



IrwinsJournal.com Presents:

The Unofficial Micro-Trains® Release Report Issue #277 – January, 2020

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Hello again everyone, and welcome to the Twenties! Will they be Roaring? At least this month they are here at UMTRR HQ—there is a **lot** to cover. Something Really Small is a dominant part of the pre-order news this month, and I don't mean the beginning of the transition to pre-order only for regular run Z Scale releases. What else is in store to report on as we begin Year 24 of this humble enterprise? Let's find out together...

N SCALE NEW RELEASE FREIGHT EQUIPMENT:



027 00 440, \$26.90

Reporting Marks: BNSF 713012.

50 Foot Steel Exterior Post Boxcar, Single Plug Door, BNSF (Burlington Northern Santa Fe).

Mineral red with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and "wedge" herald on right. White on black double COTS panel at bottom right. Yellow horizontal conspicuity stripes across bottom of side. Approximate Time Period: Approximate Time Period: 2005 (introduction of herald) to present. This car has a lowered underframe and body mounted couplers.

This paint scheme more or less "moves up" from Z Scale (shown at right), although it doesn't carry the same road number and the "wedge" is in a different place. That 1:220 offering was released in June 2013, Catalog Number 511 00 190, Road Number 712979.



When that car was run, I found a bingo to it on as of 2007 on RailcarPhotos.net. No such luck for this N Scale New Release on that site. But the story is the same. The series BNSF 712961 to 713095 is a former ATSF set of boxcars, Class Bx-180, numbered 501799 to 501899. Proving that out, BNSF 712970 as of August 2007 still has the small Santa Fe circle cross in the top left hand corner with just restenciled reporting marks—and what's arguably become the usual amount of graffiti. The cars were built by Berwick Forge and Fabricating in 1976 as their lot 33000 and are within Plate E dimensions. They are a bit larger than the MTL 027 body style. Other photos of cars in this group show no herald at all, the BNSF circle cross, or the "wedge" as on the Micro-Trains car, and on sister cars 713034 found in 2012 and 713035 captured in 2013. Meanwhile, over on RRPictureArchives is the bingo we need, of the 713012, freshly repainted as of December 2005. That makes it among the first BNSF cars to receive the wedge herald. We also can tell from the photo that the ends aren't the same between prototype and model. A second bingo of the 713012 on RRPictureArchives was taken in July 2009; amazingly, it got that far without any graffiti—well, at least on the side we can see.

The Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER) for January 2006 shows a total of 110 cars in series BNSF 712961 to 713095. The cars have these key dimensions: inside length 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 4 inches, inside height 11 feet, outside length 58 feet, extreme height 15 feet 9 inches, door opening 10 feet 6 inches, capacity 5194 cubic feet, and gross rail weight 263,000 pounds. As of January 2011 the car count was 116, as more former ATSF cars were relettered. The January 2018 Register shows a still healthy 66 cars in the group, so “to present” should work for our Approximate Time Period.



034 00 460, \$26.90

Reporting Marks: NH 40509.

50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Double Youngstown Door, New Haven (New York, New Haven and Hartford).

Red with black side sills. Mostly white lettering including roadname and reporting marks on right. Large McGuinness-era herald with black “N” over white “H” on left. Multicolor ACI Label left of reporting marks. Approximate Time Period: 1956 (build date) or late 1960s (given ACI Label) to mid-1970s. This car has a lowered underframe and body mounted couplers.

Wait, hasn’t Micro-Trains done this car before? The technical answer is no, not as a regular run release. However, several 50 foot double door boxcars with this paint scheme, although without the ACI Label, were commissioned as Special Runs from the folks in Talent. One example is NH 40500, half of a two-pack “New Haven Delivers #2” from the N Scale Enthusiast released in 2007 (NSC/NSE Number 07-05). And there’s been at least one third-party release of an MTL 34000/034 body style in a similar scheme, with road numbers 40502 and 40504, done back in June 1992 by Eastern Seaboard Models. One of these is in my accumulation. And let’s not forget two road numbers Micro-Trains released in Z Scale in March 2009 (506 00 24x, 40500 and 40502, at right). So I guess you could say that this paint scheme, like the BNSF x-post boxcar above, also “moved up” to N from Z.



But let’s get back to the new release at hand. Pullman-Standard had a much larger order for these cars placed by the New Haven, but, oops, no money available to pay for them. So they took delivery of just fifteen, numbered 40500 to 40514. (The rest of the order went to the Chesapeake and Ohio, and six of those became the C&O’s “Cameo Cars.”) The **New Haven Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, Page 24, has the bingo photo of the 40509 as it appeared in October 1972. And as it appeared was pretty worn. There wasn’t much red paint left on the galvanized roof. The “H” in “NH” was faded and scraped down by the left hand door. This particular photo shows the car with its doors partially open, revealing a wood floor. Sister car NH 40501 also appears on the same page in the **Color Guide**. Both cars still had their running boards.

The ORER for January 1958 is the closest one I have to the build date. The series 40500 to 40514 was shown as “Box, Steel” with AAR Classification XM. The inside length was 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 4 inches, inside height 10 feet 5 inches, outside length 50 feet 9 inches--mighty short couplers, or more likely a typo (later corrected to 54 feet 6 inches); extreme height 15 feet, capacity 4927 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds, door opening 15 feet. Hmm, it seems that we have a “door thing” here; yes, the prototype had an eight foot door and a seven foot door, whereas the MTL 034 body style has two eight foot doors. Since this car has an ACI Label, from the system that was installed circa 1968, you’d have to remove that detail to run this car “as delivered” and for about the next twelve years after that.

Since the photos in the **Color Guide** showed that at least two cars in the group still existed then, we can jump all the way to the April 1970 ORER to find these NH cars in the Penn Central registration. (The NH was “force fed” into the PC on January 1, 1969.) All fifteen cars remained, in four subsets yet. There is the main series, if I can call it that, with just six cars, then three groups of three each based on end notes. Two of these groups had DF loaders installed and their auxiliary door either removed or more likely just permanently closed to yield a door opening of eight feet. By the July 1974 Register thirteen of the original 15 cars were in service. Those same 13 cars make it into the first registration for Conrail, April 1976. But by the April 1981 ORER only one car, the 40508, is left.



049 00 880, \$27.95

Reporting Marks: NWX 15630.

40 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator Car with Fishbelly Underframe, E & A Opler / Our Mother's Cocoa.

#12 and final release in the Farm-to-Table

Series (Pre-orders taken in September 2018). Gray sides, brown ends, roof, and door sill, black details. Red and blue lettering including “Our Mother’s Pure-All Occasion Cocoa” on left, split by multicolor rendition of the Our Mother’s Cocoa “mother” trademark; and “E & A Opler Inc. / Cocoa and Chocolate / Chicago - Brooklyn” on right. Black reporting marks and dimensional data at lower right. White end markings. Approximate Time Period: 1934 (service date) to no later than 1938.

The **Chicago Tribune** obituary of August 30, 1995, for the “E” in E & A Opler barely mentions the company advertised on this final entry in the Farm to Market series. “Edmond Opler Sr., 98, started his career as a wagon boy for a chocolate company when he was 13 and eventually founded World’s Finest Chocolate in Chicago. He died Aug. 19, 1995 at Hinsdale Hospital.” It’s noted in the article that Edmond and his younger brother Arnold moved to Chicago from New York City, and started the cocoa packing business E&A Opler in 1922. In 1939, Opler also founded Cook Chocolate Company. Ten years later, it starting marketing candy for fundraisers; that became the dominant part of its business. It took the name of its leading product, World’s Finest Chocolate, in 1972. It’s now led by Eddie Opler, grandson of Edmond. Among the items on the company’s history page is a black and white photo of a New York Central double sheathed boxcar with a banner proclaiming the first full carload shipment of

Our Mother's Cocoa to a Kentucky jobber for distribution. Probably not something you'll see as an MTL offering, but still pretty cool.

Turning to **Billboard Refrigerator Cars**, Page 87, we find the bingo for this release. It's another North Western Refrigerator car built in April 1927. The paint scheme is from August 1934. We already know from the Nash Food Products car issued in October 2019 (Farm to Table Series #9), just thirty cars away at NWX 15660, that ORER data is not terribly useful. The 15000 to 15999 series numbering also dates to 1934, as noted previously, but there's no car count to relate in the July 1935 Register.

Our Mother's Cocoa was a brand after the end of the Billboard Refrigerator Era: a Farm Security Administration image of a Salem, Illinois grocery store circa February 1940 shows advertising for the product. A two pound container cost... wait for it... nineteen cents. That's \$3.49 in 2019 dollars. Cocoa has more than outpaced with inflation. I also found several "cardboard tins" (not my term!) that I presume no longer hold the product but were preserved and sold on that Popular Internet Auction Community. The "Our Mother" figure on these matches what's on the refrigerator car.



055 00 560, \$25.80.

Reporting Marks: RF&P 7047.

33 Foot Two Bay Open Hopper, Offset Sides, Flat Ends, Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac.

Black with white lettering including reporting marks on left. Multicolor ACI

Label on right. Four vertical stripes at points along side. Approximate Time Period: 1972 to late 1980s. This car is a "Special Offering / Regional Railroad" limited release per Micro-Trains and is not on dealer standing orders.

Micro-Trains' car copy is not in the Micro-News, nor is it on the web page showing it as a New Release. Ah, but it is in the January "Dealer Media Kit." I'll copy and paste for you: "Belonging to series 7001-7070, this two-bay open hopper was built for the RF&P in the 1940s and used until the mid-1980s. With a 2,190 cubic-foot capacity, it slowly fell out of preference as larger three and four-bay cars became commonplace."

The bingo photo, on George Elwood's "Fallen Flags" site (www.rr-fallenflags.org) bears out the mid-1980s mention. The shot was taken in March 1986 at Doswell, Virginia, on the RF&P. I'll jump right into the ORERs: there were 14 cars remaining in the series as of the October 1986 Register, but there was just a single car left in the July 1989 ORER.

I thought that finding the start of the ATP would be a lot harder, but I started down the wrong track (pun intended) by looking at the paint scheme. From the few photos available via the online presence of the RF&P Historical Society, it appears that the company's hoppers were basic black and white, but with variations. For example, an undated photo of hopper number

6022 shows reporting marks "R.F.P." with no ampersand ("&"). Fifty-ton hopper 3608 was found in 1969 with "RF&P" reporting marks but no white horizontal stripes.

However, the service date on the model, August 1972, turns out to be the important data point. It's not until sometime between the April 1970 and the October 1972 ORERs that this series of cars appears in the RF&P roster. All 70 are in the October 1972 book, with these key dimensions: inside length 33 feet, inside width 10 feet 4 inches, inside height 7 feet 5 inches, outside length 37 feet, extreme height 10 feet 9 inches, and capacity 2190 cubic feet or 154,000 pounds. Since it is, let us say, extremely unlikely, that these cars were built new in 1972, the RF&P must have picked them up used. Certainly there were plenty of surplus two-bay open hoppers around. Hopping back to the RF&P Historical Society website, note is made that these were sand and gravel hoppers. There's no load included with this release but there are sources for simulated sand and/or gravel loads, or make one of your own.



069 00 231 and 069 00 232, \$29.90 each.

Reporting Marks: RMAX 284 and 268.

51 Foot Mechanical Refrigerator Car, Riveted Sides, American Refrigerator Transit.

Orange sides, brown roof and ends, black door sill and tack board. Black lettering including reporting marks on left and "American Refrigerator Transit Co." on right. Red, white and blue ART shield on left above reporting marks. Red and white Missouri Pacific "buzzsaw" herald and red,

white and blue Wabash "flag" herald on right; positions of these heralds are reversed on each side of the car. Approximate Time Period: 1960 (build date) into the mid-1960s.

Ah, those days when railroad heralds were painted in full color on the sides of refrigerator cars! The early 1960s was the end of that period for the American Refrigerator Transit Company. Even before the Wabash was absorbed into the Norfolk and Western in 1964, the ART switched to all black lettering and heralds. Depending on how long it took to repaint these cars, the ATP could be quite short. For example, a 1966 Jim Sands photo showed sister car RMAX 293 in the red-orange paint which succeeded what Micro-Trains has depicted here. That photo is on RRPictureArchives.net. There are differences between prototype and model.

The January 1962 ORER showed 150 cars in the series numbered RMAX 175 to 499. Not all of the numbers were used, as that sequence could hold 325 cars. While we're here, the key dimensions were: inside length 45 feet even, inside width 8 feet 7 inches, inside height 8 feet 5 inches, outside length 52 feet 2 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 8 feet wide by 7 feet 11 inches high, and capacity 3187 cubic feet or 122,000 pounds. There are four end notes for this group, calling out permanent floor racks, deployment in special service only, being equipped with 144,000 pound journals, and having side wall flues.

By the January 1967 Equipment Register, the series span had been reduced to RMAX 175 to 324, with 146 cars. Meanwhile, a series of RMDX mechanical refrigerator cars with cushion underframes picked up at road number 325 and ran to road number 464. I bring that up because Kadee and Micro-Trains have done cars from that later series on the 69000/069 body style; with yellow sides and all black lettering in six-packs in April 1990 and again in October 1991 and a single car in April 1995, and in red with black lettering in August 1992 with MP and N&W heralds. Those yellow cars have a service date of 1962, with the full color heralds already gone – that’s an Approximate Time Period data point for us.

I don’t see these cars lasting much longer than the mid-1960s as decorated by Micro-Trains, between the switch from color heralds to black and white and the Wabash going into the N&W. Add to that the fact that the N&W quit the partnership with the MP in American Refrigerator Transit in 1973 according to the book **American Refrigerator Transit** (not in the UMTRR Research Accumulation).



069 00 240, \$26.80.

Reporting Marks: SRLX 25048.

51 Foot Mechanical Refrigerator Car, Riveted Sides, Swift Refrigerator Line.

Silver with black lettering including company name and reporting marks on left.

Red and white “Swift’s Premium” trademark on right. Multicolor ACI Label on right. Approximate Time Period: 1954 (build date) or late 1960s (given ACI Label) to early 1980s in revenue service.

As long as Micro-Trains was releasing 32 Swift wood refrigerators (the second half of which are noted below), I guess they thought it would be nice to add this item. This paint scheme has been done multiple times by several different manufacturers in N and other scales. However, because this series of cars is rather different than your typically sized mechanical refrigerator car, no one’s really been able to do better than a stand-in.

A look at the ORER for July 1963, the first edition in which I pick up these cars, shows the series SRLX 25000 to 25099 along with all the other Swift cars under the General American Transportation Corporation listing. (General American acquired the Swift fleet in 1930, well before these cars appeared.) The inside length was 44 feet 6 inches and outside length 51 feet 9 inches, which is probably close enough to the MTL 069 body style, but the extreme height was only 13 feet 10 inches, which is more than a bit noticeable compared to 15 foot tall cars. Though it’s a mechanical refrigerator, it’s also shown with a crushed ice capacity of 10,000 pounds. Methinks that is an error.

While the **Refrigerator Car Color Guide** doesn’t cover these refrigerators, it is noted there that the last Swift car on the General American roster was in the April 1978 ORER, and it was in this 25000 series. The actual 25048 lasted longer than that, if you can call “derelict” lasting longer. In photos posted to RRPictureArchives, it was in Butler, New Jersey on the Susquehanna Railroad in May 1995, then in Boonton, New Jersey as part of the collection of

the United Railroad Historical Society of New Jersey as of 2011. In both cases, its relative lack of height versus other cars is quite visible. A number of the 25000 series cars escaped scrapping based on the photos on RRPictureArchives, but none of them are in what I'd call pristine condition. For example, the 25024 was found at the end of August 2019 with considerable rust at Nelsonville, Ohio. Given the number of these cars still extant, I'll add the "in revenue service" tag to the Approximate Time Period here.

Speaking of the United Railroad Historical Society of New Jersey, they've got a short writeup on this very car on their site (www.urhs.org/swift-25048/). "Inside, the car is intact as-built. The floor is covered by raised panels, which could be lifted to clean out condensation and droppings from the transported meat. The car also has wooden bars running the length of the ceiling which were used to hang dressed meats and carcasses." The car is currently used by the URHS as a workshop and for storage.



105 00 770, \$25.90

Reporting Marks: RFP 3114.

50 Foot Steel 14 Panel Gondola, Straight Sides, Fixed Ends, Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac.

Black with white lettering including reporting marks on left. Multicolor ACI Label and white on black COTS panel on right. Four vertical stripes at first and second ribs in from each end. Approximate Time Period: 1972 to late 1980s. This car is a "Special Offering / Regional Railroad" limited release per Micro-Trains and is not on dealer standing orders.

I think it's safe to say that the RF&P is a better known "regional railroad" than last month's Genesee and Wyoming. It also handled a whole lot more traffic, as it served as the connection between railroads ending in Washington, DC (Pennsylvania, Baltimore and Ohio) and railroads starting in Richmond, Virginia (Atlantic Coast Line, Seaboard Air Line) with connections with two other Class One lines along the way (Chesapeake and Ohio, Southern Railway) and two shortlines (Washington and Old Dominion, Virginia Central). The RF&P's "Linking North and South" was perhaps no more obvious than with its hosting of through passenger trains. Even so, back in January 1945 when the ORER still included passenger equipment, the RF&P only rostered 121 total cars. Most of what traveled back and forth between Richmond and Washington wasn't their rolling stock. In the same ORER the company also listed just 806 freight cars, of which 62 were cabooses.

Let's go to the car copy from the MTL "Dealer Media Kit": "Built by Thrall in 1975, this 2,244 cubic-foot capacity gondola conformed to Plate B standards and AAR class G513. Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac was established in 1836 and had just over 100 miles of track in Virginia at its height of operations. It was rolled into CSX Transportation in the early 1990s."

Based on the information supplied with a January 1999 bingo photo of the car over on RRPictureArchives, I wonder whether the white stripes indicated Maintenance of Way service. That doesn't necessarily mean confinement to RF&P rails: sister car 3125, also with white vertical stripes and conspicuity stripes, was spotted in West Springfield, Massachusetts in

March 2010, probably as part of a CSX work train. There are differences in the ends between the real car and the 1057 body style. Also, although they are a bit strangely arranged, the sides have fourteen “ribs” which means fifteen panels versus fourteen on the Micro-Trains car.

The ORER for April 1976 has all fifty of these cars in the series RFP 3101 to 3150. They had an inside length of 52 feet 6 inches, inside height 4 feet 6 inches, outside length 54 feet 4 inches, extreme height 8 feet 1 inch, and capacity 2244 cubic feet or 200,000 pounds. They were described as “Gondola, Steel, Flat Bottom, Fixed Ends, Steel Floor.” The January 2000 ORER entry for CSX Transportation, into which the RF&P went in 1991, does not show these cars even though there’s clearly photo evidence of them. That adds to my view that they had been in company service for a while.



111 00 350, \$54.90.

Reporting Marks: TTX 159556.

89 Foot Enclosed Autorack, Trailer Train/Southern Pacific.

Flat car is yellow with black lettering, white reporting marks on black panel on left and white 1991 version TTX logo on black panel on right. Racking is brown with aluminum roof and aluminum panels. Southern Pacific “speed lettering” roadname on placards at top of third and fourth panels from right. Approximate Time Period: 1991 to at least 2001.

It’s almost impossible to completely pin down an Approximate Time Period for any given autorack, given that racks can be and are moved around from one Trailer Train flat car to the next. However, we do have a bingo photo on RRPictureArchives from 2001, so we are good at least to that point. The TTX logo on the flat car drives the start of the ATP as it was introduced in 1991. And yes, I still see the occasional SP “Speed Lettering” autorack on the CSX lines that run through the area. Of course, they’re not quite as clean as the Micro-Trains model!

That having been said, TTX 159556 lands in the series 156003 to 160295 in the January 2018 ORER, which had 1102 cars in the main series... and a calculator-requiring group of subsets, which added up to another 875 cars. So there’s a good change that the 159556 is still rolling around North American railroads. The dimensions are “the usual”: 89 foot 4 inch inside length, 93 foot 10 inch outside length, and 19 foot extreme height, with a gross rail weight of 179,000 pounds.



468 00 161 and 468 00 162, \$17.95 each
Reporting Marks: CSXU 682197 and 682188.
48 Foot Ribside Containers, CSX
Transportation (former Transamerica).

White with aluminum details. Red, white and blue Transamerica Leasing logo on sides and tail. Black lettering including "Working Together For Intermodal's Future" and reporting marks on sides. Black reporting marks on nose and tail. Approximate Time Period: 2000s and 2010s (a guess). These items are not on dealer standing orders. Only the 161 item is shown here.

"What is Transamerica?" was the questioning headline in an article in The New York Times on March 1, 1981. Although this largely pre-dates the dominance of containers, the company already owned a trailer and container transportation concern called Transamerica Interway, which was likely the genesis of its being a large, if not long-lived, presence in intermodal. Did Transamerica stick around the "Work Together for Intermodal's Future"? In a word, no. Back in the April 2014 UMTRR I noted that GE Capital Services via its TIP subsidiary, bought about 19,000 trailers from Transamerica in December 1992. CSX, which is itself a big player in the secondary market for containers, got hold of these and as is more typical than not, didn't bother to repaint them. I would add some weathering to these models given that CSX purchased these containers at least second-hand.

The first and only bingo I found is over on Matt's Intermodal Page, in an as usual undated photo with CSXU 682197 in the bottom slot of a unit of double-stack car DTTX 725313. Not very helpful without a date! MTL mentions that these container were formerly marked ICSU, however the only boxes with those reporting marks I was able to locate were 40 feet long, not 48 feet long. At least those had photo dates, in the early decade of the 2000s. According to Bloomberg (now that's a reference I don't remember using before!) Transamerica Leasing was founded in 1988 but if it's part of the larger financial services company, that fact is not available on the main Transamerica website. Well, a guess on the ATP is as good as it gets at this point.

*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 **January 31**.*

And now for some fun... I had been wondering whether Micro-Trains would ever release their Scale Test Car again. They'd done nine paint schemes between January 2007 and May 2008 (in catalog number order: B&O/CSX, Norfolk Southern, Union Pacific, Cotton Belt, Conrail, Southern Railway, Burlington Northern, New Haven, and Canadian National. The body style even then was being called a limited release. So would there be more? Be careful what you ask for...



Scheduled Release June 2020:

121 00 110, \$16.95

Reporting Marks: CSXT 914240.

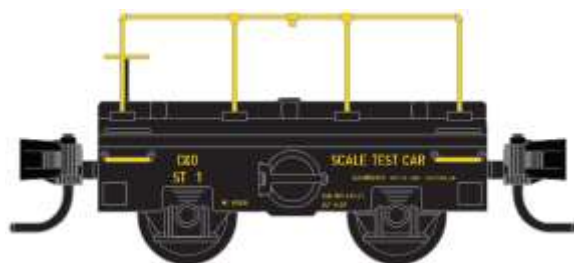
Scale Test Car, CSX Transportation.

Blue with yellow handrail and brake wheel. Yellow lettering including reporting marks on left and "Scale Test Car" on right. Orange vertical conspicuity stripes at three points on car. Approximate Time Period: 1990s through at least the decade of the 2000s. Micro-Trains artwork is preliminary and actual product may vary.

If you haven't seen a Scale Test Car before, the size of the couplers is not that much of an exaggeration. The prototype cars really are that small as well—smaller, in fact, since N Scale couplers are oversize. Diminutive or not, they were built to serve the vital function of calibrating scales. The door in the center of the car is used to add or subtract weight in order to make the car weigh exactly a certain amount. It's then put on a track scale and the scale is adjusted until it matches the car's weight. I would imagine it's less important in these days of double-stack container trains, the payload of which has its own measuring system. But more traditional cars still need to be weighed from time to time, even if only to adjust the "light weight" of the car with no load.

And how about this: the first of the seven pre-orders is a miss in terms of prototype photos. I thought this would have been the easy one, but no. CSX used plenty of other types of cars in scale testing service, including a full-sized hopper painted in pink, which you're not going to mistake for anything else. (See RRPictureArchives for that photo; the car is CSXT 914215. I also found other scale test cars in the employ of CSX that look just like this one except for the paint scheme. (CSXT 914229, for example, was in service in 2004, with the familiar CSX logo.) I'm sure MTL has a prototype photo from which they're working for this car.

From the Micro-Trains rendition we pick up a build date of 1947, which is relatively late for this particular body style, as we'll see; and that it was painted in 2008 (the "RA" standing for Raceland Shops, I think) and last calibrated on August 24, 2009. It should weigh exactly 80,000 pounds when used to test scales.



Scheduled Release June 2020:

121 00 120, \$16.95

Reporting Marks: C&O ST-1.

Scale Test Car, Chesapeake & Ohio / Chessie System.

Black with yellow handrail and brake wheel. Yellow lettering including reporting marks on left and "Scale Test Car" on right. Yellow grab irons. Approximate Time Period: mid-1970s to at least the 1980s. Micro-Trains artwork is preliminary and actual product may vary.

Let's see if we have better luck with finding a bingo for this car. Yes, we do, over on RailPictures.net. (Don't try it with an ad blocker enabled.) The ST-1 was found on a wintry

Valentine's Day 1981. It was built in 1924, which is more typical for cars of this type. Micro-Trains is subtitling this car "Chessie System" which makes sense given the ATP. That ATP is drawn from the service date in 1975 and calibration on October 8, 1980 as per the MTL artwork which matches the prototype photo.



Scheduled Release June 2020:

121 00 130, \$17.95

Reporting Marks: MILW 980238.

Scale Test Car, Milwaukee Road.

Orange with black handrail and brake wheel. Black lettering including weight and "Scale Test Car" on sides. Red and white Milwaukee Road herald on

left. Yellow on black U-1 wheel inspection "dot" on right. White grab irons. Approximate Time Period: 1970s, or strictly speaking, 1978 given U-1 "dot" to at least 1992. Micro-Trains artwork is preliminary and actual product may vary.

MTL gives a road number for this car, but it's not to be found on the sides. It is on the ends, though, based on a photo of the car also on RailPictures.net taken in 1992. In addition, attached to the handrail of the real car was a placard with the reporting marks, and another placard reading, "Trains handling this car must not exceed 25 mph (miles per hour) on main line / 20 mph on branch line / Car to be hauled on rear of train only. And a third placard warned, "Do not make repairs to this car unless directed by scale inspection." That last word could be "inspector" instead; it's a little hard to read. I wouldn't expect these signs to be included with the Micro-Trains release but reproducing them would require printing at something like dimensional data size.

Also in this view, the weight amount is "missing." It looks like there are two holes into which a placard denoting the actual weight is inserted, i.e. "80000". That's just a guess on my part. I certainly hope that placard was well secured for movement, even at only 25 miles per hour.

There's a photo of a second Milwaukee Road car of the same type, just one number away at 980239, available by searching for "scale test car" on RailPictures. (There's an album which includes several of the photos I'm citing, www.railpictures.net/album/1092/, for these pre-orders.) This picture was taken in 1983 and includes the photographer's sons posing atop the car. Hey, kids, you're going to add weight to it!



Scheduled Release June 2020:

121 00 140, \$15.95

Reporting Marks: CP 420939.

Scale Test Car, CP Rail.

Black with white grab irons. White lettering including roadname on left. Approximate Time Period: as early as 1968 to at least 2005, or to at least

2012 if adding conspicuity stripes. Micro-Trains artwork is preliminary and actual product may vary.

I don't have a look at the ends of this car from either bingo photo posted to RRPictureArchives, so I can't say for certain that the road number is anywhere... except a placard attached to the handrail. However, sister car CP 420928 can be seen from the end and it does have reporting marks there as well as on the sides—but no CP Rail roadname. That shot was taken in 2005 and it's on the RailPhotos page I noted above. I'm calling the beginning of the ATP concurrent with the change of the Canadian Pacific to CP Rail in 1968, but I think you'd have to deploy Rule #1 (It's Your Railroad) to go back that far with this car.

Back to the 420939: the first bingo is from 2002 and shows the car in LaCrosse, Wisconsin. That's former Milwaukee Road territory. I wondered for a moment whether this car was formerly on the Milwaukee Road company service roster. It certainly looks like the MILW cars... mostly. The key difference is that the CP car has a vertically mounted brake wheel in an assembly that looks pretty close to what Micro-Trains uses on its cupola cabooses. With a bit of modification and patience, one of those might just work to get the CP Rail model closer to its prototype. The second bingo is from 2010 and shows the 420939, with conspicuity stripes applied, in White River, Ontario in June 2012. It's coupled to a scale test car made from one of the CP's cylindrical covered hoppers, which makes for a rather strange pair.



Scheduled Release June 2020:

121 00 150, \$14.95

Road Number: 490387 (will be "PRR 490387" in website listings).

Scale Test Car, Pennsylvania Railroad.

Black with white lettering including "Test Weight Car" on left and roadname and road number on

right. Approximate Time Period: 1917 (build date) into the 1960s. Micro-Trains artwork is preliminary and actual product may vary.

Now this is how old some of these cars really were: this one was built in 1917. And it's Class Y4, meaning there were three classes of Scale Test Cars that were constructed prior to these! (YA, YB and YC, if you're interested.) And this is how long some of these cars served: its bearings were lubricated in April 1963! I doubt that was the end of the line for this car either.

Rob's Pennsy Page (prp.railfan.net) has a diagram for this car. It had a seven foot wheelbase and was all of 15 feet 4 inches between coupler faces while being just 13 feet 4 inches of what we might call "inside length." Conveniently, that 13 feet 4 inches is also 160 inches, which reduced to N Scale is... yes, you've got it: a one inch long car.

Page 127 of the **PRR Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** (Volume 1) has the bingo photo for this car. "They were carefully maintained to specified weight at Altoona, hauled only in front of the cabin [the PRR's term for caboose] with special speed restrictions. They were not equipped with air brakes so that the normal wear of wheels and brake shoes would not affect the weight. They were even specially formed just to reduce wind resistance when readings were being taken." The 490387 was coupled to PRR 490398, which was built in 1891—almost making the 490387 a youngster by comparison. Another Y4 class car, PRR

490389, is on Page 118 of the **PRR Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume 2**. It's coupled to another scale test car: "Test-weight cars were often operated in pairs so that the track scale could be calibrated at two different weights." The photo was taken in February 1965, helping us with the ATP.



Scheduled Release June 2020:

121 00 160, \$14.95

Reporting Marks: UP 903145.

Scale Test Car, Union Pacific.

Aluminum with black lettering including reporting marks on right. Approximate Time Period: 1990s to present (a bit of a guess). Micro-Trains artwork is

preliminary and actual product may vary.

Yes, scale test cars are often old and are in use for decades, but I think the "06" in the service date on this car is 2006, not 1906. There are bingo photos from January 2008 and May 2019 over on RRPictureArchives, so a "to present" ATP works here. There are placards attached to the handrails, one specifying operating restrictions and the other warning not to conduct repairs without authorization by the Manager of Scales. His name and phone number are given; I wonder if I called him about the build date of the car and when it was painted aluminum he might know?

No, best to let him work, I suppose.

Don Strack's "Utah Rails" website provides some insight. "Roadway Equipment" as it was known on the UP was transferred to the 900000 series starting in 1959 in order to be compliant with the company's then-new computerized scheduling system. (The system didn't accept road numbers with leading zeroes. That's still true of some applications!) In December 1952 the color for such equipment was changed to aluminum. Starting in 1968, some equipment was painted green. This all helps set a backstop to the start of the Approximate Time Period regardless of how old this car is. However, I don't think this car as painted goes back nearly that far. I'm going to take a bit of a guess on the start of the ATP being in the 1990s.



Scheduled Release June 2020:

121 00 170, \$14.95

Reporting Marks: D&RGW X-450.

Scale Test Car, Rio Grande (Denver and Rio Grande Western).

Black with white lettering including reporting marks on left and "Scale Test" on right. Approximate Time

Period: 1953 (as numbered) into the 1970s. Micro-Trains artwork is preliminary and actual product may vary.

We know from the above cited RailPhotos search that the X-450 was still in service as of February 2012. But it was painted in silver with black lettering. It's noted that the car was built in 1945 by Southwark-Baldwin. But there's another photo of the car in the same set of images from 1984, and in that shot the car is painted black with white lettering. The reporting marks were changed to WWIB 450, a ACI Label was added and there was a COTS panel as well. "WWIB" stands for Western Weight and Inspection Bureau, by the way. So the "strictly speaking" ATP won't go that far.

And that brings us to the **Rio Grande Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, Page 108. The bingo photo of the car shows it with an ACI Label just to the right of the reporting marks. Color Guide author Jim Eager notes that the original number was X-4500 but it was renumbered in 1953. We'll take that as the start of the ATP, though it would not take much to add a zero to the road number and push that ATP back to the build date of 1945.

N SCALE NEW RELEASE PASSENGER CARS:



148 00 360, \$32.90

Road Number: 6586 (will be "PRR 6586" in website listings).

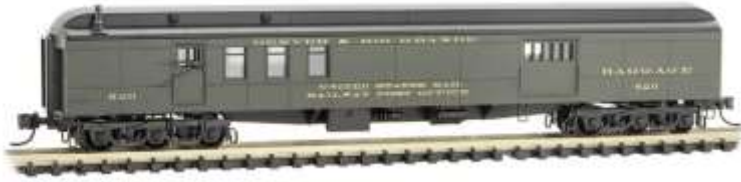
Heavyweight Mail/ Baggage Car, Pennsylvania Railroad.

Tuscan Red with black roof, underframe and trucks. Yellow lettering including "United States Mail / Railway Post Office" and road number at bottom center. Red and white keystone heralds at far left and far right. Approximate Time Period: 1964 into the late 1960s.

From the **PRR Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** (Volume 1) we learn that only eleven of these type cars survived into the Penn Central merger of 1968. Was the 6586 one of them? It's at least possible given that it had received the final PRR paint scheme. My ATP might need to be shortened a bit though.

There's an undated bingo photo on northeast.railfan.net. I'm not completely certain of the location but given the large Gillette sign in the background it could be Boston, which would likely put the car on the New Haven Railroad. There are differences between the real car and the MTL 148 body style; first, the large door isn't quite as wide and it has a porthole window and second, there's an extra door on the side. The prototype also had a balloon roof. I wonder if the one that is used for the Heavyweight Observation would work here?

We know that the car is of Class BM70m. There's a floor plan of this car on "Rob's Pennsy Page" (pr.railfan.net). The car weighed 126,000 pounds and could hold 15,000 pounds of baggage. Meanwhile, The Official Register of Passenger Train Equipment for January 1953 shows 61 cars in the Baggage-Mail series 6532 to 6592.



148 00 390, \$29.95

Road Number: 620 (will be "D&RG 620" in website listings).

Heavyweight Mail/ Baggage Car, Denver and Rio Grande.

Pullman Green with black roof, underframe and trucks. Gold lettering including roadname off center of letterboard, "United States Mail / Railway Post Office" at bottom center and road numbers at bottom left and right. Red and white keystone heralds at far left and far right. Approximate Time Period: 1914 (build date) to the early 1920s, based on the paint scheme.

It's not Denver and Rio Grande Western on this car, it's Denver and Rio Grande... no "Western." But which Denver and Rio Grande Western? Of course, it's the 1921 incarnation which was the result of the Denver and Rio Grande's reorganization. But there was also the 1881 version of the Denver and Rio Grande Western, which was a narrow gauge line that built from Ogden, Utah to Grand Junction, Colorado, where it connected with the Denver and Rio Grande. The D&RG eventually merged in that first D&RGW.

But I digress. There's a bingo photo of the 620, undated, in glorious black and white, on www.drgw.net. It shows four windows on the side we can see, versus three on the MTL 148 body style. The doors are of a different width as well. The photo caption reads, "the notes attached to the negative claim this is 1961 Pueblo, but the car was retired in 1952." The car was built by American Car and Foundry in 1914, which gives us the start of the ATP. I don't think that the D&RGW allowed this car to remain without the "Western" in its roadname for too long after its 1921 absorption of the D&RG no W.

The Official Register of Passenger Train Equipment for March 1943 shows the 620 as the first in a series of ten cars numbered through 629. They were 70 feet long. Confirming that the car would have had the "Western" on its letterboard by then, it's noted in the header of the listing that cars are marked "D&RGW."

N SCALE REPRINTS: No releases this month.

N SCALE MULTI-PACKS: Runner Pack

#161 (993 00 161, \$99.95), of four Illinois Central Gulf 50 foot 14-panel fixed end gondolas, is expected to be available mid-month and should be at MTL dealers as you read this. UMTRR coverage was in the August 2019 issue. The individual catalog and road numbers are as follows: 105 51 566, 245157; 105 52 566, 245161; 105 53 566, 245174; 105 54 566, 245198. These are the first through fourth releases for this item. Each car includes a stone load.



Also, the **Swift Weathered 16-Pack of 36 Foot Wood Refrigerator Cars (993 01 925, \$399.95)** is expected to be available mid-month and should be at MTL dealers as you read this. UMTRR coverage was in the July 2019 issue. The individual catalog and road numbers are as follows (Reporting Marks SLRX): 058 51 587, 6127; 058 52 587, 6129; 058 53 587, 6174; 058 54 587, 6229; 058 55 587, 6254; 058 56 587, 6281; 058 57 587, 6289; 058 58 587, 6318; 058 59 587, 6357; 058 60 587, 6373; 058 61 587, 6381; 058 62 587, 6423; 058 63 587, 6459; 058 64 587, 6488; 058 65 587, 6522; and 058 66 587, 6569. These are the seventeenth through thirty-second releases for this item.



And the **Northern Pacific Heavyweight Five-Pack (993 01 950, \$164.95)** is also expected to be available mid-month. UMTRR coverage was in the August 2019 issue. The individual catalog and road numbers are as follows: Baggage Car, 147 51 320, Road Number 1513; Mail/Baggage Car, 148 52 320, Road Number 1440; and three 10-1-2 Sleepers: 141 53 320, Road Number 704; 141 54 320, Road Number 708; and 141 55 330, Road Number 707.



For all of these multi-packs, should the actual product images become available, I'll have them on the UMTRR Website.

*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 **January 31**.*



Scheduled Delivery June 2020:

993 00 167, \$119.95

Reporting Marks: SFRP 2040, 2046, 2051 and 2059.

Runner Pack #167, quantity four of 51 Foot Mechanical Refrigerator, Rivet Sides, Santa Fe.

Orange with blue plug doors. Mostly black lettering including large circle cross herald and reporting marks on left, and large

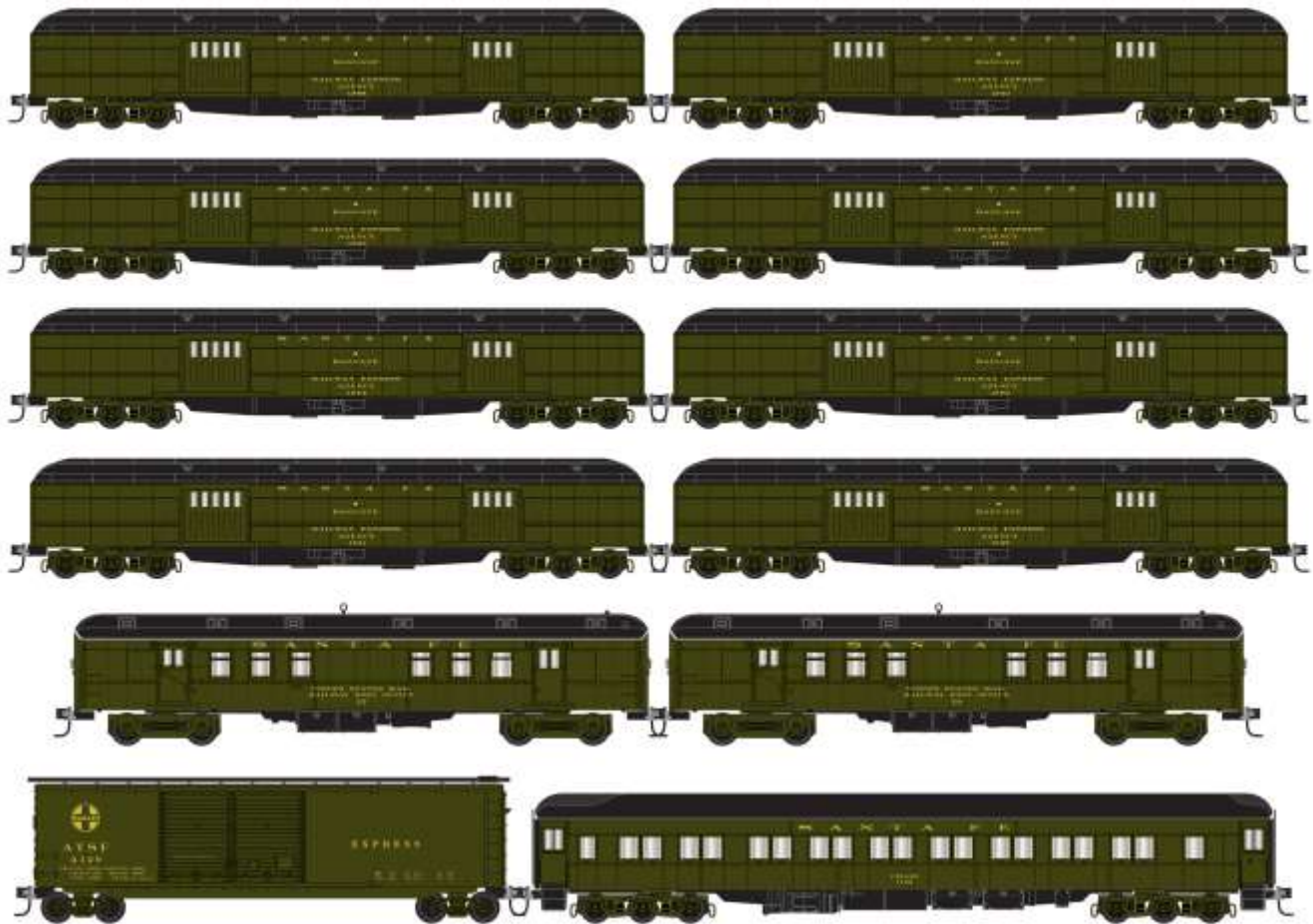
Cooper Black roadname on right. Multicolor ACI Label and black on white double COTS panel at bottom right. Approximate Time Period: 1972 (based on paint scheme) to late 1970s. Previous Releases: None. Catalog numbers (in the 069 series) and reporting marks will be confirmed upon release. MTL artwork is preliminary and actual product may vary.

While this series of RR-56 cars, numbered 2000 to 2188, was built by the Santa Fe's own shops in 1955, the paint scheme MTL selected was introduced around 1972. So we don't have an "as delivered" model here. The bingo photo of SFRP 2040, one of this scheduled quartet, is on RailcarPhotos, taken in November 1974. We can read from the lettering on the car that the refrigeration equipment was supplied by Trane. The vents for this apparatus, which was installed at the brake wheel end of the car, don't match the pattern on the MTL 069 body style. The rest of the car looks a bit different as well.

The ORER for October 1972 shows 242 cars in the series SFRP 2000 to 2263. The inside length was 44 feet, inside width 8 feet 6 inches, inside height 8 feet, outside length 56 feet 5 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 6 feet wide by 8 feet 2 inches high, and capacity 2995 cubic feet or 124,000 pounds. The ORER series being what it is allows me to bring in another data point: the photo of SFRP 2194, a RR-60 class car built in 1958, which appears as of July 1973 on Page 99 of the **ATSF Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**. Despite being of a different class, the cars were alike enough to be included together in the Equipment Register. These cars had an "all-purpose" temperature range according to an end note in the ORER.

In the January 1978 Equipment Register, there were 229 cars in the series. However, the July 1980 ORER shows only four cars total with SFRP reporting marks in the Santa Fe registration, none of which are in the series in question. That's a rather abrupt end to the ATP, at least for revenue service. A short thread on Trainorders.com indicates that many of the RR-56 class of cars ended up in company service after the Santa Fe's refrigerator operations ended. Referring to a photo, one poster wrote, "This one's coat of aluminum paint has almost completely washed off, but the black lettering applied over it is still intact, giving us both the car's revenue number (SFRP 2134) and maintenance of way number (ATSF 205168)."

Meanwhile, RailcarPhotos has a couple of examples of what these cars looked like when they were constructed. SFRP 2095 has the "traditional" (if you will) 1955-era paint scheme, with small square circle cross herald and the "Route of the Texas Chief" slogan at right (where the large billboard "Santa Fe" appears on the forthcoming MTL model). SFRP 2190, found in 1973 and sporting a 1970 reweigh date, has managed to hang to its original paint complete with "Route of the San Francisco Chief" slogan. One feature in common to all the paint schemes is the well-known blue door with white and blue "MTC" logo, standing for Mechanical Temperature Control.



Scheduled Release June 2020:

993 02 050, \$299.95, Santa Fe Heavyweight Fast Mail Express Train.

Scheduled to consist of eight 147 series Heavyweight Baggage Cars (Road Numbers 1755, 1760, 1763, 1769, 1774, 1779, 1781 and 1797), two 140 series Heavyweight Railway Post Office Cars (Road Numbers 77 and 79), one 034 series Steel Double Door Boxcar (Road Number 4129), and one 145 series Heavyweight Paired Window Coach (Road Number 1155). All passenger cars are Coach Green with black roof, underframe and trucks and gold lettering including roadname across letterboard. The baggage cars also have a star (denoting toilet facilities on board), "Baggage," "Railway Express Agency" and the car number in center. The RPOs also have "United States Mail / Railway Post Office" and the car number at bottom center. The coach also has "Chair" and the car number at bottom center. The boxcar is Coach Green with gold lettering including circle cross herald (without usual black background) and reporting marks on left and "Baggage" on right. Approximate Time Period: 1940s (boxcar has service date of 1945) and 1950s. MTL artwork is preliminary and actual product may vary. Catalog and road numbers will be confirmed upon release. Strictly speaking among passenger cars, only the RPO has had previous releases: Catalog Number 140 00 040, Road Number 76, February 2010 and Road Number 78, September 2019. The Baggage Car (Catalog Number 147 00 040, Road Number 1809, May 2015 has "Railway Express Agency Inc." lettering; the Coach (Catalog Number 145 00 040, Road Number 2205, October 2012) has road numbers at left and right, not center. The boxcar was previously released in August 2016 (Catalog Number 034 00 41x, Road Numbers 4166 and 4179).

There is a non-trivial amount of information about the Santa Fe's "Fast Mail" train online before even checking "official" sources like books. Some takeaways from cyberspace include: the Fast Mail operated from 1915 to 1967 along several routes; the Santa Fe had a contract that required that they take all mail originated in its service area; a rider car was required so that any paying passenger could ride; foreign cars (meaning not from the Santa Fe) were frequently part of the consist; and perhaps most importantly for this announced release, the consist could and did vary and the train itself may have been broken into separate sections. That means this set works for the real Fast Mail Express simply by being a representative consist. Just add the appropriate power – steam or diesel, depending on your preference – and off you go.

Let's look at the Official Guide of the Railways for December 1941. Number 7 westbound originated in Chicago at 10:35 PM on Day 1. It reached Kansas City, 451 miles away, at 8:55 AM the next morning, then Dodge City, 789 miles from Chicago, at 3PM Central Time/2PM Mountain Time, and reached Raton, New Mexico at 8:10 Mountain Time. The train was scheduled into Albuquerque at 1AM Mountain Time on Day 3, 1338 miles out of Chicago. At 8PM Pacific Time that day, Number 7 terminated at Los Angeles, 2227 miles from Chicago. If my math and time zone adjustments are right, that's less than a 48 hour trip and just a little bit slower than the Santa Fe's premier name train of the time, the Super Chief. Number 8 eastbound left Los Angeles at 11PM Pacific Time on Day 1 and arrived in Chicago at 6:20AM Central Time two days later. "Limited non-air conditioned coach accommodations only," it's warned alongside the schedule in the Official Guide.

According to an article in **Prologue Magazine**, no less than five mail crews worked the Fast Mail Express along its route. The "day in the life" of a crew of ten to eleven workers started well before the scheduled departure from Los Angeles and ended 485 miles away at Ash Fork, Arizona. See www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2005/fall/fast-mail-side.html for this short but detailed piece.



Here's what the four cars coming to this Fast Mail Express set looked like in previous iterations. The express boxcar and RPO are true reprints, but lettering differences – very slight in the case of the baggage car! – make them "not a reprints" this time. The single express car represents the rebuild and repaint of these cars in 1944 and 1945. The RPOs fall into the prototype series 70 to 79 and with the pair projected for this set MTL will have covered four of that set. The eight baggage cars coming in the set, like the previous run, were part of the pretty enormous group of 264 Baggage/Express cars numbered 1585 to 1919 as of the Official Register of Passenger Train Equipment (ORPTE) for March 1943. The Santa Fe needed plenty of these, no doubt. When the coach was released, I couldn't match the road number to any ATSF rosters. A quick trip to the same ORPTE March

1943 didn't locate the 1155 either, however it is in the ORPTE for January 1953 in a short series 1155 to 1164. It was noted by Andy Sperandio for the Santa Fe Railway and Historical and

Modeling Society these cars were renumbered around 1953, so having the 1155 in the later ORPTE but not the earlier one makes sense. It does, though, make the coach a bit anachronistic versus the rest of the train. The March 1943 ORPTE shows 50 non-air conditioned chair cars numbered 3303 to 3361 although I don't think they looked that close to the MTL 145 body style.



Scheduled Release April 2020:

993 02 060, \$69.95.

Great Northern Caboose Two-Pack.

Scheduled to consist of two 051 series 34 Foot Wood Cabooses with Straight Cupola.

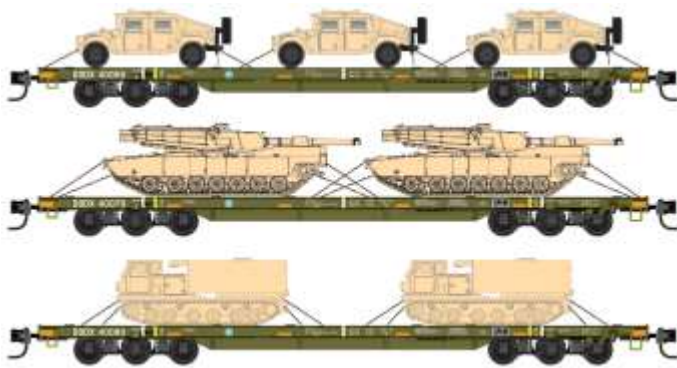
• Road Number X204 is red with aluminum roof, red underframe and details and alternating black and white side grab irons. White lettering including road number at left and right, “Radio Equipped” at center and safety slogan “The Best Way Is The Safe Way” under cupola; large black and white side-facing goat herald below cupola. Small white rectangles along bottom of side.

• Road Number X242 is red with black roof, underframe and details and alternating black and white side grab irons. White lettering including road number at left and right, “Radio Equipped” at center and safety slogan “You Can’t Afford An Accident” under cupola; large black and white side-facing goat herald below cupola. Small white rectangles along bottom of side.

Approximate Time Period for both cabooses: 1953 to 1971. Catalog and road numbers will be confirmed upon release. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

Two cabooses, two paint schemes, two slogans. And two prototype photos on Page 122 of the **Great Northern Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**. The X204 was found in September 1968. It was part of the series X201 to X228 built in the GN’s own St. Cloud Shops in 1941. The X242 was part of the group X230 to X249, also constructed in St. Cloud in 1943. The decoration distinctions between the two cars are also present in the photos. On the X242, though, the black has gotten dirty to the point of looking almost gray. (See, it’s not just black automobiles that are difficult to keep clean!) The cars have four windows per side, but the cupola is different as is its placement on the car between prototype and MTL 051 body style (which, broken record alert, is based on a modified UP/SP “Harriman Common Standard” prototype). The X204 became Burlington Northern 11207 in May 1971 and ended up at the Midwestern Rail Association in Winnipeg, Manitoba, which now operates as the Winnipeg Railway Museum. I don’t know if the caboose is still part of their collection.

According to the “Great Northern Empire” website, safety slogans were used on the GN’s cabooses from 1953 to 1967. The last digit of the road number determined what slogan was to be applied, and the slogan aligns with the road number in both cases.



993 01 811 and 993 01 812, \$134.95 each.

Reporting Marks: DODX 40066, 40079, and 40080.

Olive Drab DODX Flat Car Three-Pack with Military Vehicles.

Consists of three 137 series DODX Heavy Duty Flat Cars. Each car is olive green with white lettering including reporting marks on left. White on black double COTS panel on right. Cars in the 811 release will also

have orange conspicuity stripes. Cars in the 812 release will not include these stripes. The road numbers are the same for both packs. This set also includes unpainted unassembled kits for three Humvee vehicles, two M1 Abrams tanks, and two mobile rocket launchers, along with tie-down hardware. Approximate Time Period: For the 811 release, 2005 (given conspicuity stripes) to present; for the 812 release, 1981 (build date) to sometime after 2005. Previous Releases: Catalog 137 51 021, Road Number 40012, October 2018, part of the "Mixed Three Pack" (993 01 630); then the Olive Drab Weathered Three-Pack (993 05 520, April 2019) with Road Numbers 40022, 40070 and 40089 and Catalog Numbers 137 5x 023; then the DODX Olive Drab Flat Car Three-Pack with Humvees (993 01 810, July 2019) with Road Numbers 40032, 40040 and 40047 and Catalog Numbers 173 5x 022. All of these cars had conspicuity stripes. Catalog and road numbers will be confirmed upon release. These will be the tenth through fifteenth releases for this item (counting both the 811 and 812 packs even though the road numbers will be the same). MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

Do you want conspicuity stripes with that? Hmm, doesn't have the same ring as "Do you want fries with that?" Although I have memories of ordering a cheeseburger numerous times at a location which shall remain nameless, only to be asked, "Do you want cheese on that?" But I digress... The point here is that after all previously released DODX cars had conspicuity stripes, this time N Scalers have a choice besides removing them to backdate the cars.

I'll recap a bit on the prototype since I haven't in a while. These cars were built in 1981 by Fruit Growers Express, which did build equipment besides refrigerator cars on occasion. The April 1984 Register lists DODX 40000 to 40100. They have an inside length of 68 feet, outside length of 72 feet 10 inches, and capacity of 299,000 pounds, and are described as "Flat, Axle Spacing 4 feet 6 inches, Truck Centers 33 feet." As of the January 2018 ORER all 101 cars in the series were still in service. The description changed to "Flat, Two 6-Wheel Trucks, Axle Spacing 5 feet 6 inches, Truck Centers 46 feet 3 inches, Chain Tie-Down, COFC" with a Gross Rail Weight of at 394,000 pounds. That is a heavy car! I wouldn't worry about the "COFC" (Container on Flat Car) part as there is plenty of photo evidence to show that the cars carry whatever the Department of Defense needs carried. How about, for example, on RailcarPhotos.com, a 65 ton center cab switcher being transported between bases?

Speaking of photos, there's a bingo for the 40079 as of August 2018 on RailcarPhotos. It's carrying a U.S. Army M1 Abrams tank and a Stryker Interim Armored Vehicle. The 40080 was found in May 2015 with an Army M2 Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle. (Looks like a tank to

me!) For an example of a car without conspicuity stripes, we go to RRPictureArchives.net for a September 2005 bingo on DODX 40066.

There is one more thing I was thinking about with respect to this offering: what's the ATP of the loads? Well, the Humvee that looks like the MTL rendering was introduced in 1983; the M1 Abrams Tank has been around since 1980; and the mobile rocket launchers similar to what MTL has in its artwork has been in service since March 31, 1983 – all of this courtesy of our friends at Wikipedia.

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 January 15.*



025 44 019, \$29.95

Reporting Marks: RBOX 37227.

50 Foot Steel Exterior Post Boxcar, Single Door, Railbox.

#1 in the "Year in Railbox 2020" series. Base car is yellow with black door and with mostly black lettering including original version Railbox name and reporting marks on left and "The nationwide boxcar pool" on right. Black, red and blue original version "Next Load/ Any Road" logo on right. White on black double COTS panel on far right.

Yellow horizontal conspicuity stripes at points along sides. "A" side of the car has multicolored graffiti covering nearly all of the side. "B" side has heavy weathering and fading effects. Approximate Time Period: 2014 through 2019, plus or minus (using the "A" or featured side of the car). This car has a lowered underframe and body mounted couplers.

What is I have no idea, Alex? Had I appeared on **Jeopardy!** with the clue "This is what's depicted on the 'A' side of the January 2020 'Year in Railbox' release from Micro-Trains," that would be my response. There are bingo photos of the car from 2014 on RRPictureArchives and on Flickr from 2018, and our Graffiti Special Correspondent David Grothe pointed me to another photo from 2019 (www.flickr.com/photos/129272849@N07/48076219733/), leading to a relatively wide confirmed Approximate Time Period. David also noted, "I don't believe side A is anything other than a design from graffiti artist Pawn. If it has any more meaning than an interesting design, I can't interpret it and it hasn't been tagged with anything other than Pawn on the countless photos of this car on the internet." So perhaps "What is I have no idea, Alex" is the correct response!?

Anyway, RBOX 37227 belongs to the group 30000 to 37749, which had a total of 3560 cars in the January 2018 ORER. These are a combination of 5275 and 5290 cubic foot cars. TTX combined several groups into this large series. The specific group into which the 37727 falls is RBOX 36750 to 37749, built by Pullman-Standard as their Lot 106 in March and April 1980 and

carrying the TTX Class XPF20B. The ends aren't the same as on the MTL 025 body style. And just to confuse things further, RailcarPhotos.com has these cars tagged as 5277 cubic feet capacity, while the ORER doesn't. The Micro-Trains car is a model of the FMC 5077 cubic foot car.

A programming note on this car and its Z Scale counterpart: You may have noticed that I didn't list "Previous Releases" here. Part of this is the length versus the value add, but perhaps more importantly is that I'm on the fence as to whether to count all of the Railbox graffiti releases together or not, since each car is different from every other one. On the other hand, the "base paint" of either the first or the second Railbox version is the same across multiple cars. Decisions, decisions...



180 44 140, \$27.95.

Reporting Marks: ATSF 13238.

50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single 10 Foot Door, No Running Board, Short Ladders, Santa Fe (AT&SF).

Red with black ends, roof and side sills. White lettering including reporting marks and large circle cross herald on left. Yellow and white "Super Shock Control/A Smoother Ride" wording on right. Black square with "SL" at top left corner. White restenciled dimensional data below

reporting marks. Multicolor ACI Label at far right. Approximate Time Period: early 1970s (strictly speaking for this car, 1971 given restencil service date), into the 1980s. Previous Releases: None. This car has a lowered underframe and body mounted couplers.

ATSF 13238 is part of the Santa Fe's BX-82 class of boxcars numbered 13000 to 13299. These weren't the only BX-82s but they are the ones in which we're most interesting. According to the book **Santa Fe Freight in Color The Series Volume One**, Page 53, these cars were built by the Santa Fe in 1961. As built, they would have had running boards and full ladders so the MTL version represents the later modification to meet safety regulations. However, this is the "as delivered" paint scheme. That same scheme was on sister car ATSF 13072, found in January 1980, over on Fallen Flags. And finally there's the bingo to the 13238, found in March 1976 and posted to RailcarPhotos.com. All three photos show a diagonal row of rivets either side of the door, so if you're counting rivets, that's a delta to the MTL 180 body style. MTL has done quite the job of capturing the dirt, fading, scratches and scrapes – and the silver paint at the top of the door – just as it appeared in the photo of the 13238.

The ORER for April 1976, really close to the date of the bingo photo, shows 155 cars in the series ATSF 13001 to 13299, described as "Box, Shock Control, SL Loaders, Nailable Steel Floors, Roller Bearing, 50K." The inside length was 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 3 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 57 feet 6 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 9 feet wide, and capacity 4975 cubic feet or 140,000 pounds. The car count was down

just 15 to 140 cars as of April 1980, but we do need to keep in mind that the Santa Fe was repainting cars into simpler schemes by then. We're down to 81 cars in the April 1985 Equipment Register, 22 in July 1987 and 11 in July 1989. All cars are off the roster by the October 1991 ORER.



993 05 610, \$99.95

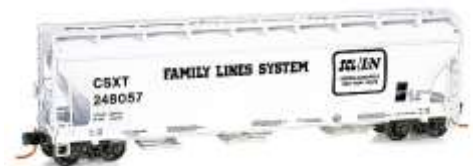
Reporting Marks: CSXT 247653, 247660, and 247688.

CSXT Ex-Family Lines Center Flow Three-Pack.

Consists of three 094 series Three-Bay Center Flow Covered Hoppers with Trough Hatches. Each car's base color is beige with black lettering including restenciled reporting marks on left, "Family Lines System" in center and Family Lines herald (SCL/L&N/Georgia/Clinchfield/ West Point Route) on right. White on black double COTS panel on far right. Moderate to heavy weathering including rust and mud effects across car and on roof. Approximate Time Period: late 1980s to as late as the present. Previous Release (Unweathered):

Road Number 248057, January 2009. Individual catalog numbers for this pack are 094 51 290 (247653), 094 52 290 (247660), and 094 53 290 (247688).

Back in January 2009 when the first run of this car was released, I hit MTL rather hard with two words: Add Weathering. A restenciled car would not have been "clean" in real life, but that's how Micro-Trains depicted it (at right). There was some concern about the base color as well. It was described by MTL as "off-white" when the prototype looked more like beige or ivory – enough of a difference to bring out the boo-birds.



Well, that's all been addressed with this release. Continuous improvement! I'm a fan of that.

The information from the January 2009 release is still relevant here. The Family Lines paint scheme dates to approximately 1974 ("Family Lines" was not ever an official corporate entity) and was succeeded by Seaboard System in 1982, then absorbed into CSX Transportation in 1986. So we're looking at about ten years of dirt, grime, cargo spillage and rust between the Family Lines paint and the CSXT restencil.

The site RRPictureArchives.net provides bingo photos on all three road numbers here. There are five different photos of CSXT 247653, formerly SCL 242586, ranging from 2007 to 2011. Meanwhile, there are three shots of CSXT 247660, ex-SCL 242593, from 2010, 2013 and February

2019; the last of which shows graffiti that almost looks like it's been photoshopped onto the car. (CSX does not allow models of its equipment to have graffiti so MTL couldn't reproduce that.) Finally, the 247688 was at Silver Spring, Maryland in July 2010; the former SCL 242621.

Let's grab the July 1992 ORER, sufficient time after the CSX creation to allow for some relettering. The railroad doesn't help us here: there is an outsized series of covered hoppers numbered 246165 to 248384, which contains a mixture of different sized cars. The main series, if we can call it that, has trough hatches, outside length of 58 feet 4 inches, and capacity of 4600 cubic feet, and is of 302 cars. But in the subseries that follow, which go on for nearly two entire pages in the Equipment Register, we have 54 foot cars with 4650 or 4700 cubic foot capacity as well. In short, we have a mess, not unlike the appearance of some of the prototype cars after long years of service. I didn't see 247653, 247660, and 247688, the three road numbers in this set, among the more than one hundred subsets listings within this series. Most of the cars, including all of Page Two of the lines in the list, are 4600 cubic foot. The MTL 094 body style is of a 4650 cubic foot car, so there's a bit of a delta here.

As you might recall when the original "clean" car was released, I did similar fishing expeditions in the January 2000 and January 2007 Equipment Registers, which mostly produced a headache. Bringing that as close to the present as I can, the January 2019 ORER, it looks like the total number of cars is down to 317, all of which are CF4600s. Depending on how fast you think CSX repaints cars—and remember, at least one was still in mostly Family Lines paint—the ATP could reach to the present. By the way, what I didn't see on these cars, even in the later photos, was conspicuity stripes. Either CSX didn't get around to them or they're covered in grime just like the rest of the car. Adding stripes is relatively easy, of course.

Given that RRPictureArchives has the original SCL road numbers, I also found photos there of cars in the series which retained those reporting marks. SCL 242625 was still lettered that way as late as February 2012. And SCL 242698 handily beats that—it was found in April 2019 (!) with, ahem, some additional decoration including Mike from the film **Monsters Inc.** Bouncing over to RailcarPhotos.com, we find that the original series was 242500 to 243074, built by American Car and Foundry in 1979. That means the "Family Lines" paint scheme was the original decoration. And just to bring this full circle... SCL 242855, photographed in 1993...looks like it's painted white.



993 05 620, \$59.95

**Reporting Marks: SP&S 22902 and 22907.
Spokane, Portland and Seattle Two-Pack.**

Consists of two 083 series Drop Bottom Gondolas. Each car is brown with white lettering including reporting marks at top center. Multicolor ACI Label at right. Simulated scrap loads included. Approximate Time Period: as early as 1956, or late 1960s (given ACI Label) to mid-1970s. Previous Releases: None. The individual catalog and

road numbers are 083 51 130 (the 22902) and 083 52 130 (the 22907).

These are simply painted gondolas with a little less than simple story. First, the bingo for the 22902 is on Page 61 of the **Spokane, Portland and Seattle Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** – and when was the last time I needed to open that book?

These cars can be traced back to 1949, when Pullman-Standard built the series 22000 to 22099. “Between 1956 and 1962,” it’s reported in the **Color Guide**, “72 of the group were converted to woodchip cars and reassigned to the 22900 to 22971 series. Once in woodchip service the cars occasionally lost their extended tops, reverting to general service for short periods.” The 22902 was in one of those short periods in 1974 when its picture was taken, and so we have an 083 body style from Micro-Trains, not an 084 body style. It’s also noted in the **Color Guide** that 28 of the cars were on the SP&S roster at the time of the BN merger. The presence of the ACI Label gives us a “strictly speaking” ATP a bit earlier than that. In theory, the start of the Approximate Time Period could be as early as 1956, but I don’t think I could pin it down accurately even if I were not being lazy.

The January 1967 ORER puts a spanner in the works, however. The listing of the series SP&S 22900 to 22939 is there, alright, but the dimensions reflect the cars with the full woodchip extensions, which is to say an inside height of 10 feet 9 inches, extreme height of 15 feet 1 inch and a 4135 cubic foot capacity. Remember, those extensions were removed only occasionally, right? In addition, there’s a pound sign “#” indicating “large cars within Plate C dimensions.” (It’s 1967, so “#” is a pound sign, not a “hashtag.”) The rest of the dimensions were: inside length 40 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, outside length 40 feet 10 inches, and weight capacity 100,000 pounds. An end note that the cars were “equipped with racks furnished by consignee.” I’m not sure what that means for a woodchip car.

In the April 1970 issue ORER, the first for Burlington Northern Incorporated, a car count of 40 is shown, contradicting the 28 quantity given in the **Color Guide**, but the dimensions still reflect woodchip extensions. The July 1974 ORER shows a split in the series, with 30 cars still with the extensions and nine cars without them, including both the 22902 and the 22907 selected by Micro-Trains. How about that? The inside height is listed at only 5 feet 4 inches, extreme height at 9 feet 7 inches, and the capacity at 2048 cubic feet. In the October 1976 Register, the count of gondolas without extensions is up to 23 versus 16 with extensions. In January 1978, it’s 10 with and 28 without. In April 1981, the series is flipped so that the main series with 25 cars doesn’t have the extensions and the subset of only three still does have them. Only two of the cars remain by the January 1985 ORER, where I stopped looking.



N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES: Car #10 in the **Thomas Kinkadee Painter of Light Series** has been released (102 00 810, \$31.95). UMTRR coverage was in the December 2018 issue. This release features the 1996 work

“Sunday Evening Sleigh Ride.” View a larger version of this painting along with notes on it at <https://thomaskinkadee.com/art/sunday-evening-sleigh-ride/> .

Z SCALE NEW RELEASES:



510 00 451 and 510 00 452, \$26.90 each.

**Reporting Marks: MP 357304 and 357281.
50 Foot Steel Exterior Post Boxcars, Single
Door, Missouri Pacific (Union Pacific).**

Brown (close to the UP's "synthetic red") with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left. Small red, white and blue Union Pacific herald on right. White on black double COTS panel at bottom right. Small white blocks along bottom of side. Approximate Time Period: late 1990s to as late as the present.

We quickly learn from RailcarPhotos.com that the series MP 356700 to 357687 is the former Railbox series RBOX 11000 to 11999. These were in the Railbox class of cars XAF11 which were built in 1975 by American Car & Foundry. As late as 2007 some of these cars was still wearing weathered and graffitied Railbox paint with an MP restencil. (Examples of these cars are on the Fallen Flags site and elsewhere.) This is similar to the October 1992 three-pack MTL N Scale release of just such cars (Catalog 25502) which are in fact from the same prototype series. Micro-Trains' 510 body style is modeled after the FMC 5077 boxcar while the Railbox XAF11s are from AC&F and have a 5090 cubic foot capacity, so there will be some differences between model and prototype.

As of the ORER for January 2011 there were only 29 cars remaining in the MP series. So I'm While here, we'll get the dimensions: inside length 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 10 feet 7 inches, outside length 55 feet 7 inches, extreme height 15 feet, door opening 10 feet, capacity 5090 cubic feet and Gross Rail Weight 220,000 pounds. Three of the cars in the series were called out separately; they were "clearance cars" in special duty. Maybe we'll see one of those from MTL as we did in N Scale in July 2012. Given the low car count I was skeptical about a "to present" ATP, however 23 cars remained in the January 2018 ORER so it is possible. There is the matter of conspicuity stripes, however; you'll probably want to add those if modeling after 2005.

MP 357281 was bookended by two excess height boxcars in a photo taken in July 2001. There was some, ahem, additional decoration on the side of the car we can see also. (You won't see that from MTL as UP doesn't allow graffiti on models of its cars.) MP 357304 was captured in October 2006, with its paint looking a bit worn, particularly on the roof, but amazingly with no "extra" paint, if you know what I mean. Both of these photos are on RRPictureArchives.



510 00 461 and 510 00 462, \$25.90 each.

Reporting Marks: NS 400011 and 400033.

50 Foot Steel Exterior Post Boxcars, Single Door, Norfolk Southern.

Brown with mostly white lettering including reporting marks and speed lettering "NS" herald on left. White on black double COTS panel at bottom right. Approximate Time Period: early 1990s to late decade of the 2000s.

Micro-Trains picks cars from the same series as its N Scale virtual two-pack from August 2011, and one of the same road numbers, namely, the 400011.

The first edition of the ORER I own in which an entry for the Norfolk Southern appears isn't until October 1991, and there's not much listed with NS reporting marks. That changes in a hurry; by the July 1992 Equipment Register there are five pages of entries including the series NS 400000 to 400911 with 912 cars. They are described as simply "Box, Steel" with AAR Designation XP and these dimensions: inside length 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 5 inches, inside height 10 feet 11 inches, outside length 55 feet 6 inches, extreme height 15 feet 6 inches, door opening 10 feet, and capacity 5219 cubic feet or 154,000 pounds.

Almost as quickly as they appeared, these cars are gone: still at 912 in the October 1996 ORER, but down to a mere 43 in the January 2000 book and 34 in the October 2007 ORER. Just one remains in the January 2011 Register, which is where I stopped looking. "Late decade of the 2000s" is as far as I think we can reasonably go with the ATP.

There is all of one car on the RailcarPhotos website out of all of these, but it's enough to give us the heritage, which I did not have when the N Scale virtual two-pack was released. The image is of NS 400013 as of March 2006. The series was Southern Railway's 40500 to 41499, built by Pullman-Standard as its Lot 9352 between December 1968 and February 1969. This was the Southern's BS-79 class, a designation that stayed into the Norfolk Southern.

George Elwood's "Fallen Flags" website (www.rr-fallenflags.org) includes photos of NS 400013 and 400019, taken in 2004 and 2006. We've also got a bingo—an exact road number match—to the NS 400011 on RRPictureArchives.net, found in May 2005. A three-quarter view of NS 400005 at the same site gives us about the best chance for comparison of prototype to model. The ends and door differ, and the prototype's side sill is a bit deeper with angled ends.



518 00 820, \$27.95.

Reporting Marks: NWX 14404.

40 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator Car, E & A Opler / Our Mother's Cocoa.

#12 and final release in the Farm-to-Table Series (Pre-orders taken in September 2018).

Gray sides, brown ends, roof, and door sill, black details. Red and blue lettering including "Our Mother's Pure-All Occasion Cocoa" on left, split by multicolor rendition of the Our Mother's Cocoa "mother" trademark; and "E & A Opler Inc. / Cocoa and Chocolate / Chicago - Brooklyn" on right. Black reporting marks and dimensional data at lower right. White end markings. Approximate Time Period: 1934 (service date) to no later than 1938.

Please see the coverage of the N Scale release above (049 00 880).

Z SCALE SINGLE RELEASE PREORDERS: Now we come to the first month of transition for Micro-Trains with respect to Z Scale single car releases (and virtual two-packs, as we'll see below). As noted in last month's bytes, MTL is going to a pre-order only protocol for these releases. Presuming that there is sufficient interest to manufacture these cars covered below — which is **not** a sure thing — they will be available a few months after the pre-order window has closed. In this case, that's projected to be June or July 2020. And off we go...

*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 **January 31**.*



Scheduled Release June/July 2020:

510 00 471 and 510 00 472, \$24.90 each.

Reporting Marks: CNW 162065 and 162414.

50 Foot Exterior Post Boxcar, Single Door, Chicago and North Western.

Brown with white lettering including reporting marks on left. Black and white ball and bar "Employee Owned" herald on right. White on black COTS panel and yellow on black U-1 wheel inspection "dot" at far right. Approximate Time Period: 1973 (build date) or, strictly speaking, 1978 given U-1 "dot", to as late as early decade of the 2000s. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary. Only the 471 release is shown.

CNW 162065 appears on Page 38 of the **C&NW Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume 2**. It was part of the series 162000 to 162599. These cars were built by Pullman-Standard from September to November 1973; the MTL artwork shows 1972, but that can be addressed. (In the photo, the "3" does look like it's worn to a "2".) These P-S cars have different ends than the 510 body style. The bingo photo is from 1980 and shows the U-1 "dot" and COTS panel. The next page of the Color Guide shows CNW 162573 repainted to yellow with a very small herald as of February 1994. We'll need to be mindful of that for the

Approximate Time Period, however, not all cars would have been repainted at the same time, and some might not have been repainted at all.

First, though, let's check the ORER accumulation. The July 1974 addition has the group described as "Box, Steel, Wood Lined, Cushion Underframe" with all 600 possible cars in service. The key dimensions: inside length 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 5 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 58 feet 4 inches, extreme height 15 feet, door opening 10 feet, and capacity 5022 cubic feet or 154,000 pounds. The slightly lower cubic capacity is probably due to the interior wood lining. Almost ten years later in the April 1984 ORER, the car count stood at 577. Of that, 558 made it in the Union Pacific registration in the October 1996 Equipment Register. But that was down to 108 in the January 2002 Register and only four of those remained as of the October 2007 ORER, so "to present" is definitely not an option here. And even then there's an "as late as" in play given the change in paint schemes – and that includes repainting into Union Pacific colors with CNW reporting marks.

So what cars can we find in "as delivered" paint and how late? Well, how about October 2009 for CNW 162229, which would be one of the last four cars in service? That shot is on RailcarPhotos.com. It appears to have a replacement door and the U-1 "dot" is gone, but that's a lot later than I would have expected.



Scheduled Release June/July 2020:

510 00 481 and 510 00 482, \$27.60 each.

Reporting Marks: NW 57571 and 57870.

50 Foot Exterior Post Boxcar, Single Door, Norfolk and Western.

Black with white lettering including runtogether "NW" and reporting marks on left, and roadname right of door. Black on yellow "XF Food Loading Only" on right. White on black double COTS panel at far right. Approximate Time Period: 1975 (build date) to around 1997. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary. Only the 481 release is shown.

The bingo for the first number in this pending virtual two-pack is on Page 41 of the **Norfolk and Western Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**. It was built by the Southern Iron and Equipment Company, or SIECO, one of the series 57500 to 57999 built from October 1975 to July 1976. The N&W assigned these to its class B-137. We have another case where the ends don't match the 510 body style here; they look more "traditional" if you will, partially but not completely like the Dreadnaught ends seen on older steel boxcars. The side sills are different as well between model and prototype. The other coming road number, NW 57870, is represented on RailcarPhotos as of September 1978, and there's also a shot of NW 57829 as of May 1992 in the "as delivered" paint, which helps with our ATP.

The April 1976 ORER has the series listed, but with only 190 cars out of the possible 500 in the set. Take a deep breath for the description: "Box, Steel, Standard Draft Gears, Single Sliding Doors Centered, Nailable Steel Floor, Lading Strap Anchors in Door Posts, 50K, Axle Spacing 5 feet 8 inches, Truck Centers 40 feet 11 inches (Processed Food Products)." As long as that description is, I'm a bit surprised that as an AAR Designation XF there's no mention of any car

lining. Anyway, the cars had an inside length of 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 10 feet 7 inches, outside length 55 feet 7 inches, extreme height 15 feet, door opening 10 feet, and capacity 5085 cubic feet or 154,000 pounds. By the October 1976 ORER the car count was up to 329 cars; I suspect that these were still being delivered and the Equipment Register was being updated as this was happening. The next Register in my accumulation is from January 1978, and there are 490 cars in service as of that issue.

Given the proto photo from 1992, I went next to the ORER for July of that year. By then the Norfolk Southern merger was official (it had happened on December 31, 1990) so the N&W cars were listed in that registration. There was a split in the series: the main series, of 349 cars, was still assigned to Processed Food Products; three had been downgraded to plain XM boxcars, and 121 were reclassified to AAR Designation XP and were assigned to cocoa loading. The 57870 was in that last group, but the black and yellow "XF - Food Loading Only" panel at the top right had not been disturbed. Well, cocoa is a food, isn't it? (And chocolate is one of the Four Food Groups, right? At least at UMTRR HQ.)

After a car count of 198 total in October 1996, and 118 in April 1997, there's exactly one car left in the July 1998 ORER, which did hang on to at least the January 2000 Register, which is where I stopped looking. My sense is that since Norfolk Southern was not the fastest repainter around, these cars remained mostly in the "as delivered" decoration until they were out of service.



Scheduled Release June/July 2020:

511 00 271 and 510 00 272, \$29.90 each.

Reporting Marks: ATSF 521583 and 521585.

50 Foot Exterior Post Boxcar, Plug Door, Santa Fe (AT&SF).

Red with mostly white lettering including reporting marks and large circle cross on left. Yellow and white "Super Shock Control - A Smoother Ride" on right. Black equipment list on yellow panel at top left. Multicolor ACI Label left of door. Four small black and white circle crosses along bottom of side. Approximate Time Period: 1969 into the 1970s as painted, strictly speaking, or into the 1990s otherwise. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary. Only the 271 release is shown.

The Santa Fe's Bx-137 class of boxcars was built by the Santa Fe in its own shops in 1969 and 1970. The book **Santa Fe Freight Cars In Color: Volume One** has a bingo to the 521583 as of January 1970 on Page 102. Comparing photo to the MTL 511 body style, you'll immediately notice diagonal ribs either side of the plug door on the actual car, which isn't on the model. Images of sister cars on Fallen Flags, for example ATSF 521432 and 521517, show that the ends are not the same as on the MTL car either.

The ORER for October 1972 shows the ATSF series 521450 to 521924, AAR Designation XLI, described as "Box, Load Dividers, Side Wall Fillers, Insulated, Shock Control, Roller Bearing." There were 441 cars in the group. They had an inside length of 50 feet 2 inches, inside width 9 feet 5 inches, inside height 10 feet even, outside length 57 feet 10 inches, extreme height 14 feet

6 inches, door opening 10 feet 6 inches wide by 9 feet 5 inches high, and capacity 4750 cubic feet or 140,000 pounds.

In the ORER of January 1978, there were 432 cars in service, however all but 27 of these cars had their side wall fillers removed. It appears, but I can't confirm, that when that removal occurred, the black on yellow panel at the top left of the car may have been painted over, since the cars in question no longer had some of the equipment indicated. The above noted 521924 posted on Fallen Flags has a photo date of July 1978, though, illustrating that at least one of these cars kept its original paint that long.

The number of cars in general dropped off from there. The October 1986 Equipment Register shows a total of 167 cars in the series, only one of which, ATSF 521712, is shown with side fillers. That would clearly end the "strictly speaking" ATP if the yellow panel was removed along with the side fillers. By then, the paint scheme was also being simplified by removing the yellow paint, yielding simply "Shock Control" no longer "Super." Eventually, these cars had just white reporting marks and dimensional data on a mineral brown carbody. Yawn... For the record, the series was down to just 22 cars in the October 1991 ORER – and they'd been reclassified to "Refrigerator." Just four were left in the April 1997 Register; I stopped looking there.



Scheduled Release June/July 2020:

511 00 281 and 510 00 282, \$25.80 each.

Reporting Marks: NYC 48260 and 48264.

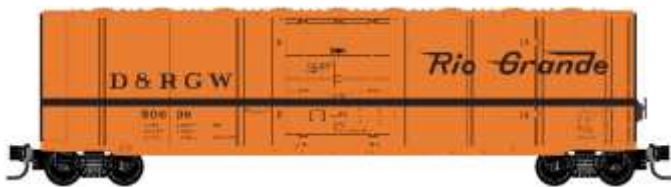
50 Foot Exterior Post Boxcar, Plug Door, New York Central.

Green with white lettering including "Cushion Underframe" and reporting marks on left. Small black, white and red "cigar band" herald at top right. Approximate Time Period: 1966 (build date) into the 1980s. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary. Only the 281 release is shown.

The build year is 1966 for these cars, but just barely. The bingo photo of NYC 48260, on Page 54 of the **NYC Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume Two**, shows this car posed in front of the NYC's Despatch Shops in East Rochester, New York. That's not far from UMTRR HQ. The building behind the boxcar is one of the last remaining pieces of what was once a sprawling freight car construction complex right along the Central's Water Level Route main line across New York State. The 48260 is wearing a small placard hung from the body, just to the left of the right truck. That sign reads, "DSI / Lot 996 / 12-28-66." No, that lot number doesn't align with the 115-B painted above the small "Cigar Band" herald at the top right of the actual car. While we're on "not aligned," the MTL 511 body style has the more modern ends typical of 1970s boxcars, while this NYC series had what were called "Despatch Ends," a two-panel arrangement with four ribs in the upper panel and five in the lower panel. Also on Page 54 of the **Color Guide** is NYC 48317, part of the same prototype series 48260 to 48359, but built in January 1967, not December 1966. I think we're okay with both road numbers MTL plans to carry a December 1966 build date since they're only five roadnumbers apart.

Given that construction of these cars was still underway, it's not a surprise that the January 1967 ORER shows this as a "coming soon" group: the description was there but the dimensional data and car count were not. That description was "Box, Cushion Underframe, Plug Doors, 6-Position Side Fillers" and the AAR Designation was XME. The next Equipment Register I have, from October 1969, is from after the Penn Central merger. By then 99 of the possible 100 cars are present, still with NYC reporting marks and, I presume, the original paint scheme. The first 61 cars, NYC 48260 to 48323, had an inside width of 9 feet 5 inches, while the last 36 cars, NYC 48324 to 48359, had an inside width of 9 feet 7 inches, resulting in a gain in capacity of... drum roll please... 12 cubic feet. Reduced to Z Scale, that's... never mind. The other dimensions were the same: inside length 50 feet 6 inches, inside height 10 feet 3 inches, outside length 57 feet 9 inches, extreme height 15 feet, door opening 10 feet 6 inches, and weight capacity 142,000 pounds.

At least one of these cars made it into Conrail, as NYC 48285 was captured in the "as delivered" paint as of August 1976. It's on Page 86 of the **NYC Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment (Volume One)**, with almost completely faded lettering, an ACI Label and two COTS panels. That leads us to the ORER for April 1976 and the initial Conrail entry. Of the original series, 46 total cars remain in NYC reporting marks. That drops to nine as of the April 1981 ORER, six as of January 1985, and four as of October 1986. Just one remained in the July 1989 Equipment Register.



Scheduled Release June/July 2020:

511 00 291 and 510 00 292, \$29.90 each

Reporting Marks: D&RGW 50638 and 50641.

50 Foot Exterior Post Boxcar, Plug Door, Rio Grande (Denver & Rio Grande Western).

Orange with black ends and black stripe across sides. Black lettering including large reporting marks on left and "speed lettering" roadname on right. Approximate Time Period: 1966 (build date) to 1972. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary. Only the 291 release is shown.

The last of our five pre-order Z Scale x-post cars was also the first built and the first to leave service of the railroad for which it's painted. The **Rio Grande Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, Page 52, provides the story of these cars as told by author Jim Eager. The 50600 to 50624 series was built in 1965 and the 50625 to 50674 in May 1966 by North American Car Company and leased to the Rio Grande. These cars were built to then-upcoming safety standards including no running board and half-height ladders. They were classified as refrigerator cars even though they were insulated boxcars. The ATP ended abruptly in 1972 when all cars were returned to North American in favor of newer cars which had the same road numbers.

The bingo photo of the 50638 in the **Color Guide** includes one more item: this car was assigned to loading on the New York Central. So it's completely plausible to run it with one of both of the NYC boxcars immediately above if suitable based on your railroad's Approximate Time

Period. We also learn that the cars had Stanray roofs and ends, which would differ from the MTL 511 body style.

Given the short and well defined ATP, I can get away with just one ORER check. The October 1969 edition will work. Despite identically reported inside length, width and height (50 feet 1 inch, 9 feet 3 inches and 9 feet 10 inches respectively), the 50600 to 50624 group somehow has ten cubic feet greater capacity than the 50625 to 50674 set, 4614 cubic feet to 4604 cubic feet. The outside length of both sets of cars was 57 feet 9 inches. The extreme height of the first set was 15 feet 1 inch and the second set 15 feet even. The weight capacity of both cars was 140,000 pounds. The description of these RBLs was "Refrigerator, All Steel, Insulated, Evans and Equipco Loaders." End notes described the North American Car ownership and lease arrangement and also called out individual cars with had pallets "considered part of car."

And here's a fun fact... even as these more modern cars made their way onto the Rio Grande roster, there remained 870 narrow gauge (!) cars in service on that part of the D&RGW system. Based on the dimensions, you could fit one and two-thirds of the narrow gauge boxcars into one of these RBL cars.

Z SCALE REPRINTS: No releases this month.

Z SCALE MULTI-PACKS: See below for the Union Pacific Tie-Loader Three Pack. There are no pre-order announcements this month.

Z SCALE SPECIAL EDITIONS: No releases this month.

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 January 15.*



510 44 018, \$29.95

Reporting Marks: RBOX 37227.

50 Foot Steel Exterior Post Boxcar, Single Door, Railbox.

#1 in the "Year in Railbox 2020" series. Base car is yellow with black door and with mostly black lettering including original version Railbox name and reporting marks on left and "The nationwide boxcar pool" on right. Black, red and blue original version "Next Load/ Any Road" logo on right. White on black double COTS panel on far right.

Yellow horizontal conspicuity stripes at points along sides. "A" side of the car has multicolored graffiti covering nearly all of the side. "B" side has heavy weathering and fading effects. Approximate Time Period: 2014 through 2018, plus or minus (using the "A" or featured side of the car). Images of the N Scale version shown.

Please see the coverage of the N Scale release (510 44 019) above.



In addition to the above, The Union Pacific Tie-Loader Three Pack (994 01 260, \$99.95) was scheduled to be available mid-month and should be at MTL dealers as you read this. UMTRR coverage was in the August 2019 issue. The individual catalog and road numbers are as follows: 522 51 320, UP 30139; 522 52 330, UP 30428; 522 53 340, SP 323014.

MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS: None, other than the plethora of pre-orders that is.

INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT: None received or uncovered for this edition. Besides, how long is this issue already...

DISCONTINUED ALERT: Perhaps I made a tactical error by going with an abbreviated Do It Yourself Bye-Bye Board last month. If I'd known how many releases and announcements items I'd be covering this month... well, anyway, I promised full coverage of what's left the building, so here we go, from oldest to newest. I suppose I should start by mentioning that once again the only item not discontinued from 2006 until 2008 is the N Scale Liberty Railroad Train Set (993 21 030, July 2006). I still wonder how many of those are left at the factory. The only item left from 2009 is the Z Scale Southern Pacific baggage car (553 00 075), there's nothing left from 2010 releases, and now there are no 2011 releases left either with the departure of the Z Scale MKT Caboose (535 00 330, November). All 2012 items are already gone, and there's nothing new to report in terms of sellouts among 2013, 2014 or 2015 releases.

On to 2016, then. Nothing in N Scale has sold out, but we have some Z Scale action: the second number of the Susquehanna "Susie Q" 40 foot boxcar (500 00 912, December), the first number of the Northern Pacific 50 foot boxcar with large "NP" (505 00 351, October), the Providence and Worcester x-post boxcar (510 00 330, May), the weathered Pittsburgh and Lake Erie open hopper (533 44 180, July), and the White Christmas Delivery Train Set (994 21 070, October) are all gone.

Moving to 2017, in N Scale, the Grand Trunk Western double door and end door car is gone (078 00 160, September). So is the Cotton Belt (SSW) open auto rack (112 00 550, February). In Z Scale, the second number of the Western Pacific stock car has stampeded out (520 00 222, March), Runner Pack #103 of four Rio Grande hoppers has emptied out (994 00 103,

November), and the Pennsylvania Railroad tuscan red F7B diesel has run out (980 02 020, September).

On to 2018 N Scale items. The National Refrigerator Car refrigerator with green bananas is all eaten up (049 00 780, August). It's no April Fool: The REA "Referarigtor" is gone (052 00 015, well, April, of course). Union Pacific Poster Series troop cars Number 9, 10 and 11 have marched away (118 00 190, 200 and 210, October, November and December). Wave goodbye to the Southern Pacific "Spirit of '76" Bicentennial Caboose (130 00 250, July). The second number of the Arizona & California Well Car has rolled away (135 00 122, August). The "White Line" Civil War Era Boxcar Four-Pack (993 01 740, September) is gone. So is the Weyerhaeuser Logging Train Set (993 01 550, February). In the "is it or isn't it" department, I'd previously marked the Penn Central Passenger Car Five-Pack (993 01 750, November) as sold out, but in the official online listings it's now shown without the "Contact Dealer" banner. OK, then...

In Z Scale for 2018, the first number of the Muncie and Western / Ball Glass Jars wood boxcar is gone (515 00 201, November). Both numbers of the Chicago & North Western stock cars have moooved on (sorry) (520 00 24x, December). The plainly lettered Santa Fe flat car has rolled away (524 00 160, August). The Burlington Northern business car has left the station (556 00 030, May). And both numbers of the Union Pacific SD40-2 are exhausted (970 01 22x, October).

And finally, to the year just past. Leading off the DIY BBB for 2019 N Scale items are the Genesee and Wyoming x-post boxcar (025 00 176), the Cosden Petroleum "Pearl Harbor" (065 00 990), the CSX Center Flow (094 00 610), and the Railbox/ABOX Weathered/Graffiti Four-Pack (993 05 600) from just last month. The Norfolk and Western 60 Foot Boxcar is gone (103 00 140, May), and so is the Norfolk and Western Flat Car Runner Pack #159 (993 00 159, November). Add to this list of outs the Z Scale, Runner Pack #108 of four Union Pacific flat cars with loads (994 00 108, April).

See, George, that wasn't so bad, was it?

OOPS PATROL: Errors galore on the Railbox Weathered Packs. For the N Scale four pack, the second, third and fourth cars have ABOX not RBOX reporting marks. For the Z Scale two pack, I copy and pasted the N Scale description, catalog number and price: it is a Two-Pack, 994 05 240, \$62.95. The reporting marks are RBOX 40353 and ABOX 52075. Meanwhile, the reporting marks on the Swift Refrigerator "Clean" 16-Pack are SRLX, not SLRX. And finally... I think... the Pennsylvania Railroad Heavyweight Baggage Car carries Catalog Number 147 00 **360**, not the 147 00 **110** that I copy/pasted from the New York Central Heavyweight Baggage Car.

2019 BACK ISSUES POSTED: With the latest update to the UMTRR Website, I have added to the Back Issues page all editions for the year 2019. These are smaller files than what you receive in e-mail as I selected "minimum size" when saving them from the original Word documents. But they are out there in case anyone's missed or misplaced an issue.

FINALLY, WE ARE BOOKED FOR NNSC-NASHVILLE! Believe it or not, it was 2004 when I last attended what is now known as the National N Scale Convention. My daughter Thalia had just turned four! I am long overdue to attend another convention. This time, the stars will align (uh, right?) and Colleen and I already have our reservations in and registration purchased for the 2020 gathering in Nashville. It takes place from June 24 to 28; for more information head to (where else?) www.nationalscaleconvention.com.

Since there is a fair amount of overlap between the UMTRR gang and the N Scale Enthusiast membership, I'm hoping to have some sort of meet-up among readers that doesn't interfere with the already scheduled events that the hard-working convention team has in store. (We will be on the Country Music Hall of Fame bus tour on Thursday – highly recommended.) If you're planning to attend as well, let's trade e-mails over the next few months and plan something. Also, if you'd like to know more about Colleen and what she does, please visit her website www.talkwithcolleen.com – and yes, she'll be available for readings (at special convention rates!) during selected hours of the gathering. As for that now 19 year old daughter, she's already in Nashville attending Vanderbilt University and might be around in June as well.

We're looking forward to seeing everyone there, but in the meantime, there's next month's bytes right here – which I think will be a little shorter than this month's edition! Until then, do the best you can...

Cheers,
George

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