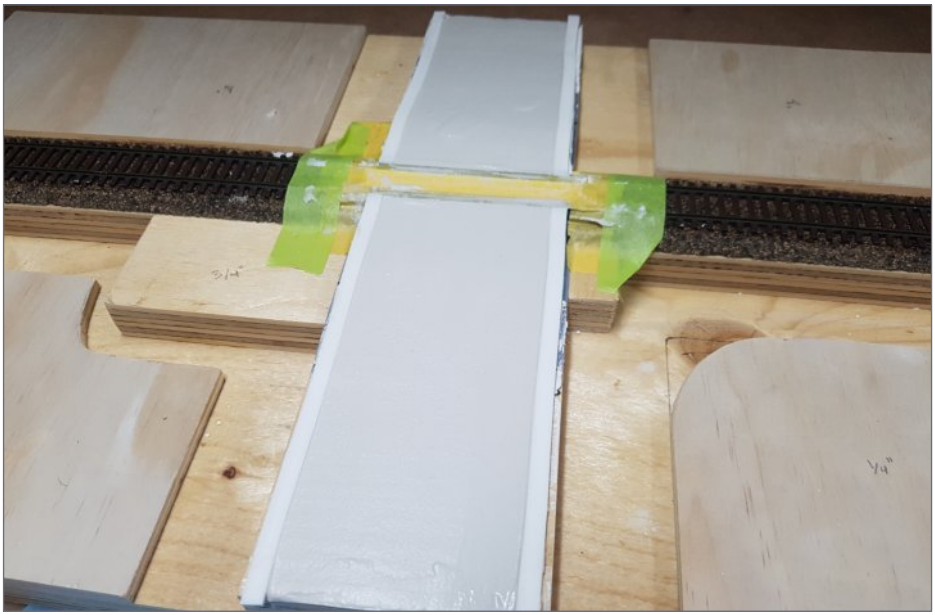
Since the road was lower than the track, I needed a ramp to gain height. I created forms in Fusion 360 by drawing smooth, curved ramps to go from the ½″ road height to the height of the track ties, giving them a flange so they could be held in place with track nails.

After 3D-printing the ramps, I drilled-out the nail holes with a small bit. Once the ramps were in place, I poured and leveled more Smooth-it, and let it dry [12].

To create the final road surface, I used Woodland Scenics Paving Tape to mark the edges of the road. The curved ramps that were used for the first layer were wide enough to allow the paving tape to go directly from the plywood, all the way to the plastic inserts next to the rails. Once again, Smooth-It was used to fill this area [13].

11. Styrene dams for the Smooth-It “Asphalt” are in place.

12. The 3D-printed ramps are in place.



13. Woodland Scenics Paving Tape marked the edges of the road.

I started to color the pavement by applying a coat of Woodland Scenics Asphalt paint (ST1453). This got the road close to what I wanted, but the surface was too uniform. To add variation, I airbrushed a light coat of Tamiya Ocean Gray (XF-82) and a few spots of Mr. Color flat black (no. 33) [14]. The goal was to provide a light dusting in various areas to break up the monotony.

I applied a coat of Tamiya red brown (XF-64) to the track. This did a decent job of simulating the rusted look of many secondary tracks [15]. Once this dried, I cleaned the tops of the rails using my trusty Bright Boy.

In preparation for adding the landforms that would represent the drainage ditches, I covered the road and tracks in painter's tape [16]. I mixed up a batch of Sculptamold and applied it to the ditch areas with a putty knife.

14. The painted road.

15. The track was painted.

16. Sculptamold formed the side grades.

I used my wet index finger to get a smooth finish at the bottom of the ditches. I also made sure to create nice gradual slopes next to the track, as well as the areas around the bases for the crossbucks, and the utility shack.

After the Sculptamold was thoroughly dry, I painted all the landforms with dark brown latex paint [17]. This would ensure there were no white spots to ruin the look, in case the ground cover didn't cover everything.

After removing the tape, I ballasted the track with medium gray ballast from Woodland Scenics.

I applied full-strength white glue to the sides of the ditch areas, and applied 4mm and 6mm static grass with my Scenic King static grass applicator. I avoided applying glue to the bottom of the ditch, as I wanted this to have a brown, muddy look [18].

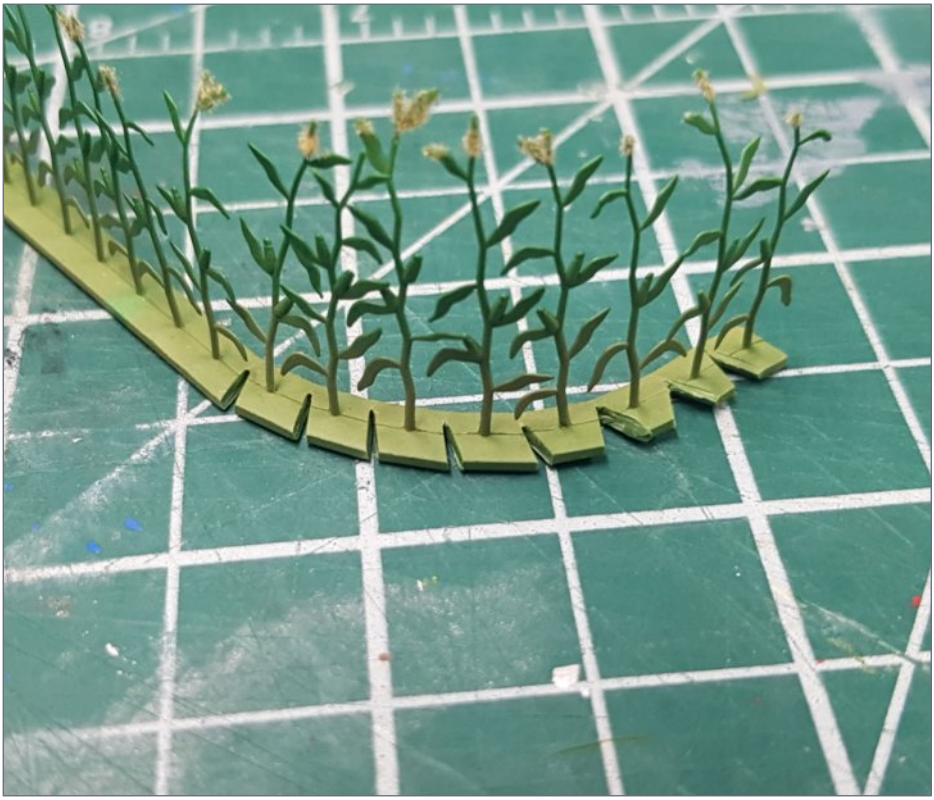
17. Landforms were painted dark brown.

18. Static grass in place. The brown ditch bottom was deliberate to represent mud.

19. The first field was created by brushing white glue and sprinkling sifted dirt.

After the glue dried, I created the first field by applying a coat of white glue, and sprinkling on sifted dirt from my garden [19]. I "cooked" the dirt in a toaster oven for an hour after it sifting to ensure there were no critters left in there. I do NOT recommend doing this in your kitchen, due to the odor!

To create the corn field, I used Bush Corn Field kits. I followed the kit's instructions to bend the plant leaves for a natural look, and applied glue with a micro brush before applying the flocking to represent the corn's tassels [20].



20. I bent the leaves and applied the corn's tassels. To curve the plants in the corner of the field, I used rail nippers to cut notches on one side of the base.

I grew up on a farm, so I'm aware some farmers make several laps around the outside of the field during planting, so instead of all rows ending in parallel lines, some curve in the field corners. I used Xuron rail nippers to partially cut through the base of the corn plant pieces to allow the corn plant base to curve to represent this look.

I proceeded to plant one row at a time, using white glue, and sprinkled dirt over the base of the corn pieces as I went along [21]. Unfortunately, I ran out of plants before completely covering the field, but it was a good experiment to understand how this could be made to look good on a permanent layout.

21. The corn rows are laid out, with the corners following a curve at the field's edge.

To simulate a soybean field in mid-summer, I used dark green clumpy ground foam to cover one of the other fields [22]. This was quite simple, as I just applied glue to the base, and pushed the ground foam into it. While some may point out that real plants are generally planted in parallel rows, I chose to model a field planted with a seed drill which makes the rows more difficult to see.

For the third field, I wanted to simulate a recently harvested wheat field, so I used 4mm Woodland Scenics Straw static grass [23]. I used my airbrush to apply a few steaks of Tamiya brown paint in various shades for variety.

22. The field of soybeans.

23. The harvested wheat field.

24. I added water to the ditches.

I added water in the ditches using Woodland Scenics Realistic Water to simulate runoff from a recent summer rain shower [24]. I dammed the ends of the ditches with some Tamiya tape until the water dried. I then added clumps of ground foam to represent brush growing in the ditches and break up the contours a bit [25].

For finishing touches, I placed power poles along the road and telegraph poles along the railroad track. I added the utility shack and a shortened utility pole for a power meter I saw in prototype locations [26].

The scene turned out reasonably well, and allowed me to try a few techniques I had not used before. If I were to try again, I would probably use a few different shades of grass for the hay field, as it currently looks too manicured, like a golf course instead of a farmer's field.

25. A few ground foam bushes break up the contours.

If you've been nervous about trying to cover large portions of your layout with scenery, especially if you've never delved deeply into scenery before, it may be worth your time to try out a few techniques on a small module. You might discover it's easier than you thought. If things don't turn out, you didn't invest a lot of time or money, and it's easy to start over and try again. ☑

26. The finished scene with power lines, telegraph poles, and the utility shack. The scene is still missing crossbucks, as I haven't acquired anything suitable yet.

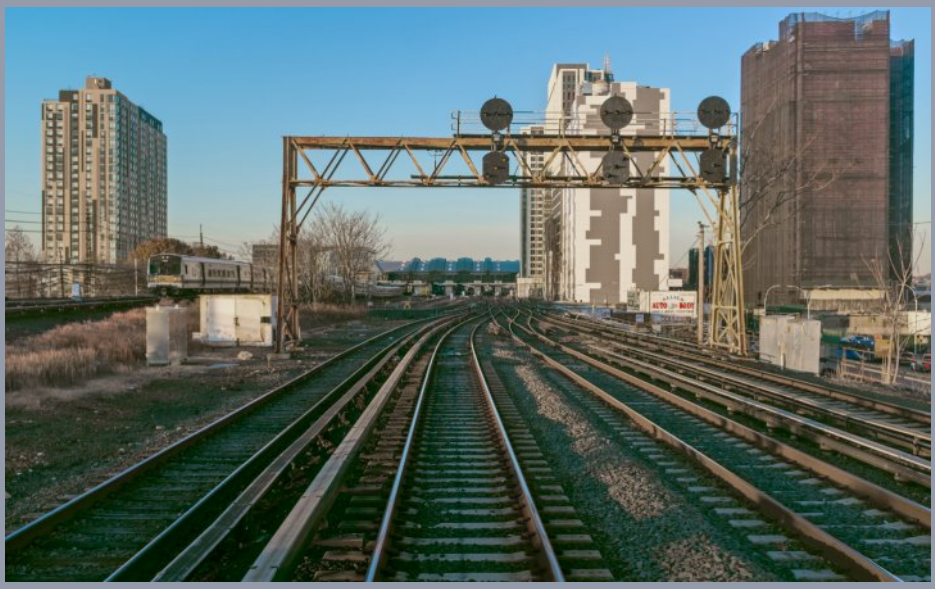
RICK BOSMA

Rick received his first HO scale Piko train set with a tiny 0-4-0 Dutch steam locomotive when he was 7 years old. From there, he built several freelance 4x8 layouts through the beginning of high school.

After a common departure from the hobby for college, career and kids, he started up again in his early 30s and has built three moderate layouts over two decades.

His most recent endeavor is a triple-level 11′x16′ layout based on the GEXR Guelph Subdivision. He is an electronics engineer, and has worked in the automotive and agricultural industries. ■

Modeling Third-rail power



1. Third-rail power on the Long Island Rail Road.

Model Railroad Hobbyist | August 2025

VIEW READER COMMENTS

DAVID STECKLER SHOWS HOW TO MODEL THIS COMMON URBAN AREA RAILROAD FEATURE ...

GROWING UP IN NEW YORK CITY AND LONG ISLAND, it came as no surprise that I chose to model a branch of the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR), particularly a branch that uses third-rail power [1]. But what's the best way to model that? I was unsure how until I read an article in the February 2024 issue of *Railroad Model Craftsman* that encouraged me to give it a try.

Unlike some electric trains that rely on overhead catenary lines to provide power, third-rail systems use a third, conductor rail. The conductor rail is placed on the tie ends outside the running rails, and

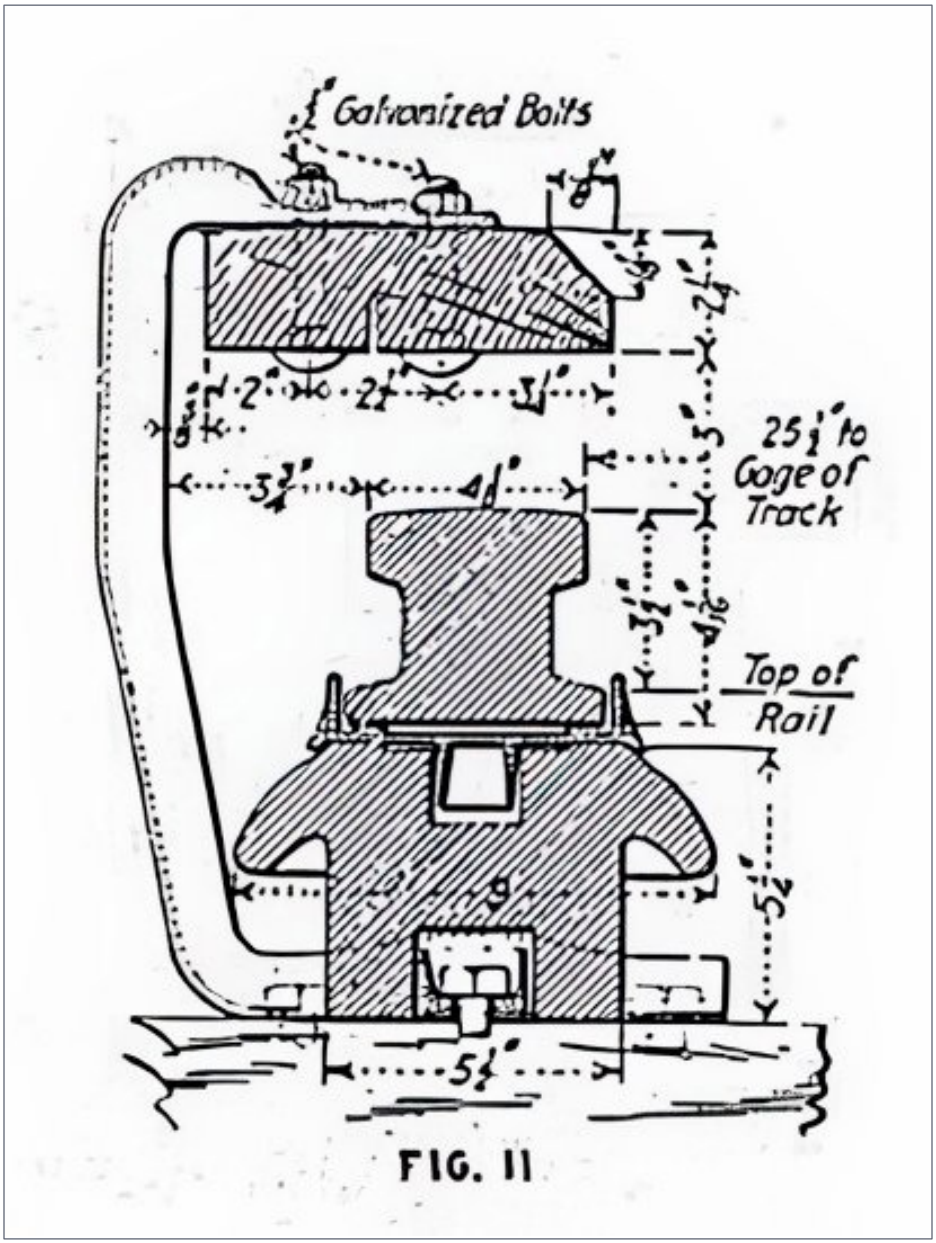
is supported on ceramic insulators or on insulated brackets. Electric locomotives, dual-mode, and electric multiple unit (EMU) cars have pickup shoes that contact the conductor rail.

Third-rail power is found around the world, and rapid-transit and heavy-rail systems both use it. Examples of rapid-transit systems in the United States using third-rail power include the Chicago L, New York City subways/elevated, Boston's MBTA, and many similar systems.

Heavy-rail systems using third-rail power are the LIRR, Metro-North (MN, former New York Central/New Haven/Penn Central), and Amtrak's Empire Service for the approach to New York's Penn Station. For safety, both MN and the LIRR cover their third rail with a protective board, while rapid-transit systems leave theirs uncovered.

I knew the third rail was placed on the tie ends alongside the running rail, but how far away? As with many new modeling projects, I began by researching the subject.

2. Overrunning pickup shoe on a Chicago L train. *Wikimedia Commons image*



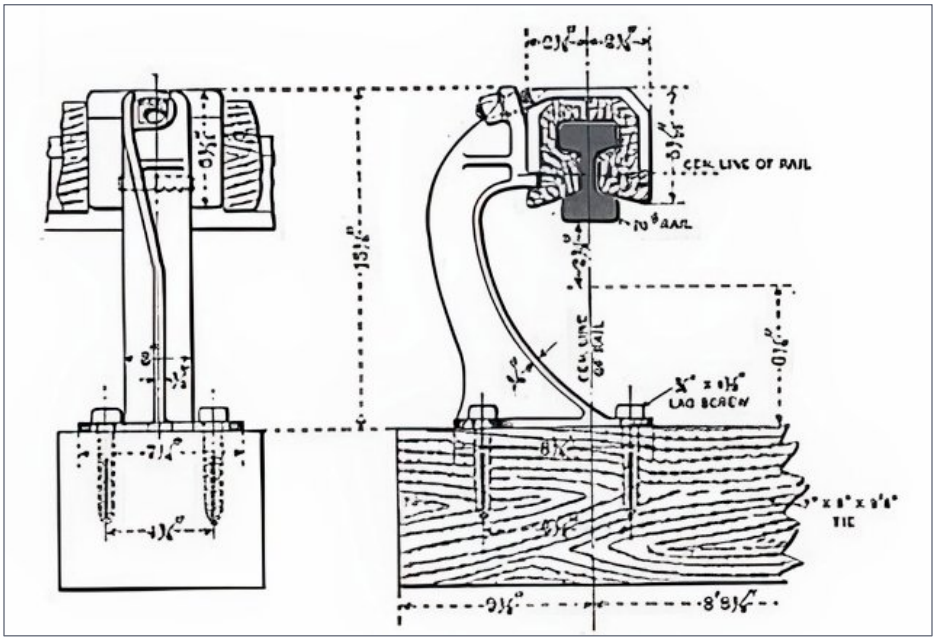
3. Overrunning third rail. *Illustration from the William D. Middleton Collection*

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN LIRR AND NYC/PC/METRO-NORTH

Pickup shoes [2] ride either on top of ("overrunning") or under ("underrunning") the third rail to pick up power. The overrunning system places the third-rail 2′-3½″ from the inside of the running rail to the center line of the third rail [3]. The LIRR uses the overrunning system.

The underrunning system places the third-rail 2′-4¼″ from the inside of the running rail to the center line of the third rail [4]. MN uses the underrunning system.

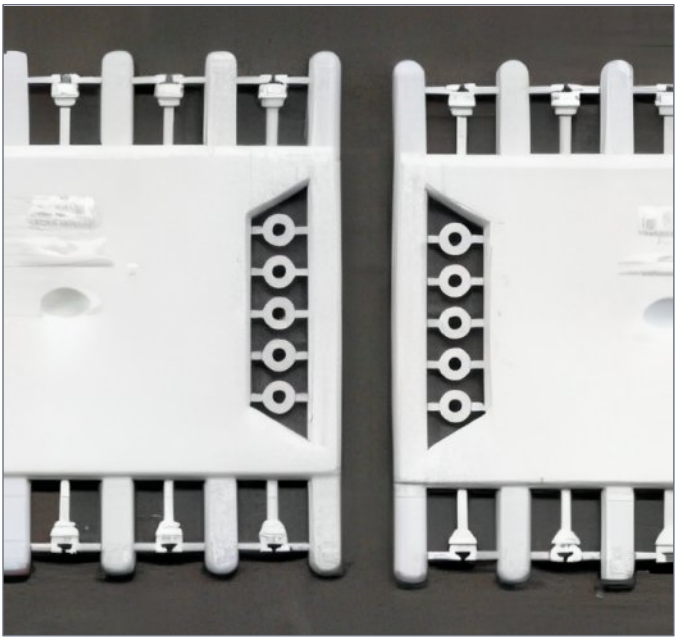
In both overrunning and underrunning systems, the third rail is 3½″ higher than the running rails. The cover board is installed 3″ above the third rail.



4. Underrunning third rail. *Illustration from the William D. Middleton Collection*

BUILDING THE THIRD RAIL

My first task was finding suitable third rail and insulated brackets. I model in HO and use Peco track. It turns out that Peco sells 4mm OO-scale conductor rail chairs (insulated brackets) [5] that use Peco Code 60 rail [6].



5. Peco IL-120 Conductor Rail Chairs.

6. Peco IL-1 Code 60 flat-bottom rail.

To experiment with installing the third rail, I began by gluing a piece of Peco HO code 83 track to a piece of Woodland Scenics 4" foam sheet.

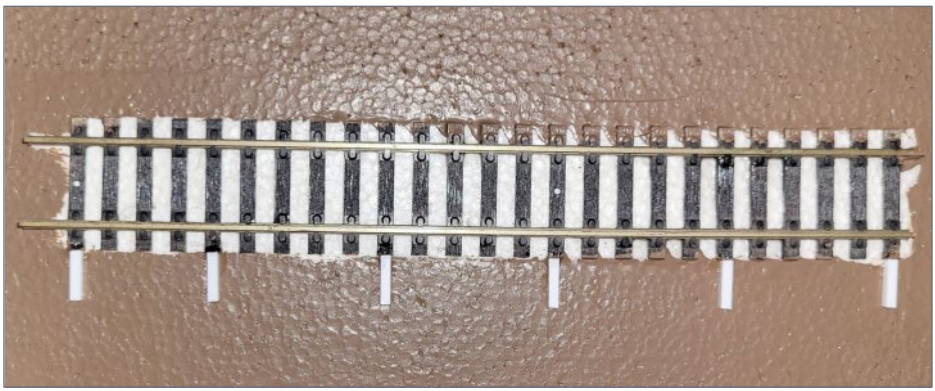
Prototype ties are 8'-8" long. Most third-rail systems have an extra-length tie every four or five ties. Using 0.080" x 0.080" Evergreen styrene, I added a scale 2' tie extension on which to install the rail chairs [7]. I drilled through the tie extensions 3/8" from the adjacent running rail with a no. 64 bit.

I needed to thread as many conductor chairs onto the Code 60 rail as there were tie extensions, and then glue the chair-mounting nibs into the extensions. Getting the chairs on the rail was fiddly.

I originally clipped the chairs off their sprues, and tried placing them onto the rail. That didn't work because the chairs are tiny, and my fingers are large. Some chairs went flying and landed who knows where, while others broke.

Frustrated, I placed the carrier sheet on my workbench with the chairs still attached. I held the rail perpendicular to the carrier sheet, and pressed the end of the rail into the chair. Success!

Once the rail was in, I clipped the chair off the sprue, slid it down the rail, and repeated the process for each chair. I was unable to thread the rail onto the chair with the flat bottom down, so I installed it flat-bottom-up. It won't be seen once the cover board is installed [8].



7. Tie extensions for third rail are glued in place.

I pressed the mounting nibs on the bottom of the chairs into the drilled holes in the tie extensions, applied Cyanoacrylate (CA) around the nibs, and let everything dry overnight. The next day I sprayed everything with Rustoleum Camo Brown, wiping the paint off the rail tops while still wet.

Building the cover board

Building the cover board for the third-rail was fun. I experimented with a number of stains and found MicroMark Tie and Bridge stain looked most like what I saw in prototype photos. I applied it to strips of scale 2x8 basswood [10].

8. Third-rail threaded, flat bottom up, into the conductor rail chair.

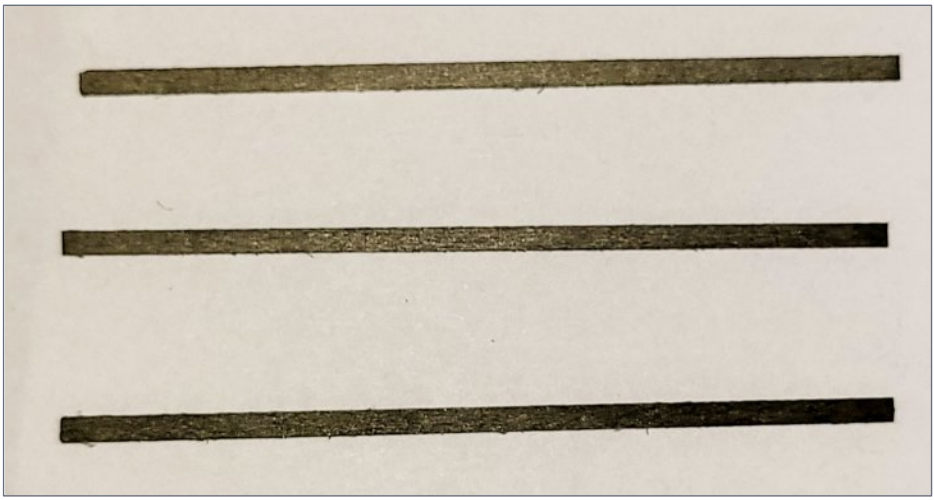
9. The third-rail is threaded through the chairs, and the nibs glued to the tie extensions.

The brackets that hold the cover board are made from two staples with their legs cut off to resemble an L. The staples tend to spread, so apply a little CA to the staples to hold them together when you glue them to the cover board [11]. I painted the staples Camouflage Brown before gluing them to the cover board.

Installing the cover board at the correct height above the third-rail was an interesting exercise. Three scale inches are 1/32" in HO, so I cut a piece of 0.040" x 0.080" Evergreen styrene strip to size for a spacer. I placed the cover board on top of the styrene strip, held this "sandwich" to the third rail with electrical clips, and pressed the staples into the foam with the right-angle of the staple nestled against the outside edge of the cover board.

I pushed the point of the staple into the foam until the horizontal leg rested on the cover board, and flowed CA onto where the staples rested on the basswood. Once the CA had dried, I removed the electrical clips and the styrene strip. A few of the staples pulled away from the basswood, so I put them back in place and added a little more CA.

I didn't model the cover board over the entire length of the third rail, since this was an experiment in technique, and not for the layout itself.



10. Stained basswood used for cover boards.

The staples were longer than the width of the basswood, so I clipped off the excess length. On the foam, I applied Scenic Express dirt, Woodland Scenics ballast and weeds, and Martin Wellburg tufts to finish the scene [12].

11. Two staples are used as a cover board bracket.

12. Completed installation.

LESSONS LEARNED

This project was fun. I used some techniques I had read about, but had not used before. When I install the third rail on my layout, I'll do a few things differently.

I added a scale 2′ extension to the ties for the third rail. Ties are typically 8′-8″ long, and the third rail ties used on the LIRR and MN are 9′-6″ long, a difference of 10″. The two-foot extension I used was too long. Instead of cutting styrene strip, I'll make a one-foot extension using extra Peco ties from my scrap box.

I drilled holes for the chair nibs 3/8″ from the adjacent running rail, but I'll aim for 5/16″ instead, which is closer to the actual distance of 2′-3½″.

In photo [13], you can see the third rail bows out slightly from the running rail. I used a pencil to mark the point on the tie extensions for drilling the holes to insert the chair nibs, but the drill bit wandered slightly. I'll use the point of an awl next time to impress pilot holes to guide the bit.

13. A successful experiment.

I'd like to install the Code 60 rail with the flat bottom down. I'll chamfer the end of the rail and see if that makes it easier to thread into the chairs.

I used standard office staples to make cover board brackets. They are typically 20- to 23-gauge wire, which is so thin I needed to use two. A single roofing staple should be sufficiently thick at 15- to 16-gauge to serve as a bracket.

When installing the third rail on my layout, the length of track will require several cover boards. I'll cut the lengths of the basswood so a joint is not over a rail chair.

Third rail is a feature typically not seen on layouts, even though O-scale legend Frank Ellison installed a working outside third rail on his Delta Lines in the 1930s! It isn't hard to model and makes a layout stand out. ☑

DAVID STECKLER

David's interest in model railroading began as a young child, even before he received his first Lionel train set. His earliest train memory is when he was not yet four years old, when the engineer invited him into the cab of a New York Central P-Motor at Grand Central Terminal, heading up the train that would take his father to Chicago.

As a child growing up in New York City and Long Island, he rode in subways and behind EMD FL-9s, Alco C420s, and in MU trains to visit grandparents in Connecticut and the Bronx. As a teenager he modeled in N scale. After college and law school, David married, and shortly thereafter built the first of several HO scale shelf layouts.

After retiring in 2011, David began building his current shelf layout, modeling the Long Island RR and the New Haven RR. His favorite parts of the hobby are electrical wiring, ballasting, and weathering track.

David is married to Sharon and lives in Ft. Worth, TX. He is a NMRA member and enjoys photographing railroads locally and around the world. ■

Savvy Modeler Online

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Hobby goodies from Harbor Freight (and Dollar Store)

YouTuber **Train Video Pro** provides a dozen different tool and material ideas for your train layout in this 16 minute video.

VIEW READER COMMENTS

While this video is six years old, we checked and Harbor Freight still carries all the items he mentions. In most cases, the price is a dollar or two more now, but in a couple cases the item is actually cheaper now! He goes off script and also mentions a couple of Dollar Store goodies. We're certainly going to go check out some of these items for ourselves! ☑

GREAT MODELER VIDEOS ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB

AUGUST NEWS column

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

VIEW READER COMMENTS

IN MEMORIAM

NRail president **John M Wallis,** 84, passed away on July 19th 2025 in Apex, North Carolina. Born November 28th, 1940, John was a leader in developing and expanding NTRAK and T-TRAK modular standards for N scale layouts. A member of the NMRA, NTRAK (later NRail), the North Raleigh Model Railroad Club, and the Neuse River Valley Model Railroad Club, John was an advocate for mentorship, fellowship, and community.

A memorial celebration of life for **Victor S. Roseman** will be held on October 22, 2025 at the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Museum in Baltimore, MD. While the celebration is by invitation only, invitations can be secured by emailing Michael R Wienman at mrw@ptsitransportation.com before September 1, 2025. Details on the celebration will be furnished with the invitations. The celebration is being held in cooperation with the Central Railroad of New Jersey Veterans Association, which will be commemorating the 100th birthday of the first CNJ diesel locomotive, CNJ No. 1000, and the family of the late CNJ Trustee

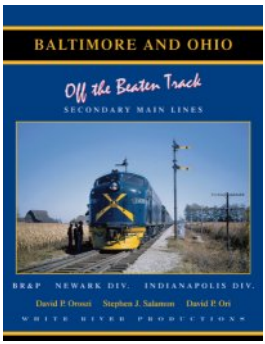
THE LATEST MODEL RAILROAD PRODUCTS, NEWS & EVENTS

Robert D. Timpany, who will be observing the naming of the CNJ diesel locomotive "Robert D Timpany."
Info: mrw@ptsitransportation.com

CLUB CAR

The **Eastern Main Model Railroad Club** is offering an exclusive run of ScaleTrains ExactRail Trenton Works Hi-Cube boxcars decorated for the New Brunswick Southern Railway (CRLE). Consisting of six road numbers, four carry the New Brunswick Southern logo and two are simply lettered CRLE.
Info: www.easternmainemodelrailroadclub.org/club-cars.html

NEW PRODUCTS FOR ALL SCALES



White River Productions has released Volume 4 of *Baltimore & Ohio – Off the Beaten Track: Secondary Main Lines.* Authored by three respected veterans of the railfan community – David P. Oroszi, Stephen J. Salamon, and David P. Ori – this all-new hard bound book features 290 photos and 11 maps along with detailed histories of each B&O division including information on operations and freight schedules.
Info: shop.whiteriverproductions.com

VIEW READER COMMENTS

O SCALE PRODUCT NEWS

R. Bale

EMD GP38-2 DIESEL ELECTRIC LOCOMOTIVE

Electro Motive Division's GP38-2 was a popular moderate speed road switcher produced between 1972 and 1986. Top speed was limited to 65 mph. The GP38-2 was powered by EMD's reliable 2,000hp 645E V16 diesel prime mover. The essential difference between the GP38-2 and the basic GP38 was the Dash 2 used modular electronics. There were no significant exterior differences between the two locomotives.

Atlas has released an O scale model of EMD's popular GP38-2 diesel locomotive. Road names available for this release include Amtrak (Phase V II), BNSF, Canadian Pacific, Chessie System, Conrail, Genesee & Wyoming (Heritage scheme), Reading & Northern, Rock Island, and Vermont Railway. Check availability with a dealer since several road names are already sold out at the factory.

Features include diecast truck side frames, metal handrails, metal body side grilles on the ABS body, detachable snow plow, hand painted cab figures, remote controlled Atlas Proto-Couplers, Kadee compatible coupler mounting pads, and LED lights in the cab interior, number boards, marker lights, and headlight. The onboard DCC/DCS decoder control system includes operating ProtoSmoke diesel exhaust and playable horn sounds. The

model is designed to operate on 0-31 track.
Info: www.atlasrr.com

Smoky Mountain Model Works has released a kit for a skeleton log car. The On30 model is based on a 20′ Argent Lumber prototype. The skeleton car is a single, resin-printed item with separate upper coupler cover plates.

The slatted body is also a single printed part with separate diagonal braces made from Evergreen styrene (included). Brass rod (provided) is hidden in pockets. The model is designed to fit Kadee #145 overset couplers (not included). Printed Russel truck side frames accept Kadee 24″ Griffin wheelsets. The bark chips (tea leaves) are not included but are described in the instructions. Prototype information and assembly instructions are available at www.smokymountainmodelworks.com/Pulpwood%20car%20(On30)%207-7-2025.pdf

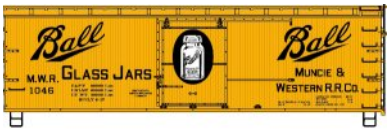
Additional projects underway at Smoky Mountain Model Works include a rerun of the 12-post 5277 non-waffle boxcar produced in 2021. A waffled version is also planned for the release which is tentatively scheduled for late this year.
Info: www.smokymountainmodelworks.com

HO SCALE PRODUCT NEWS

New economy priced HO scale freight car kits coming from **Accurail** include a 3-pcak of ACF triple-bay covered hopper cars owned by ACFX and leased to Dow

Badische, Honeymead, and A. Schulman. The kits will also be available singly.

Accurail's HO version of this 40′ Illinois Terminal steel boxcar is based on a prototype built in August 1958.



This 36′ double-sheathed wood boxcar built in 1917 has steel ends and a fishbelly underframe. All Accurail car kits come with appropriate trucks with Delrin wheelsets and Accumate knuckle couplers.
Info: accurailinc.com

Atlas has released HO scale models for a 50′ 70-ton boxcar based on a prototype built by CFCF in Mexico in the late 1970s. The CNCF 5000 has several unique spotting features including the triangular supports above the door post, the wrapped end sheets, and the sharp notches in the sill near the corner stirrups. Variations in the Atlas HO scale version include two body styles (Early with bolts, late welded body), two end styles (three sheet Dreadnaught and bifurcated X pattern), and five door styles (Youngstown, Youngstown with pick lever, modified Youngstown, Superior, and ICG shop door).

Road names on this release include Atlantic & Western, Columbus & Greenville, Birmingham Southern, Canadian Pacific (Ann Arbor patch), Ferrocarril del Pacifico, Ferromex (new image), Grand Trunk Western (Rock Island patch), Susquehanna & Western, and Rock Island. Check with a dealer since the factory is already sold out of some road names.

Atlas is taking preorders for an HO scale Master CF-7 locomotive. Rebuilt by Santa Fe between 1970 and 1978 from F7 cowl body locomotives, the CF-7 hood body filled a need for 4-axle diesel switchers for branch line service on the Santa Fe. Starting in 1984 the Santa Fe began selling off CF-7 locomotives, with Amtrak and various regional, short line, and industrial railroads picking them up at an excellent price for what was still basically an EMD locomotive.

Road names in this run of locomotives are Allegheny Railroad, Amtrak, Ashley Drew & Northern, Black River & Western (2 schemes), Blue Mountain & Reading, and Santa Fe. The models will be available in both the Gold level with ESU LokSound and Silver with a 21-pin DCC socket.

All models feature prototype specific cab and body variations, and road name specific antennas, horns, AC units, truck types, and handrail variations. The models are equipped with coupler cut levers, trainline and MU air hoses, all wheel pickup, LED headlights and number boards, see-through fans with separate fan blades, and RP-25 contour blackened metal wheels.

Also available for preorder is the Atlas Master MP36PH-3C passenger locomotive. One of a line of locomotives built by MotivePower, it is in service with several commuter rail lines in North America. The model features golden-white LEDs, in-cab and ditch lights, metal knuckle couplers, detailed cab interior, separately installed windshield wipers, metal grab irons, and handrails; coupler cut levers, MU hoses and train line hoses. The

Silver models are equipped with a 21-pin DCC socket and speakers and the Gold models include an ESU LokSound DCC/ sound decoder.

Road names in this release are Metra (seven numbers, three schemes), Metrolink (three numbers), and Utah Frontrunner (four numbers, two schemes). New Haven and Southern Pacific road names are being released as part of the Atlas Limited Edition Collectors' Series.

Also part of Atlas' Summer 2025 announcements is the Atlas Master U23B. The prototype, built by General Electric, competed with EMD's GP38/38-2 series of locomotives and produced 2,250hp. The model includes road name specific details such as trucks, snowplows, and ditch lights, as well as separately applied detail parts like windshield wipers, metal grab irons, coupler cut levers, MU hosts, trainline hoses, and drop steps.

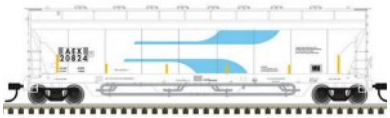
Road names in this release include Finger Lakes Railway, L&N Family Lines (2 schemes), Naugatuck Railroad, Reading, Blue Mountain & Northern, Conrail, Providence & Worcester, and Western Pacific.

Metra Type 6000 trailer and Type 8500 cab cars in new paint schemes and road numbers are part of the Summer 2025 announcements. Available singly and in 3-packs with two Type 6000 trailers and one Type 8500 cab car, a special 3-pack celebrates the Operation North Pole paint scheme. New Haven and Southern Pacific paint schemes are being released as part of the Atlas Limited Edition Collectors' Series.

The cars feature directional LED headlights, ditch lights, and marker lights, a 21-pin plug for DCC operation, space for a

speaker, metal wheels, and separately applied air horn, antenna, lift lugs, and diaphragms.

Modernized heavyweight cars are up next, with single-window coach cars decorated for New York Central, Penn Central, Southern, Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac; Boston and Albany, and Nickel Plate. The cars feature interior detailing, operating diaphragms, window glass, separately applied underbody piping, rigging and appliances, and detailed trucks with metal wheels.



Atlas' 5,000 cu ft Centerflow Pressureaide hopper features etched metal roofwalks, brake gear with scale piping, blackened metal wheels, 100-ton roller bearing trucks, and body mounted AccuMate couplers. Road names in this release are Akzo Nobel (ACFX), Amaizo (ACFX), Cyprus (ACFX), Katalistiks (ACFX), Montana Talk Company (ACFX), The Andersons (AEX), and Cerestar (ACFX).

The Atlas Master HO extended and standard vision cabooses are based on 1960s prototypes, some of which are now used as shoving platforms. The cabooses replicating this will have blanked out windows as appropriate. Road names in this release include for the standard vision Belvedere & Delaware and Norfolk Southern, and for the extended vision caboose BC Rail, Burlington Northern, Chessie System, Conrail, DODX, Dupont, Seaboard (Family Lines), Mass Coastal, and Union Pacific in a DRGW Pikes Peak historical repaint.

The cabooses all feature thin end rails, window glazing, open smoke stack, roller-bearing caboose trucks, roofwalk as appropriate, and separate brake cylinder, triple valve, and air

reservoir. The models are equipped with Accumate knuckle couplers.

In the Trainman line, Atlas is producing a new run of HO scale bulkhead flatcars. Featuring side stake pockets, simulated tie loops, a fishbelly centersill, and prototypical pull-plates and lift rings, the models also come with a pipe load with separately applied tie-downs. Road names for the standard height bulkhead include Ashley Drew & Northern, Columbia & Silver Creek Railroad, Procor, Hollis & Eastern, Union Pacific and TTX. Road names for the short bulkhead version are Southern Parts & Equipment and TTX.

Also in the Trainman line, Atlas is producing HO scale 68' flatcars. With the same features as the bulkhead flatcars, the road names in this release are Department of Defense, Southern Parts & Equipment, and TTX.

Preorders for the above Atlas products close on August 27 with an expected delivery of 3rd quarter 2026.
Info: www.atlasrr.com

Bachmann is working on a new version of an 80-ton three-truck Shay steam locomotive. Of special note on the revised HO scale standard gauge model are durable metal gears and a factory installed Soundtraxx Tsunami2 DCC/ sound, system.

Additional features include LED directional headlight and tender backup light, prototypical drivetrain with functioning piston rods and valve gear, separately applied stack, domes, cut levers, sanding lines, and handrails, steel or wood cab with oil or coal bunkers, and blackened metal wheels with tapered spokes. Decorating schemes include Cass Scenic Railroad, Clear Lake Lumber, Pickering Lumber, and painted but unlettered. A release date is TBA.

At the recent National Train Show Bachmann showed pilot models of several future models including a Metro-North version of a Charger locomotive with a 3rd rail pickup, 1900-era wood passenger cars with truss-rod underframes, and the streamlined New York Central 20th Century Limited Hudson steam locomotive.

A new version of the SP 4449 GS-4 Daylight in the American Freedom Train paint scheme and a Dewitt Clinton trainset in HO scale were also announced.
Info: www.bachmanntrains.com

Bowser has added the Delaware & Hudson No. 4068 Alco RS-3 diesel switcher to its list of HO scale locomotives tentatively scheduled for release in December 2025. The addition is in recognition of the unveiling this summer by the Delaware Lackawanna Association painting a restored RS-3 in the distinctive D&H lighting stripe paint scheme. Bowser's HO scale version will include operating headlights, ditch lights and other specific road name and number details. Both DC analog

and sound/DCC versions will be available. The deadline for preorders is August 29, 2025.

English's Model Railroad a division of Bowser, has announced the availability of 70-ton twin-bay ballast car kits. Three versions of the car are available, one with a triangular opening in the side panels between the hoppers, one with solid side panels, and one with solid side panels and missing vertical rib on the center of the sides. The open side panel and closed side panels cars are available in both undecorated and with dimensional data, the no center rib car is only available undecorated. The closed side panel car is also available decorated for Conrail and patched for Lehigh Valley (ex-Conrail) in three road numbers each.

More road names are available for preorder through Bowser for this model, including Albany & Eastern, ATSF, Burlington Northern, CNW (gray and orange), Conrail Yellow, CSXT, Grand Trunk Western, Kansas City Southern, Milwaukee Road, Morrison Knudsen, Penn Central, Reading and Northern, and dimension only in orange. Preorders close 9/6/2025. Info: bowser-trains.com

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Broadway Limited has added both pre-1944 and post-1944 versions of the Union Pacific 2-8-8-0 steam locomotive to its lineup of HO scale brass models. The difference between the original and newly announced additions generally involves the selection and location of pumps and feedwater equipment.

The Union Pacific eventually rostered 70 of these Mallets, either built by its own shops or manufactured by the American Locomotive Company (Alco). After going into service in 1918,

the husky locomotive earned its Bull Moose nickname because of its ability to pull the heaviest Union Pacific freight trains over the railroad's Sherman Hill between Cheyenne and Laramie Wyoming. Eventually they were replaced by Big Boys and Challengers.

The models are scheduled for release next January. All versions of the HO scale UP 2-8-8-0 will be available with Paragon4 Sound/DC/DCC with smoke version, and with DCC-ready Stealth no-sound.

Broadway Limited has also announced that it will be producing de-skirted versions of the Southern Pacific GS-4 4-8-4 locomotive. Removed in 1956 to facilitate maintenance, the side-skirts partially cover the wheels and machinery hanging underneath the walkway along the side of the boiler.

Locomotives in this run will include partial Daylight paint schemes and black schemes both with and without aluminum trim on the pilot and no skirts, and fully skirted versions of the American Freedom Train scheme, a 2001 black with pinstripes excursion scheme, and several fantasy paint schemes including two-tone gray Lark, red and silver Golden State, and two Western Pacific schemes.

With an order deadline of October 30, 2025, the models are scheduled for release next May. All versions of the HO scale GS-

4 4-8-4 will be available with Paragon4 Sound/DC/DCC with smoke version, and with DCC-ready Stealth no-sound.

The newest member of the BLI series of Brass-Hybrid locomotives is the Santa Fe 3460 class "Super Hudson." Built in 1937, the six locomotives in the class were used in service between Chicago, Illinois and La Junta, Colorado. Pulling the Fast Mail Express, locomotive #3461 set the world record for the longest single run by a steam locomotive in December 1937, 2,227 miles between Los Angeles and Chicago without any maintenance aside from five refueling stops.

All but one of the locomotives was scrapped by 1956, with #3463 preserved and on display in Topeka, Kansas. The nonprofit Kaw Valley Rail Heritage Conservancy is working to restore the locomotive. The locomotives will be available in as-delivered, 1940-42 appearance, post 1942 appearance, a appears today, unlettered, and two fantasy schemes – an Ornate 1870s scheme and an Aluminum Shadowline scheme that will be a Trainworld exclusive. All versions of the HO scale ATSF 3460 class will be available with Paragon4 Sound/DC/DCC with smoke version, and with DCC-ready Stealth no-sound.


R. Bale

GE ES44 Diesel Locomotive

In 2002, GE introduced its GEVO series of modern diesel locomotives. The first two units were the ES44DC (Evolution Series 4400hp DC traction motors) and ES44AC. The ES44C4, with one idler axle per truck, followed a few years later. The GEVO series was designed to replace earlier AC4400CW and Dash 9-44CW units, while complying with new emission standards imposed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The EPA established allowable emission levels, or tiers, based on a locomotive's date of manufacture. Tier 2 took effect in 2005 followed by Tier 3 in 2010. Although EPA Tier 4 standards went into effect in 2015, ES44s continued to be built. This is due to a complicated government formula that allows sharing and redistribution of emission credits between GE and the operating railroad. The external appearance of ES44 locomotives is similar to the AC4400CW with the most significant visual difference being the larger wing structure over the radiator end. The thicker radiators and related equipment work to cool the exhaust, which reduces emissions. The ES44 has become the best-selling diesel locomotive of all time.

Broadway Limited plans to release a new production run of HO scale ES44AC diesel locomotives in January 2026. The models represent the six-axle 4400hp diesel locomotive manufactured by General Electric from 2002 to 2019. Most of the more than 3,700 ES44AC locomotives produced are still in service on North American Class 1 railroads.

Each model boasts road-specific details and lighting. Individually controllable lights in BLI's GE ES44AC headlight, rear light, cab

interior light, number boards, and ditch lights. Operating system include Paragon4 Sound/DC/DCC system with smoke, or BLI's Stealth/DC/DCC-Ready system.

The paint schemes will include Atlantic Coast Line, Chesapeake & Ohio, Chessie System, CSX, Florida East Coast, Iowa Interstates, and a fantasy US Navy scheme.

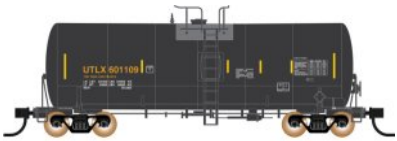
Future BLI projects announced last month at the National Train Show include an updated version of the 1947 American Freedom Train and several heavyweight passenger cars including a new business car.
Info: www.broadway-limited.com

Eastern Seaboard Models reports that it currently has sufficient inventory of its various wheelsets to meet demand through the remainder of this year. By then, ESM's wheelset contractor is expected to have its new production facility established in Vietnam which will minimize tariff increases.

Meanwhile, ESM continues to fine tune an American-made kit for a Delaware Lackawanna & Western wood-sheathed caboose. A release date is eminent.

Also in the works at ESM is an HO scale kit for a Pennsylvania Railroad class G32B steel gondola with corrugated sides. Most of the components for the kit are on hand as final details are worked out for the 3D-printed body.
Info: www.esmc.com

Intermountain his booking reservations through August 31st for an HO scale model of a Trinity 19,600 gallon tank car. Introduced in in the late 1980s, the prototype car continues to be catalogued by Trinity. Road names on this release will be TILX-Trinity Leasing, Union Tank, National Tank, Shippers Car Line, VTG North American, ADM, Cargill, Domino Sugar, Corn Products, Procor, and two GATX schemes.



The models will be equipped with separately applied grab irons, formed metal wire hand rails, etched metal walkways, Kadee couplers, and appropriate trucks with 36″ machined metal wheelsets.

Info: www.intermountain-railway.com

Kadee's latest release is a 50′ PS-1 boxcar decorated for Delaware & Hudson. The model replicates a prototype built by Pullman Standard in 1956 that was repainted in January 1977. The ready-to-run HO scale model comes with Kadee couplers and Bettendorf-type plain bearing trucks with metal wheels. Kadee cautions that the production version of the model has a minor paint defect and will only sell the D&H boxcar direct to consumers. It will not be available through dealers.

Info: www.kadee.com

Rapido has added a GE 44-ton switcher decorated for New York Dock Railway to its forthcoming release. The HO scale model will be available in three road numbers exclusively through

TrainLand. Delivery is scheduled for September. The above image is courtesy of Rapido Trains.

Info: www.trainworld.com/catalogsearch/result/?q=New+York+Dock+Rapido

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R. Bale

BERKSHIRE 2-8-4 STEAM LOCOMOTIVES

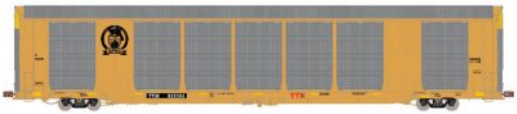
Beginning in the early 1920s, shippers began to demand faster freight service, which at that time was dominated by the 2-8-2 Mikado, a type known for their reliable power – but not for their speed. Speed would come from larger drive wheels and a larger fire box that could provide greater steam heating capacity. A four-wheel trailing truck would be required to support a bigger fire box. The result was the 2-8-4 from Lima Locomotive Works. The revolutionary locomotive marked the start of the *Super-Power* era in American railroading. The Boston & Albany used the earliest examples successfully through the Berkshire Mountains. The design was further refined by the Van Sweringen brothers, leading to the iconic Nickel Plate Berkshire in the mid-1930s. Subsequent users included Pittsburgh & Lake Erie, Chesapeake & Ohio, and Pere Marquette railroads. All were generally similar in appearance.

Scale Trains is booking reservations for a 2-8-4 Berkshire steam locomotive it is marketing under the Fox Valley Models brand. Availability is scheduled for summer 2026.

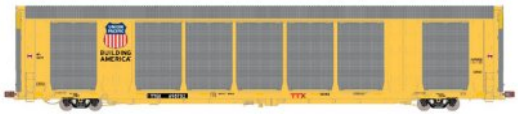
The HO scale model will have a diecast boiler and tender body, a real tender coal load, multi-bearing crossheads, a detailed cab interior, sliding cab roof vents, metal handrails and

handrail posts, interchangeable drivers with and without traction tires, synchronized puffing smoke unit (DCC only), a 5-pole skew wound motor, and electrical pickup on both the locomotive and tender.

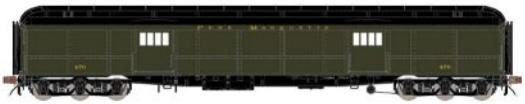
Decorating schemes will be available for Erie (1920s-1930s era), Chesapeake & Ohio (1940s-1950s), Pere Marquette (1940s-1950s, and excursion scheme), and Nickel Plate (1944-mid 1950s, 1950s, and 2009 excursion scheme).



Scale Trains has scheduled a late 2025 release date for a group of Gunderson Multi-Max Autorack cars. These will be HO scale Operator series models with fewer factory-applied parts and simplified printing to keep them budget-friendly. Details include late body type, molded-on grab irons, corrugated side panels, late end doors with "zig-zag" angle panels, low mounted side ladders, outside side sill brake cylinder and brake beam mounting brackets, outside side sill brake rod support brackets, simplified underbody brake rigging details with separate brake cylinder/ slack adjuster assembly, air reservoir, and control valve.



Road names in this release will be Union Pacific (Building America), Norfolk Southern (Horsehead), Ferromex/Grupo Mńxico), CSX, and CPKC (Beaver). The Autoracks will come with body-mounted semi-scale Type E knuckle couplers, and appropriate ASF swing motion trucks with raised foundry data and 28″ machined metal wheels. A minimum track radius of 24″ is required with a 26″ radius recommended.



Heavyweight passenger cars in the Fox Valley Models line were announced at the National Train Show in Novi, MI last month. Three of the cars, a baggage car, a 12-1 sleeper, and an observation car, are from tooling acquired from MTH. Two new cars, designed to match the MTH tooling, are also being produced, a single window coach and a 36-seat diner.

Road names for the heavyweight passenger cars are Chesapeake & Ohio, Erie, Nickel Plate Road, Norfolk & Western, Pennsylvania, and Pere Marquette.

The cars feature ABS plastic bodies, constant voltage lighting, a fully detailed underframe, flexible diaphragms, and detailed interiors. Also included are factory applied metal grab irons, coupler cut levers, trainline hoses, and 36′ machined metal wheels with .110″ tread.

Rivet Counter EMD GP40 locomotives announced recently and displayed at the National Train Show include Burlington Northern, Chessie System (B&O and C&O), Cotton Belt, Norfolk & Western, and Rock Island.

Also announced at the National Train Show is a new run of Rivet Counter GE ES44 locomotives including the final six CSX Heritage Scheme locomotives. Road names and paint schemes in this run include BNSF Heritage III, Canadian National, CPKC, Norfolk Southern, and CSX in YN3 Boxcar and the following Heritage schemes: Chicago & Eastern Illinois, Clinchfield, Georgia Railroad, Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis, Pan Am, and Seaboard Air Line. Above photo is from a previous run.

Preorders on new announcements close on August 25, with delivery expected in June 2026.
.Info: www.scaletrains.com

State Tool & Die has completed development of an HO scale triple-bay Coke Express hopper car. The HO scale model is based on a specialty prototype, usually made up in unit trains, that CSX uses to deliver coke to steel makers. Coke is much lighter than coal, hence the need for a larger, specialty car. Many of CSX's dedicated hi-capacity hoppers are painted with large letters that read COKE EXPRESS.

Scheduled for release late this summer, the painted and decorated 3D-printed model will come with Kadee #158 couplers and appropriate trucks with metal wheels. The model will be available singly and in three-, six-, and 12-packs with unique numbers. An undecorated model will also be offered.
Info: www.statetoolanddie.com

Walthers has scheduled a winter 2026 release date for a group of Amfleet 84-seat coaches. The HO scale Proto series models feature newly designed inside-bearing trucks with 36″ metal wheelsets with a prototypical profile.

Additional features include factory installed grab irons, printed car numbers, smoked windows with gaskets, and accurately detailed interiors with optional overhead LED

interior lighting. A minimum track radius of 24″ is required. Decorating schemes in this release include Amfleet Phase II, Phase III, Phase VI, and Phase VII.

A winter 2026 release date is also planned for a WalthersProto series Gunderson 48′ well car. Like the prototype, the all-purpose 48-footers can handle 20′ to 48′ containers in the well with a longer container stacked on top.

Walthers Proto series model features a heavy diecast metal body with a trailer hitch at each end, factory-installed wire grab irons, brake gear, and etched-metal walkways. The model can handle a minimum track radius of 22″, however, Walthers recommends 24″ for appearance and trouble-free operation. Road names will be Burlington Northern, BNSF, CRLE, TTX, and undecorated.

New Walthers Mainline series models coming next winter include a classic 40′ Pullman Standard boxcar. Introduced in the late 1940s, many of the iconic PS-1 boxcars served into the 1980s.

Details on the WalthersMainline model include Pullman Standard ends without rectangle stiffeners, P-S “bowtie” roof with flat end panels, Apex steel running boards with see-through tread, 6′ Superior doors, and appropriate trucks with 33″ machined metal wheelsets. Road names include Canadian Pacific, Chesapeake & Ohio, Copper Range, Chicago & Eastern Illinois, M-K-T, Chicago & North Western, Port Huron & Detroit, Duluth, South Shore & Atlantic; and undecorated.

A 60′ NSC 5150 cu. ft. triple-bay covered hopper car is also on Walthers production schedule for next winter. Prototypical details on the HO scale Mainline series model include seven body panels with raised weld seams, 11 running board supports, trough-style roof hatches with detailed handles, and flat jacking pads with notched lower corners.

Road names will be Archer Daniel Midland, Dakota Minnesota & Eastern, BNSF, TRGX-Richardson, Canadian National, Union Pacific, data only (gray), and undecorated.

In the 1950s, the International Car Co. introduced a new caboose with a bay window that allowed a conductor or brakeman to look down the length of the entire freight train, making it easier to see signals, overheated journal bearings and other potential issues. Walthers has included a Mainline series HO scale model of an ICC bay window caboose in its Winter 2026 production schedule. Features include distinctly molded weld seams, corrugations and other details on the body, ends, and roof. The model will have clear window glazing, factory applied separate end railings, a smoke jack, vent and brake wheel, and caboose-style trucks with 33″ metal wheels.

The body will have starter points for grab irons and other details to simplify the installation of a WalthersMainline Caboose Detailing kit. The kit (910-201), available as a separate purchase, includes a complete set of grab irons to detail one bay window or extended vision caboose. Add-on parts in the 28-piece kit include four curved side grab irons, four large L-shaped inside handrails, eight straight 18″ body end grab irons, four straight sill grab irons, four small L-shaped cupola roof grab irons, and four cupola roof corner eye loops. Road

names on this release will be Chessie System, Rock Island, Conrail, Southern Railway, Erie Lackawanna, and Union Pacific.

Scheduled for production next winter from all-new tooling is an ACF 1,958 cu. ft. twin-bay covered hopper with the distinctive W silhouette of the prototype. First developed by American Car & Foundry in the late 1930s, the ACF car became somewhat of a standardized design that was copied by other manufacturers during the 1940s and 1950s.

Decorating schemes on this release will be Ann Arbor, Erie, Santa Fe, HWCX-Haliburton, Chicago & North Western, KSMX-Kosmos Cement, Denver & Rio Grande Western, Southern Railway, data only and undecorated. Notable features on this WalthersMainline HO scale model include a thin profile roof walk with a see-through tread, individual discharge gates and vibrator brackets, an Ajax brake wheel, and appropriate trucks with 33″ metal wheels.

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

N SCALE PRODUCT NEWS

Atlas' Summer 2025 HO & N scale catalog includes several preorder announcements in N scale. The first of these is the GP38-2 locomotive. Road names for this release are Alton Southern, Amtrak Phase VII, Canadian National (IC), CSX, Norfolk Southern, Union Pacific, Vermont Railway, and Wheeling & Lake Erie. EJ&E and EJ&E (CN) will be available as part of the Limited Edition Collectors Series.

Details and features on all locomotives include ditch lights, golden-white LEDs, directional lighting, blackened metal wheels, AccuMate magnetic knuckle couplers, and separately applied coupler cut levers. Atlas Master Silver locomotives come sound ready with an installed speaker. Atlas Master Gold locomotives include ESU LokSound DCC/sound decoders.

Also in the catalog is the N scale General Electric U23B locomotive. Produced in the late 1960s through early 1970s, a total of 481 U23Bs were produced, the second highest total of all of GE's Universal Series locomotives. Road names in this release include Conrail, Conrail Express, Louisville & Nashville, Milwaukee Road, Naugatuck Railroad, Providence and Worcester, Santa Fe, and Western Pacific.

The models feature road name specific details such as ditch lights, low nose headlights, and cabs with two or four side windows. Details and features on all locomotives include golden-white LEDs, directional lighting, blackened metal wheels, AccuMate magnetic knuckle couplers, and separately applied coupler cut levers. Atlas Master Silver locomotives come sound ready with an installed speaker. Atlas Master Gold locomotives include ESU LokSound DCC/sound decoders.

Master N scale Trinity 53′ three and five unit spine cars are also available for preorder, with several TTX paint schemes being offered. The models are a combination of die cast metal for weight and plastic and etched metal for details. They feature a prototypical ride height, collapsed or raised hitches, Micro-Trains compatible knuckle couplers, and BLMA 70-ton ASF Ride Control trucks with BLMA scale profile metal wheels.

Next is Atlas' Master N scale 40′ PS-1 boxcar. Road names in this run include Boston and Maine, Chicago and Eastern Illinois, Chicago and Northwestern (patch RI), Columbus and Greenville, Grand Trunk Western, New York Central "Pacemaker," Lake Superior and Ishpeming, and Seaboard Air Line. This run features 8′ door openings with the door type dependent on road names.

The models feature body mounted AccuMate couplers, Barber S-2A 50-ton trucks with metal wheels, separately applied ladders, etched metal running boards, and either Ajax or Miner brake wheels depending on the prototype.

Atlas' 5,000 cu ft Centerflow Pressureaide hopper features etched metal roofwalks, brake gear with scale piping, blackened metal wheels, 100-ton roller bearing trucks, and body mounted AccuMate couplers. Road names in this release are Akzo Nobel (ACFX), Amaizo (ACFX), Cyprus (ACFX), Katalistiks (ACFX), Montana Talk Company (ACFX), The Andersons (AEX), and Cerestar (ACFX).

The Atlas Master HO extended and standard vision cabooses are based on 1960s prototypes, some of which are now used as shoving platforms. The cabooses replicating this will have blanked out windows as appropriate. Road names in this release include for the standard vision Belvedere & Delaware and Norfolk Southern, and for the extended vision caboose BC Rail, Burlington Northern, Chessie System, Conrail, DODX, Dupont, Seaboard (Family Lines), Mass Coastal, and Union Pacific in a DRGW Pikes Peak historical repaint.

The cabooses all feature thin end rails, window glazing, open smoke stack, roller-bearing caboose trucks, running boards as appropriate,

and separate brake cylinder, triple valve, and air reservoir. The models are equipped with AccuMate knuckle couplers.

The last N scale car on Atlas' preorder list is the N scale Trainman 50' double door boxcar. Featuring fishbelly side sills, diagonal panel roof, Improved Dreadnaught ends, and plain bearing trucks with AccuMate couplers, the cars will be produced for Toledo Peoria & Western, Duluth South Shore & Atlantic, Erie, Illinois Central Gulf, Missouri Kansas Texas, Great Northern, and Louisville & Nashville.

All preorders are due August 27, 2025, with an estimated arrival of 3rd quarter 2026.
Info: shop.atlasrr.com

Bachmann is selling an N scale model of a 50′ 6″ outside braced boxcar based on a prototype developed in the 1970s. Many of the popular design continue in service today.

Bachmann's N scale version features a 10′ Youngstown-style corrugated sliding door, detailed interior floor and underframe, E-Z Mate Mark II couplers, and appropriate trucks with blackened metal wheels.

Road names available now are Railbox, Canadian National, and Detroit & Mackinac Railroad.
Info: www.bachmanntrains.com

R. Bale

GE ES44 DIESEL LOCOMOTIVE

See the Broadway Limited report in HO scale for more information on the ES44.

Broadway Limited plans to release a new production run of N scale ES44AC diesel locomotives in January 2026. The models represent the six-axle 4400hp diesel locomotive manufactured by General Electric from 2002 to 2019. Most of the more than 3,700 ES44AC locomotives produced are still in service on North American Class 1 railroads.

Each model boasts road-specific details and lighting. Individually controllable lights in BLI's GE ES44AC headlight, rear light, cab interior light, number boards, and ditch lights. Operating system include Paragon4 Sound/DC/DCC system, or BLI's Stealth/DC/DCC-Ready system.

The paint schemes on this run include BNSF, Atlantic Coast Line, Chesapeake & Ohio, Chessie System, Florida East Coast, Iowa Interstate, and Union Pacific. A fantasy Pennsylvania Railroad scheme will be available exclusively through Train World.
Info: www.broadway-limited.com

InterMountain is preparing to release a group of N scale 4750 cu. ft. covered hopper cars. The models will have operating knuckle couplers, etched metal walkways, and machined metal wheelsets.

Road names include Santa Fe, Union Pacific, BNSF, (small new image), Illinois Central, Burlington Northern (with stiffener). CSX – CSXT, Reading & Northern, Farmland Industries CO-OP, RCPE (ex-CNW), and Denver & Rio Grande Western.
Info: www.intermountain-railway.com

New N scale models from **Micro-Train Line** include this 56′ General Service tank car decorated for Canadian Pacific. The model is based on a prototype TrinityRail built in 2006. Two road numbers are available.

Also released by MT this month is this Chessie System 50′ rib side boxcar equipped with Hennessey rotary door openers.

The prototype of this twin-bay covered hopper car was built in the late 1960s. The Rock Island & Pacific Railroad used it initially for chemical pellet loading. It was later used for transporting other dry commodities.

Completing our list of new N scale Micro-Trains models released this month is a Southern Pacific 36′ riveted steel caboose with an offset cupola.
Info: Contact a dealer.

RailSmith has announced the production of its first heavyweight car, the 14 section sleeper, also known as the tourist sleeper. Based on Pullman Plan 3985, the N scale model features interior details,

metal wheels, close coupling, and will fit the RailSmith lighting boards. The first two cars to be produced are the Pecos River and the Bandelier, for the Santa Fe Scout passenger train.
Info: lowellsmith.net

The second run of SD40T-2 Tunnel Motor locomotives in N scale by **ScaleTrains** has arrived in Tennessee, with Rio Grande versions, four Southern Pacific versions, and four Union Pacific versions, including both 116″ and 88″ noses. Some versions include ditch lights.

The models feature LED lighting and see-through radiator grilles. One of the models in this release is UP 8852, a “Roseville Repaint,” part of a set of 11 SD40T-2s that were repainted by former SP employees at the Roseville, California shops with 21-inch block SP letters on the nose and sides. This unit features deck mounted operating LED ditch lights, plated front and blanked rear gyralights, blanked class lights, and a lost-wax brass cast Leslie RS-3L-R three chime horn located on the long hood roof.
Info: scaletrains.com

STRUCTURES AND SCENIC SUPPLIES

Atlas has announced a run of HO scale Ford F-350 hi-rail utility trucks in the Summer 2025 HO & N Scale Catalog. Replicating the style and options available on the 2008-2010 models, the trucks feature prototypical trim packages (XL, XLT, 4x4) and optional lightbars and other details.

Road names include BNSF, CN, Conrail, Canadian Pacific, CSX, Metra, Norfolk Southern, Reading and Northern, Union Pacific, and an unlettered white version.

In N scale, Atlas has announced a Master series 53′ modern reefer trailer. Seen in TOFC service as well as on the roads, this model replicates the Utility 3000R trailer, first introduced in 1999. Paint schemes on the trailer include Clipper, England, Frozen Food Express, GO 2 Logistics, Prime Intermodal, Western, and an unlettered white version.

Atlas has also both HO and N scale signals. In N scale, in the hooded modern style, Single Head LH, Single Head RH, Double Head LH, Double Head RH, and Bidirectional Signals have been announced.

In HO scale Atlas has announced a Type H-2 dwarf signal as well as the head only of a searchlight style signal. Two signals are included in the HO packages.

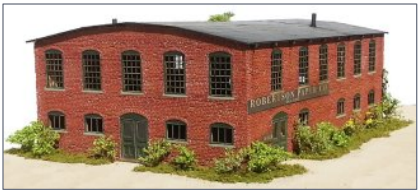
Atlas preorders are due August 27, 2025.
Info: shop.atlasrr.com

Frenchman River Model Works has released an O/On30 scale kit named Cherokee Parts Store. Design of the craftsman-type kit is based on a 1940 photo of a thriving enterprise in Atlanta, Georgia. In designing the kit, Thomas Yorke gave the wooden building a sheet

metal covered front wall and positionable doors that offers modelers an opportunity to detail both the outside and interior.

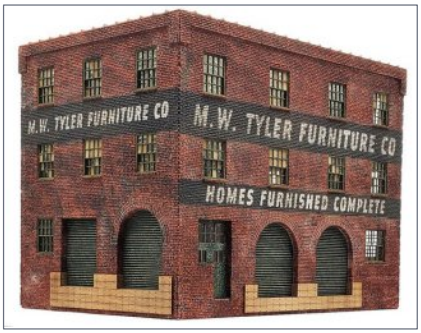
Contents of the kit include a three-piece resin front wall assembly, resin doors, and resin side, back, and interior walls. Cast resin details include batteries, innertubes, tires, and hubcaps. Additional details include laser-cut window glazing, styrene lumber, tar paper and corrugated roofing material, decals, signs and instructions. Not including the sidewalk sections, the 1:48 scale Cherokee Parts Store has a footprint of approximately: 7.5″ wide x 8.5″ deep. Assembly and painting are required.
Info: www.frenchmanriver.com

Among the newest kits from **Monster Model Works** is Robertson Paper Co. The N scale model is based on an historic 1882 prototype located in Bellows Falls, Vermont. The mill was served by the Boston & Maine and the Rutland Railroads (Green Mountain RR) into the 1970's.



Components in the craftsman-type kit include 3D-laser engraved Old Brick walls and corners, rooftop pipes, laser-cut doors and windows with glazing, peel and stick tar paper roofing material, and appropriate signage. Dimensions of the assembled model are 11.75″ long x 8.1″ wide x 3.35″ tall.

Also new from Monster Model Works is an O scale kit for J&L's Diner. The small structure features a detailed storefront and several attractive signs. The craftsman style kit includes 3D-laser engraved old brick walls and corners, 3D-printed roof vents, and laser-engraved terra cotta coping. The windows and doors are laser-cut from peel and stick material. The finished model has a foot print of 5.5″ wide x 8.8″ long.



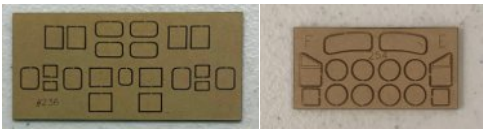
Coming from Monster Model Works later this month is an N scale kit for a three-story brick warehouse. The craftsman type kit is based on the H.L. Benbough Furniture Co., located in San Diego, CA. The kit includes 3D-engraved American Bond Brick, walls, terra cotta cornices, coping and corners, and laser-cut dock bumpers, doors, windows, and sills. Sign stencils are included, but the structure is well-suited to serve almost any industry. The assembled kit has a foot print of 4.25″ long x 3″ wide. All Monster Model kits mentioned in this report require assembly and painting.
Info: www.larkspurlaserart.com

Walthers has announced a new product line, Spaces by Cornerstone. Spaces consists of established Cornerstone kits with new interiors and lighting kits, with the interiors available separately for those who already own the kits. Products in the introductory Spaces line include Merchant's Row I, Vintage Dairy Queen, Vintage Gas Station, Brick Cape

Cod House, and the Hole-In-One Donut Shop. Reservations are open now with availability expected in Fall 2025.

Info: www.walthers.com

DETAIL PARTS



Berkshire Valley Models has introduced HO scale window sets for a variety of locomotives, cabooses, and passenger cars. Examples include Branchline Pullman Sleepers, several Rail Power Products locomotives, Athearn locomotives and cabooses, Bowser cabooses, and LifeLike locomotives. Laser cut from clear acrylic, the windows are pre-masked for easy painting. Pictured: Athearn wide-vision caboose and LifeLike E8/9.

Info: berkshirevalleymodels.com

BRIEFLY NOTED AT PRESS TIME ...

Kadee's next HO scale 40' PS-1 boxcar will be decorated for the US Navy …

HO scale Amtrak Viewliner II sleepers, diners and baggage/dormitory cars are coming from **Kato** next spring …

Tichy Train Group has added 18″ lengths of pre-blackened brass chain in 40, 32, and 23 links per inch to its lineup of detail parts. ■

SELECTED EVENTS

August

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

Ongoing 2025

ONLINE, Zoom & YouTube, Wednesdays at 7pm Eastern. New Tracks Modeling Live Weekly
Info: newtracksmodeling.com
YouTube: www.youtube.com/channel/UCMA_VhPb5pjdkAYTdXLceJA

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

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

August - September 2025

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

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

CANADA, BRITISH COLUMBIA, SIDNEY, September 21, 2025. 33rd Annual Victoria Model Train Show. Mary Winspear Centre, 2243 Beacon Avenue.
Info: victoriatrainshow@gmail.com

ALABAMA, GADSDEN, September 20, 2025. Coosa Valley Model Railroad Association 2nd Annual Fall Train Show. Mary G Hardin Center for Cultural Arts, 501 Broad St.
Info: www.facebook.com/coosavalleymodelrailroad

ARKANSAS, CONWAY, August 23-24, 2025. Central Arkansas Train and Hobby Show, Conway Expo & Event Centers, 2505 E. Oak St.
Info: railandsprue@aol.com

CALIFORNIA, IRVINE, September 3-6, 2025. PSR 2025 Convention – Pacific Southwest Express. Irvine Hilton – John Wayne Airport, 18800 Macarthur Blvd.
Info: www.pacificswexpress.org

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

COLORADO, GREELEY, September 27-28, 2025. Colorado Rail Proto Meet, in association with the Colorado Model Railroad Museum, featuring the HomeShops Freelance Forum and the Narrow Gauge Gathering. Island Grove Event Center, 421 N 15th Ave.
Info: corpm.org

FLORIDA, THE VILLAGES, September 20-21, 2025. Summer Expo Model Train Sale & Show, Savanah Center, 1545 N Buena Vista Blvd.
Info: www.thevillagesmodeltrainclub.com

GEORGIA, DULUTH (Atlanta), August 23, 2025. 67th Atlanta Model Train Show. Gas South Convention Center, 6400 Sugarloaf Parkway.
Info: www.gserr.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

MASSACHUSSETTS, ORLEANS, Wednesday evenings, July & August 2025. Annual Summer Open House of the Nauset Model Railroad Club. 180 Rte 6A.
Info: www.facebook.com/p/Nauset-Model-Railroad-Club-100054369888560

MISSOURI, KANSAS CITY REGION, August 23, 2006. MO-KAN Garden Railroaders 2025 Garden Railroad Tour. Thirteen train gardens in the Kansas City metropolitan area.
Info: mokangardenrailroaders.org

MISSOURI, SPRINGFIELD, September 19-20, 2025. Ozarks Model Railroad Association 2025 Train Show. Ozark Empire Fairgrounds, 3001 Grant Ave.
Info: www.facebook.com/events/1337256877719034

NEW HAMPSHIRE, CONCORD, August 17, 2025. Concord Model Railroad Club 39th Annual Show. Everett Arena, Loudon Rd.
Info: www.trainweb.org/cmrc/index.html

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

NEW YORK, BATAVIA, September 7, 2025. The Great Batavia Train Show. Genesee Community College, 1 College Road.
Info: gsme.org

NEW YORK, HEMLOCK, September 20-21, 2025. 5th Annual Hemlock Train Show. Hemlock Fairgrounds, AG Expo Building, 7370 Water St.
Info: www.fctt-hirailers.com

OHIO, ATHENS, September 11-14, 2025. C&O Historical Society Annual Conference. Ohio University Inn & Conference Center.
Info: chessieshop.com/event/chesapeake-ohio-historical-society-conference

OHIO, VAN WERT, August 16-17 2025. 22nd Annual Van Wert Railroad Heritage Weekend Model Railroad Show & Swap. Van Wert County Fairgrounds, 1055 S Washington St.
Info: www.vwrrhw.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

TEXAS, AUSTIN, August 23-24, 2025. Austin 2025 Train Show. Palmer Events Center, 900 Barton Springs Rd.
Info: austintrainshow.org

WASHINGTON, BATTLE GROUND, September 27, 2025. Southwest Washington Model Railroaders Great Train Swap Meet. Battle Ground High School, 250 N Parkway.
Info: larry.sprnkel@gmail.com

Future 2025-26 by location

CANADA, ONTARIO, BURLINGTON, October 17-19, 2025. Real Rails 2025 Convention, sponsored by the Canadian Pacific Historical Association. Holiday Inn and Candle Wood Suites, 3060 South Service Road.
Info: www.cptracks.ca/realrails2025.html

CONNECTICUT, VERNON, November 9, 2025. Vernon Model Train Show, sponsored by the Rockvile High School Band. Rockville High School, 70 Loveland Hill Road.
Info: www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61551588057395

FLORIDA, OCALA, October 9-11, 2025. Sunshine Region 2025 Annual Convention. Ocala Hilton, 3600 Southwest 36th Ave.
Info: www.nmrasunshineregion.org/2025-annual-convention

INDIANA, DANVILLE, November 22, 2025. CID-NMRA Danville Train Show. Hendricks County Fairgrounds, 1900 E. Main Street.
Info: www.cidnmra.org

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

MASSACHUSSETTS, WEST SPRINGFIELD, January 24-25, 2026. Amherst Railway Society Railroad Hobby Show. Better Living Center, Young, Stroh, and Mallary Buildings at The Eastern States Exposition Fairgrounds – Home of the Big E. 1305 Memorial Avenue.
Info: www.railroadhobbyshow.com/index.php

MINNESOTA, WOODBURY, October 18, 2025. Newport Model Railroad Train Flea Market, sponsored by the Greater East Area Model RR Club. Woodbury High School, 2665 Woodlane Dr.
Info: newportclub.us

MISSOURI, KIRKWOOD (St Louis), October 11-12, 2025. 34th Annual Greater St. Louis Metro Area Train Show, sponsored by the Mississippi Valley N Scalers LLC.. St. Louis Community College-Meramac Gym, 11333 Big Bend Road.
Info: mvns.club/annualshow.php

NEW YORK, SYRACUSE, November 1-2, 2025. 50th Great New York State Model Train Fair, sponsored by the CNY Chapter, National Railway Historical Society. NYS Fair Exposition Center, 581 State Fair Blvd.
Info: www.modeltrainfair.com

OHIO, CAMBRIDGE, October 26, 2025. Seventh Annual Buckeye Division (Division 6, MCR) Train Show. Pritchard Laughlin Center, 7033 Glenn Hwy.
Info: div6-mcr-nmra.org/trainshow.html

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

OHIO, WEST CHESTER (Cincinnati), October 11-12, 2025. 57th Annual Division 7 NMRA Fall Train Show. Lakota West High School, 8940 Union Centre Blvd.
Info: cincy-div7.org

OREGON, PORTLAND, October 25, 2025. 6th Bridgetown Railroad Prototype Modelers Meet. Holiday Inn Airport – Portland (I-205), 8439 NE Columbia Blvd.
Info: www.facebook.com/groups/2001136043323501

PENNSYLVANIA, EASTON, October 5, 2025. 47th Annual Lehigh Valley Regional Train Show & Expo. Charles Chrin Community Center 4100 Green Pond Road.
Info: www.lehighlines.org/chrin-flyer.html

PENNSYLVANIA, KING OF PRUSSIA, October 16-19, 2025. Philly Express, 2025 NMRA/MER Convention. Crowne Plaza Hotel, 260 Mall Blvd.
Info: phillyexpress.org

TEXAS, PEARLAND (Houston), November 15-16, 2025. 2025 Houston Area Model Train Show. Knights of Columbus Hall, 2320 Hatfield Rd.
Info: houstonttrak.org

UTAH, SALT LAKE CITY, November 7-8, 2025. 37th Intermountain Train Expo, hosted by the Northern Utah Division. Stadler USA, 5880 West 150 South.
Info: www.intermountaintrainexpo.com

WASHINGTON, LYNDEN, October 4-5, 2025. 40th Anniversary Lynden Lions Club Model Train & Toy Show. Northwest Washington Fairgrounds, Henry Jansen Agricultural Building, 1775 Front St.
Info: lyndentrainshow.com

WASHINGTON, SPOKANE, October 12, 2025. River City Modelers Fall Model Train Show. Spokane Fair & Expo Center, Buildings A, B, & C. Gate G, 404 N Havana.
Info: www.rivercitymodelers.org/rcm-train-show-info.html

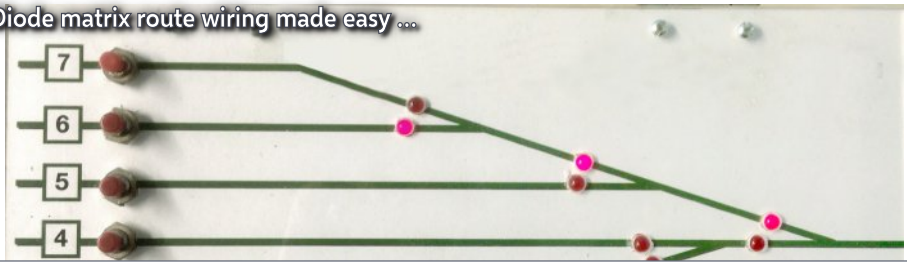
WISCONSIN, MILWAUKEE, November 1-2, 2025. Trainfest – America's Largest Operating Model Railroad Show. Baird Center, 400 W Wisconsin Ave.
Info: www.trainfest.com/trainfest.html ■

Clickable advertiser index

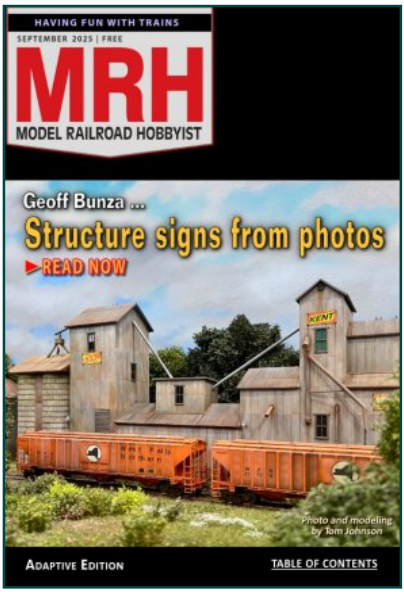
Clickable "other" index

Coming next month in MRH ...

Geoff Bunza on modeling structure signs from photos ...



Diode matrix route wiring made easy ...



Joe Fugate's Siskiyou Line 2 update ...

... coming September 15th in the September MRH

Coming next month in Running Extra ...

... all the MRH articles and ads, PLUS:

... all this and much more!

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