



*IrwinsJournal.com Presents:*

## **The Unofficial Micro-Trains® Release Report Issue #233 – May, 2016**

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Hello again everyone! Well, a “funny thing” happened on the way to this month’s issue which delayed it until now... a Hard Drive Failure on the main desktop PC that is the key technology of UMTRR HQ. Fortunately, I try to be as backed up as I can. Unfortunately, I didn’t realize that I had two copies of the Eudora e-mail program data and I kept backing up the wrong one... which meant that my distribution list for this humble effort was actually the version from... 2013. Yikes. After scrambling, I think I have the current DL back—although, obviously, if I’ve missed anyone, I won’t know. If you’re not here, raise your hand... and if you were supposed to be unsubscribed, my sincere apologies. Please reply again if you would.

On the Micro-Trains front, now, we start with an announcement—mostly so I don’t forget! MTL advertising discloses the next new N Scale body style, the post-1979 version of the GATX Airslide 4180 Cubic Foot Covered Hopper. This is the “box” shaped car with two bays for unloading. First release is in the Summer... which tends to be relative. Meanwhile, though, we have the first two releases of Micro-Trains’ new N Scale 53 Foot Corrugated Container, which we’ll get to as part of our usual look behind the red and yellow sign which starts now...

### **N SCALE NEW RELEASES:**



**030 00 270, \$27.95**

**Reporting Marks: UO 1506.**

**50 Foot Steel Exterior Post Boxcar, Double Door, Union Railroad of Oregon.**

**#4 in the MTL N Scale Per Diem Boxcar Series. Light green with dark green lettering**

including reporting marks and herald on left and roadname on right. Approximate Time Period: 1979 (“new” date on car) to 1985.

This series of cars, numbered 1500 to 1549, were leased by Brea to the Union Railroad of Oregon. That shortline connected with the Union Pacific at what was officially called “Union, Oregon” but was actually “Union Junction,” as the Town of Union was missed by the Union Pacific by more than two miles. The railroad, which was located in Northeastern Oregon, traces back to 1890. There’s a short history of this 2.2 mile line, including the various financial twists and turns it took, online as part of the “High Desert Rails” website of Jeff Moore (direct URL [www.trainweb.org/highdesertrails/uo.html](http://www.trainweb.org/highdesertrails/uo.html) ). The final shipper on the line was a sawmill. When that business closed around 1989, that was the end of the railroad as a going concern, although it was not officially abandoned until 1995. The “latest” motive power for the railroad was a circa-1936 diminutive Plymouth 35-ton gas-mechanical switcher, not unlike

the old AHM/Lima model that was marketed back in the early years of N Scale (though that model would be way oversize).

The boxcars from which MTL draws this release were FMC-built 5077 cubic foot models, and the FMC 5077 with staggered doors is the basis for the MTL 030 body style, so have a very close match this month. The August 2000 issue of **Rail Model Journal** includes this from Jim Eager's coverage of the Incentive Per Diem boxcars: "Micro-Trains offers very nice models in N Scale for FMC's 5,077-cubic-foot Plate B single-door (25000-series), offset double-door (30000-series), combination door (26000-series), and plug-door cars (27000-series)." (Though not relevant for this car, Eager goes on to note, "The first two configurations are accurate but the combination and plug-door cars were only built in the taller Plate C height, although five scale inches is hard to notice in N scale.") Meanwhile, there are photos of these cars online including on [RRPictureArchives.net](http://RRPictureArchives.net) (17 of them!) and George Elwood's "Fallen Flags" site (URL [www.rr-fallenflags.org](http://www.rr-fallenflags.org)), which has a bingo on the 1506 from April 1988.

The Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER) for July 1980 has these cars, described as "Box, Steel, End of Car Cushioning" with the AAR Designation XM. The inside length was 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 10 feet 7 inches, outside length 57 feet 9 inches, extreme height 14 feet 10 inches, door opening 16 feet and capacity 5077 cubic feet or 154,000 pounds. A side note: since there was already a Union Railroad in Pennsylvania, this one needed to be called the Union Railroad of Oregon. (And the other Union Railroad added "Pittsburgh, PA" to its ORER heading.)

As with many of the Incentive Per Diem cars, these didn't last long with their original lessee. The UO's fleet remained in the April 1985 ORER but was completely gone no later than the October 1986 Equipment Register. It's noted on [RailcarPhotos.com](http://RailcarPhotos.com) that the cars went first to the Seaboard System, possibly in October 1985 and then headed back west to the Burlington Northern, where some became part of the series BN 223000 to 223391. Only the reporting marks were changed with the rest of the paint scheme remaining intact. Photos of BN 223269 and BN 223666 from 1992 are on that site; yes, I know 223666 isn't within the range 223000 to 223391! Micro-Trains did this "restencil" as its Catalog Number 30170 with reporting marks BN 223665 in May of 1992; however, the car was painted yellow in this release. I hasten to point out that while most of the online photos make the car look like it's painted white. On the other hand, the short history of the railroad cited above calls out the boxcar color as "light lime green" and includes a photo that clearly shows this. Could have fooled me. That "dark green" lettering reminds me of the Pennsylvania Railroad's "Brunswick Green," as in "can't tell it from black." I'm sure there's a difference but it's difficult for me to discern.



**054 00 201 and 054 00 202, \$27.90 each**  
**Reporting Marks: SOO LINE 5066 and 5069.**  
**54 Foot Bulkhead Flat Cars, Soo Line.**

White with red roadname on left and mostly black lettering otherwise including road number next to reporting marks. Double panel consolidated stencils on right. Simulated steel

plate load included. Approximate Time Period: 1980 (build date) to present. Note: Only the image of the 202 release (Road Number 5069) was provided by MTL.

I get a bit of a head start on this virtual two-pack since it was released in Z Scale June 2015, in fact, the 5069 was one of those road numbers as well. At the time, though, I didn't have the book **Soo Line Freight Equipment and Cabooses** which will provide some incremental information... and corrections...

First, the series Soo Line 5050 to 5089 was built in **1980**, not 1984 as previously stated in MTL's car copy for the Z Scale release. These forty cars were built by Thrall as their Lot 773. They had 100-ton capacity, bulkheads that rose 11 feet from the floor level, nailable steel floors, 15 inch Freightmaster draft gear and thirteen stake pockets per side. A photo of the 5054 as of March 1980 is on Page 80 of the Soo Line book, and it looks nice and clean even in that white paint. A bingo on the 5051 is on the Fallen Flags site, captured in its original paint in 2005, though I'd hardly call that paint fresh and new. Sister car 5073 was still around as of August 2013 sporting conspicuity stripes, and a fair amount of rust, and the 5072 was photographed in August 2014, also looking rather tired.

Given the build date of 1980, we'll go to the April 1981 ORER for this full description: "Flat, Steel, Freightmaster HD-E Cushioning, Chain Assembly, Stake Pockets, Odd and Even Numbers." The inside length of these cars was 50 feet even, outside length 60 feet 3 inches, extreme height 14 feet 9 inches and capacity 192,000 pounds. The forty cars numbered 5050 to 5089 were all present and accounted for. The January 2011 ORER shows thirty-four of the original forty cars still in service, and the October 2014 ORER has twenty-eight. So that seems to be a good bet for a "to present" Approximate Time Period. The 5073 is shown carrying a load of steel plate not all that different from the load supplied by Micro-Trains with its cars. Bulkhead flat cars do have a fair amount of versatility, as checks of online photos will attest.



**108 00 301 and 108 00 302, \$25.30 each**  
**Reporting Marks: C&O 141271 and 141341.**  
**Three Bay 100 Ton Open Hoppers, CSX Transportation.**  
Black with mostly yellow lettering including large reporting marks on left and "CSX Transportation" logo on right. Black and white double panel consolidated stencils on right. Simulated coal load included. Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 1986 into the early 1990s.

As soon as I saw this new release, I said to myself, "Well, researching this one will be fun."

First, we'll go to the ORER for October 1986 – the first one I have after the official formation of CSX Transportation. At that time the predecessor railroads still had their own listings and reporting marks, including the Chesapeake and Ohio. There were a number of C&O series in

the general number sequence 141200 to 142999, all of which were, at 44 feet 2 inches outside length, 11 feet extreme height and 2700 cubic foot capacity, noticeably smaller than the MTL 108 body style. Both the 108s and the prototype cars do have thirteen ribs, though.

By the October 1991 Equipment Register and the CSX Transportation entry, various groups of cars have been consolidated into fewer series. The one in which we're most interested, CO 141200 to 141913, stood at 349 cars. Less than a year later in July 1992, that's down to 258 and a mere two are shown in the April 1995 ORER. In fact, by the October 1996 Register, the CO reporting marks have vanished from the CSXT registration. (I suppose that could be some sort of answer to a trivia question.)

With that part of the ATP research settled, let's turn our attention to the paint scheme. The version of the CSX Transportation herald (to use that term rather loosely) that's used on the Micro-Trains cars was rather short-lived. The "CSX" with the single "underline" stripe succeeded it rather quickly, although I didn't locate an exact date for this. Fallen Flags site has a photo of C&O 141441 as of February 1988, for example, and while it retains its Chesapeake & Ohio reporting marks it's already sporting the CSX logo without the "Transportation." On the other hand, there's a bingo on C&O 141341, the second of the two road numbers MTL has depicted, as it appeared in 1991 over on RRPictureArchives.net and it still has the "Transportation" version of the CSX herald. I also received from the UMTRR Spy Network a prototype photo of the C&O 141271, though it's undated. And how about this: a photo of CSXT 161378, a waffle-sided boxcar with the "CSX Transportation" version of the logo... seen and photographed in November 2015!



122 00 090, \$32.90

Reporting Marks: D&RGW 63826.

60 Foot Double Plug Door Boxcar,  
Long Wheelbase, Rio Grande (Denver  
& Rio Grande Western).

Orange and silver sides separated by black stripe. Orange roof; black ends. Black lettering including large reporting marks on left and speed lettering roadname on right. Approximate Time Period: 1963 (build date) to as late as the mid-1990s.

Jim Eager's **Rio Grande Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** is in use for the second month in a row for these bytes. In fact, I didn't need to go very far for the bingo: how about the front of the dust cover? The 63826 is also on Page 45, with details on this first group of sixty foot boxcars purchased by the Rio Grande. As with many cars of this type during the time period, these were dedicated to pool service for automobile parts. They were built by Thrall in September and October 1963 and numbered 63800 to 63830. The photo shows these cars with solid orange ladders, even over the silver part of the sides; MTL's model has the ladder matching the two body colors. If that's the worst nitpick I could have found, not bad! The 122 body style is modeled from a Greenville prototype so deltas to a Trinity product wouldn't be surprising; anything else seems to be minor at most.



The ORER for January 1964 shows all thirty-one of these cars with AAR Designation XAP, description “Box, All Steel, Cushion Underframe, Plug Doors” and these key dimensions: inside length 60 feet 9 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 10 feet 9 inches, outside length 65 feet 11 inches, extreme height 15 feet 4 inches, door opening 16 feet, and capacity 6087 cubic feet or 200,000 pounds. An end note calls out roller bearings, 100 ton trucks (unusual for that timeframe), the pair of eight-foot plug doors per side and the special equipment for auto parts loading.

As of the October 1986 ORER, 30 of the original 31 cars were still in service, although probably not with the same pristine paint as when delivered in 1963! They were also broken into four subsets, two of which still included auto parts as part of the description, and interestingly, their capacities were de-rated to between 170 and 174 thousand pounds. Just one car remained in April 1997 which is where I stopped looking.

Were these cars ever repainted from those attractive two-color sides that the Rio Grande used from 1962 to 1966? I can't say for certain, of course, but I can point to a photo of D&RGW 63815 taken in Lyons, New York (not that far from UMTRR HQ) in May 1991, which is available on Fallen Flags. That car is so dirty that the road number had to be “cleaned off,” but it's most definitely in the “as delivered” orange and silver. The site also has an image of sister car 63830 from 1976, complete with some orange paint patches.



**144 00 085, \$29.95**

**Car Name: Assiniboine (will be shown as “CP 70” in website listings).**

**Heavyweight 3-2 Observation with Balloon Roof, Canadian Pacific.**

Maroon sides and ends; black roof, underbody and trucks. Gold lettering including roadname in center on letterboard and car name at bottom center. Approximate Time Period: at widest, 1929 to present, but with a break in between (see text).

Technically, it's a Business Car for the CP, not an Observation Car. Photos of Canadian Pacific Car #70, also named “Assiniboine” for a Canadian First Nation of the Prairies, are easily found online, including on RRPictureArchives.net and in the Canadian Freight Railcar Gallery. The two images on the latter site were taken in 2012 in Calgary, Alberta, and clearly the car is being repaired since it's sitting on two ordinary freight car trucks! One of the same two photos is also posted to Railpictures.ca and photographer Paul O'Shell had this to say about it: “CP business car Assiniboine is ‘up on stilts’ so-to-speak as it waits outside the Ogden Yard car shop for its rebuilt truck assemblies. The relatively fresh exterior paint is already showing signs of pollution stains and will require a good wash before the car goes back into service and receives its first load of executives. The Ogden car shops were catering to at least half-a-dozen business cars in various stages of overhaul during my July 2012 visit.”

This fits with a short presentation I found online dated 2010, which states, “With the relocation of CPR Business Car No. 83 LACOMBE from Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, to Calgary, Alberta, in late October 2009, all of CPR’s active duty and stored Heavyweight Business Cars are now based in Calgary.” At the time, CP had twelve active cars including the 70/ Assiniboine and one additional car in storage. Roster and action photos are in the document (direct URL [www.canadianrailwayobservations.com/2010/02/CPRHWBusinessCars.pdf](http://www.canadianrailwayobservations.com/2010/02/CPRHWBusinessCars.pdf) ). This is also one of several sources that give 1929 as the build date for this car.

The “bingo” for the 70/ Assiniboine on Page 31 of the **Canadian Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** (Volume One) isn’t really a bingo though. The base colors are still maroon, black and gold, but the roadname is off to the far end of the letterboard adjacent to the platform and it’s “CP Rail” not “Canadian Pacific.” The car name is in italics in the usual position. That’s my “see text” part of the ATP; the car would have been redone with the CP roadname sometime after the official name of the railroad reverted back to that from CP Rail in 1996 and would have assumed that CP Rail name sometime after its introduction in 1968. A break in the timeline, so to speak. In addition, it’s stated in the caption in the **Color Guide** that “this is the third CP business car to carry the name.” Without a really, really detailed chronology the exact ATP isn’t going to be something I can relate to you. I can tell you that the Official Register of Passenger Train Equipment (ORPTE) for March 1943 and January 1953 both reference an “Official Car” named Assiniboine. In the 1943 ORPTE the car isn’t yet air conditioned and in the 1953 issue it is, which aligns with the information in the **Color Guide**.

While it might not be relevant to the “as delivered” configuration or anything between then and the 2012 date of the photos of the car in Calgary, there are differences in the window arrangement on both sides of the prototype Assiniboine versus the MTL 144 body style. I like the use of the balloon roof here, which gets the model closer to the real thing. If I recall correctly, this alternate part was initially tooled for Special Runs, and there’s nothing wrong with leveraging it for regular releases.



146 00 030, \$29.95

**Road Number: 178 (will be “CB&Q 178” in website listings)**

**Heavyweight Diner, Burlington (Chicago, Burlington & Quincy).**

Pullman green with black roof, end diaphragms, underframe and trucks. Gold lettering including “Burlington” roadname in center of letterboard and “Dining Car” plus road number at bottom center. Approximate Time Period: 1950s and 1960s as painted.

The very first line in the CB&Q entry in the ORPTE of March 1943 is for eight diners numbered from 169 to 178. They were listed as 83 feet in length with a seating capacity of 36 persons. They already had Electro-Mechanical or Steam air conditioning (one of these days I'm going to look up how air conditioning can be steam powered – and I see I made this same statement when the Burlington Parlor Car was released by MTL in 2013!). By the January 1953 ORPTE there were six cars in the group 171 to 182 with Electro-Mechanical air conditioning and eight “exceptions” with an ice system, none of which were the 178.

But simply assuming that cars 169 to 178, or 171 to 182, were identical wouldn't be correct, and, say, the photos of CB&Q 171 and 176 found on Jerry Laboda's “Passenger Car Photo Index” would help with reviewing the 178 would be “good enough” wouldn't be good enough. Fortunately, there is the **CB&Q Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, Page 24. On that page it's explained that the Burlington purchased their Class DA-5, numbered 170 to 177, in 1912 from AC&F, and then their DA-6, numbered 178 to 187, in 1922 from Pullman. “[These] would be the standard diners on all of the Burlington's first class passenger trains until the stainless steel diners were delivered in 1938,” according to Color Guide author Michael J. Spoor. While some heavyweight diners were painted silver to more closely align with the “Q”s stainless steel consists, the 178 stayed in Pullman Green until it was scrapped, which was sometime after its photo was taken in 1965. At that time the small windows at one end of the car were plated over, while the larger windows are paired, not the single pane version. So there are likely some deltas between the real car and the MTL 146 body style.

What was useful about the photo of the 176 in the “Passenger Car Photo Index” is that it's shown with the earlier style of lettering, which I'll somewhat generally refer to as the CB&Q's version of Railroad Roman, extended style on the letterboard. So the Approximate Time Period for this car is driven by the use of what's called “Ribbon Lettering” in the **Color Guide**. I had to back into that ATP beginning through the statement in the **Color Guide** that the CB&Q's converted troop sleepers began to receive that style of roadname and number during the 1950s.



**149 00 040, \$29.95**

**Road Number: 1982 (will be “AT&SF 1982” in website listings)**

**Heavyweight Horse Car, Santa Fe (AT&SF).**

Pullman green with black roof, underframe and trucks. Gold lettering including “Santa Fe” roadname off-center of letterboard (split by middle door), “Railway Express Agency” and road number between left and center doors and “Horse Express” between center and right doors. Approximate Time Period: early 1950s into the late 1960s at least.

So, after potentially being misled by the ORPTE listings for the CB&Q Diner just above, can we trust what's in it for these Horse Cars? It turns out that the question is moot because neither of the ones I have, March 1943 and January 1953, actually have ATSF 1982 listed. There is a series 1990 to 1999, shown as 79 feet 2 inches long and described as "Horse Express" with an AAR Designation of BH. According to the **ATSF Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, Page 20, Pullman built that group in 1930. But that's not the 1982!

Fortunately, we can return to Jerry Laboda's "Passenger Car Photos Index" ([URL passcarphotos.info](http://passcarphotos.info)) for images of what I assume (hope?) are sister cars ATSF 1987, photographed by Otto Perry in 1952, and ATSF 1984, photographed – believe it or not – in 1969 as part of the Texas Chief consist. Jerry Laboda himself commented on this photo, which is on [RRPictureArchives.net](http://RRPictureArchives.net), that by then this Santa Fe car was being leased to the Railway Express Agency. The lettering looks accurate to the prototype here, however the roof and doors differ between the real car and the MTL 149 body style.

I did find online that the Santa Fe converted chair cars and coaches to this group of Horse/Express cars in the early 1950s. That could mean too late for the January 1953 ORPTE, and since I only have two, that's all I can say here. Given the 1969 photo date for the 1984 I'll call the ATP to "at least" there. Going back to the **Color Guide**, it's noted that when Horse/Express cars received roller bearing trucks, they were repainted in gray as an indication – something to keep in the files for future reference.



**469 00 010, \$13.95**

**Reporting Marks: CSXU 232514.**

**53 Foot Corrugated Container, CSX Intermodal.**

Blue with mostly yellow lettering including "How Tomorrow Moves" slogan and CSX "boxcar" logo in center and reporting marks on right. Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 2008 to present. Note: MTL has announced that this item is not on Dealer Standing Orders. Also please

note that the image provided by MTL is not of the usual high resolution (i.e. "it's not your eyesight").

Allow me to start with a concession: I know almost nothing about containers. I suspect I'm going to have to learn now! Luckily for me, there is a bingo on this box from 2010 on [RRPictureArchives.net](http://RRPictureArchives.net) with a description of the U288 AAR Designation: "Containers, General Service (Non-equipped Dry Vans), 53 feet and less than 57 feet outside length, outside width over 8 feet, outside height over 9 feet 6 inches." In the action photo the container is riding in well car DTTX 726274B in the lower position with another "high cube" CSX blue container atop it.

MTL notes that these containers for domestic use only were built in China by CIMC (China International Marine Containers). While they've been built since 1989 the CSX "How





Tomorrow Moves” slogan and “boxcar” logo has been in use since 2008 (check YouTube for a television commercial) so that will do for a start to the Approximate Time Period.

For a bit of additional information, Micro-Trains also included a small graphic of the end of this container, in order to illustrate how it’s decorated. It won’t be on the UMTRR Website so consider this to be a bit of a Subscriber Bonus.



**469 00 020, \$13.95**

**Reporting Marks: AXSU 211026.**

**53 Foot Corrugated Container, AX Sun Group.**

All white except for yellow panels at left and right of each side. Black lettering including reporting marks on left and logo and website URL in center. Approximate Time Period: at least 2011 to present. Note: MTL

has announced that this item is not on Dealer Standing Orders. Also please note that the image provided by MTL is not of the usual high resolution (i.e. “it’s not your eyesight”).

The AXSUN Group is headquartered in Canada, with Head Offices in both the greater Montreal and Toronto areas, but also has operations in the USA and Mexico. In fact, according to their website, they can handle any business within the NAFTA (North American Free Trade Act) geography. News releases on their site indicate that the company marked its tenth anniversary in 2012, so doing the math (!) it was formed only in 2002. The firm is younger than both of my children...

Anyway, the earliest image I found on RRPictureArchives.net is from mid-2011, so I’m going to be lazy here and call an “at least” ATP. (A data point which supports this is from AXSUN’s own site; a news release from May 2011 announcing its first delivery of CIMC 53 foot containers.) One of the photos of another box in the series, AXSU 211006, happens to be riding along with a CSX blue “How Tomorrow Moves” 53 foot “high cube” container, so feel free to stack these two releases together. There are a few more photos, but no exact match (“bingo”) on “The Intermodal Container Web Page – Part 3” which I suspect may be a source for future releases (Direct URL [www.matts-place.com/intermodal/part3/53foot.htm](http://www.matts-place.com/intermodal/part3/53foot.htm) ).



As with the CSX Container, Micro-Trains also included a small graphic of the end of this release as well, and here it is for you.

## N SCALE REPRINTS:



094 00 270, \$35.90

**Reporting Marks: KCS 286026.**

**3 Bay ACF Center Flow Covered Hopper, Long Hatches, Kansas City Southern.**

Dark forest green (essentially black) with gray roof and top side plate. Red and yellow

bands at bottom of sides. White and yellow lettering including reporting marks on left (in yellow outlined in red). Red and yellow KCS Lines "heritage herald" on right. Approximate Time Period: 2007 to present. Previous Releases: Road Number 286022, November 2007; then Runner Pack #23 with Road Numbers 286018, 286019, 286020 and 286021, January 2009. This doesn't count Special Runs.

In anticipation of the National N Scale Convention taking place next month in, well, Kansas City, here's another run of this very sharp looking "heritage scheme" covered hopper. At the time of its initial release, the actual prototype from American Railcar Industries had not yet been done in N Scale, though there are now closer 1:160 three bay covered hoppers to the KCS cars than the MTL 094 body style. The first run and the Runner Pack were instant sellouts and it'll be interesting to see if this one follows that pattern. As I'd previously mentioned, the Pennsylvania Railroad's "Dark Green Locomotive Enamel" has a new contender for the answer to the question "How close can you get to black paint without being black paint?" This "heritage scheme" complements what has been painted on more than 100 locomotives throughout the KCS system. It's an homage to the "Southern Belle" passenger train that ran on KCS from 1940 to 1969. The line has even repainted its number 34, an FP9 museum unit, into this retro scheme.

You need look no farther than RailcarPhotos.com for prototype photos, more than two entire pages of them actually. Among these are some photographed in April 2007 in East St. Louis Illinois by Keith Belk, who notes that the cars were constructed from April to December of that year. I'm not sure whether it's the camera angle or not, but in a photo of KCS 286014, the "Do Not Hammer On Car" warning appears to be accompanied by a large dent in the car side! I will note a minor quibble with the paint in that the bottom hatches, and just the hatches, not the bays, look to be gray on this car and not black. Conspicuity stripes have been added in yellow to the yellow part of the sill; this would be practically indistinguishable in N Scale. It's also interesting to note that the car has the "Do Not Hammer" warning in Spanish ("No Martillos En El Auto") as well as English. Given the KCS presence in Mexico this shouldn't be surprising; in fact, the first 150 of these cars were sublet to the KCS de Mexico.

When first released, Micro-Trains officially listed "unknown" for the series on the insert label. No kidding: KCS's Heritage Scheme was announced in March 2007, and how's that for an ATP of "the present" for that first run! We now know that the number series is 286001 to 286750. The October 2014 ORER has the series broken into multiple subgroups but stays overall at 286000 to 286749 for a total of 731 cars. The outside length of these cars is 60 feet 1 inch,

extreme height 15 feet 6 inches, capacity 5200 cubic feet and gross rail weight (car plus lading) of 286,000 pounds.

**N SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES:** *The following was announced mid-month via the Micro-Trains website, the MTL Facebook page, and via the e-mail "Micro-Trains E-Line," all on or about May 13.*



**055 44 470, \$23.70**

**Reporting Marks: RDG 85711.**

**33 Foot Two Bay Hopper, Offset Sides, Flat Ends, Reading.**

Black with rust colored wheels, couplers and draft gear. White lettering including reporting marks on left and large slant style roadname in center. White reporting marks on ends. Red, white and black "America's Largest Anthracite Carrier" herald on right. Moderate to heavy weathering and fading effects across car. Approximate Time Period: early 1950s to mid-1970s. Previous Releases: None, though there have been similar paint schemes on other Reading hopper releases.

Quoting from the **Reading Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**: "Between 1950 and 1957, the Reading amassed one of the largest single classes of cars on their roster in later years, classed HTv, all built by Bethlehem Steel." A table at the front of the **Color Guide** gives road numbers 83000 to 87999 for this group and also conveniently samples car counts: 2996 in 1955, 4674 in 1960, 4074 in 1965, 2121 in 1970 and just 355 in 1975. While the delivery of these cars began in 1950, during 1950 and 1951 the cars came with the roadname in Railroad Roman, not the slant serif style on this model. So it's "early 1950s" for the start of the ATP.

The example HTv in the Color Guide is RDG 87089, captured far from home in San Bernadino, California in an undated photo. (There have been some very interesting discussions online about just how far hoppers travel off their home rails; this is a pretty extreme example.) The fading pattern on the 87089 is quite different from what I'd call typical. The red in the "Anthracite" herald is almost completely gone, while the white lettering is almost completely intact. Overall, we have a good match between the prototype and the MTL 055 body style.

My copy of the ORER for January 1958 is not quite as beat up as this release looks, but it's definitely used. The Reading series had 4686 cars at the time, with these vital statistics: inside length 33 feet, inside width 10 feet 4 inches, outside length 34 feet, extreme height 10 feet 9 inches, and capacity 2145 cubic feet or 110,000 pounds. Jumping all the way to the first appearance of Conrail in the April 1976 Equipment Register, there were no cars remaining of the once massive fleet, so the end of the ATP in the early seventies is confirmed.



094 44 100, \$33.90

Reporting Marks: ATSF 314683.

Three Bay Center Flow Covered Hopper, Trough Hatches, Santa Fe (AT&SF).

Base car is mineral red with white lettering including reporting marks on left and large

Cooper Black style roadname in center. Light to moderate weathering; black and multicolor graffiti across bottom of one side matching a prototype photo. Approximate Time Period: at least 2011. Previous Releases: As Catalog Number 94100, Road Number 313831, December 1997 and Road Number 313838, as part of 92102 BNSF Merger Two Pack, April 2002; then Runner Pack #20 with Road Numbers 313833, 313840, 313867 and 313888, September 2008; and also two previous Weathered Releases: Catalog Number 094 44 101, road number obscured, May 2009 and Catalog Number 094 44 102, road number obscured, September 2009.

Before checking the prototype photo for this release thoughtfully cited by Micro-Trains, let's do a quick recap of the prior coverage of this car. So back we go to the September 2008 UMTRR for what was a previously unannounced Runner Pack (as in, "surprise"). An article in the May 1994 issue of **Rail Model Journal** notes that this MTL body style works for the CF4600 series of Center Flow cars, which were used by more than 35 different railroads. These were delivered during the years 1965 to 1981, and over 15,000 were made. American Car and Foundry built these and they were among the most popular of the Center Flow variations.

These particular Center Flows were built in 1973 by AC&F in Huntington, West Virginia as the Santa Fe's GA-183 class. (How these are classed as "Gondolas" I'm not really sure, but that's the Santa Fe's call.) The series was 313800 to 314799 and were delivered in the mineral red and white scheme depicted by MTL. There's a November 1974 photo of the 313831, which was the first road number released by Micro-Trains, in the **ATSF Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**.

Three years after being built, the October 1976 ORER shows 984 cars strong out of the original thousand. Twenty-one years after that in 1989, 749 cars were extant, of which 569 remained at the initial capacity of 200,000 pounds and the rest varied up or down from there. And in January 2000 as part of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe, there remained 476 cars in ATSF reporting marks in the original series. It doesn't look like either ATSF or BN cars kept their road numbers when restenciled to BNSF.

But this one kept not only its number, but its original lettering, all the way to November 2011 when it was caught in Griffith, Indiana complete with its colorful, ahem, additional markings. The reference photo can be found over on RRPictureArchives.net. That answers, at least in this single case, a question I had back in 2008, which was how long we could have expected the "as delivered" paint to last. While this doesn't convey paint scheme, as of the October 2014 ORER, 84 cars from this series were still in the original ATSF numbers. I'm not sure that takes us all the way to the present, but I expect that the "at least 2011" ATP is most likely conservative.





Before wrapping up this particular commentary, allow me to present one side each of the two previous Weathered Releases, mostly for reference purposes (I wasn't including images in the UMTRR then) and partially to illustrate how MTL has progressed with its own artistry since that time. First is the weathered only car from May 2009 and second is the version with weathering and Halloween-ish graffiti from September of that year.

**094 44 420, \$33.90**

**Reporting Marks: BNSF 404059.**

**Three Bay Center Flow Covered Hopper, Trough Hatches, Burlington Northern Santa Fe.**

Base car is mineral red with white lettering including reporting marks on left and circle cross BNSF herald on right, and yellow conspicuity stripes along bottom of car. Moderate weathering including brown wash over lettering; black and multicolor "99 Problems" graffiti across bottom of one side matching a prototype photo. Approximate Time Period: at least 2011. Previous Releases: None.

This car was also captured in 2011 and its image is also available on RRPictureArchives.net, so it's conceivable that it and the previous ATSF Weathered/Graffiti car could appear in the same train without a mile-long stretching of Rule #1. I'm not a fan of graffiti, but at least I can read it this time! (I don't really have any idea what the Santa Fe car "says.") The "piece of paper" at the right of this might include a reference to rapper Jay Z's "99 Problems," however the exact lyric is not suitable for a family publication nor do I think it's reprinted on the MTL version of this car! Based on how the lettering is spaced on the actual car, I don't think it's there either, so I think it's something else that "ain't one" of the 99 problems. Also, the gentleman depicted to the left of the "99 Problems" graphic looks about as much like Jay Z as, well, I do. I think he looks more like something out of the Archie Comic Books than out of the housing projects of Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant district, which was the early home of Shawn "Jay Z" Carter. (He's apparently dropped the hyphen between "Jay" and "Z"; if you don't already know this, his stage name comes from the J and Z subway trains that run in Brooklyn.)

Anyway, the BNSF 404059 might make it To Present as part of the ATP as it potentially in the October 2014 ORER as part of the series 403746 to 404100 which had 135 cars in total. At 4650 cubic feet, these cars are just a small bit larger than the 094 body style, which is closest to the CF4600 car from American Car & Foundry. RailcarPhotos.com has this BNSF series coming from predecessor Burlington Northern as its groups 481501 to 481550 and 481551 to 481725 (formerly Fort Worth and Denver 459350 to 459549), also built by AC&F but in 1970 and 1974.



In addition to the above, the **BNSF/Procor Weathered Bulkhead Flat Four-Pack (993 05 320, \$129.95)** is scheduled to be available mid-month and should be at dealers as you read this. UMTRR coverage was in the January 2016 issue. The individual catalog and road numbers are as follows: 054 51 009, 545705; 054 52 009, 545707; 054 53 009, 545709; 054 54 009, 545711.

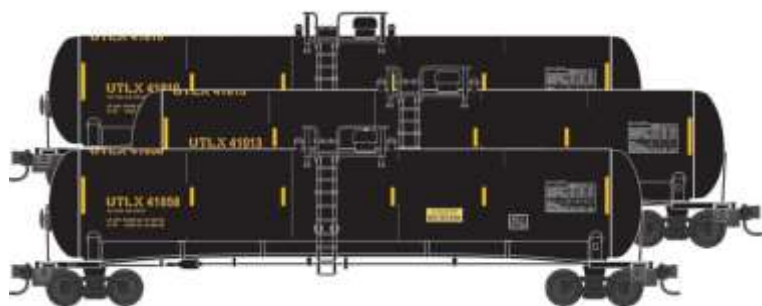
**N SCALE RUNNER PACKS:** In addition to the below announcement, **Runner Pack #116 (993 00 116, \$109.95)**, four Soo Line Evans Three-Bay Covered Hoppers, is now available. UMTRR coverage was in the December 2015 issue. The individual catalog numbers and road numbers for these items are as follows: 099 51 160, 72423; 099 52 160, 72555; 099 53 160, 72639; 099 54 160, 72755. These are the first through fourth road numbers for this car, which hasn't been previously released.



Also, **Eight Pack #10 (993 00 810, \$179.95)**, eight Pennsylvania Railroad three bay open hoppers with loads, has also been released. UMTRR coverage was in the December 2015 issue. The individual catalog numbers and road numbers for these items are as follows: 108 51 290, 276009; 108 52 290, 276018; 108 53 290, 276023; 108 54 290, 276026; 108 55 290, 276044; 108 56 290, 276061; 108 57 290, 276073; 108 58 290, 276099. These are the first through eighth road numbers for this car, which hasn't been previously released. As noted in the pre-release coverage, these cars are lettered as PRR class H39a hoppers while the 108 body style is a much closer match to the H43 cars that the Pennsylvania Railroad had on its roster.



*The following is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is as noted below. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close May 31.*



***Scheduled Delivery October 2016:***

**993 00 121, \$99.95.**

**Reporting Marks: UTLX 41010, 41013, 41058.**

**Quantity three of 56 Foot General Service Tank Cars, Union Tank Car Line.**

Black with dark yellow reporting marks at left and at left top of tank.

Yellow conspicuity stripes along middle of sides. White tank qualification stencil on right. Black emergency advisory on yellow panel right of center. Approximate Time Period: 2005 to present, but see text. Previous Releases: None. Catalog numbers (in the 110 series) will be note upon release. Micro-Trains artwork is preliminary and actual product may vary.

Here I go again, forgetting the timing of the two major spotting features of these cars... excuse me, I'll be right back from the archives... OK, it's 2005 for the conspicuity stripes and the year 2000, more or less, for the qualification stencil. That having been noted, a check of the ORER for January 2006 can't hurt. As usual, the information about tank cars is very limited. We have the series 40800 to 41299, comprised of 217 type T108 cars plus others with AAR Type Code T105, T106 and T107, for a grand total of 256 tankers. The January 2014 Equipment Register has just T108s in the single group 40844 to 41232 with a car count of 173. Other than the Gross Rail Weight of 263,000 pounds, we got nothin'.

All three of the road numbers selected for this forthcoming Runner Pack have bingos on RRPictureArchives: the 41010 from 2011, the 41013 from 2007 and the 41058 from 2008. The "see text" part becomes rather evident upon looking at these photos: the cars are a fair amount longer than the MTL 110 body style. In fact, they're 69 feet long, versus the nominal 54-foot length of the Micro-Trains models. Among other things, that "squeezes" the spacing of the six conspicuity stripes. The degree to which is this an issue is, of course, up to the modeler.

By the way, if you really want to make an impression on people at parties – though I can't guarantee what kind of impression! – be sure to check out the "Field Guide to Tank Cars" published by the Association of American Railroads. Yes, with a little bit of study, you too can translate that Tank Car Specification, such as "DOT111A100ALW1"! Find that publication at [www.joinnsoar.com/pdf/4185\\_Field\\_Guide\\_To\\_Tank\\_Cars1-opt.pdf](http://www.joinnsoar.com/pdf/4185_Field_Guide_To_Tank_Cars1-opt.pdf) . Perhaps the most useful item included for this reviewer is that there is a specified layout for tank car lettering, including placement of reporting marks, the qualification stencil and other information.



## N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES:



146 00 240, \$32.95

### **Ringling Brothers Heavyweight Series #9, Heavyweight Diner.**

Red with aluminum roof and black underframe. "Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey" in yellow with black outline in center of letterboard. "Diner" in yellow at bottom center. Multicolor simulated posters with various food selections across car. No road number.

In March 2010, The New York Times published a "Diner's Journal" blog entry called "When The Line for Dinner Is a Mile Long." The "Pie Car," as it's almost always known in circus conversations, was opened to the news media during the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus's stay in the New York City area. The circus wanted both to commemorate the 140<sup>th</sup> edition of the circus – the "Funundrum" which has appeared on an MTL release – and show off the \$1.2 million renovation of the Pie Car. The diner was one of a sixty-one car train "stashed away on an obscure railroad siding rimmed by reedy brush and a chain link fence crowned with razor wire." (If that "obscure" location is the same as it was this year, it's right behind one of the hotels in which I've stayed just north of Newark Airport. I can never keep the exact trackage names straight in that area but one online source calls it "Bay Line Yard.")

"Once upon a time," the piece opens, "any self-respecting aerialist or big-top roustabout ordered pie in the Pie Car. Of course. And heaps of fried chicken. Or beef stew with glorious gobbets of fat, swimming with hefty carrots and an armada of bobbing potatoes. Not to mention buckets of strong, steaming java.

"But these days, in the Pie Car – the newly renovated \$1.2-million, 24-hour-a-day dining facility on the mile-long train of the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey circus – some 350 ladies, gentlemen and children of all ages have actually been known to order salads. Or vegetarian medleys. And, on request mind you, there is decaf."

Any more quoting and I'd be violating Fair Use, but I highly recommend the rest of this: [dinersjournal.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/03/02/when-the-line-for-dinner-is-a-mile-long](http://dinersjournal.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/03/02/when-the-line-for-dinner-is-a-mile-long) . The prices aren't quite as good as what's on the MTL Heavyweight Diner, but food is still sold "at cost" which is not bad at all. And food is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for hungry circus performers and workers.



It turns out that the Pie Car is a favorite topic for journalists: search the phrase “circus dining car” for more articles from around the country. It turns out I have something in common with the Thundering Cossack Riders: a weakness for mayonnaise.



*In addition to the above, the **Ringling Brothers Heavyweight Series FT-A Diesel (987 01 681, \$134.95)** is scheduled to be available mid-month and should be at MTL dealers as you read this. UMTRR coverage was in the February 2015 issue.*

*The following is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is as noted below. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close May 31.*



**Scheduled Delivery September 2016:**

**993 21 270, \$239.95**

**Dr. Mort's Creepy Carnival Halloween Train Set.**

Expected to consist of the following:

987 Series FT-A Powered Diesel Locomotive

140 Series Heavyweight Railway Post Office Car

139 Series Circus Flat Car with Trailer and Circus Wagon

“Exhibit Car” which appears to be a special non-standard body style

144 Series Heavyweight 3-2 Observation Car

Each item is shown in a scheme of either gray or gray and brown, except for “The Exhibit Car” in yellow, with multicolor lettering and graphics. Artwork is preliminary and actual product may vary.

The Halloween Train Set entry for this year leans toward what was called in less politically correct times the “Freak Show.” The folks at Wikipedia have somewhat of a textbook definition of this (with the caveat that it “may not represent a worldwide view of the subject”) but the main point is that these attractions were often sideshows connected with circuses, P.T.

Barnum's for one, and ran the gamut from actual individuals with physical conditions to outright frauds.

The fictional Dr. Mort (Latin for "death") appears to be featuring performers who might lean more toward the latter than the former here. The "Head of Medusa" probably doesn't turn men into stone... what would that do for repeat business? I've known blockheads in my time, but not an actual "Block Head." As for "Cobra Girl," "Frog Princess" and the three untitled characters in "The Exhibit" car... that might be an exercise in excellent costuming and makeup, no?

Overall, though, what we have here is a good example of what would be a very condensed traveling show, complete with enough gear in the trailer to set up the tents and whatever else is needed, plus two passenger cars for the staff and the acts. That "The Exhibit" car is probably the most interesting to me, since as depicted it doesn't look anything like the usual Micro-Trains offerings. This harkens back to the "Liberty Bell Train Set" which included a flat car on which the model Liberty Bell was displayed. I don't own that set but what I've seen of the car makes me think that it's a 40-foot boxcar underframe upon which one or more specially created castings will be attached. We'll see by the time that it's time for Trick-Or-Treat...

**NARROW GAUGE (N<sub>n3</sub>) RELEASES:** No releases this month.

### **Z SCALE NEW RELEASES:**



**506 00 331 and 506 00 332, \$25.70 each.**

**Reporting Marks: B&O 289247 and 289250.**

**50 Foot Steel Boxcars, Double**

**Youngstown Doors, Baltimore and Ohio.**

Red oxide (the B&O's "Iron Sesqui-Oxide") with mostly white lettering including small

capital dome herald and reporting marks on left and large "B&O" on right. Double panel consolidated stencils and U-1 "yellow dot" wheel inspection stencil on right. Approximate Time Period: mid-1960s or, strictly speaking, 1978, to early 1980s. Note: MTL had only the image of the 331 available at "press time" though there are two road number releases.

I was getting nowhere on this car until I remembered that it had already been released in N Scale (034 00 380, April 2014). Once again, the "strictly speaking" Approximate Time Period is driven by the detail of the U-1 wheel inspection stencil at the bottom right of each side. That marking was applied starting on March 31, 1978, with a yellow dot meaning the wheels were OK and a white dot meaning the wheels were among a defective batch requiring replacement by the end of 1978. The MTL depiction of this car is as serviced in June 1978. Remove that and you can back up a few years to the start of double paneled consolidated stencils. Remove both and perhaps you can go back to when the B&O started using this particular paint scheme. Micro-Trains says the main scheme was used beginning in 1964 while a compendium of boxcar schemes on the B&O Historical Society website ( [www.borhs.org](http://www.borhs.org) ) gives 1962 as the starting point. Either way, it's not the 1954 build date of the car-- i.e. this scheme is not "as delivered."

Can we just remove the consolidated stencils and yellow dot and go all the way back to the early 1960s? We'll find out.

But first, the obvious question for me is whether this car should still have its roofwalk if it's meant to represent June 1978. A photo reference should exist, and it does: Page 11 of **Classic Freight Cars Volume 8**. The image is undated but the stencils and the roofwalk are both present, so the answer to my obvious question is Yes. There is also an ACI Label which would need to be added just above the U-1 stencil. There can be quibbles with the side sill shape and the ends, plus the fact that the real car had riveted sides, not welded as on the 034 body style. If you don't have the print reference, there's a photo of B&O 288031 in the same paint scheme at [RRPictureArchives.net](http://RRPictureArchives.net), in black and white but from 1980.

The Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER) for January 1978 shows a surprisingly small series, B&O 289245 to 289251, with seven cars of AAR Classification XL and with description "Box, Steel, Evans 9 Belt DF Loaders." The inside length was 50 feet 6 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 54 feet 4 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 15 feet and capacity 4952 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. There is a "door thing" here since the prototype cars had an 8+7 foot configuration versus the 8+8 foot pair on the MTL car. This specific small group remained just a short time longer, as they are in the April 1981 ORER but gone from the April 1984 Register.

It's probably safe to say that these M-65a cars were converted from the original M-65 class of cars, numbered 288000 to 288799. Keeping in mind that these seven cars were fitted with DF equipment as noted by MTL in its car copy, I backtracked to the July 1963 ORER. And... there is no 289247 listed, though there is a series of boxcars with the same dimensions numbered 289000 to 289055. I'll guess that these were split into subsets later, and it's when that happened that the Less Strictly Speaking Approximate Time Period begins. That would be sometime between January 1964 and January 1967 based on other ORERs I own, or "mid-1960s" in ATP-Speak.



510 00 330, \$27.95

**Reporting Marks: PW 167.**

**50 Foot Steel Exterior Post Boxcar, Single Door, Providence & Worcester Railroad.**

#4 in the MTL Z Scale Per Diem Boxcar Series. Red with mostly white lettering

including reporting marks on left and roadname on right. Black, red and white herald left of door. Two single panel consolidated stencils at lower right. Approximate Time Period: 1977 ("new" date on car) to no later than 1981. Note: Only the MTL artwork was available at "press time," which I will replace with the actual image on the UMTRR website as soon as it's available.

No "please see the N Scale release" gimme this time in the Per Diem Series. In fact, you'd have to go back to July 1981 for the first and only release of a P&W boxcar by Kadee Micro-

Trains in N Scale (two, part of their “Super Six-Pack”) and it’s not even part of the same prototype number series as this car.

But we can start with a bingo over on RRPictureArchives.net of this car. PW 173 was found in March 1977 in Calumet City, Illinois, just a month after it was built. This certainly didn’t start as a digital image! The three-quarter view illustrates a good “look and feel” match between the prototype and the MTL 510 body style. There are other photos of P&W boxcars on the site as well, most taken when the cars were brand new and a bit of a colorful curiosity.

The ORER for January 1978 shows the series PW 101 to 300 described as “Box, Steel, Nailable Steel Floor” with AAR Designation XM. The inside length was reported as 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 11 feet 2 inches, outside length 57 feet 3 inches, extreme height 15 feet 6 inches, door opening 10 feet, and capacity 5347 cubic feet or 154,000 pounds. This brings up my “look and feel” comment since the car is actually a bit larger than the FMC 5077 cubic foot design that I believe is the prototype for the 510 series, as it is for the N Scale 025 series of cars. In Z Scale this difference is, well, small.

And the difference between my memory and reality is, well, large! I thought that these cars lasted on the Providence & Worcester roster much longer than they actually did. Not true! All 200 cars are in place in the July 1980 ORER, but they’re all gone in the April 1981 Register. Where did they go? That’s probably a much longer story than I can fit in these bytes, or research fully for that matter, but a quick check on the phrase “ex-PW boxcar” revealed that some went to the Green Bay and Western, which itself had Incentive Per Diem boxcars come and go.



**530 00 451 and 530 00 452, \$24.70 each**

**Reporting Marks: SP&S 38017 and 38024.**

**39 Foot Single Dome Tank Cars, Spokane, Portland and Seattle.**

Black with white lettering including reporting marks on left. Approximate Time Period: as early as 1911, or 1954 (service date) to mid-1950s.

Company service cars? Not quite. When purchased by the SP&S in 1911 from the Pressed Steel Car Company, these cars were given revenue roster numbers even though they were mostly utilized for oil fuel for steam locomotives. According to what I could surmise from the **Spokane, Portland & Seattle Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, these cars were eventually reassigned into Maintenance of Way service and given “X numbers,” for example, the 38023 became X-383 in October 1956. Checking the January 1958 ORER I can confirm that only six tank cars had revenue numbers, and they were the 38000 to 38005; so the ATP is over for the two road numbers selected by Micro-Trains. Those six did hang around all the way through the 1960s. With a little decaling (or squinting!) and the application of Rule #1 one could keep these around into the Burlington Northern merger.



Whether company service or revenue service, you might already be thinking that tank cars built in 1911 look a fair amount different than the MTL 530 body style, and you'd be right about that. The cars had a large center sill resulting in an elevated tank, which itself was of a relatively large 12,000 gallons. The cars didn't have ladders to the platform; actually, they didn't have a platform either. Instead, there are grab irons directly to a small expansion dome. The walkway is higher than might be expected with later cars.

Here's a fun fact: of these thirty tank cars the SP&S purchased in 1911, the first ten were lettered for its subsidiary Oregon Trunk, and may have been the only revenue cars to carry "OT" reporting marks.

*In addition to the above, the following is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is as noted below. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close May 31.*



994 01 160, \$119.95

#### **Great Northern Passenger Car 4-Pack.**

Expected to consist of the following items:

550 Series Lightweight Sleeper, Road Number 1377, "State Pass"

551 Series Lightweight Dome Car, Road Number 1331.

552 Series Lightweight Coach, Road Number 1079.

553 Series Lightweight Baggage Car, Road Number 269.

All cars are in the Big Sky Blue (BSB) scheme: blue sides with white band at top, gray roof and black underframe and trucks. White lettering including outline goat herald and roadname on left and small road number on right. Approximate Time Period: 1967 to 1971 based on paint scheme. Preliminary artwork shown; actual product may vary. Individual catalog numbers are TBD.

This final scheme for the Great Northern—indeed, one of the final schemes of any railroad prior to Amtrak's takeover of intercity passenger service in 1971—is still a favorite of mine, although Empire Builder fans might be gnashing their teeth at my opinion. I was able to see some Big Sky Blue cars with everything except their roadnames as part of NJ Transit's "Jersey Builder" trains of equipment purchased from the Burlington Northern. In fact, somewhere in the Irwin Family Archives there are photos of ex-Great Northern cars in commuter service along the Northeast Corridor. Not exactly elegant, but it did delay the coming of the scrapper.

Since the Big Sky Blue paint scheme was so short-lived, and much of the Great Northern's equipment made it into that scheme, I think checks of the MTL-announced cars in either BSB or earlier paint is fair game as long as the road numbers are appropriate. (That, of course, assumes that I'm reading them correctly...) With that, it's off to the **Great Northern Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**.

And there are no worries with the sleeper "State Pass," also Road Number 1377, which appears in BSB paint on Page 28 of the **Color Guide**. It's actually a 6-5-2 Sleeper that was among the "Pass" series numbered 1370 to 1384. Just above that photo is a shot of sister car 1373 "Santiam Pass" which gives us both sides of this model... and there are differences in the window arrangements versus the MTL 550 body style. These cars "were an integral part of the Empire Builder" according to text on that page.

The 1079 coach was among seven 56-seat cars, numbered 1076 to 1082, acquired from the Chicago and North Western Railroad in 1964 and 1965. It was captured in BSB paint in September 1968 and that photo is on Page 23 of the **Color Guide**. These cars were called "Northwesterners" or "The 400s" given their heritage; the C&NW was one of many railroads that dispositioned surplus passenger equipment to other lines.

Regardless of the actual size of the domes involved, the GN called all of its dome cars "Great Domes" (they had some which spanned the entire length of the car). Among these were the GN series 1320 to 1335, built in 1955 by Budd for the "Great Dome Empire Builder." Besides the 1323 which was found in Big Sky Blue, there was also at least one painted in... Big Cascade Green? Yes, swap out the GN's Sky Blue for successor BN's Cascade Green, but keep the final version of the GN herald and roadname. Both are on Page 27 of the **Color Guide**; with respect to the BN Green version, author David H. Hickcox adds: "Gasp." This group of dome cars also has a different window arrangement than the MTL body style, most notably smaller windows below the dome.

Though still shown in Empire Builder paint on Page 5 of the **Color Guide**, there is "Storage Mail Baggage Car" 263 which was part of the series 262 to 276. That includes 269 which is what I think (hope!?) the road number will be. These cars were rebuilt from heavyweight passenger cars in 1948. I did catch the bingo for the 269 over on Northeast.Railfan.Net, which gets us the quartet. Between the photo in the **Color Guide**, the one of the actual 269, and a 2004 image of a preserved GN 270 on RRPictureArchives.net, I'm thinking that the real cars might have been just a bit longer than the MTL 553 body style.

The usual question of whether all four cars appear to be contemporaneous should be answered with an emphatic "yes" this time, simply because of the very short life of the Big Sky Blue paint scheme. And we've got direct photo evidence that this is the case for all four of these cars. And one more thing: should you happen to own Z Scale Runner Pack #32 or #33, which are GN sleepers and coaches respectively in the "Empire Builder" scheme, you can certainly run those cars with this forthcoming four-pack.

**Z SCALE REPRINTS:** No releases this month.

**Z SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES:** *The following was announced mid-month via the Micro-Trains website, the MTL Facebook page, and via the e-mail "Micro-Trains E-Line," all on or about May 13.*



**500 44 440, \$25.60**

**Reporting Marks: GN 271 – (last two digits obscured).**

**40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Great Northern.**

Green with white lettering including reporting marks on left. Red slanted serif

roadname on right. Black, white and red side-facing goat herald and "waving goat" device on left above reporting marks. Light weathering and "Robot" graffiti with depiction of a "vintage" robot next to the "waving goat." Approximate Time Period: 1960 to early 1980s. Previous Releases (unweathered): Previous Releases: As catalog 500 00 44x, Road Numbers 27107 and 27163, January 2008; then Runner Pack #68 (994 00 068) with Road Numbers 27176, 27185, 27194 and 27203, August 2014. Note: It's possible but not confirmed that any of the four Runner Pack cars could have been utilized for this Weathered Release.

Danger Will Robinson! Okay, first, apparently the Robot B9 from the television series **Lost In Space** which debuted in 1965 said this exact phrase only once, and that wasn't until Season 3. And second, the "robot" that was "added" to this Great Northern boxcar doesn't look anything like B9. But "Danger Will Robinson" is the first thing I thought of when I saw this car.

But the actual drawing looks more like the vision of a robot from the 1940s and 1950s than the 1960s, mostly human form with some human features. Some of these machines looked, well, pretty cheesy, especially those in some of the movie serials. This leads to my very favorite line in reference to one of these cheesy robots, from the cult classic **J-Men Forever** (are you surprised?): "Uh-oh, an enraged water heater!"

Anyway, getting back to the car in question, the GN's group of boxcars numbered 27000 to 27799 was actually rebuilt from wood-sheathed boxcars. The key spotting feature is how the steel sides extend a bit from the ends and bottom sills. This series was also the first to carry the Glacier Green paint that was adopted at the time for Great Northern boxcars. One of many "official" paint schemes that make the GN such an interesting – and perhaps frustrating – road to model, this one was introduced in late 1960, giving us the start of the ATP. Page 47 of the **Great Northern Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** has GN 27751 as of sometime later than the 1967 service date shown on its side. Of the original series of 800 cars, 759 survived into the Burlington Northern merger, but the total was down to just 35 cars by the April 1981 ORER. There is of course the question of whether graffiti like this would have been painted onto a car this old, but in this case, I think it's just fun.



505 44 330, \$28.95

Road Number: 118663 (will be preceded with "PRR" in website listings).

50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Superior Door, Pennsylvania "Merchandise Service."

Brown (the Pennsy's "Freight Car Color")

sides with white band across including door. "Merchandise Service" in red on left and circle keystone on right in red circle. White lettering otherwise including roadname and road number on left. Light weathering and "Hobo Tagging" right of door. Approximate Time Period: 1950 (based on paint scheme) to mid-1960s. Previous Releases (in unweathered form): Runner Pack #81 (994 00 081), July 2015, with Road Numbers 118652, 118663, 118774, 118785. Note: It's possible but not confirmed that any of the four Runner Pack cars could have been utilized for this Weathered Release.

There are two hobo tags this time. The second symbol is "there's no use going this way," or simply "go" according to online references I checked. (Remember, your hobo "dialect" may vary.) The first symbol is harder to interpret; I didn't find anything close (although I did find some amusing takeoffs on the traditional hobo symbols). It could be that the first symbol is more like a "calling card" from a specific hobo—remember "Kilroy Was Here" for example?

The 1950 start of the ATP for this car, based on the introduction "MS2" version of the Pennsylvania's "Merchandise Service" paint scheme, is again probably a bit too new for this type of graffiti—strictly speaking, of course. Also note that many of these Merchandise Service cars, originally in the series PRR 118491 to 119990 and Class X41B, were converted in 1963 to X41E cars, by changing the single doors to double doors. They also received the then-standard "plain keystone" lettering and no mention of Merchandise Service, which was long gone as was most less-than-carload handling on the PRR and other railroads.

**Z SCALE RUNNER PACKS:** In addition to the below announcement, **Runner Pack #91** (994 00 091, \$99.95), four New York Central 40 Foot Single Door Boxcars, is now available. UMTRR coverage was in the December 2015 issue. The individual catalog and road numbers for these are as follows: 500 51 890, 162216; 500 52 890, 162444; 500 53 890, 162637; 500 54 890, 162955. These are the first through fourth road numbers for this car, which hasn't been previously released. Note that only the preliminary artwork was available at "press time." I'll replace that with the actual product image on the UMTRR Website as soon as that image becomes available.





Also, **Eight Pack #10 (994 00 810, \$164.95)**, eight North American (NATX) 39 foot single dome tank cars, is now available. UMTRR coverage was in the December 2015 issue. The individual catalog and road numbers for these are as follows: 530 51 440, 5911; 530 52 440, 5923; 530 53 440, 5932; 530 54 440, 5945; 530 55 440, 5958; 530 56 440, 5963; 530 57 440, 5970; 530 58 440, 5992. These are the first through eighth road numbers for this car, which hasn't been previously released.

*The following is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is as noted below. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close April 30.*



**Scheduled October 2016 Release:**

**994 00 096, \$74.95.**

**Reporting Marks B&O 324752, 324759, 324760, 324793.**

**Quantity four of 33 Foot Two Bay Open Hoppers, Rib Sides, Flat Ends, Baltimore and Ohio.**

Black with white lettering including roadname and reporting marks on left and "13 States" capitol dome herald on right. Approximate Time Period: mid-1940s to 1960s. Previous Releases: None. N Scale

version of this car (56310, June 1997) shown for illustration purposes; actual product will vary. Catalog numbers (in the 534 series) will be confirmed upon release.

This is one of the more complex of the B&O hopper paint schemes, which have also ranged to the other extreme of just a large "B&O" and a road number, plus required data. This particular "capitol dome" scheme, proclaiming that the B&O "Links 13 Great States With The Nation" and including both the roadname and reporting marks, was used between 1946 and 1953 according to Chris Barkan's document on the website of the B&O Railroad Historical Society. It's called the "Post War 13 Great States" version. If you're curious, by the way, my reckoning of those thirteen states are, from west to east, Missouri (St. Louis, to be specific), Illinois, Kentucky (Louisville), Michigan (via trackage rights to Detroit), Ohio, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York (mostly via ownership of the Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburgh), Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and New Jersey (via Reading and CNJ).

The specific series from which this car is taken is 324000 to 324999. Pulling the January 1945 ORER, close enough to the start of the Post War 13 States Scheme to be relevant, we have the following vital statistics: inside length 30 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 5 inches, outside length 31 feet 11 inches, extreme height 10 feet 8 inches, capacity 1880 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. There were 984 cars in the series at the time. You might be thinking, “Isn’t that a little bit smaller than the MTL 534 body style?” and you’d be right. The B&O’s N-17 class, of which these were a part, were built to the USRA standard which predates the open hoppers on which the Micro-Trains model is based. Photos of the N-17 and N-17a cars which I found on a TT Scale (!) discussion venue bear this out; the actual shape of the hopper is also a bit different, and there are lots of rivets to count if you’re so inclined. How much of a difference is this reduced to 1:220 Scale? That is, of course, up to the reader.

That same discussion venue includes an image of B&O 320835, also an N-17, in the later “Billboard” paint, so we do know that cars of this type had their paint updated from the Post War 13 States Scheme. I’m somewhat arbitrarily calling the ATP at the 1960s for that reason. The January 1964 ORER showed 258 cars remaining in the 324000s so we also know that some of these cars lasted at least that long.

**Z SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES:** No releases this month.

**MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS:** The big announcement is what’s replacing the Ringling Brothers series, which is winding down. This time, they’re going up, up and away in a sense, with the N Scale NASA Railroad Series. This is scheduled to begin in September and will consist of twelve prototypical cars that operated on the “NASA Railroad.” Hopefully by September I’ll have an interesting angle to use to cover this series...

Meanwhile, MTL also released, though not on standing order, a sprue of six End of Train Devices (499 43 932, \$9.95, at right). These are in gray plastic so they’re unpainted and unassembled. Also new in N Scale are pairs of 100-Ton Barber Roller Bearing Trucks with 36 inch wheels (003 02 080, \$6.70); these don’t have couplers.



**DISCONTINUED ALERT:** They weren’t on standing order, and now they’re at the top of the Bye-Bye Board: The N Scale log cars released last month (114 00 170, 180 and 190) are all outta here already. Also gone from just last month is the silver Rio Grande tank car (065 00 890). The B&O/Chessie System enclosed autorack released in March (111 00 080) has left the building.

That takes us back to 2015 items which are now gone, in catalog number order: the reprinted blue Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac boxcar (024 00 290, September); the first number of the “not a reprint” Burlington Northern x-post double door boxcar (030 00 201, October, second number already sold out); both numbers of the Big Sky Blue Great Northern open hoppers (055 00 52x, September); the Great Northern “Fire Prevention” baggage car (147 00

025, August); and the Pennsylvania Railroad baggage car (147 00 050, April). Reaching back to 2014, both numbers of the gold and silver Rio Grande plug door boxcars with “DF” ribbon have sold out (032 00 22x, May).

There are five outs in Z Scale, two of which are the B&O dome car and coach (551 and 552 00 030) released in March. The Baby Ruth Series #3 refrigerator is emptied (518 00 370, August 2015). The second number of the Chicago and North Western green gondola is gone (522 00 252, January 2015, first number already sold out). Finally, the first number of the Southern Railway bulkhead flat car is discontinued (527 00 141, January 2015, second number still available).

**INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT:** This is more of a question, but perhaps it will lead to Incremental Information. Michael Stephens wondered, “What becomes of the Per Diem cars after their short leases expire? Perhaps someone else has tracked the earlier Per Diem releases. It would be interesting to see where all of them ended up.” I agree! However, as far as I know there is no comprehensive listing of the chain of disposition of these cars, anywhere, so we here at UMTRR HQ resort to hunting, pecking, and occasionally being lucky with online and in-print sources of data. Thoughts from readers are certainly welcome.

Claus Schlund has “a little contribution regarding Great Northern 38063, the 1 ½ door wood boxcar reprinted last month (041 00 030). “The attached image [at right] shows a GN double-sheathed boxcar in Potomac Yard in 1925. The car seems like a very good match. The ends appear to be 7-8 Murphy ends, and the MT release has 5-5-5 Murphy ends. Too bad the image isn’t a little bit clearer or we could read the road number!”



**OOPS PATROL:** I think my now-former UMTRR HQ computer committed the largest oops by far this time, as in, “Oops, hard drive not working”. I didn’t receive any oopses otherwise, but I also haven’t done my usual check of the previous column to find my own, either.

**ALL FOR THIS MONTH.** Until next time, do the best you can!

Cheers,  
George

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