



*IrwinsJournal.com Presents:*

## **The Unofficial Micro-Trains® Release Report Issue #261 – September, 2018**

(Not affiliated with Micro-Trains Line, Inc.)

Copyright ©2018, George J. Irwin. Reproduction prohibited.

Please see legal notice at the end of this document.

Hello again everyone! We start with some good news for Z Scalers – the SD40-2 diesels are back on track (pun most definitely intended) and some should be rolling into Authorized Micro-Trains Dealers during the month. And there's more to cover, so let's get started...

### **N SCALE NEW RELEASE FREIGHT EQUIPMENT:**



**021 00 600, \$29.80**

**Reporting Marks: C&O 7783.**

**40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Plug Door, Chesapeake and Ohio.**

Yellow sides, black ends, aluminum roof. Black lettering including reporting marks and "Compartmentizer | Insulated |

Refrigerator on left and "C&O for Progress" herald on right. Approximate Time Period: December 1959 (build date) to early 1970s with running board or mid-1980s otherwise.

It was well back in the previous century that my late dad and I ventured into Kiddy Mart in Linden, New Jersey and I picked up an Atlas yellow C&O 40 foot plug door boxcar for the princely sum of, if I recall correctly, one dollar and eighty-eight cents, plus tax. (The list price was \$2.25.) From my beat-up rolling stock inventory archive (converted from dBase III !) I can tell that it wasn't from the same prototype series, and the three subsequent reprints of that original run weren't either.

But it's easy enough to get a bingo, or exact match, for **this** car which is a bit more on topic. Simply turn to Page 37 of the **Chesapeake and Ohio Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** and there it is, absolutely brand new out of the Chessie's Raceland, Kentucky shops in December 1959. It positively gleams! Who says that a shiny surface is unprototypical for freight cars? Well, maybe just this once it isn't – the exception to the rule, you know.

The MTL car copy is from the caption accompanying the car photo. The car itself has different ends from the MTL 021 body style, however that's the main delta I can see. The side sills are a bit different as well, but overall, considering that the prototype is a home built car, not bad.

The Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER) for July 1963 shows the series 7750 to 7824 with all 75 possible cars. They are described as "Refrigerator, Steel, Plug Doors" with AAR Designation RBL – yes, it's another insulated boxcar that's officially a refrigerator car. The "L" in the designation refers to loaders, described in an end note as Pullman-Standard Compartmentizers. The inside length was 39 feet 10 inches, inside width 8 feet, inside height

9 feet 8 inches, outside length 41 feet 10 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 8 feet wide, and capacity 3571 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds.

I would start thinking about running board removal and ladder shortening in the mid-1970s, which would end the Strictly Speaking Approximate Time Period. The April 1974 ORER shows several subsets constructed from the original series. The main series of 33 cars still have the compartmentalizers. Another eleven have been demoted to “Box, Insulated” including the 7783. I wonder if that means a paint-out of the word “Compartmentalizer” on the left side of the car. (I’d do it.) Twenty-four cars have the compartmentalizer and pallets, and finally just two have no compartmentalizers but do have pallets. Remember, the theory was that if the pallets were listed as part of the car, they’d stay with the car. In theory, that is. This is probably a new personal record for the number of times I have typed “compartmentalizer” in one paragraph. OK, one more time: just three cars from the series remain as of the January 1985 Equipment Register, and all three have compartmentalizers. That’s where I stopped looking. I would not count on a Chessie System repaint for these cars, although it’s possible.



**028 00 240, \$20.95**

**Reporting Marks: CN 461244.**

**40 Foot Wood Single-Sheathed Boxcar, Single Door, Canadian National.**

Brown (light freight car red) with white lettering including roadname and reporting marks on left and small “C.N.”

on door. Approximate Time Period: 1933 to early 1970s.

According to Ian Cranstone’s “Canadian Freight Cars” site ( [www.nakina.net](http://www.nakina.net) ), the series 461000 to 461999 was renumbered during the years 1933 through 1940 from the original Canadian National series 577000 to 577999, which was built by Canadian Car and Foundry in 1921. Some of these cars were subsequently renumbered again, this time to the 515000 to 515050 group between 1968 and 1971. Cranstone cites ORERs from July 1933 to January 1976 as including these cars, but I believe that includes the renumbered group so I backed off the ATP to end in the early 1970s.

What looks like a company photo in glorious black and white of sister car 461935 is also posted on Cranstone’s site. The service information “A.K. 2.34” corresponds to the timeframe in which these cars were renumbered. The built date is shown as April 1921. Capacity, Load Limit and Light Weight data haven’t yet been added; there are spaces before the “00” which would indicate hundreds of pounds. (These measurements were usually rounded or raised to one hundred pound increments.)

The principal delta between the prototype car and the MTL 028 body style is the width of the far left and far right “panels” defined by the bracing pattern – which is otherwise in alignment between the real car and the model. On the actual CN 461935 the farthest left and right panels are quite narrow, so much so that the roadname and reporting marks are really squeezed in. The fishbelly underframe is accurate.

A sample ORER, from January 1943, shows this group of cars combined with a similar group built by American Car and Foundry in 1920 to form the series 461000 to 463999. These were described as “Box, Steel Frame” with AAR Designation XM. The inside length was 40 feet 6 inches, inside width 8 feet 6 inches, inside height 9 feet, outside length 42 feet 2 inches, extreme height 13 feet 6 inches, door opening 6 feet, and capacity 3098 cubic feet or 90,000 pounds. There were 1173 total cars in the group as of that Equipment Register. Interestingly, also still listed at the time—in the thousands—were multiple groups of 36 foot inside length cars which were largely inherited from the CN’s predecessors.

As of July 1963, 489 cars remained on the roster. That was down to just 24 in October 1969, still, not bad for cars constructed nearly five decades previously to that ORER entry. One of the last of these cars on the roster would have been CN 461863, photographed in 1965 and found on the Canadian Freight Car Gallery. From this view I can confirm that the ends look pretty good against the MTL 028 body style as well. If you’re wondering, these cars did travel “South of the Border” to the USA so don’t overlook them in International Interchange Service.



**035 00 270, \$20.60**

**Road Number: 15283 (will be “WAB 15283” in website listings).**

**40 Foot Despatch Stock Car, Wabash.**

Brown with white lettering including roadname and road number at center left. Approximate Time Period: early 1930s to no later than 1971.

OK, I’ll start with the usual blather about how the MTL 035 body style is strictly a New York Central prototype--which reminds me, why hasn’t there been a Runner Pack in that roadname? But this prototype does share something with its NYC counterpart: they were both rebuilt from wood boxcars. (In the Central’s case, their USRA style single sheathed cars, in 1947.)

Right on the dust cover of the **Wabash/Nickel Plate/DT&I Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** is a bingo to the 15283. The photo is repeated on Page 28 of the book and is accompanied by a shot of sister car 15182. Both were from the series 15000 to 15399, rebuilt from 40000 series automobile boxcars in 1933 and 1934, as MTL reports. Here’s a surprise: shortly after the Norfolk and Western took over the Wabash, there were still 264 of these cars on the Wabash roster! And these cars were given Norfolk and Western road numbers, namely, N&W 315000 to 315399. (In other words, drop a “3” in front of the original number, I suppose.) It’s noted in the **Color Guide** that “fully 31 cars were still active with Wabash reporting marks in January 1971, but they were gone by the following quarter.” And thus endeth the ATP.

Let’s back up a few decades to the ORER for July 1935. The rebuilding program must have concluded by then as all 400 possible cars are in the group 15000 to 15399. The inside length was 40 feet 6 inches, inside height 10 feet, outside length 40 feet 10 inches, extreme height 14 feet 8 inches, door opening 6 feet, and capacity, well, I can’t read the electronic version as it’s

too blurry. (This does happen with scans.) From the January 1940 ORER I get 3459 cubic feet or 80,000 pounds; that'll do. The cars were described as "Stock, Steel Underframe, Single Deck" which means larger animals would have been placed in them for transport.

The photo of the car MTL selected, 15283, shows separate letterboards for the roadname and road number. The 15182 has the same, but a much larger "WABASH" that spans more than three of the vertical braces on the left hand side of the car. The better choice given the 035 body style is probably the 15283 with the smaller lettering. I'm just surprised that not one but two stock cars from a "welterweight" railroad that went into a larger company in 1964 hung around long enough to be photographed in color. Those images were taken in April 1965 of the 15182 and June 1966 of the 15283.



058 00 400, \$29.95

**Reporting Marks: HJHCo. 486.**

**36 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator, Truss Rod Underframe, Vertical Brake Staff, Heinz.**

First release in the Heinz Yellow Series (pre-orders taken April 2018). Yellow sides, brown roof and ends, black underframe

and details. Arch bar trucks. Green and white Heinz pickle trademark on left. Red with white outline lettering including "57 Varieties" on left and "Prepared Mustard" on right. White end markings. Approximate Time Period: Decade of the 1900s into the 1920s.

We go from ending the "brown" series with Tomato Ketchup to beginning the "yellow" series with Prepared Mustard. I checked and so far there has not been any Prepared Mustard gracing the sides of a Micro-Trains Heinz refrigerator car... Prepared Mustard **lettering**, that is. If you get actual mustard on the sides of one of these cars, that's different!

According to the website allrecipes.com, "Prepared mustard simply refers to the condiment, or spread, that comes in a bottle. Dry mustard refers to the powder, and mustard seeds are the whole, small seed that is ground to make the powder (and which can also be used whole for texture)." It can be made with eight ingredients including water, white vinegar, flour, salt, turmeric, garlic powder, paprika, and, well, mustard powder. Well, that was easy! Complicating it a bit is the question, "What is the difference between yellow mustard and prepared mustard?" In my case, I like one more sparingly than the other. You can guess which is which. And let's not forget Dijon Mustard. (You know, they make Dijon Mustard but they don't make Dijon Ketchup. Bonus points for getting that song reference. But I digress as usual...)

A 2007 auction documented online shows a somewhat unusually shaped jar with "perfect label and the original stiff paper lid" sold for under twenty-five dollars. A "mini mustard" jug went for \$49. Back in the present day, it appears that in the United States at least, Heinz has gotten away from calling their product just "Prepared Mustard" and moved to having "Yellow Mustard" and "Spicy Brown Mustard." (Elsewhere may vary.) That may be a response to



competitors making that distinction, for example Gulden's which is the brand I remember growing up did the same thing. As long as I'm naming names, I can't leave out French's which got its start in the City of Rochester not far from UMTRR HQ. (Look for Mustard Street on your favorite mapper.)

No photos – as I would have expected – but there is a Clover House Catalog reference which gives the paint scheme as “circa 1907.” A search on the phrase “Heinz brown to yellow freight cars” was, let us say, not productive. Neither were ORER lookups, since whether brown, yellow or some other color, they were not listed in the Equipment Register. However, a possible confirmation of the start of the ATP lies just to the left of the door of this car: “4-[something]-07.”



100 00 400, \$33.95

Road Number: 01400 (will be “D&RGW 1400” in website listings).

36 Foot Steel Cabooses, Off-Center Cupola, Rio Grande (Denver and Rio Grande Western).

Black with orange cupola sides, ends, and details and silver steps. White lettering

including “flying” roadname below cupola and road number at bottom center. Orange “Switch Cabooses” lettering below road number. Approximate Time Period: 1963 (service date on car) to at least 1977.

Several different sources provide similar information on the Rio Grande's fleet of steel cabooses. The 01400 was the first of 91 steel cabooses constructed by the railroad at its own Burnham Shops in Denver, Colorado, beginning in 1940. The last eleven of these cars weren't built until 1955, so this was a slow motion, or perhaps “just-in-time,” process. Details on these cars varied, but they all had Duryea underframes, and raised numbers. In N Scale that's likely to be reduced to the thickness of a coat of paint so I think we're OK.

At least two of these cabooses, the 01400 and the 01404 (the latter pictured in the **Rio Grande Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, Page 96) received the orange cupola when assigned to yard and transfer service out of the Rio Grande's Roper Yard in Salt Lake City.

The bingo for this car is on RailPictures.net (ad blocker disabling required). The cupola on the MTL 100 body style, being from a distinct Missouri Pacific/Texas & Pacific prototype, differs from the actual car's. The window arrangement differs also. The paint scheme is accurate down to the silver steps, which I didn't even notice until viewing the proto photo. It appears that the same photo is on RRPictureArchives.net and we also get a 1973 view of the same cabooses. Between the two we have both sides of the car... a special treat!

The photo is dated 1977 so we know the ATP is at least that long; the 1963 service date still appears though. It's noted on Don Strack's “Utah Rails” site that the Southern Pacific, which was (technically!) absorbed by the much smaller Rio Grande, ran a “dismantle” train from

Denver to Pueblo, Colorado and then to St. Louis. The train, consisting of cars sold for scrap, included 39 Rio Grande cabooses. We don't know if the 01400 was among them. The original source for this was the July 1994 issue of **CTC News**. I think I'll go with an "at least" ATP here based on the 1977 prototype photo.



**135 00 132 and 135 00 132, \$29.90 each.**

**Reporting Marks: SP 513414A and 513414B. 70 Foot Well Cars, Southern Pacific.**

Red with aluminum details. Mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and gothic style roadname on right. White

on black single COTS panel on far right. Approximate Time Period: 1989 (build date) to no later than 2010.

If these cars look just a bit familiar, it's because MTL has "moved up" this paint scheme from the Z Scale releases of this car, first a single unit in May 2005 and then a "virtual two pack" in May 2010 (Catalog 540 00 04x) which has the same road numbers as this offering in N Scale (see photo at right for the 1:220 version which also had containers included). So I can start with that information, including that these cars were built in 1989 (a correction from earlier coverage courtesy of Lee Gautreaux's "Railgoat" website), and then update from there.



These two cars were part of a five-unit drawbar connected set on the prototype, the SP's Class FC-320-2. The ORER for April 1995 shows 40 (!) of these sets in the series 513390 to 513429, next to another 75 (!!) numbered 513430 to 513504. These are all given AAR Classification FCA and the description "Flat, Well, COFC-Double Stack, 5 Unit Articulated". The inside length is 48 feet but that's per well. The outside length is 304 feet 6 inches and the extreme height--unloaded, of course, is 7 feet 11 inches. The total capacity is 585,000 pounds. The October 2007 Register shows most of these still in service with SP reporting marks under the Union Pacific listing, although some of the descriptions have been knocked back to just "Flat" with an inside length changed to 60 feet. With the change from capacity to Gross Rail Weight, we get a sense of how heavy these things are: subtract the GRL of 801,000 pounds from the capacity above and we find that the 5 unit set comes in at about 216,000 pounds, give or take a brake wheel. In 2010 I called the ATP to "the present" but that was just barely, as the series was missing from the January 2011 ORER. I don't have anything in between the October 2007 and January 2011 Equipment Registers in the Research Accumulation.

As I mentioned back in 2005, the Fallen Flags website ( [www.rr-fallenflags.org](http://www.rr-fallenflags.org) ) has shots of all five units that comprise SP 513419, the first Z Scale release, as of March 2004. No, this set isn't drawbar connected, but has truck sharing between units. The "A" unit of the SP 513412 also on Fallen Flags, photographed in March 2008, shows the same arrangement, as well as plenty of graffiti. I located the actual 513414A on RRPictureArchives.net in a photo from

January 2009 and it's definitely sharing trucks between the A unit and the next unit. Also, the units aren't all lettered the same; the middle two have the phrase "Double Stack 125 Service" and the center unit has, well, not much at all. As the A and B units, though, the MTL depicted cars would be at the ends and as such the decoration is a good fit. By the way, I think the sequence is A, E, D, C, and B... or B, C, D, E, A if you're on the other side of the track.



**450 00 160, \$19.80**

**Reporting Marks: USLU 4216984.**

**40 Foot Trailer, United States Lines.**

Aluminum with red, white and blue company name and eagle logo at center of sides. Blue reporting marks at nose end of sides. Company name (red and blue on

white), blue reporting marks and black data on doors. Approximate Time Period: 1970s and 1980s (a guess). Note: Micro-Trains has announced that this item is not on Dealer Standing Orders.

The "Matts-Place" website has a "whatever happened to" bingo on this release. And here's something you might have already picked up with that fourth letter in the reporting marks being a "U" and not a "Z" —it was actually a container, not a trailer. Assume that the undercarriage was just for transportation. The "after" photo of USLU 4216984 shows it being used for storage of some sort, with three cyclone ventilators installed on the roof and a door cut into the side near the nose (the side without the end doors). Matt's Place citations need a direct URL: [www.matts-place.com/intermodal/part1/images/mmm/uslu4216894.jpg](http://www.matts-place.com/intermodal/part1/images/mmm/uslu4216894.jpg). The photo is undated and there's no location given. It is noted as a "sheet/post old design." I'm not an expert on container construction! Given that, I can't quite determine when 40 foot containers were introduced, and I'm not even going to speculate about that paint scheme. Suffice to say, the ATP is a guess.

One of the co-founders of United States Lines was none other than Kermit Roosevelt, one of President Theodore Roosevelt's sons. The company, formed in 1921 was what we would now call a re-boot of the United States Mail Steamship Company. A series of corporate transactions followed as the company went into and out of various maritime businesses. During World War II, its ships were repurposed as troop carriers. Its S.S. United States remains the largest ocean liner built in the United States and it was the fastest ever as well. (It's docked in Philadelphia.) The company exited the passenger business in 1969 and was taken over by Malcolm McLaren (of Sea-Land fame) in 1968. The company made a big bet on large, fuel-efficient but slow ships in the 1980s, and... lost. Unable to recover from the debt that resulted, the company declared bankruptcy and was completely liquidated by 1992. Its passenger pier in Manhattan, Pier 86 is now the site of the Intrepid Museum, while its freight dock, Pier 76, is the home of Classic Car Club Manhattan. That pier's building still carries United States Lines lettering which is visible from the Hudson River and New Jersey.



**468 00 111 and 468 00 112, \$16.95 each.**

**Reporting Marks: JBHU 602710 and 603002.**

**48 Foot Rib Side Containers, J.B. Hunt.**

White with yellow doors. Black on yellow lettering including company name on sides, nose and tail. Approximate Time Period: at least the mid-1990s to about 2003. Note:

Micro-Trains has announced that this item is

not on Dealer Standing Orders. The image of the 112 release is shown here (JBHU 603002).

The August 2017 release of a pair of J.B. Hunt containers sent me to the web to find out more about the company. I'll reprint that here: J.B. Hunt Transport Services, Incorporated is a publicly traded company founded in 1961 by Johnnie Bryan Hunt. From five trucks and seven trailers based in Arkansas hauling rice hulls, the company has grown to be one of the largest trucking firms in the country. It was an early adopter to intermodal partnerships with railroads, having started in 1989 with the Santa Fe. The mission statement on their website (URL [www.jbhunt.com](http://www.jbhunt.com)) goes farther than that: "We forge long-term relationships with key customers that include supply chain management as an integral part of their strategy. Working in concert, we drive out cost, add value and function as an extension of their enterprise."

The previous run of J.B. Hunt containers, one of which marked one million intermodal loads in 2010, were of the 53 foot size. The 48 foot container was introduced in 1986, but by APL, not J.B. Hunt, so we know the ATP can't start any earlier than that.

Images of both the 602710 and the 603002 are on the Matt's Place website, access them through [www.matts-place.com/intermodal/part3/48foot.htm](http://www.matts-place.com/intermodal/part3/48foot.htm). The 603002 is on the ground—somewhere—in a view showing the yellow doors. I don't think it will be hauling any more loads based on its condition; it's probably now being used for storage. It's listed as of "plate side" construction. The 602710, called an "exterior post" box, is sitting atop a chassis in a parking lot; again, we don't know where or when. The company name is on a placard, not painted directly onto the container. I suspect this is an earlier paint scheme. There are also some circular indentations on the sides. I have no idea what they are. None of this helps with the Approximate Time Period either.

The site RRPictureArchives.net, despite having 214 pages (!) of JHBU containers, has just four boxes in the 600000 series. A 1997 photo of JBHU 602894 in transit in a double-stack car is captioned with, "Up until 2003 or so, JB Hunt had both 53 and 48 foot containers." That helps a bit. Also in 1997, JBHU 603071 is in a train heading out of Richland, Mississippi. The 602621 with yellow doors is sitting on the ground in 2010, probably in use as a storage shed. (Check out the phrase "repurposed shipping containers" for some additional interesting uses, such as for residences.) Finally, also in 2010, the 605049 has been refitted with a rollup door, shorn of its identification other than reporting marks, and sits on the ground next to a refrigerated trailer. It's noted as having possibly been built in 1995. I think the ATP I've called out is about as good as I can get it, pending any Incremental Information out there.



*In addition to the above items...*

The **Canadian National Impact Boxcar (073 00 250, \$49.95)** is scheduled to be available mid-month and should be at MTL dealers as you read this. UMTRR coverage was in the March issue. Note the use of the French “Canadien” on this car’s non-impact side.



Those **Cotton Belt SW1500s** just keep getting mentioned in these bytes... they (**986 00 581, Road Number 2585 and 986 00 582, Road Number 2589, \$184.95 each**) are re-scheduled to be released mid-this month along with the pair of **Norfolk Southern** units (**986 01 151, Road Number 2201 and 986 01 152, Road Number 2218, \$174.95 each**) and should be at MTL dealers as you read this. UMTRR coverage was in the January 2017 (Part 2) edition. That road number on that Cotton Belt unit artwork...augh...



*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 September 30.*



**Scheduled Delivery February 2019:**  
**020 00 187, \$49.95.**

**Reporting Marks: ATSF 10000.**  
**40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Door, Santa Fe (AT&SF) Impact Car.**

One side is brown with white reporting marks on left and “Ship and Travel Santa Fe all the way” slogan on left, with old style black and white circle cross herald above reporting marks, and yellow “New 3-D Transparent Car” lettering left of door. Other side is transparent (including door) with simulated aluminum interior bracing,

red “New 3-D Transparent Car” lettering on left and circle cross herald on door. Approximate Time Period: at least the mid-1950s based on 1955 shop date on car. MTL artwork is preliminary, actual product may vary.

OK, so we have a wipeout in the UMTRR Research Accumulation on this one. An online search wasn't much better. The Kansas Historical Society Archive provides a citation for a photo of this car, but not the actual photo... which is undated and was taken at an unknown location. It is described as, "Trackside view of a Santa Fe railways 3-D transparent freight car, showing the potential of damage in shipment, by impact, breakage, or shift of freight."

Fortunately, our Santa Fe Special Correspondent (and frequent Special Run commissioner) George Hollwedel provided the photographs to MTL, and they're in **Volume 4, Santa Fe Boxcars 1869-1953** of the "Rolling Stock Reference Series" published by the Santa Fe Historical and Technical Society. George notes that the 020 body style isn't a match for the car. Unfortunately, that book, which is out of print, is not in the UMTRR Research Accumulation.

Let's see what else we have. Perhaps the key data point is on the car, or at least the MTL artwork: "TS 9-55" which translates to the Santa Fe's Topeka Shops and a service date of September 1955. Could that be the start of the Approximate Time Period? Recalling that the Union Pacific constructed the first impact car in 1952 – and that 19 other railroads followed suit – that 1955 date seems good to me. We also know that one of the Santa Fe's 50 foot express boxcars was numbered 10000 – a car modeled by MTL back in October 2001. That overall series of 200 cars lasted into the 1960s in multiple paint schemes which have been done by MTL, so that 10000 would have been retired or renumbered to open up that road number for this car. For the record, there's, well, no record of either ATSF 10000 in the ORERs I have from the mid-1950s. The box-express car 10000 is in the Official Register of Passenger Equipment for March 1943.

The lettering on the MTL artwork also contains the Santa Fe's car class, Bx-63. That series, numbered 35250 to 35998, was delivered by the Topeka Shops in July 1952. It's logical to think that one of these 749 cars was pulled and repurposed to become the "3-D Transparent Car" in 1955. And indeed, that is the case per a chart compiled by Ed Hawkins for the "Steam Era Freight Car" website. Ed cites an image available from Bob's Photos (one of the premier dealers of rolling stock photograph prints). The BX-63 cars were 1944 AAR design with inside height of between 10 feet 4 inches and 10 feet 6 inches, and 4/4 Improved Dreadnaught Ends. This wouldn't be an exact match to the MTL 020 body style which is modeled on the PS-1, just as George Hollwedel noted to us.

As for an end to the Approximate Time Period, we can only speculate at this point, but again noting that the UP's version was scrapped in 1963, chances are that the Santa Fe's version was gone around the same time. I'll be conservative at the mid- and late 1950s but tag it with an "at least." I suspect there will be plenty of invocations of "Rule #1" (It's your layout) regardless of when this car actually served as an instructional guide for the Santa Fe.



*Scheduled Delivery Starting February 2019:*  
**Farm To Table Refrigerator Car Series,**  
**\$27.95 each.**

Expected to consist of twelve 40 foot wood double sheathed refrigerator cars (MTL 047 and/or 049 series) lettered for various lessors. MTL example artwork for two of the expected twelve cars is shown at left; actual product may vary.

The book **Billboard Refrigerator Cars** was one of the more important acquisitions for the

UMTRR Research Accumulation. Certainly the folks in Talent have a copy, not surprising considering that MTL CEO Eric Smith's favorite type of freight car is the Billboard Refrigerator. (It's probably mine too.) Both example cars, for Joan of Arc Beans and Monarch Finer Foods, have bingo photos in that volume. Dozens if not hundreds of smaller businesses had a few cars painted up with advertising for their products. Many of those products are no longer available and the companies either merged into larger firms or simply went out of business.

The general time period for these cars is the late 1920s to the end of the legality of the Billboard Refrigerator in the late 1930s. However, we also know that some cars lasted only a very short time in real life, either because they were painted close to the Interstate Commerce Commission's ban on car advertising of this type or because they weren't leased very long. Fortunately, the lessors of these cars had the foresight to photograph them, and some eight to nine decades later, these photos survived and were compiled into **Billboard Refrigerator Cars** and elsewhere in print and occasionally online.

As a journalist, though, I need to add that MTL is not the only N Scale rolling stock source which owns a copy of this book, and has used it as a source. Both of the illustrated cars, while now out of production, have been released by another company. In addition, the MTL 047 and 049 body styles might not follow the prototypes for these cars.

I quickly note that last month's Z Scale version of the Northern Refrigerator Car "Bananas" refrigerator cars had details "painted" on which made the cars more closely resemble their prototypes. As Micro-Trains' ability to simulate hardware continues to improve with this process, I think we may very well see continued narrowing of the deltas between the real car and the MTL depiction. The key question is whether the market for these cars has already been satisfied by prior releases, assuming that there is overlap beyond Joan of Arc and Monarch — which might not at all be the case.

My sense is that MTL has done its homework on this, and besides, plenty of N and Z Scalars who don't model the Approximate Time Period of these cars — myself included — own plenty of these cars already. Even as I've been slowly dispositioning my late father's collection of HO Scale Billboard Refrigerator Cars, mostly dating back to the Train-Miniature releases of the

1970s but some earlier than that, I've been adding to my own N Scale accumulation, often of the very same cars.

That having been said, we'll defer the official coverage of the two cars teased with this pre-order announcement until they actually are released. For one thing, researching some of the companies whose products appear on these refrigerator cars will be a non-trivial task... unlike, for example, Heinz which remains a large ongoing business operation. For example, good luck on that search for The Illinois Canning Company of Hoopeston, Illinois, Mr. Micro-Trains Reviewer...

### **N SCALE NEW RELEASE PASSENGER CARS:**



**147 00 190, \$34.90**

**Road Number: 740 (will be "UP 740" in website listings).**

**Heavyweight Baggage Car, Union Pacific.**

Two-tone gray sides with white striping. White lettering, including roadname at center of letterboard, road number at bottom center, "Railway Express Agency" at bottom center, and road number at left and right. Black roof, underframe and trucks. Approximate Time Period: 1946 to early 1950s, but see text. MTL announced that this car's release was delayed to after September 6.

As I've mentioned previously in these bytes, it's difficult to prove the absence of something. So let's start with the key finding right up front: The Official Register of Passenger Train Equipment for January 1953 does not show any UP passenger cars numbered between 673 and 871. The ORPTE for March 1943 doesn't show any between road numbers 712 and 847. In addition, Don Strack's UtahRails site, which I consider to be the definitive online resource for such things, shows no baggage car UP 740 either, and instead notes that the former series 731 to 750, UP 1200 to 1219 after 1915, were arch roof "chair/smoker cars," or basically coaches. Further, the late Jerry Laboda's "Passenger Car Photo Index" also skips the 700s entirely in the Union Pacific listing.

Certainly the Union Pacific rostered plenty of baggage cars, including some with the curious name of "baggage/dynamo cars" (I'll leave that research to the reader). I also know that previously when Micro-Trains does essentially a "for completeness" release, they will use a number that doesn't belong to any prototype cars. That might be the case here... or not. Don Strack notes that even his extensive research remains incomplete. If there's any Incremental Information out there, this byte-slinger would certainly appreciate it!



**N SCALE REPRINTS:** A passenger car again this month...



145 00 061, \$34.90

Road Number: 421 (will be "UP 421" in website listings).

Heavyweight Paired Window Coach, Union Pacific.

Armour Yellow sides, Harbor Mist Gray roof, ends, underframe and trucks (not wheels). Red stripes and top and bottom of sides. Red lettering including roadname in center of letterboard and road number at bottom center. Approximate Time Period: Decade of the 1950s. Previous Releases: Road Number 417, January 2012.

The Official Register of Passenger Equipment for January 1953 shows the 421 in the same series of six cars as the 417, the car released by MTL in 2012. Just wanted to confirm that so I can reprint myself... the group is numbered 416 to 421.

There is a September 1953 photo of the UP 417 on Page 70 of the **Union Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume 2**. The photo caption provided Micro-Trains with some of its car copy. Called a "chair car" by **Color Guide** author Lou Schmitz, the 417 was one of twenty cars built by Pullman in 1922 and rebuilt by Pullman in 1936 with air conditioning, larger rest rooms and fifty seats. The photo shows a good match to the paired window pattern, but different doors, roofline and underframe detail. The car as pictured in the Color Guide also has black trucks; those didn't become aluminum until 1959 according to material I've read. Does that make for this release being a "stand in" or not? That's up to you.

Ignoring the color of the trucks, we know that the Approximate Time Period includes 1953, but how about the rest of that ATP? Checking UtahRails.net, we find that the cars 416 to 421 last appeared in issues of the Official Register of Passenger Train Equipment in 1958, 1959 or 1960. So late fifties seems to be alright for the end of the ATP. (This also means that the 417 may never have had aluminum trucks... consider some black paint.) The start of the ATP would be called at the rebuild of 1936, except that the gray and yellow paint scheme was not made official for all UP passenger equipment until March 1952. I think "decade of the 1950s" might be the best Approximate Time Period choice here.

**N SCALE MULTI-PACKS:** Runner Pack

**#144** (993 00 144, \$109.95), **four Norfolk Southern Centerbeam Flat Cars**, is now available; it was scheduled to be available last month. UMTRR coverage was in the March 2018 issue. The individual catalog numbers and road numbers for these items

are as follows: 053 51 750, 120052; 053 52 750, 120089; 053 53 750, 120114; 053 54 750, 120128. These are the first through fourth road numbers for this car, which hasn't been previously released.



Meanwhile, the **DODX 'Red' Three-Pack (993 01 620, \$109.95)** is scheduled to be available mid-month and should be at MTL dealers as you read this. UMTRR coverage was in the July 2017 issue (part of the overall coverage of this body style). These cars have four-wheel trucks. Each car comes with an M1 Abrams Tank load, assembled but unpainted (decals included). The individual catalog numbers and road numbers for these items are as follows: 137 51 040, 41006; 137 52 040, 40018; 137 53 040, 41025. The M1 Abrams Tank loads are also on pre-order this month; see "MTL Announcements" below.



*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 September 30.*



**Scheduled Delivery February 2019:**

**993 00 150, \$89.95.**

**Reporting Marks: QTTX 130525, 130526, 130534.**

**Runner Pack #150, Quantity Three of Heavyweight Depressed Center Flat Cars, TTX (Trailer Train).**

Yellow with black and gray deck. White on black reporting marks on left of depressed section. White on black "TTX" on right of depressed section. Black lettering otherwise with white on black COTS stencil to right of "TTX." Approximate Time Period: 1995 (build date) to present. Previous Releases:

Catalog Number 109 00 14x, Road Numbers 130527 and 130531, April 2018. Catalog Numbers (probably 109 5x 140) will be confirmed upon release.

I'll mostly repeat myself from the April 2018 coverage of the "virtual two pack" of these cars. On RailcarPhotos.com we find a 2006 photo of sister car QTTX 130526. It was built by DIFCO, now part of Trinity, in 1995, and is part of the TTX Class DDH24. Considering that the prototype for the MTL 109 body style is far older than that, we don't have a bad match here. The principal differences are "ribs" along the slopes and center portions of the side, and what I'm thinking might be a collapsible brake wheel assembly on only one end of the car.

The ORER for January 2018 shows all ten cars still in place in the short series QTTX 130525 to 130534. The inside length is given as 54 feet 7 inches and outside length 59 feet 5 inches, but

we're also directed to the Heavy Capacity Section of the ORER. There we learn that the loading platform is 2 feet 2 inches above the top of the rail, and is 25 feet long by 9 feet 9 inches long. An end note further explains how heavy of a load can be handled based on its width. For example, if what's being carried is only two feet, it can't be any more than 215,600 pounds. To get to the full load limit of 244,000 pounds, the load must be 10 feet long or longer.

The short timeline history of TTX shows that heavy duty flat cars were added to the roster in 1991, four years before Trailer Train became TTX. The QTTX reporting marks are used by TTX for these heavy duty cars, all of which have end of car cushioning. The TTX fleet is far larger than that of any other company—except Kasgro Rail Lines, reporting marks KRL, which specializes in this type of car. Meanwhile, you can have fully fifty percent of the active roster with this Runner Pack plus the two single releases from just a few months ago.

**N SCALE WEATHERED/GRAFFITI RELEASES:** *The following was announced via the Micro-Trains website, the MTL Facebook page, and via the e-mail "Micro-Trains E-Line," all on or after September 13.*



**025 44 015, \$28.95**

**Reporting Marks: RBOX 34608.**

**50 Foot Exterior Post Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Railbox.**

Car #9 in the "A Year of Railbox" series. Base car is yellow with black door and aluminum roof. Black lettering including reporting marks (with patched road number) and large "Railbox" name on left. Large red, blue and black "Next Load/Any Road" symbol and slogan on right. A side has caricature of an armadillo (on the door) with

"BURN SOLAR" lettering inside of which is a desert scene. B side has fading, rust effects and graffiti right side of door. Approximate Time Period: 2016, plus or minus (using the A or "featured" side of the car). Previous Releases: A six-pack (Catalog Number 25012) with Road Numbers 17715, 17723, 17771, 17783 and 17792, February 1981; then Road Number 17787, December 2004 (this car with an aluminum roof); then "A Year of Railbox" #6 and #7, June and July 2018.

Our Graffiti Special Correspondent David Grothe notes that the "B" side of the car doesn't align with the one photo he found of it, so we'll focus on the "A" side. Here's what David did find: [www.flickr.com/photos/96665117@N02/26179018400/in/photolist-FTmj7d](http://www.flickr.com/photos/96665117@N02/26179018400/in/photolist-FTmj7d). That shot was taken in February 2016, just a few months before the featured side of the car was found in a train in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania in June 2016. That is of course plenty of time for, ahem, additional extra decoration, to be added to the "B" side to match what MTL has.

RBOX 34608 falls into the series 34100-34999 built by Pacific Car & Foundry as their Lot 2973. It's the Railbox Class XCF20 and was constructed between February and April 1979. As with other groups of these cars, some but not all were repainted into the "small logo" scheme with



reduced size “Next Load/ Any Road” logo. Sister car RBOX 34657 is shown in 2006, already very faded in terms of lettering but graffiti-free... at least the side facing the camera... over on RailcarPhotos.net.

As of the October 2014 ORER, several groups of cars were consolidated into the larger series 30000 to 37749, which had a total of 3,593 cars of either 5275 or 5290 cubic foot capacities and a common Gross Rail Weight (car plus lading) of 220,000 pounds. These cars are a bit larger than the FMC 5077 cubic foot single door boxcar which is the basis for the 025 (and Z Scale 510) body style. The January 2018 Equipment Register has 3,560 total cars in service in this group.

So what is the commemoration for September in the “Year of Railbox?” Ozone Day? Well, more formally, it’s the “International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer.” This event commemorates the date of the signing of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer in 1987. And how many of you recall the “hole in the ozone layer” that was a world-wide story back in the 1970s? If you weren’t around yet, there was quite a scare about certain chemicals causing the breakdown of ozone, chemically O<sub>3</sub>, into the usual oxygen molecules, O<sub>2</sub>, up in the stratosphere. Physical effects included increased risk of skin cancer and cataracts without the protective layer of ozone that was breaking down. The Montreal Protocol included the banning of the worst chemical offenders, such as some refrigerants, aerosol propellants, solvents and foam-blowing agents. This agreement is generally considered to be the most successful global environmental action to date. While ozone levels have stabilized and even risen a bit since then, you can see why graffiti reading “Burn/Solar” fits with the topic!



**092 44 420, \$32.90**

**Reporting Marks: BN 419321.**

**Two Bay Center Flow Covered Hopper, Burlington Northern (ex-Frisco/St. Louis-San Francisco).**

Base car is gray with mostly black lettering including roadname and reporting marks on left and large BN herald on right. Extensive fading effects including “see through” of former FRISCO roadname in center. Approximate Time Period: 2006, plus or minus. Previous Releases” None.

I really do mean “Previous Releases: None” here, as there has not been either a Frisco release or a Burlington Northern gray painted release on this body style before. I’ll get right into the bingo, which is on RRPictureArchives.net, but with a twist: the October 2006 image is the closest to the MTL rendition. The white spray paint lines and the relatively small graffiti appear in the photo of the real car as depicted by Micro-Trains. As the years go on, both the Frisco and the BN lettering continue to fade out. In June 2011, the bottom half of the car has a fresh coat of paint, covering half of the BN herald, and there are conspicuity stripes as well as



a restenciled set of reporting marks. By 2014 the “FRISCO” was nearly gone from the center of the side, and the BN roadname and what was left of the herald didn’t look so good either. So I can take the unusual step of using an “plus or minus” ATP on a mere weathered car that I usually invoke for the heavily weathered releases like the “Year in Railbox” cars.

The BN 419321 was formally part of the SL-SF group 78500 to 78749, built by American Car and Foundry in 1975 as their lot number 11-01052. The BN series was 419100 to 419349. This is one of those somewhat unusual 2971 cubic foot Center Flows, the details of which vary a bit from the MTL 092 body style. Sticking within the “plus or minus” ATP, the January 2006 ORER’s BNSF Railway listing had 101 cars remaining in the BN series, and the Frisco series was all gone. (Well, it had been 26 years since the Frisco was absorbed by the BN.) Jumping to the October 2014 Register, 27 cars remained, only two of which were left in the January 2018 ORER. So I wouldn’t go out to The Present even if I didn’t have those additional reference photos.



**099 44 200, \$28.70**

**Reporting Marks: PLCX 28570.**

**Evans Three Bay Covered Hopper, GE Rail Services (now Wells Fargo Rail Corporation).**

Base car is green. Nearly all lettering is patched; reporting marks in white over light green patch panel. White on black double COTS panel on far right. Orange vertical conspicuity stripes along bottom of car. Weathering, peeling paint effects and large black repainted section unevenly applied along bottom center of car. Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 2005 (given conspicuity stripes) to present.

If Incentive Per Diem boxcars are the most repainted, patched and restenciled cars out on North American Railroads, then covered hoppers have to be in second place. Examples of these abound wherever bulk commodities are shipped. Around here that particularly means salt, and boy do those hoppers look beaten up and rusty. (Some of them still have faint Milwaukee Road lettering!) This is an example of that, and it’s also a bit of a throwback to the first Evans covered hopper released by MTL in... sitting down?... October 2006.

PLCX used to stand for Pullman Leasing, but that was years ago; the reporting marks and the equipment were absorbed into the behemoth GE Rail Car Services lessor. I wondered whether GE, which has been shedding “non-core” subsidiaries at a rather rapid pace, had in fact let this operation go. And they did, in September 2015; certainly I wasn’t paying attention. Wells Fargo bought it, merged it into its already owned First Union Rail Corporation (that from a former bank which Wells Fargo also swallowed up) and created Wells Fargo Rail Corporation, with a total of over 103,000 freight cars as of the January 2018 ORER. (Union Tank Car still has a few hundred more than that. TTX outpaces both with more than 166,000 cars.) Barely a rounding error in this pile of freight equipment is the series PLCX 27005 to 28665, with a total of 430 covered hoppers, mostly of the 4780 cubic foot size with some 4750s thrown in just to be annoying. I think we’ll take a “To Present” for the ATP out of that listing. The conspicuity stripes bound the front side of the Approximate Time Period.

RailcarPhotos.com gets us “close enough” with photos of sister cars 28518, 28572 and 28580. All three of these are painted, and patched up, quite similarly to the particular one MTL selected for this release. Photo dates range from 2009 to 2016 on these.

And here’s the throwback: these cars, built by Evans-United States Railway Equipment, were originally in the employ of the Missouri-Kansas-Texas, though with OKKT subsidiary reporting marks and road numbers 3000 to 3234. OKKT marks, still used by the Union Pacific, stood for the Oklahoma, Kansas and Texas, a former Rock Island line taken over by the Katy. See the “before” photo at right, namely, of that first Evans Covered Hopper release from MTL. Once you know that, it’s relatively simple to see the heritage of these now-PLCX cars.



Fidelity to the prototype looks fine; my main spotting feature is the 5-4-5 rib pattern along the sides. We’re good there.



**111 44 120, \$49.95**

**Reporting Marks: TTGX 255631.**

**89 Foot Enclosed Tri-Level Autorack, TTX/Ferromex.**

Base car is yellow with yellow racking, aluminum protective panels, white roof, white reporting marks on black panel on left, black roadname on aluminum panel on left, and orange conspicuity stripes across car. Both sides have

multicolor graffiti covering about the bottom quarter of each side. Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 2014 to present. Previous Releases: Catalog Numbers 111 00 121 and 122, Road Numbers 922134 and 922239, October 2008, then Catalog Numbers 111 44 121 and 122, two Weathered Releases with Road Numbers obscured, May 2009. Note that the Weathered/Graffiti Release for Ferromex, Catalog Number 111 44 190, February 2016, is also similar with respect to the base car but with ETTX reporting marks. (I checked.)

Counting the “I only love you cuz I hate you” “Valentine’s” (?) Weathered/Graffiti Release from 2016, the “dirty” Ferromex cars now outpace the “clean” Ferromex cars on the MTL release board, four to two.

A bingo for this car, dated January 2011 and available on RRPictureArchives.net helps provide the “no earlier than” start of the ATP here. Why? Because the side of the car shown is completely free of any, ahem, incremental decoration. It’s a totally clean car! That and the fact that the road number looks newer than the TTGX reporting marks suggest a car that has only recently been outshopped. Given what I know about how quickly taggers can, well, tag a

freight car, even an 89 foot long one, it could be that on January 9, it was pristine, and by January 10, it wasn't. Well, no, as over on the Fallen Flags site, there's a photo of the same car as of August 2011, and it's still clean as a whistle, relatively speaking.

But wait, George, you say, your ATP starts "no earlier than 2014," not 2011. Yes. A second photo on RRPictureArchives shows the 255631 with a remarkably small amount of graffiti, in June 2014, a full three years and five months after the previous photo was taken. How can this be? Was the car in storage all that time? Or was it moving so fast that it couldn't be tagged?

That is, of course, presuming that the graffiti depicted by MTL is in fact prototypical. Our Graffiti Special Correspondent David Grothe couldn't find a match to what Micro-Trains put on the car. We also know that given the agreements with some Class 1 lines (that's you, UP and CSX), the graffiti may have been "relocated" to this car so that it could be produced.

I'll make a quick aside here that the rack itself carries the reporting marks NKCR 2812. That corresponds to the shortline Nebraska Kansas Colorado Railway, an Omnitrax property which operates some 500 miles of line in its three namesake states. How is it that a Mexican railroad has racking with a shortline's reporting marks? I'm not sure, though I suspect some leasing arrangements are in the mix somewhere. NKCR also has a fleet of rolling stock which includes a few hundred full autoracks.

In the January 2018 ORER, the 255631 is part of the mind-numbing TTGX group numbered from 253886 to 256187, which has almost two pages of subseries in the TTX registration. Even I'm not that crazy to review all of them. The total number of cars... ah, never mind. Let's just say, "a lot." And let's call the ATP at "The Present."

## N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES:



**Car #8 in the Union Pacific World War II Poster Series** (118 00 180, \$25.95) has been released. Reporting Marks for this Troop Sleeper are USAX 19418. UMTRR coverage was in the September 2017 issue. At left is the poster on which the car artwork is based.







Also, the **Halloween Ghost Train Set (993 21 300, \$239.95)** is expected to be released mid-month and should be at MTL dealers as you read this. UMTRR coverage was in the May 2018 issue. The individual item numbers are as follows:

- 987 series FT-A Diesel Locomotive, no road number. The exact catalog number wasn't available at "press time."
- 029 52 029, 40 Foot Single Sheathed Boxcar, 1 ½ Doors, Reporting Marks GT 3637.
- 042 53 009, 40 Foot Double Sheathed Boxcar, Single Door, Reporting Marks GT 2528. Note the painted on "windows" on this car.
- 116 54 039, Troop Sleeper, Reporting Marks GT 8878.
- 130 55 059, Bay Window Caboose, Reporting Marks GT 2838. I like the substitution of steel bars on the ends for the usual ladder and end rails... though I doubt that will keep ghosts in.

Meanwhile, we have a pre-order announcement...

*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 September 30.*

**Expected Delivery November 2018:**

**101 00 804, \$39.95**

**40 Foot Modified Hy-Cube Boxcar (No Doors), 2018 Custom Christmas Car.**

Side A has a silhouette depiction of Santa Claus with reindeer on left and "Merry Christmas" lettering in white with black shadow on left. Side B is in the format of a postcard and has up to four lines of text (30 characters each or less) on left with up to three additional lines of text (18 characters each or less) on bottom right. MTL artwork shown; actual product will vary. Pre-orders are accepted through MTL dealers or direct to MTL via its website or a paper insert in the September 2018 Micro-News.





Yes, it is that time of the year again, and for the fourth straight year, here's the chance to have a personal greeting of your choice on an MTL boxcar. I like this idea—in fact, I think I inadvertently suggested it back in 2014 when the Postcard Series began and I said in the UMTRR, “What if modelers could fill out their own postcards with a personal holiday message?” However, this year I have a nit to pick: What's with only six reindeer pulling Santa's sleigh? I know Dasher and Dancer and Prancer and Vixen, Comet and Cupid and Donner and Blitzen... which ones stayed home? And what about Rudolph? (And they're all “ranked”... with tongue firmly in cheek, over on Thrillist.com. It's not exactly a politically correct page... just so you know.)

Anyway, this year the folks behind the red and yellow sign went a little easier on the logistics and created just one style of Christmas car for your personal greetings. In 2015 and 2016 there were several permutations from which to choose. That's fine, though... it's the thought that counts.

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



**518 00 630, \$29.95**

**Reporting Marks: HJHCo. 486.**

**36 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator, Truss Rod Underframe, Vertical Brake Staff, Heinz.**

First release in the Heinz Yellow Series (pre-orders taken April 2018). Yellow sides,

brown roof and ends, black underframe and details. Arch bar trucks. Green and white Heinz pickle trademark on left. Red with white outline lettering including “57 Varieties” on left and “Prepared Mustard” on right. White end markings. Approximate Time Period: Decade of the 1900s into the 1920s.

Please see the coverage of the N Scale Release above (058 00 400), with the caveat that the Z Scale release is on a 40 foot car while the N Scale run is on a 36 foot car.



**502 00 441 and 502 00 442, \$29.80 each.**

**Reporting Marks: C&O 7783 and 7795.**

**40 Foot Steel Boxcars, Plug Door, Chesapeake and Ohio.**

Yellow sides, black ends, aluminum roof. Black lettering including reporting marks and “Compartmentizer | Insulated | Refrigerator” on left and “C&O for Progress” herald on right. Approximate Time Period: December 1959 (build date) to early-1970s with running board or mid-1980s otherwise.



Please see the coverage of the N Scale release above (021 00 600).

Also, hurray, hurray, just in time for that Holiday Gift-Giving (if you're thinking a bit ahead, that is), the first of the **SD40-2 Diesel Locomotives** have now arrived after a long production issue-laden delay. I'm not sure there's anyone more relieved by this news than the folks at MTL themselves! The **Norfolk Southern units (970 01 211, Road Number 3414, 970 01 212, Road Number 3416, \$195.95 each)** and **Canadian Pacific locos (970 01 231, Road Number 5617, 970 01 232, Road Number 5698, \$225.95 each)** should finally be at dealers as you read this. UMTRR coverage of these was in the June 2017 issue.



*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 September 30.*



**Scheduled Delivery Starting February 2019:**  
**Farm To Table Refrigerator Car Series,**  
**\$27.95 each.**

Expected to consist of twelve 40 foot wood double sheathed refrigerator cars (MTL 518 series) lettered for various lessors. MTL example artwork for two of the expected twelve cars is shown at left; actual product may vary.

Please see the coverage of the N Scale pre-order announcement above.

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

**Z SCALE MULTI-PACKS:** No releases this month, but there is a pre-order announcement:

*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 September 30.*



*Expected Delivery February 2019:*

**994 01 230, \$119.95**

**Auto-Train Passenger Car Four-Pack.**

Expected to consist of three 551 series lightweight dome cars with road numbers 901, 902 and 908, plus one 553 series lightweight baggage car, road number 137. Each car is white with aluminum roof and red band across center of car, red “auto train” (all lower case) roadname under the dome on the dome cars and between the baggage doors on the baggage car and road number below roadname. Approximate Time Period: 1971 to 1981. Micro-Trains preliminary artwork shown; actual product may vary.

Amtrak currently operates a successful Auto Train (no hyphen) service and has done so since the end of October 1983. This four-pack—don’t call it a “Runner Pack”!—is lettered for the original private venture. I’m old enough to remember the TV commercial for this, and it’s old enough to be a full minute in length. See [www.youtube.com/watch?v=6MzVidE8W8o](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6MzVidE8W8o).

The Wikipedians tell us that Eugene K. Garfield studied the concept of transporting automobiles and passengers to and from Florida as part of his role in the Department of Transportation. Certainly it would be an alternative to flying that the airlines couldn’t match: then as now, motor vehicles don’t fit under the seat or in the overhead compartment. Garfield took that study and founded Auto-Train based on it. Service began on December 6, 1971. Equipment consisted of second-hand passenger cars, including full dome cars, and double-deck enclosed auto rack cars from the Canadian National. Power for these trains were General Electric U36B diesels. The red, white and purple paint scheme was distinctive and the use of all lower-case lettering was a not-unusual feature of 1970s marketing.

The original service from Lorton, Virginia, about 30 minutes south of Washington DC, and Sanford, Florida, about a half-hour from Orlando, was quite successful. However, the company overextended itself with a second line from Louisville, Kentucky to Florida. That route wasn’t as well-maintained as the one from Lorton to Sanford, and was subject to delays... and derailments. Result: The Auto-Train Corporation struggled and then failed, shutting down in April 1981. The idea was still sound, however, and Amtrak resumed it under its own auspices 22 months later, between the two original terminals only. Today’s Auto Train fleet consists of Superliner passenger cars and larger configurable enclosed auto-racks.

Auto-Train is far better known for its full-dome cars which came over from the Santa Fe, but the company also purchased “standard” dome cars from the Western Pacific and Union Pacific. This included cars from famous “name trains”: the California Zephyr and the City of Los Angeles. The 901, 902 and 908 came over from the UP; they were numbered 9001, 9002 and



9009 respectively. The first two were for the City of Los Angeles and the third for the City of Portland. These cars differ from each other so there will be deltas to the MTL 551 body style but the overall idea is there.

The dome cars went elsewhere after Auto-Train. Coming full circle, the 908 went back to the Union Pacific and is part of their business train fleet. The 901 went to the Algoma Central and was rebuilt in 1997. The 902 was rebuilt to a theatre car and belonged to the New York, Susquehanna and Western and then to CSX. Other Auto-Train equipment wasn't as lucky: at least one became part of a fish reef in the Gulf of Mexico!

Car 137 was acquired by Auto-Train from the Santa Fe's series 135 to 138. It was originally built by Pullman-Standard. Auto-Train used it as a steam generator car. I could understand why baggage cars weren't really needed on the train, as anything that wasn't carry-on with passengers simply stayed in their cars.

Back when this original Auto-Train was still being advertised on television, Bachmann offered a diesel, full dome cars and the distinctive ex-CN autoracks in HO and N Scales. As far as I know, this is the first widely available Z Scale release for that service. (Current Auto Train Amtrak equipment is available.) What about the other cars that made up this train? Well, one advantage we have now that we didn't have back in the seventies was 3-D printing...

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



**510 44 015, \$28.95**

**Reporting Marks: RBOX 34608.**

**50 Foot Exterior Post Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Railbox.**

Car #9 in the "A Year of Railbox" series. Base car is yellow with black door and aluminum roof. Black lettering including reporting marks (with patched road number) and large "Railbox" name on left. Large red, blue and black "Next Load/Any Road" symbol and slogan on right. A side has caricature of an armadillo (on the door) with "BURN

SOLAR" lettering inside of which is a desert scene. B side has fading, rust effects and graffiti right side of door. Approximate Time Period: 2016, plus or minus (using the A or "featured" side of the car). Previous Releases: Road Number 17834, Mar 1985 (Marklin Couplers) and March 1987 (Magne-Matic Couplers); Road Number 17700, September 1988 (both coupler types), then Runner Pack #1 with Road Numbers 17728, 17746, 17785 and 17818, January 2009, then Weathered Releases 510 44 011 and 012, May 2010 (multiple road numbers), then "A Year of Railbox" #6, June 2018.

Please see the coverage of the N Scale release above (025 44 015).





548 44 040, \$32.80

**Reporting Marks: WFEX 800 and 805.**

**51 Foot Mechanical Refrigerators, Rivet Sides, Western Fruit Express.**

Yellow sides, brown ends, aluminum roof.

Black lettering including reporting marks

and "Western Fruit Express" on left and small outline goat herald with Great Northern roadname on right. Approximate Time Period: 1953 (build date) to early 1970s. Previous Releases (unweathered): Road Numbers 800 and 805, April 2015.

You might remember from my coverage of the "clean" cars (one of which is shown at right) that while I found an example of this car in the **Great Northern Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, Page 92, it was in the later "new image" scheme. It did work for a prototype to model comparison, and a bit more.



First, the check of details: the rivets (!), straight side sills, and door that's slightly less tall than the full car side more or less align. We also get confirmation of the 1953 build date, and with the service date stencil "JAX 3 68" a reference to the affiliation of Western Fruit Express with Fruit Growers Express, to which MTL refers in its car copy. "JAX" refers to Jacksonville, Florida, one of the main shops of the FGE.

From the book **Classic Freight Cars Volume 9** we can confirm that the cars were also built by the FGE at its shops in Alexandria, Virginia. As has been noted here and elsewhere, while the FGE, the WFE and the Burlington Refrigerator Express were technically separate companies, they were tightly affiliated, pooled their rolling stock, and shared executive management. That book also answers a question I had about these cars. Back in 1997 when a reprint of the N Scale version was released, I noted that the WFE series is in the April 1970 ORER but completely gone from the April 1976 Register. Thanks to owning more Equipment Registers, I can narrow that down to between October 1972 and July 1974. Between those dates, the reporting marks changed from WFEX to BNFE, as the Burlington Northern wound down Western Fruit Express as a separate registration in the ORERs. The CFS has a shot of BNFE 538, naturally, in Burlington Northern paint, so that's another possible follow up paint scheme for MTL. Gee, if I could only find the actual decoration that MTL used, I'd have the triple play. I suspect a photo or two can be found in the **Great Northern Equipment Color Pictorial: Book Three** from Four Ways West, not in the UMTRR Research Accumulation.

I can't leave out an actual ORER lookup, and for that, we'll go back to the January 1955 edition. WFEX series 800 to 849 had an inside length of 44 feet 5 inches, inside width 8 feet 8 inches, and inside height 7 feet 10 inches. Those dimensions make sense given the amount of insulation in the car. The outside length was 52 feet 6 inches, extreme height 14 feet 11 inches, door opening 6 feet wide by 7 feet 3 inches tall, and capacity 3035 cubic feet or 128,000 pounds.

**Z SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES:** No releases or pre-order announcements this month.

**MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS:** The lead story this month is a pre-order window through September 30 for two-packs of the M-1 Abrams tank which serves as the load on this month's DODX "Red" Three-Pack. These are in kit form, unassembled and



undecorated, but with a decal sheet. Based on the MTL images, these appear to be injection-molded plastic with brass details. Catalog 499 45 901 will carry an MSRP of \$19.95.



Announced on the Micro-Trains website, but not in the September Micro-News, is that an undecorated version of the N Scale 26 Foot Civil War Era boxcar is now available (151 00 000, \$13.50). Given that there was that White Line Four-Pack just released, it makes sense for MTL to run off some extra copies of this car... economies of scale, you know.



**INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT:** Further to the MTL release of the "White Line" Civil War era cars, the pre-order information for the "Red Line" cars last month, and what I think will be an eventual production of "Blue Line" cars—plus a throwback to the "Merchants Despatch" four-pack from May of 2017... we have, courtesy of a post to the Steam Era Freight Cars Group ([main@RealSTMFC.groups.io](mailto:main@RealSTMFC.groups.io)) citations to photos taken at the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia. The URLs [libwww.freelibrary.org/digital/item/1646](http://libwww.freelibrary.org/digital/item/1646) and [libwww.freelibrary.org/digital/item/1647](http://libwww.freelibrary.org/digital/item/1647) show two views of one of each of these cars. They're in black and white, of course, but there's no doubt in my mind that this was among the source material for the MTL releases, including the use of link and pin couplers. The only question I have left is when we'll see a Blue Line Four-Pack announcement.

Meanwhile, the discussion on the group led to a post by Garth Groff citing archive photos of the Harrisburg Car Manufacturing Company that are located on the University of Pennsylvania website: [www.library.upenn.edu/collections/rbm/photos/harrisburgcar/](http://www.library.upenn.edu/collections/rbm/photos/harrisburgcar/). One of these images is of the New York Central and Hudson River flat car 15019 that will be part of the Red Line set... that is, a bingo, and from well over a century ago! An interesting item that's not going to be part of the MTL release is a placard warning, "This car must not be diverted from the line between New York and Cleveland." A quick perusal of the photos revealed others that may very well have been the basis for the other CWE car sets. There's a shot of an NYC&HR car lettered "Blue Line." I hope I remember to check this site out if (when?) the Blue Line set is announced!

**DISCONTINUED ALERT:** MTL did not provide an official Sold Out list again, so it's time for another "do it yourself" bye-bye board. Last month we caught up on the 2017 and 2018 N Scale Freight Car releases, and used up all of the available commas, semicolons and parenthesis at

UMTRR HQ. We've restocked on those punctuation marks and ready to take on another section of the MTL releases which are outta here.

Let's go back in time, then. First, I note that all 2010, 2011 and 2012 N Scale Releases I track have sold out: freight cars, passenger cars, runner packs, train sets, etc. That brings us to the N Scale items for 2013. All freight cars are gone, so that's easy and moves us to passenger cars. The Burlington 12-1 Sleeper (142 00 030, February) has left the building. The Milwaukee Road 10-1-2 Sleeper (141 00 120, September), 28-1 Parlor Car (143 00 120, October) and 3-2 Observation (144 00 120, August) have rolled away, though at this writing the RPO is still available (140 00 120) – in fact, it's one of only two N Scale items without the dreaded "D" in my website listing. The other one is the gray 40 Foot US Army Container (461 00 010).

On to the 2014 N Scale releases. The Rio Grande double door boxcar without running board is officially gone (076 00 080, February). Holiday Postcard Series Boxcars #2 and #3, "Santa Calling" and "Santa's Balloons" (101 00 812 and 813, November and December) have flown away. The only passenger car which has been sold out since last check is the New York Central 10-1-2 Sleeper (141 00 130, April). Among sets, only the "Terminus Short Line" (993 21 230) is still in stock.

Next up: 2015's N Scale items. The AGR/Virginia Central patched and weathered boxcar gets its "D" (025 44 850, December). Also gone is the Canadian National weathered panel side hopper (085 44 070, June). The Manassas Gap and Georgia Railroad Civil War Era Tank Cars have both been emptied out (154 00 050 and 060, both June) and that completely clears out that body style from MTL shelves. Among passenger cars, the Canadian National "Armitage" 12-1 Sleeper (142 00 150, September), Union Pacific Diner (146 00 060, January), Santa Fe Baggage Car (147 00 040, May) and Burlington/CB&Q Mail/Baggage Car (148 00 030, July) are all discontinued. Surprisingly, to me, anyway, the Erie Baggage Car – which is the model drawn directly from the prototype – is still gettable from MTL. Closing out the year, the Weathered Santa Fe Refrigerator Set (993 01 280, January), Liberty Bell Train Set (993 01 310, June) and Weathered Maintenance of Way Heavyweight Set (993 01 360) are sold out, but the "Alice In Wonderland" (993 21 250) and "Reindeer Belt" (993 21 260) are still available.

And that leaves 2016's N Scale items to review. We'll start with the Santa Fe Slogan/Map Set of forty foot single door boxcars (993 01 410, July) since those are all 020 series cars. (Not to be confused with the Santa Fe Slogan set of forty foot double door boxcars, 993 01 690, released in April of this year... wait, they are also sold out.) Per Diem Boxcar Series #1, for the Delta Valley and Southern, is gone (025 00 900, February). Wave goodbye to the reprinted Lehigh Valley door and a half single sheathed boxcar with flag herald (041 00 020, February). Both numbers of the Santa Fe TOFC Flat are gone (071 00 05x, March), as is the weathered Wisconsin and Southern "Sargento" boxcar (075 44 200). Staying with Weathered Outs, we have "Monster #1" on the two-bay Center Flow (092 44 340, September) and the "dirty" version of the GACX blue Airslide (098 44 010, December). Gone is the reprinted Union Pacific "Automated Railway" Hy-Cube Boxcar (101 00 040, December). Christmas Postcard Series Cars #7 and #9 have been delivered (101 00 817 and 819, October and December). NASA Series #4, the black tank car, has lifted off (110 00 260, December). Both numbers of the reprinted TTX/Burlington

Northern autorack are off the lot (111 00 03x, January). And both numbers of the reprinted Troop Sleeper—make that iterations number 20 and 21—have marched out (116 00 01x, November), as has the US Army “Hospital” Troop Kitchen Car (118 00 050, November). The CSXT “Baltimore and Ohio 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary” Bay Window Caboose (130 00 180, December) has clocked out. Two 53 foot containers are as sold out: Sea Star (469 00 030, August) and CN “We Deliver” (469 00 040, July). Moving to passenger cars, the Royal American Shows three-pack (993 01 450, November) has left town, as have the Canadian National 10-1-2 Sleeper (141 00 150, September) and paired-window coach (145 00 150, October). Runner Pack #122, four Chesapeake and Ohio boxcars, was the last of 2016 to be sold out (993 00 122, November). The “Western Train Set” (993 01 440, April) featuring a Santa Fe H12-44 diesel has ridden off. The only 2017 N Scale Train Set left is the “Dr. Mort’s Creepy Carnival” (993 21 470).

Moving briefly to 2017, all five heavyweight passenger car five-pack sets have left the station: the US Army (993 01 520, May), Great Northern (993 01 570, June), Pullman (993 01 580, April), Santa Fe (993 01 590, September), and Baltimore and Ohio (993 01 600, December).

Rats, I’m out of parenthesis again. We’ll make more progress on the Do-it-yourself Discontinued Alert next month.

**OOPS PATROL:** The second boxcar in the Z Scale Northern Pacific Weathered Train Set (994 01 190), the brown double door one that is, has Catalog Number 501 55 280, not 501 52 280.

This is a long-term oops: Back in June 2017, I did a copy/paste of the US Army Heavyweight Five-Pack into the Great Northern Heavyweight Five-Pack and never changed it. So, to set the record straight, the individual items in the GN set are: Railway Post Office, 140 51 010, Road Number 30, 142 52 020, 12-1 Sleeper “Havre,” 145 53 020, Paired Window Coach, Road Number 902, 146 54 020, Diner, Road Number 1039, Car Name “North Dakota,” 144 55 020, 3-2 Observation, No Name or Number. The website table has been fixed and a corrected version of the June 2017 UMTRR is available in the “Back Issues” section of the UMTRR Website.

**THAT WRAPS UP THIS MONTH.** Until next time, do the best you can!

Cheers, George

[Legalese: You’ve received this because you’ve requested a UMTRR e-mail subscription. If there’s been some mistake, please let me know via e-mail at [umtrr@irwinsjournal.com](mailto:umtrr@irwinsjournal.com), including “UMTRR” in the subject line. You may also reply to this e-mail, but PLEASE delete attachments and other text first. All information contained herein is supplied “as is” and no warranties are express or implied. Trademarks are the property of their respective owners. Images of releases provided through courtesy of Micro-Trains Line, Inc. The Federal Trade Commission considers this effort to be an “endorsement.” I assume readers can make up their own minds. **The UMTRR is copyrighted and all reprinting, reposting and other transmission is expressly prohibited, except for “Fair Use” quotes, unless prior permission has been obtained from me.**]