



IrwinsJournal.com Presents:

The Unofficial Micro-Trains[®] Release Report Issue #307 – July, 2022

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

Copyright ©2022, George J. Irwin. Reproduction prohibited. Please see legal notice at the end of this document.

Hello again everyone! As promised by CEO Eric Smith at the National N Scale Convention last month, it's finally pre-order time for the long-awaited N Scale PS-2 Covered Hopper. We will, well, cover, that pre-order announcement, and a pre-order for a second new body style (!) as well as the other news and views for the month... which are quite lengthy this time out.

But first, when MTL released two 181 body style cars in May with widely varying catalog numbers, I wondered whether something was up. I didn't have a chance to research this until now, between the Day Job and our travel to the National N Scale Convention. But now it can be told... MTL has performed another Stealth Release of a New Body Style.

Here are the cars in question: May's Penn Central boxcar, 181 00 230, and Santa Fe/SFRB boxcar, 181 00 810, via the official MTL images.



No difference can be seen, right?

No. That's because, well, no difference **can** be seen in this images.



But let's take a look at the brake wheel end of these two cars, and...

Aha! The PC boxcar, left in the photo on the left, has the low mounted brake wheel that's been a feature of the 181 body style since it was introduced in July 2017. But the Santa Fe car, on the right in the photo, has a high mounted brake wheel... and that makes it, by my

reckoning at least, a new body style. Also by my reckoning, using a broad definition that includes the circus wagons and specialty items like the Roco-based helium car, that's Body Style Number 160. By a more rigid definition, it's still more than 150 different designs. Perhaps more importantly, it's also a reflection of continued movement towards prototype-specific detail... and in this case, one that wasn't even mentioned in the MTL car copy that accompanied the release of the Santa Fe car.

I've already updated the Body Style Table on the UMTRR Website to include this most recent addition. With that bit of business out of the way, let's continue...

N SCALE NEW RELEASE FREIGHT EQUIPMENT:



032 00 550, \$30.95.

Reporting Marks: NYC 48222.

50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Plug Door, New York Central.

Green with white lettering including reporting marks on left. Large white, black and red "cigar band" herald on right. Multicolor ACI Label on far right. Approximate Time Period: 1964 (build date), or strictly speaking, late 1960s given ACI Label, to mid-1970s (given running board) or late 1980s. This item has a lowered underframe and body mounted couplers.

The prototype for this car was part of Lot 936B, the series NYC 48160 to 48259, built in April 1964 at the Central's Despatch Shops, Incorporated in East Rochester, New York, not far from UMTRR HQ. According to the **NYC Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** (Volume One), each of these 100 cars was equipped with a single movable bulkhead and six position side wall fillers, which of course you can't see from the outside. They were also equipped with 20 inch travel cushion underframes, which are denoted by the extended draft gear couplers. Unlike the immediately preceding number series of boxcars, these cars were painted in straight Century Green, with no black on the ends or roof. The bingo photo of the 48222, in service in February 1970, is on Page 80 of the **Color Guide**. It's difficult to tell from the image whether the car had lost its running board (roofwalk) by that date, but after close inspection I could see the end of it protruding past the roof. The Fallen Flags site (www.rr-fallenflags.org) has later shots of sister cars 48218, 48242, and 48244, showing cars that had seen better days. In 1978 the 48242 still had its running board, but could have been out of service. And the Canada Southern website has a shot of a rather faded looking NYC 48246, as well as a drawing of the specifications for the car. Not shown on the specs is that the cars had riveted sides, a delta to the MTL 032 body style that I am getting less concerned about as my ability to see it decreases!

The January 1967 Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER) shows the series NYC 48160 to 48259 with the description "Box, Steel, Plug Doors, Cushion Underframe" and AAR Designation XML. The inside length was 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 3 inches, inside height 10 feet 5 inches, outside length 57 feet 10 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 10 feet 6 inches (more than the MTL car's 8 feet) and capacity 4896 cubic feet or 140,000 pounds. End notes described the equipment I noted above and that some cars had pallets "considered part of car" (i.e. shippers, they are ours, not yours!). In the Penn Central listing of October 1969, 97 of the original 100 cars were in service. In the first Conrail listing, April 1976, 70 cars were on the roster in the NYC series. I'll leave it to the reader to determine if any were relettered for either Penn Central or Conrail. I suspect that the running board would have been lifted at that point. Closing out this coverage, the ORER for April 1981 shows 17 of these cars left, down to nine in April 1984 and three in October 1986, which is where I stopped looking. Strictly speaking, COTS panels and the U-1 "dot" would need to be added somewhere on the car if modeling the later part of the ATP, along with a lot of weathering and fading.



073 00 310, \$27.90.

Reporting Marks: C&O 23764.

40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, No Running Board, High Side and End Ladders, High Mounted Brake Wheel, Chesapeake and Ohio/Chessie System.

Dark blue with yellow lettering including Chessie System roadname and reporting

marks on left and large "Ches-C" herald on right. Multicolor ACI Label on far right. White on black double COTS panel at bottom right; yellow "Keep Off Roof / No Running Board" warning at far bottom right. Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 1972 to early 1980s. This item has a lowered underframe and body mounted couplers.

Micro-Trains provides a rebuild date of 1965 for this car, which is confirmed, but the Chessie System paint would have come no earlier than August 1972. And as noted in the **Chessie System Color Guide to Freight Equipment**, Page 47, "Forty foot boxcars... were becoming rare by the time of the Chessie System... more typically these short cars were either being scrapped by this time or moved over to Maintenance of Way service." But the 23764 was an exception still in revenue service when its photo was taken, though on an unknown date. That photo is also on Page 47 of the **Color Guide**. Not all of these surviving boxcars were redone into Chessie's colors: witness C&O 23792 from the same series, still in boxcar red with white "For Progress" herald as of December 1976, in a photo on RRPictureArchives. I wonder how many of these cars actually did sport the "Ches-C" of the Chessie System before being retired.

The ORER for July 1974 shows... an Oops, actually, as the series C&O 23700 to 23819 is described as "Box, **Plug Doors**, DF Loaders." Those are definitely not plug doors shown in the photos of these cars! But they are nine feet wide, which makes for a larger "door thing" than usual as the MTL car's door is six feet wide. The other dimensions: inside length 40 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 44 feet 4 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, and capacity 3900 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. This group had a total of 112 cars, of which 11 had pallets. There's another 29 cars without DF loaders in the next listing, numbered 23820 to 23850, which I bring up only because the **Color Guide** called out the overall series as being 23700 to 23850. By the January 1985 ORER that second group was gone and there were just 22 cars left in the set 23700 to 23819, which had all left revenue service no later than the October 1986 Equipment Register.



073 00 320, \$27.90.

Reporting Marks: NP 45617.

40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Superior Door, No Running Board, High Side and End Ladders, High Mounted Brake Wheel, Northern Pacific.

Brown with aluminum roof. White

lettering including reporting marks on left. Large "NP" in white with black shadow on left. Large white, black and red "Northern Pacific Railway" monad herald on right. Multicolor ACI

Label and yellow on black U-1 inspection “dot” below herald. Black on yellow double “Keep Off Roof / No Running Board” warning at far bottom right. Approximate Time Period: 1964 (rebuild date given by MTL) or strictly speaking, 1978 and later given U-1 “dot,” to late 1970s. This item has a lowered underframe and body mounted couplers.

You really couldn’t get a much bigger “NP” on this car than what was already painted on it. The same was true of the monad herald, which was eight feet in diameter. The initials were five feet six inches high. It’s pointed out in the caption which accompanies the bingo photo of the car, on Page 42 of the **Northern Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** that what appears to be a white roof is actually the weathered color of the galvanized roof panels. A shot of NP 36297, which most definitely does not have billboard NP initials, shows this coloration better; I think MTL has this a lot closer to correct with an aluminum roof than if they’d gone with a brown roof. Feel free to add weathering.

The 45617 was part of the series NP 45500 to 45999, built by Pullman-Standard in 1942. That’s before the introduction of the PS-1 boxcar on which the MTL 073 series is based. One difference is that the side sill on the real car goes straight across the car. But the high brake wheel and full size ladders match the prototype and the car has a six foot Superior style door. In the proto photo, dated August 1978, I think I see the reporting marks crossed out or “white-lined” which signifies that the car is out of service and may be on its way to the scrapper. There is also a black stenciling that I cannot make out left of the reporting marks.

The ORER for January 1967 shows two groups of cars with identical key dimensions: 45500 to 45527, with 27 cars; and 45528 to 45999, with only another 65 cars. Those key dimensions were: inside length 40 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 10 feet 5 inches, outside length 42 feet 2 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 6 feet, and capacity 3904 cubic feet or 110,000 pounds. Given the date of the photo in the **Color Guide** I jumped to the January 1978 ORER and the Burlington Northern listing, where the series has changed to NP 45304 to 45629 with 40 cars. The car count was down to six in the July 1980 Equipment Register, which is where I stopped looking. There’s no COTS panel on the car, which should have been present later in the ATP, but there isn’t on the prototype car pictured either.



073 00 330, \$27.90.

Reporting Marks: BN 189070.

40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, No Running Board, High Side and End Ladders, High Mounted Brake Wheel, Burlington Northern.

Green with white lettering roadname and reporting marks on left and large BN herald on right. Multicolor ACI Label left of door. Black on yellow double “Keep Off Roof / No Running Board” warning at far bottom right. White simulated reflective rectangles at seven points along bottom of car. Approximate Time Period: 1970 to mid-1980s. This item has a lowered underframe and body mounted couplers.

The 189070 was the result of a 1970 rebuild of what remained of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy groups of boxcars numbered 29900 to 37749, which were built between 1942 and 1948. It's noted on Page 8 of the **Burlington Northern Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** that this particular car had been built in 1947 in the Burlington's Havelock, Nebraska shops. The bingo photo, on that same page of the **Color Guide**, was taken in June 1970, not long after it was rebuilt in March 1970. There is a "door thing" as the prototype had an eight foot door and the MTL 073 body style has a six foot door. The real car also had a diagonal row of rivets either side of the door, and a bottom sill that ran almost the entire length of the side. It's a lot easier to get the reflective stripes on the car when the sill looks like that.

The October 1972 ORER is the closest I have to the rebuild date. The series BN 189000 to 189799 had 791 cars in it out of a possible 800. They were simply "Box, Steel," AAR Designation XM. The inside length was 40 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 44 feet 3 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 8 feet, and capacity 3898 cubic feet or 110,000 pounds.

While looking for something else, I came across my saved soft copy of **Freight Car Journal #7**, which included a 1985 survey of forty foot boxcars still in service. Not surprisingly, Canadian National and Canadian Pacific, each of which had low-density grain branch lines that couldn't handle larger cars, led far and away with 24,600 and 22,500 boxcars each. Far behind in third was the National Railways of Mexico with a "mere" 9600 forty foot boxcars. And way behind that in fourth place was Burlington Northern, with 3300 cars. They did still have a number of granger branches in their system.

By then, though, or to be more specific, the January 1985 ORER, what was left of cars in the BN 189000s were lumped together with other previous groups to result in the series BN 185950 to 189799... which had a car count of just 60. That count was down to only 21 in the October 1986 Equipment Register.



098 00 201 and 098 00 202, \$34.90 each.

Reporting Marks: GACX 46576 and 46622.

50 Foot Two Bay Airslide Covered Hoppers, GATX (General American Marks Company).

Gray with black lettering including reporting marks on left. White on blue GATX "Service Driven" logo in center. White on black COTS panel at bottom right. Approximate Time Period: at least 1987 to 2007 based on photo evidence.

I just saw an Airslide in about this same paint scheme late last month. It was in the middle of a train consisting of various types of freight cars on the CSX main line through Rochester, not far from UMTRR HQ. I made a mental note that Micro-Trains hadn't yet done that GATX paint scheme. Hadn't yet done, that is.

And in the middle of a train consisting of various types of freight cars in Keokuk, Iowa in November 1992 was GACX 46576, in a bingo photo posted to RRPictureArchives. That's the easy one. The 46622 eluded my search for a bingo, but while looking around I did observe cars with road numbers close to 46622 had been leased out to companies like Staley and Coca-Cola for dedicated operation, and may or may have had their lessee's logos. (A small group for Staley started just one number away: GACX 46623 to 46628.)

I also saw that there were plain GACX cars, cars with the GATX decal (yes, a decal!) as modeled here by MTL, and cars with the "GATX Airslide" yellow on dark blue band at the far left, such as the first paint scheme on the Micro-Trains body style (098 00 01x, September 2016, at right), all in the same general set of road numbers. That "blue repaint" dates to 1992, by the way.



The actual driver of the ATP, though, is the use of the GATX decal. I do not believe it started as early as the 1974 date on the car. It was noted on another manufacturer's site that the "Service Driven" logo has an era from the 1980s to the early 2000s. That's later than the build date of these type of cars, which began in the late 1960s in the low brake wheel configuration. My research didn't turn up anything further, so we'll need to go with any available photo evidence of cars with the decal, and then invoke Rule #1 ("It's your railroad") from there. Online photographic data points include: GACX 46207, July 1997, GACX 46220, June 2007; and GACX 46685, May 1990; GACX 47255, April 1992; GACX 48551, July 1988. I can't say that's a statistically valid sample, but I do think it illustrates a variety of road numbers and dates, which we can use.

With that decal detail in mind, let's look at the ORER for July 1989. Both road numbers, 46576 and 46622, belonged to the series GACX 46195 to 46699, a large group of covered hoppers. There were subsets within this large group, though, of 356 cars of 4180 cubic foot capacity cars and another 84 cars of 4200 cubic foot capacity – thanks, General American. Getting out the magnifying glass, I can confirm that the two cars selected are 4180 cars (although 20 actual cubic feet reduced to N Scale is... never mind). Moving up to the July 2007 ORER, we're down to 92 cars in the same GACX 46195 to 46699 series in what has become the General American Marks Company listing. Again, though, it appears that the majority of the GACX cars did not receive this decal.

[Note: The CSXT/Conrail gondola, Catalog Number 105 44 597, is in the Weathered Releases section.]



Also, the first number of the TTX "TBOX" Boxcar (60 Foot Excess Height Double Plug Door Boxcar 123 51 011, TBOX 665113, \$44.98) is expected to be available mid-month. This is the first car of three from the originally pre-ordered three pack which is now being made available on an individual car basis.

UMTRR coverage was in the January 2021 issue.

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



Targeted Delivery October 2022:

068 00 510, \$28.95.

Reporting Marks: CNW 57460.

40 Foot Steel Boxcar, No Running Board, Full Side Ladders, Chicago and North Western.

Brown with white lettering including reporting marks on left. White on black "Employee Owned" ball and bar herald on right. White on black double COTS panel and multicolor ACI Label on right below herald, yellow U-1 wheel inspection "dot" (without black background) at bottom left. Approximate Time Period: late 1960s, or strictly speaking, 1978 or later given U-1 dot, to early 1980s. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

It was May 1981 when the bingo photo for this car was taken. It appears on Page 14 of the **C&NW Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume Two**. It's noted that this car was part of the series 57400 to 57898, even numbers only, built by Pullman-Standard in 1949. These cars have double doors (well, duh) and riveted sides (likely a delta to the MTL car but hard to discern at 1/160th actual size). What we can see of the ladders on the prototype and the model align, as does the lettering.

While it's well before the start of the Approximate Time Period of the car as it will be modeled, the ORER for July 1950 shows the series, described as "Auto, All Steel, Wood Lined, Even Numbers" with AAR Designation XMR. At the time, distinctions were made by some railroads between ordinary boxcars and boxcars specially equipped and/or designated for automobile service, and that could mean either parts, assemblies or finished vehicles. In fact, the North Western had its own category for auto cars in its ORER listing, separate from its boxcar listings. (Which means, yes, I almost missed it.) The key dimensions were: inside length 40 feet 1 inch, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 10 feet 8 inches, outside length 41 feet 11 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 15 feet, and capacity 100,000 pounds and either 3623 cubic feet or 4105 cubic feet. What? An end note explains this: "Cars... are equipped with Type 'F' Auto Loading Devices... The vertical inside height of cars in this series equipped with loading racks in stored position is 9 feet 5 inches..." and then some additional detail is given. The net of it is that when the racks are stowed, the capacity is 3623 cubic feet. I presume that the higher number of 4105 cubic feet would be if the racks were deployed, or when they weren't present at all. The 250 cars in this series made up a good chunk of the total 1851 automobile cars in the C&NW roster at that time.

Fast forward to the July 1974 Equipment Register. The Type "F" Auto Loading Devices are long gone, the description changed to "Box, Steel, Wood Lined" and the AAR Designation the common XM, but 221 cars remained out of the original 250, not bad. By the April 1984 ORER that car count was all the way down to three. And so much for the Approximate Time Period.

I noticed in the listing from July 1974 that the capacity was given as 3600 cubic feet. Did anyone tell the ORER folks that the auto loaders were gone?

I don't think we will ever know when the running board was pulled on this car, but given that the ACI Label and the COTS panels on the bingo photo would have been present by then, certainly the ATP includes that year. I'm thinking that the late 1960s might be a good start to the ATP given that running boards were outlawed on boxcars starting in 1964. Detail-wise, the U-1 dot gives a strictly speaking time period of 1978 and later. The use of that dot without a black background is unusual but not unheard of.

Also note the Micro-Trains catalog number here. A new body style typically begins with an 010 or 01x as the last three digits, for example the long-awaited announcement that's up next, but this one ends with 510. Could this be a subsidiary body style with another similar double door boxcar still to come? Hmm.

And now we come to the pre-order announcement that some non-trivial portion of the N Scale Population has been waiting for: the Micro-Trains N Scale PS-2 Two Bay Covered Hopper. As I mentioned last month, I had the chance to see the pre-production model live and in person at the National N Scale Convention last month, and it was impressive. During the NNSC, MTL's CEO Eric Smith hosted a clinic and spoke about how the car was designed and tooled. He noted that it requires a fair amount of assembly at the factory. Following the show, Micro-Trains posted a page on their website with photos of the sample along with more information, which I suspect many of you have seen as it's been shared on various discussion venues.

Page 112 of the book **Pullman-Standard Freight Cars, 1900-1960** contains a reproduction of the full page advertisement which appeared in the 1953 edition of **Car Builders' Cyclopedia**. From the outset, the PS-2 wasn't just one size. "This standardized 70-ton freight car is built in three lengths with 4, 6 and 8 hoppers" announced Pullman-Standard. "From the circular hatch covers to the 50 degree slope sheets, the PS-2 all welded, covered hopper car is built for trouble-free service. Engineered to high standards of dependability and economy for the railroads, it is built to serve shippers better and to make unloading safer and easier for consignees. The PS-2 is a refinement of the covered hopper cars Pullman-Standard has been building in quantity since the 1940s."

Just like the PS-1 boxcar discussed with the "Pullman Milestone" boxcar pre-order announcement last month, the PS-2 was standardized, but that doesn't mean that all of the cars were identical. Even within the two-bay hopper type, there were distinctions, for example the "hat" ribs versus the "channel" ribs used at the ends of the sides of the car. I've come to the realization that "PS-2" was more of a brand than a specification since there were so many variations on the theme, just like with the PS-1. That concept in itself, the use of a brand for an entire freight car, was an innovation.

Now for the two actual pre-order announcements...



Targeted Delivery October and November 2022:

095 00 011 and 095 00 012, \$45.95 each.

Reporting Marks: GN 71470 (October 2022) and TBD (November 2022, see below).

PS-2 Two Bay Covered Hopper, Great Northern.

Gray with black lettering including reporting marks on left and slant style roadname across car. Red and black "Great Northern Railway" herald at top right. Approximate Time Period: 1958 (build date) to early 1980s. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

Page 72 of the **Great Northern Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** has a photo of sister car GN 71436, which was the road number MTL used for the Z Scale version of this car released in November 2014. (Note, though, that this model is all new tooling, not an "upsized" of the Z Scale version.) The photo is undated, but would have to have been taken later than the November 1968 service date. The real car is a PS-2 Covered Hopper so no fidelity worries there. As of, well, whatever date, though, it looks a lot less than Brand New. The red in the black and red herald is gone and there are plenty of rust spots. The numeric part of the dimensional data has been patched in and so has, of course, the service date. Weathering this car to match the photo in the **Color Guide** would make for an interesting project. If you don't have that book, check the Fallen Flags site for a 1980 photo of sister car 71410, which has a completely different weathering pattern plus an ACI Label, double panel consolidated stencils and a U-1 "yellow dot." RRPictureArchives has that same photo and a shot of GN 71427 as of June 1976 at a concrete plant in St. Paul, Minnesota. And RailcarPhotos has GN 71500 also found in June 1976, with a small placard reading "Cement" next to the "LO" designation of the dimensional data. In both of those cases the red in the herald is worn away.

How about a bingo photo? Let's to the Canadian Freight Railcar Gallery for that, in fact, a builder's photo from April 1958. This image is large enough to be able to read almost all of the data, including the trust information (First National City Bank of New York). That's a lucky break, since there is more Great Northern documentation out there than I could possibly manage (or afford), including the Four Ways West book **Great Northern Equipment Pictorial Volume Two** which includes covered hoppers. The MTL artwork for the first car indicates that the car will be modeled as delivered. Might I also point out that the road number 71470 was also made in HO Scale by the "brother" company Kadee in 2005? Wait a minute, don't I have that car for my HO Scale switching layout?

Anyway, speaking of as delivered, according to the information in the **Color Guide**, the GN purchased 100 PS-2s numbered 71405 to 71504 in 1958, placing them in cement service. In the January 1959 ORER, they were given the somewhat unusual description "Covered Twin Hopper, Self Clearing" and had typical dimensions for this body style: inside length 29 feet 3 inches, outside length 35 feet 3 inches, extreme height 12 feet 10 inches, and capacity 2006 cubic feet or 140,000 pounds. All 100 cars remained in service as of the April 1970 Equipment Register, with the original GN reporting marks under the Burlington Northern registration. The BN was so new at the time that the component railroads were still listed separately.

Given the 1980 photo on Fallen Flags, I went to the ORER for July of that year, finding 86 cars in the group plus an exception (the 71471) which had been fitted with four long hatches. (Another interesting project.) From there, though, it's a fast drop to only five cars in the January 1985 ORER, though two hang on to the July 1989 Register.

And here's some additional news. You might have noticed from the MTL website that only the first road number is shown in the MTL artwork for both releases of this car, that is, October and November, or the 011 and 012. That's because there is a possibility that there may be variations in the decoration for that second car, for which renderings aren't yet complete. In other words, while the second Great Northern car will be, well, Great Northern, it won't necessarily be exactly the same paint and lettering. If this holds, this is another advance for Micro-Trains and aligns with the "road specific details" that we're seeing on locomotives as well as "road number specific details" for individual cars. So for now, the second number is TBD, though I presume still somewhere in the 71405 to 71504 series. I guess we'll all find out what exactly that means either on or before the release date.



Targeted Delivery December 2022 and January 2023:

095 00 021 and 095 00 022, \$45.95 each.

Reporting Marks: WP 11301 (December 2022) and TBD (January 2023, see below).

PS-2 Two Bay Covered Hopper, Western Pacific.

Gray with black lettering including reporting marks on left and roadname on right. Approximate Time Period: 1958 (build date) to early 1980s. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

Across the three WP books I have, there's only one photo of one of the railroad's PS-2s. It's a 1975 shot of 11330, the highest numbered of the series 11301 to 11330, on Page 89 of the **Western Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**. There is a service date of 1968 on the car in the photo, which also appears on the February 2016 rendition of the car by Micro-Trains in Z Scale. However, the artwork for the N Scale car shows it as delivered. Besides that in-print photo, there's an image of WP 11326 taken in June 1983 on Fallen Flags. At the time that car had an ACI Label—quite obsolete by then—and a double COTS panel. But we can do a lot better than that: a builder's photo from 1958, again found on Canadian Freight Railcar Gallery (which yes, does have a lot of cars from United States railroads). From that photo we see both the Pullman-Standard builder's mark, at the bottom of the side below the "W" in "Western Pacific" and a stencil at the far bottom right indicating that the car is owned by the Bank of America National Trust.

These thirty cars were an important enough addition to the WP's fleet that a photo of a string of them appears on Page 11 of the company's 1958 Annual Report. (That page, and the entire annual report, is online on the "WP Lives" site: see www.wplives.com/about-wp/annual-reports/1950s/1958/1958-11.php.) The photo is captioned, "A five-mile spur track was laid from the main line to the new dolomite plant of the Utah Marblehead Lime Company near

Dalle.” Dolomite is “an anhydrous carbonate mineral composed of calcium magnesium carbonate... used as an ornamental stone, a concrete aggregate, and a source of magnesium oxide, as well as in the Pidgeon process for the production of magnesium” (thank you, Wikipedians). The Great Salt Lake area, where the dolomite plant that the WP built to was located, is a good place to look for the mineral. And a rail-served facility still operates near Dalle, by the way. I checked.

The ORER for January 1959 shows the series with the usual dimensions for this car type: inside length 29 feet 3 inches, outside length 35 feet 3 inches, extreme height 13 feet 2 inches, and capacity 2003 cubic feet or 140,000 pounds. Given the 1975 photo in the Color Guide, I jumped to the April 1976 Equipment Register where 29 of the original 30 cars remained on the roster. The April 1984 ORER shows this group in a combined series 11201 to 11330 with 24 cars – not sure why that happened. That count is down to seven in the April 1985 ORER and zero in the October 1986 Register, so we have a pretty tight end to the Approximate Time Period.

The same comment I made for the Great Northern pre-order announcement applies to this Western Pacific announcement: the two cars, December and January or 021 and 022, may differ in lettering details. So this second number, like the second number of the GN PS-2, is TBD, though presumably within the prototype series 11301 to 11330.

N SCALE NEW RELEASE PASSENGER CARS: No releases this month, but see the Multi-Packs section for the Missouri Pacific Heavyweight Five Pack.

N SCALE REPRINTS: One this month...



032 00 461, \$28.90.

Reporting Marks: PRR 21008.

50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Plug Door, Pennsylvania Railroad.

Brown with mostly white lettering including roadname and reporting marks on left. Black and white shadow keystone herald on right.

Yellow “Insulated / DF” on door. Approximate Time Period: 1959 (build date) to late 1970s. Previous Release: Road Number 21019, January 2012. This item has a lowered underframe and body mounted couplers.

For the first release of this car (at right), I leveraged the July 2011 edition of the UMTRR in which MTL’s Z Scale version of this car was reviewed, right down to the same number. This car represents the Pennsylvania Railroad’s X53 series of insulated boxcars. Page 51 of the **Pennsylvania Railroad Color**

Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment, Volume 2, includes a straight on shot of sister car PRR 21012 caught in November 1965. The paint is already wearing out, with the yellow



“Insulated” and “DF” legends turned nearly white. It’s noted in the **Color Guide** that 300 cars numbered 21000 to 21299 were built at the Pennsy’s Samuel Rea Shops as part of the road’s 1959 program to update its freight car fleet. “These cars were generally used for handling food products and in addition to their insulation, were equipped for application of heaters and featured 8 foot 2 inch wide sliding flush doors and nine belt-rail DF loaders.” The cars had riveted sides and a straight sill, which differ from the MTL body style.

I’ll fill in the rest of the vital statistics from the ORER for January 1964: inside length 50 feet even, inside width 9 feet 1 inch, inside height 9 feet 7 inches, outside length 51 feet 11 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, capacity 4401 cubic feet or 125,000 pounds. The cars were described as “Box, Steel” although they did get the AAR Designation RBL, the usual for insulated boxcars. The end note calls out use of a floor on cars numbered 21100 to 21199 consisting of 2 3/8 inch yellow pine covered with 1/8 inch diamond plate, and the use in cars 21200 to 21299 of a “Doweloc” floor... whatever that is. Anyway, all 300 cars were in service at the time. Of those, 289 were in service in the PRR series as of the April 1970 ORER listing for the Penn Central. Skipping to Conrail in the April 1976 Equipment Register, there were a bunch of subsets of the group which total, if my addition is correct, to 110 cars. Only six cars were left in PRR markings in the April 1981 ORER, which is where I stopped looking, but the X53s continued service in either Penn Central or Conrail paint or both. For example, the Conrail Historical Society website (thecrhs.org, no “www”) has a shot of CR 361142 in painted out Penn Central green with CR reporting marks. It looks like the PC renumbered the X53s into three groups starting at 361000 and going to 361298, and Conrail kept at least some of these numbers. Don’t forget to remove the running board!

N SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES:



105 44 597, \$29.95.

Reporting Marks: CSXT 915769.

50 Foot Steel 15 Panel Gondola, Fishbelly Sides, Fixed Ends, CSX Transportation / Conrail.

#10 in the CSX Family Tree Series (pre-orders taken June 2021). Brown with mostly white lettering including small Conrail herald on right and restenciled reporting marks on

black patch panel on left. White on black COTS panel at bottom right. Orange vertical conspicuity stripes at seven points along side and white vertical simulated reflective stripes on four of the ribs. Moderate weathering including rust and dent effects. Simulated tie load included. Approximate Time Period: 2017, plus or minus, based on photo evidence.

Before I go any farther, did anyone else notice how MTL simulated side dents on this car as part of their weathering treatment? Let's take a close-up view (at right, way larger than actual size). Now that's pretty cool, and worthy of reproduction on future releases in my estimation. (See below for another example in Weathered Releases.) No, it's not three dimensional, but at least for me, it's a lot easier and far less dangerous than taking a soldering iron to the sides of the car to make real dents.



Micro-Trains notes in its car copy that the car was built in October 1971; though they quote New York Central/Penn Central, this would have been for the latter since the PC was formed in 1968. The gondola does carry the class G47, a holdover from how the other major Penn Central component, namely, the Pennsylvania Railroad, denoted its equipment. Conrail kept that classification system going. However! The NYC reference could also be to the protocol used by CSX and Norfolk Southern to split up Conrail's rolling stock: NS kept the CR reporting marks for freight cars and CSXT relettered the cars with NYC reporting marks. Indeed, a photo of CSXT 915744 on RailcarPhotos is captioned with the information that it was CR 5881 and then NYC 588107. The confusion between the actual New York Central and the "temporary" use of NYC reporting marks by CSXT is rather confusing. They couldn't have selected a different set of letters?

MTL also notes that the car became "a Maintenance of Way car for CSX's scrap railroad ties." Looking at cars in the 915700s on RRPictureArchives, we see that the group is a mix of gondolas from multiple different CSXT predecessors – hey, a CSXT MOW Gondola Family Tree? – so we really should find a bingo on the 915769. (The closest road number on RRPictureArchives is 915772, which was a former New York Central 15-panel gondola.) For that, we go to the Conrail Photo Archive (conrailphotos.thecrhs.org) where we've got an overhead shot of the car complete with a load of beat up used railroad ties. And speaking of bingo, my thought on New York Central/Penn Central does have some merit: the car was built as PC 508128, became CR 608567, then NYC 608567, and finally CSXT 915769. The photo was taken in February 2017; in the absence of any ORER data on CSX company service equipment, we'll tack on a "plus or minus" to that for the Approximate Time Period.

I can, however, grab the ORER for April 1995 for dimensional data on the car when it was still part of the Conrail roster as CR 608567. And here is that data: inside length 52 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 4 feet even, outside length 57 feet 3 inches, extreme height 8 feet 3 inches, and capacity 1995 cubic feet or 185,000 pounds. MTL notes that the car was used for coil steel loading; the AAR designation of GBS hints at that, as does the circled "S" in the center of the car which tells us it has a steel floor.

And now, for the usual content that appears in this section: *The following was announced on the Micro-Trains website on July 14.*



104 44 021, \$29.95.

Reporting Marks: PC 278706.

60 Foot Excess Height Boxcar, Single Door, Penn Central.

Green with green with white lettering including roadname and reporting marks on left and large herald on right. Black on yellow return instructions left of door, black on yellow "Keep off Roof / No Running Board" warning at bottom left and right, multicolor ACI label on right below herald, and yellow on black U-1 wheel inspection

"dot" at bottom right. Black "Excess Height" lettering and reporting marks on white panel at top of each end. Moderate to heavy weathering and rust effects, especially on roof. Approximate Time Period: 1969 (build date) to early 1990s. Previous Release: Road Number 278655, March 1999.

I noted in my coverage of the first run of this car in March 1999 that PC and Conrail fans were going to have a lot of fun with this one, namely because Conrail kept the same number series when it flipped PC for CR reporting marks following its absorption of Penn Central. "Given that Conrail could not afford a lot of paint," I wrote, "want to guess how these 36 might have been decorated? Try this recipe: Combine one of this month's release with a bottle of non-matching jade green or box car red paint. Paint out the roadname, the herald, and the PC reporting marks, and let dry. Then take either Penn Central style or Conrail style or even plain old stencil style white lettering, and apply 'CR' just above the number. Weather and put on layout. Yields one messy looking car." I did just that and posted the results, including scans (!) of the finished "product," on the UMTRR website. It's still there: look for the page titled "Conrailized." The folks in Talent have made this project even easier: they've already done the weathering for you! And a lot better than I could have...

The build date on the first run of this car is March 1969. I suppose that it shouldn't be surprising that the series doesn't show in the April 1970 ORER given that Penn Central was pre-occupied with mere survival. On the other hand, that same first run is lettered with Class X64A, which was constructed in 1970 at the PC's former Pennsylvania Railroad Samuel Rea Shops according to the Conrail Historical Society, after building 270 X64 boxcars in 1968 and 1969. At any rate, the series 278650 to 278728 does appear in the October 1972 Equipment Register, with all 79 possible cars. The inside length was 60 feet 9 inches, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 12 feet 5 inches, outside length 68 feet even, extreme height 16 feet 11 inches, door opening 10 feet, and capacity 7250 cubic feet or 130,000 pounds. The group was described as "Box, Steel, 20 Inch Travel Cushion Underframe" and an end note calls out that the cars exceeded Plate C dimensions. This large size was still a rather unusual feature at the time.

At the dawn of Conrail in April 1976, there were 76 cars of the original 79 brought over from the Penn Central. For April 1981, the PC series is down to 41 cars, but there are also 36 cars in the same number series with CR reporting marks. As we continue through the ORERs, we

find that the proportion of CR series cars to PC series cars stays about the same but both groups decline in total. As of July 1992 only 4 CRs and 3 PCs remained, and that's where I stopped looking.

But maybe I shouldn't have stopped looking: the bingo photo, found on RRPictureArchives, was taken in December 1996. "It may be in company service here," "here" being Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania. With the door open, the small amount of lading doesn't look very high-value, although I can't determine exactly what. Company service looks to be absolutely right, as there's no record of the car in the October 1976 ORER.



104 44 051, \$29.95.

Reporting Marks: UP 960974.

60 Foot Excess Height Boxcar, Single Door, Union Pacific.

Yellow with aluminum roof, ends, bottom sills and truck frames. Red roadname on left. Black lettering including reporting marks on left. Red, white and blue shield herald on right. Multicolor ACI label on right, and white on black double COTS panel on right below herald. Light to

moderate weathering and rust effects, especially right of door. Approximate Time Period: 1977 (build date) to the mid-decade of the 2000s (but could go to the present, see text). Previous Release: Road Number 960971, March 2000.

The ATP I called when the first release of this car was issued, more than 22 years (!) ago, was "to present." And I could prove it! This time, probably not.

The series 960956 to 960999 is listed in the April 1981 ORER as "Box, Steel, Cushion Underframe, 22 Belt DF Loaders" and is in Class F+ with AAR designation XL. The stats: 60 foot 9 inch inside length, 13 feet 2 inch inside height, 68 foot 1 inch outside length, 17 feet 2 inch extreme height, 10 foot door opening, 7373 cubic feet or 167,000 pounds capacity. There were 43 cars of the original 50 that were built in 1977. As of the July 1998 ORER there were 25 cars left in the main series, plus 15 more, including the previous road number 960971, had been changed from XL to XP. For the review of the previous run, I was able to confirm "the present" from something that no longer exists: the Union Pacific "Public Equipment Trace" page. There are still ORERs of course, and we've got 39 total cars in the January 2006 edition, but just six in the January 2011 issue and three from April 2013 all the way to the October 2020 Register.

Does that mean we have "to present" again? Well, it could be that the ATP does get limited by the paint scheme and not the retirement of the car, although I haven't cast it that way. The bright yellow and aluminum paint scheme was a transition of sorts from the "Automated Railway" scheme-- very expensive-- to the, uh, less striking box car red with small shield scheme that became the standard for the system today. As such, it may not have lasted this long as painted.

Now to some photos, starting with RRPictureArchives. Sister car 960966 was almost brand new looking in March 1978, with just some wear and rust at the bottom of the door. An overhead three-quarter view reveals two things of interest: corrugated style ends that are different from that on the MTL 102 body style, and a roof that's yellow, not aluminum. But the 960977 as of May 2015 and then May 2021 have not much left of the original paint, though it does seem like the as delivered decoration is under the rust and patch panels. As of May 2003 the 960981 was repainted into basic brown—OK, “synthetic red,” Union Pacific—and as of April 2007 the 960997 was also. Then to Fallen Flags where, in glorious black and white, we have a bingo from November 1985. The damage to the side is replicated on the MTL model, which is a non-trivial effort considering the starting point wasn't a color photograph.



993 05 014, \$64.95, with Family Foam Nest packaging.

983 05 014, \$73.95, with Jewel Box packaging.

Reporting Marks: FGEX 38915 and 38935.

Fruit Growers Express Weathered Two Pack.

Consists of two MTL 0595 series 40 foot steel ice refrigerator cars with Preco fan. Base color is yellow with black ends and aluminum roof. Black lettering including “Fruit Growers Express” and reporting marks on left and “Refrigerator” on right.

Multicolor ACI label on right. Heavy weathering and rust effects. Approximate Time Period: as early as 1960 given paint scheme, or mid-1960s given ACI label, to mid-1970s. The individual catalog numbers are 059 44 596, 38915; 059 45 596, 38945.

Here's something interesting: a bingo photo of a car that is in much better shape than how MTL modeled it. From February 1977 and posted to RRPictureArchives, FGEX 38915 looks quite nice in San Bernadino, California in front of the Santa Fe Shops. A rust pattern like what Micro-Trains used can be found on FGEX 38947 as it appeared in February 1998, still riding on friction bearing trucks. But sparkling clean in June 1969 is FGEX 39709, in a photo posted to the Canadian Freight Car Gallery. ACI Label placement wasn't consistent, as evidenced by its location under the letters “XP” in “Express” on the left. Meanwhile, on Page 37 of the **Refrigerator Car Color Guide** there is a September 1979 image of FGEX 38947—yes, the same car that also had its photo taken in February 1998. We get an important data point from the caption to that photo: a group of these cars was built in 1948. Much of FGE's record library was literally thrown out, so precision simply isn't possible with car histories. Speaking of precision, though, I'll note that the prototype and the MTL 0595 body style are in pretty good alignment. The exception I see is relatively small: the Preco fan isn't visible on the real cars in the place where it is on the Micro-Trains car.

With the help of a Powerpoint presentation that was filed on the Steam Era Freight Cars Group, we can back into the ATP start which is keyed to the cars' paint scheme. It's later than I

thought! When built, the cars were lettered using the “Optic” font. Until late 1951 the words “Ventilator and Refrigerator” were painted on the right. Then “Ventilator” was dropped. It wasn’t until the mid to late 1960s that the Gothic font was deployed, replacing “Optic.” That’s the key for our Approximate Time Period.

Gee, I certainly hope I related this information for the two previous FGE eight packs... Let me check... phew, I did, although the research I did in August 2021 for that pre-order coverage came up with about 1960 for the switch from Optic to Gothic, found in a post by the late Bill Welch. This difference is personally important: if 1960, I can use these cars on my model railroad when operating in “strictly speaking” mode (well, once I rebuild said model railroad), but if mid 1960s, I can’t. Chances are that early in their service life, the cars wouldn’t look as rusty as Micro-Trains has modeled them, also note that FGE took relatively good care of their fleet as well.

Anyway, this narrows down the scope of ORER lookups quite a bit. Presuming that 1960 is the right one for the switch to Gothic from Optic, we’ll start with the January 1962 issue. There we find the series FGEX 38500 to 38999, with 494 total cars. They are described with one word, “Refrigerator” although an end note calls out stage icing capability. The key dimensions were: inside length 33 feet 2 ¾ inches, inside width 8 feet 3 inches, inside height 7 feet 4 inches, outside length 41 feet 9 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 4 feet wide by 6 feet 6 inches high, ice capacity from 9600 to 10600 pounds depending on the type of ice, and lading capacity 2022 cubic feet or 75,000 pounds, except for three cars which could carry 100,000 pounds. By October 1972 the car count for this group was down to 214 cars, and in the October 1976 ORER there were just 16 left, as mechanical refrigeration had largely made ice-cooled cars obsolete.



993 05 016, \$59.95, with Family Foam Nest packaging.

983 05 016, \$68.95, with Jewel Box packaging.

Reporting Marks: CNW 741058 and 742002. Chicago and North Western Weathered Two Pack.

Consists of two MTL 105 series 50 foot steel gondolas (different subseries body styles). The 741058 (Catalog Number 105 44 514, Steel 15 Panel Gondola, Fixed Ends) is brown with brown patch panels and white lettering including restenciled reporting marks on left and small “Employee Owned” herald on far right; multicolor ACI label and white on black double COTS panel on right. The 742002 (Catalog Number 105 44 830, Steel 14 Panel Gondola, Fishbelly Sides, Fixed Ends) is blue with dark blue patch panels and white lettering including restenciled reporting marks, “The Rock” roadname and small “Employee Owned” herald on far right; multicolor ACI label and white on black double COTS panel on right. Weathering, rust effects and “denting” effects on both cars. Approximate Time Period: early 1980s.

The heritage of one of these cars is quite obvious: it's an acquisition from the vast inventory of rolling stock made surplus when the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific, also known as "The Rock," was unceremoniously shut down on March 31, 1980. I don't trust myself to have that date memorized, so I always recheck it. This time I found a short document "Fall of the Rock Island Railroad" that calls out three men who contributed greatly to its demise according to the piece's author, who was in management at the time. Have a look for yourself at the URL https://www.american-rails.com/support-files/fall_of_the_rock_island_railroad.pdf.

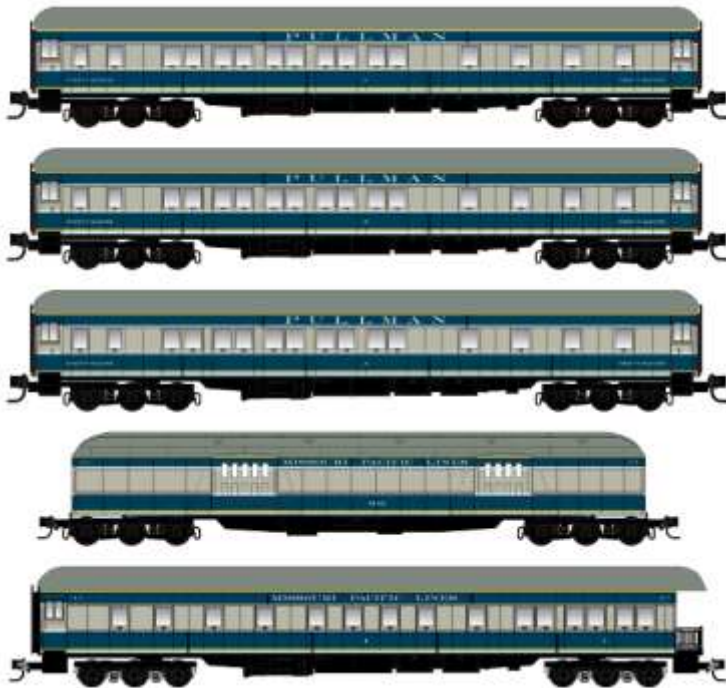
Anyway, the "The Rock" and the stylized "R" remaining on the car indicate that the North Western was in a big hurry to get this car back into service. A quick restencil of the reporting marks plus the addition of a small "ball and bar" herald and out it went.

It's a little harder to determine the heritage of the brown car, but take a look at how many patched rectangles there are: four and then six. Let's see: R O C K, space, I S L A N D. That's four and six letters... and there you go. At least the C&NW painted out those letters before the same fast application of reporting marks and lettering, unlike not covering "The Rock."

Page 103 of the **C&NW Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume Two** provides bingo photos for both of these cars, and the explanation that they were obtained used – well, duh. Thrall Manufacturing built both, though they are not identical. The 741058 was part of the C&NW's series 741000 to 741096, previously Rock Island 180000 to 180099 built in July 1973. The 742002 was in the North Western's group 742000 to 742149, which was built for The Rock by Thrall in 1977, road numbers 680100 to 680299. If the photo date of the blue car is correct – March 14, 1980 – that's a few weeks before the official shutdown of The Rock, but certainly liquidation was already underway. The brown car was found on May 10, 1980.

What we can only suspect and not officially confirm is that these cars were painted into more proper paint schemes not long after their acquisition by the C&NW. I'm familiar with some cars that lasted for years afterward with "The Rock" still visible. But on the same page of the Color Guide is a shot of CNW 741034 in full North Western decoration, green paint and yellow lettering, as of September 1987. There are a few images online that show CNW repainting as well, and even a photo of CNW 741048 with the Union Pacific herald as of December 2003. I'm going to call the ATP at only the early 1980s, but feel free to invoke Rule #1 ("It's your railroad") to decide how long you want to keep these restenciled cars out of the paint shop.

Just one ORER check should do here. Let's try the edition from April 1982. The 741000 group had these dimensions: inside length 52 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 4 feet 6 inches, outside length 56 feet 11 inches, extreme height 8 feet 5 inches, and capacity 2244 cubic feet or 190,000 pounds. The 742000 set had the same inside length and width and outside length, but the inside height was 6 inches greater at 5 feet, yielding a capacity of 2494 cubic feet but still 190,000 pounds. Both gondolas are a bit taller than the MTL models with which they are depicted.



N SCALE MULTI-PACKS: The Missouri Pacific Heavyweight Five Pack (993 02 201, \$199.95) is scheduled to be available mid-month. UMTRR coverage was in the December 2021 issue. This set is packaged in the Foam Family Nest. The individual catalog and road numbers are as follows: Railway Post Office, 147 51 470, Road Number 4182; Pullman 10-1-2 Sleeping Cars, 141 52 470, 141 53 470, and 141 54 470, Road Numbers 1, 2 and 3; and 3-2 Observation Car with Balloon Roof, 143 55 470, Road Number 4. These are all new releases in a paint scheme not previously done by Micro-Trains. Note that "Pullman" replaces the roadname on the three sleepers.



And the **ATSF Two Pack with Fuselage** (993 02 181, \$89.95) is expected to be available mid-month. UMTRR coverage was in the January 2022 issue. The individual catalog and road numbers are: 064 51 013, 95002; 064 52 013, 95009.

I can confirm via online listings that **Runner Pack #186** (993 00 186, \$124.95) of four ADM (Archer Daniels Midland) Center Flows with the ADM "Molecule" Logo was released mid June and is available from Authorized Micro-Trains

Dealers. If you're keeping score, this pack was out of sequence, coming after Runner Packs 187 and 188. If you're not keeping score, no worries, as I am trying to do so on the Runner Pack page on my UMTRR Website. If you think that's fun, you ought to try keeping tabs on sequence the Weathered Packs... which I am also doing.

There are no pre-order announcements this month, which makes sense when considering how many Special Edition pre-orders there are this month! See below...

N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES:



Car #5 in the "Railroad Magazine Years Gone By Series" (101 00 884, \$27.95) has been released. It features the cover of the July 1946 issue, "After The Show." UMTRR pre-order coverage was in the October 2021 issue.

The Montana Rail Link 35th Anniversary Car (104 00 100, \$28.95) is now available. UMTRR coverage was in the December 2021 issue.

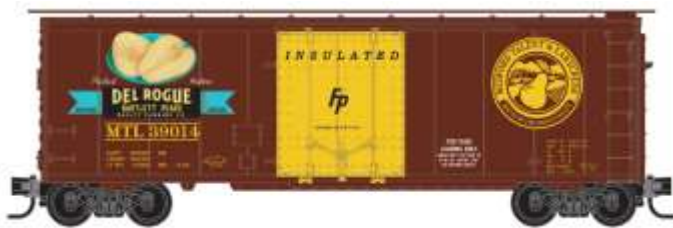


And the next two items for MTL's freelance railroad, the Medford, Talent and Lakecreek, are expected mid-month. These are the 40 Foot Steel Single Door Boxcar (020 50 307, \$26.95, Reporting Marks MTL 39587) and the 50 Foot Fishbelly Side Flat Car with Load (045 50 490, \$27.95, Reporting Marks MTL 63217). UMTRR coverage was in the January 2002 edition.

And now, hold on to your seats, folks, because there are a LOT of pre-orders coming up the track. I will group these by type instead of catalog number, although as it turns out they wind up in catalog number order anyway.

*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 **July 31**.*

Let's start with some additions to the MTL "Freelance Railroad" that were teased by MTL via the official program of the National N Scale Convention last month.



Targeted Delivery January 2023:
021 50 621, \$27.95.

Reporting Marks: MTL 39014.
40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Plug Door, Medford, Talent and Lakecreek/Bagley Canning Company.

Brown with yellow door. Mostly yellow lettering including reporting marks on left and MT&L herald on right. White return instructions right of door. Black "Insulated" and "FP" on door. Multicolor "Del Rogue Bartlett

Pears” artwork on left. Approximate Time Period: 1950 (build date) to early 1970s. This item will have a lowered underframe and body mounted couplers. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.



Targeted Delivery January 2023:

021 50 622, \$27.95.

Reporting Marks: MTL 39032.

40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Plug Door, Medford, Talent and Lakecreek/Bagley Canning Company.

Brown with yellow door. Mostly yellow lettering including reporting marks on left and MT&L herald on right. White return instructions right of door. Black “Insulated” and “FP” on door. Multicolor “Bagley’s Tomatoes” artwork on left. Approximate Time Period: 1950 (build date) to early 1970s. This item will have a lowered underframe and body mounted couplers. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

Why, yes, in real life, not just the alternate timeline in with the MTL Freelance Railroad exists, there was a Bagley Canning Company. We get just a hint of this – establishment in 1912, in the reference to a page that apparently no longer exists on the website of the Southern Oregon Historical Society. Or maybe it was 1927 if you look at Allbiz.com. Or maybe you just get advertising to subscribe to Moody's Analytics if you try another link I found. Locations given for this company include Medford and Ashland, Oregon, and a post office box in Talent, which as we know also has a post office box for a certain maker of model railroad equipment.

But I also found for sale a genuine can label for Bagley’s Tomatoes, a product of Bagley Canning Company of Ashland, Oregon, on the site labelcollector.com. The part of the label that would go on the front of the can is a match for the artwork MTL has on its rendering of the car. No such luck for “Del Rogue Pears” but just as not every freight car that ever existed is documented online, I suspect not every fruit crate label that ever existed is either. It’s more likely than not that the artwork on the MTL rendering for the first of these two plug door boxcars is based on, well, a prototype.

If we were to suspend disbelief about these two plug door cars, they would be, if actual rolling stock, among the earliest plug door boxcars on American Railroads. In fact, according to a history of boxcar and refrigerator doors by Richard Bale which appears in the March 2016 issue of Model Railroad Hobbyist (available for download on the MRH site), the first use of plug doors was as a replacement for hinged doors on refrigerator cars starting about 1948. He further notes: “Although sliding plug doors were not new, Youngstown, the biggest name in the freight car door business, made a big splash in 1952 with an advertising campaign that touted the ‘The first complete, ready-to-hang sliding flush door for refrigerator and insulated box cars.’” An accompanying image of a Youngstown plug door from 1953 shows a device that looks quite a lot like the ones modeled on the MTL 021 series body style. So if the MT&L built plug door boxcars in 1950, they were certainly an innovator! And so much for the fake

“history” I wrote in January indicating that other than the single sliding door car that’s coming this month the MT&L had no other steel boxcars...

But wait, they’re insulated as well, so maybe I can classify them as “Refrigerator Cars” as is done so often. Actually, Micro-Trains did just that: the dimensional data includes the RB designation.

So, as long as I’m faking it anyway, how about an ersatz ATP to go with it? Well, there’s running board removal which could have started in the mid-1960s, so I can go with that, or let’s say a little later, the early 1970s. I’ll ignore the usual “strictly speaking” details like the ACI Label and COTS stencils. I’ll also ignore that these two cars would probably be “illegal” In Real Life since they advertise a specific product, even if they are in captive service as suggested by the return car instructions. The same situation that led to the banning of Billboard Refrigerator Cars – the chance that a competitor’s product could be carried in a car advertising Bagley’s Tomatoes or Del Rogue Pears-- would likely result in the Bagley Canning “Labels” being painted out. Hey, there’s another variation on the theme... which I think I’ll leave to the modeler.



Targeted Delivery February 2023:

055 50 620, \$25.95.

Reporting Marks: MT&L 7343.

33 Foot Steel Two Bay Open Hopper, Offset Sides, Flat Ends, Medford, Talent and Lakecreek.

Black with white lettering including reporting marks on left, large “MT&L” in center, and MT&L herald on right. Simulated aggregate load included. Approximate Time Period: 1943 (build date on car) to 1970s. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

This car is scheduled to be accompanied by an “aggregate load.” OK, then, what is an “aggregate load”? I’ll bet you’ve always wondered about that.

So, let’s excerpt from the conveniently available web page “Aggregates By Rail: An Introduction” posted by the Greenbrier Companies, who just happen to manufacture aggregate hoppers, although much larger than the two bay car that’s coming from Micro-Trains. “Mining and transporting construction aggregates is arguably one of the oldest industries on the planet. From earliest times, man has sought to improve his shelter, and later, his mobility, by mining rocks, sand and gravel to build houses and to improve paths and tracks for wheeled vehicles... In general, nothing has changed. Aggregates are just as dense, relatively low value, and require substantial energy, plus heavy machinery, to mine and transport the quantities required by a modern industrial economy. Where possible, the closest sources are exploited, usually transported by trucks due to short travel distances.”

I was reminded of maps I studied in elementary school which showed the key industries of a given geographic location when I saw the center pages of the June 2022 Micro-News. A

location called “Agate,” at the end of a short branch line, was the only one on the MT&L with the symbol for aggregates, so it’s probably safe to assume in our made-up story that this was the central point for loading of hoppers like the one that will be, well, modeled by MTL. These aggregates probably didn’t go very far, probably not even leaving the railroad’s trackage, so these hoppers could have been used until they were just too worn out to be useful. Based on what happened on other railroads, that could be well into the 1970s.

The 1943 build date on the artwork, while during the World War II years, is probably OK, although steel was in short supply and builders were turning out composite side “War Emergency” hoppers with steel frames and wood sides in greater quantities at that time. Perhaps authorization for this one slipped past the War Production Board.



Targeted Delivery February 2023:

066 50 180, \$32.95.

Reporting Marks: MTL 45637.

Three Dome (Three Compartment) Tank Car, Rogue Valley Wine Company.

Silver and black with black lettering including reporting marks on left. Red

“Rogue Valley Wine Co.” outlined in black across center. Multicolor bunch of grapes artwork on right. Approximate Time Period: 1940 (service date on car) through 1950s.

Oh, this is too much: the small lettering on the far right of this forthcoming car reads, “Micro-Coat Lined at Talent, Ore.” That must have been a way to protect the Rogue Valley Wine from, well, whatever it needs to be protected from, while it travels in this tank car. Other lettering indicates that the car is insulated and that it’s for Wine Only. Since, as we’ll see below, the service date on this car wouldn’t align with actual wine making in the area served by the MT&L, we’ll consider cars of this type from in the “Grape to Glass” series, which were used into the 1950s. I do note that railroad ownership of a tank car in interchange service was quite rare.

I did find reference to a Rogue Valley Wine Company online, but this one wasn’t founded until 2011 so it wouldn’t be the one on the MTL car. According to the “Visit Medford” website, there was a long gap in Rogue Valley winemaking, from the closure of the Valley View Vineyard in 1907 to the establishment of an experimental vineyard in 1968 by an Oregon State University professor. Now there are four area wine trails. Be sure to have a designated driver!

There’s one more non-rolling stock item that’s available for pre-order in the MT&L series, which I note in the “MTL Announcements” section.

Now, to the second set of preorders, which sort of kind of preface the third if you ignore the middle two digits of the catalog number: 101 xx 740. These will be of particular interest to those who previously purchased the “Christmas Around The World” set that Micro-Trains released in 2021... and is now sold out at the factory.



Targeted Delivery October 2022:

101 56 740, 101 57 740, and 101 58 740, \$27.95 each.

Christmas Around The World Modified 1017 Series 40 Foot High Cube Boxcars.

Each car is black with silver roof and ends and red ribbon across sides. Each side has different multicolor artwork showing a world landmark, the location on the globe of that landmark's city of location, and "Merry Christmas" in the language of the country in which the landmark is located. The 101 56 740 car has multiple landmarks of Taipei, Taiwan including the Taiwan 101 skyscraper and the Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial Hall on Side A and Mt Fuji behind a cityscape of Tokyo, Japan which includes the Tokyo Tower, Rainbow Bridge and Sensoji Temple on Side B. The 101 57 740 car has a cityscape including the Burj Khalifa (Khalifa Tower) in Dubai, United Arab Emirates on Side A and the Sagrada Familia Cathedral in Barcelona, Spain on Side B. The 101 58 740 car has a cityscape including Big Ben, London Bridge and The Shard Tower in London, England on Side A and the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco on Side B. "Merry Christmas" greeting is flanked by sprigs of holly. These cars do not have road numbers. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

While we let Santa get his sleigh ready for the next run on Christmas 2022, let's take our own tour of some of the landmarks depicted in this virtual three pack add on to last year's Christmas Around The World Train Set. First stop is Taipei, where we see the Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial Hall, the second structure from the left in the front row. Chiang Kai-Shek (remember, the family name comes traditionally comes first in Chinese) "was a Chinese Nationalist politician, revolutionary and military

leader, who served as the leader of the Republic of China from 1928, until 1949 in mainland China, and then in Taiwan until his death in 1975" (thank you, Wikipedians). His side lost the Chinese Civil War and was effectively exiled to Taiwan in 1949 which created "two Chinas" (or one China and one illegal government, depending on who you ask). The memorial was opened on April 5, 1980, exactly five years after Chiang's death. There was symbolism contained in the structure, for example it's octagonal, since eight is a lucky number in Chinese culture (don't halve that amount, though as the result symbolizes death!) The building is at the east end of what is now known as Liberty Square, renamed from Chiang Kai-shek

Memorial Square in the 1990s to mark the transition to democracy from one-party rule. At the west end of this over 240,000 square meter site is a main gate, the “Gate of Great Centrality and Perfect Uprightness”—I was not going to pass up relating that name. The plaza quickly became a favored site for mass gatherings including political protests.

The skyscraper somewhat in the background but still prominent in the cityscape is Taipei 101, which was the tallest building in the world between 2004 and 2009, when it was surpassed by Burj Khalifa, the featured landmark for Dubai. It’s now dropped to only the fifth tallest building on Earth. Taipei 101 is remarkable not only for its size, but for the fact that it’s built in a region highly prone to both earthquakes and tropical storms. It was engineered to withstand over 200 mile per hour winds and the strongest quake in a 2500 year cycle. Among its hidden features is a 660 metric ton steel damper, hung between the 87th and 92nd floors to help mitigate the effects of wind. It’s also a “green” building constructed to energy-efficient standards. In keeping with the lucky number eight, the section of the building between the base and the spire is comprised of eight sections of eight stories each.

Moving on to Japan, you can’t miss Mount Fuji, a volcano, from anywhere in Tokyo even though it’s sixty miles (100 kilometers) away. At 12,388 feet, it’s the highest peak in Japan. It last erupted in 1707 but geologists say it’s technically still active. Don’t call it “Mount Fujiama” as that translates to “Mount Fuji Mountain”—“Fujisan” is more correct. (Well, I learned something!)

Much less old than Mt. Fuji is Sensoji Temple, founded around 645 AD. It’s the most widely visited spiritual site in the world with more than 30 million visitors in a typical year. Originally associated with the Tendai sect of Buddhism, it became independent after it was rebuilt following World War II. The temple is actually a complex of buildings, only one of which is rendered in the Micro-Trains artwork.

Tokyo Tower was built in 1958. Inspired by the Eiffel Tower, it is used for communications and also has a popular observation deck. It’s painted in International Orange and white to meet aircraft safety regulations. It stands 1,092 feet (almost 333 meters) tall and is officially called the “Tokyo Radio Tower.” Photos of how it’s lit at night are particularly attractive.

Lighting is also a feature of the Rainbow Bridge, officially “Shuto Expressway No. 11 Daiba Route – Port of Tokyo Connector Bridge.” It opened in 1993 after six years of construction. This double-deck bridge carries motor vehicles, a fully automated transit line, and pedestrians over to a man-made island in Tokyo Bay. The walk across takes about 30 minutes; there are observation decks along the way. In December and January, lights cast a rainbow effect on the bridge, lending to its name. (Winter illumination displays are popular throughout Japan.) Other times of the year the towers are lit in different hues of white and blue. Special occasions are marked with other light patterns.

It’s close to 5000 miles—at least a 10½ hour flight—from Tokyo to Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, on the southeast coast of the Persian Gulf. Dubai is the name of both the city and the emirate. The city, now home to some 3 ½ million people, is thought to have begun as a simple

fishing village in the early 18th Century. In 1901, it was established as a duty-free port and from there grew into an important trading hub. Discovery of oil in territorial waters kicked off a period of growth that hasn't abated since, though international trade and business has long since eclipsed oil as the main source of its prosperity. Dubai, the emirate, was among the founders of the United Arab Emirate which officially formed in 1972 after years of negotiations.

The highlight of the MTL artwork is a highlight of the city: the Burj Khalifa. The tower, at 889 meters, or 2,717 feet, or over half a mile, is the tallest building in the world. It is the centerpiece of "Downtown Dubai," a mixed use area which includes high density developments and shopping. The tower and the complex were in part meant to further diversify from an oil-based economy and bring more international recognition to the emirate. Among the consulting design team was the group that worked on Chicago's Sears Tower (renamed the Willis Tower), which was once the world's tallest building – that one is now Number 25 at a mere 1,450 feet in height.

From there it's another 3221 miles or so from Dubai to Barcelona, Spain, in Catalonia Province on the country's northeastern Mediterranean coast. The landmark representing the city of over 1 ½ million people is actually not yet finished! It is the Sagrada Familia, or Basilica of the Holy Family. It was the idea of a bookseller, the construction of which began in March 1882 under the direction of architect Francisco de Paula del Villar. He resigned the position the next year and the project was radically changed with the arrival of the Antoni Gaudí. Gaudí is known as the greatest exponent of a style known as Catalan Modernism, and he brought his unique approach to the Sagrada Familia. The construction period was known to be extremely long and the building process itself intricate. "My client is not in a hurry," Gaudí is said to have remarked. When Gaudí died in 1926 after being hit by a streetcar, the project was less than 25 percent complete. While modern technology will speed things up a bit, the Sagrada Familia will not be finished until at least 2026. But the unfinished work is still the most visited location in all of Spain. Fans of the Alan Parsons Project might recall that musical acts' 1987 album **Gaudi**, which was based on the architect's life and (in my estimation, anyway) Gaudí's religious and spiritual beliefs, for example in the song from the album "Standing on Higher Ground."

It's a relatively short hop for Santa Claus from Barcelona to London. (I think he plans his trip a little differently than how the cities on the cars are sequenced.) There are several icons of the city, most of which are probably familiar to readers: Tower Bridge, Big Ben, a Double Decker Bus, a London Phone Booth (it's red, so probably not a Tardis), and the London Eye Ferris Wheel (a vertigo-inducing 443 feet/135 meters tall). The one featured landmark I didn't immediately recognize is the oddly shaped building that partially obscures the London Eye. That's a representation of "The Shard." It stands 1016 feet (almost 310 meters) high and is the tallest building in the United Kingdom. The site of The Shard was a 1970's era office building, Southwark Towers, which has the dubious distinction of having been in a tie for the tallest structure ever demolished in the UK. The Shard was inaugurated in 2012 and completed in 2013. It is 95 percent owned by the State of Qatar.

And from there we head to The City by The Bay, and perhaps its most famous landmark, the Golden Gate Bridge. Okay, to be technically about it's only partially in San Francisco, as it reaches across the bay to Marin County, California. At the time of its opening in 1937 it was the longest and tallest suspension bridge in the world, spanning 4,200 feet (1,280 meters) and topping out at a height of 746 feet (227 meters). It largely replaced the Golden Gate Ferry Company, which was a subsidiary of the Southern Pacific Railroad. And guess what? The SP was a staunch opponent of the bridge. Among other opponents were those who said it was simply going to be too difficult to build. For one thing, San Francisco Bay is up to 372 feet deep (113 meters). It took from 1916 to January 1933 for support to be gathered, designs to be developed, and money to be raised. It opened for traffic on May 27, 1937. It has in common with Tokyo Tower its official color: International Orange. I won't get into whether these are identical shades of paint. If you're a rivet counter, you'll need a fair amount of time: there are about 1.2 million of them. The bridge was retrofitted in 1953 and 1954 for better performance in the wind (it absolutely does sway) and its original concrete roadway was completely replaced with steel panels during the period 1982 to 1986. An unintended consequence of the replacement of pedestrian barriers on the west side of the bridge is that it "sings" when the wind hits it right.

When the Christmas Around The World Train Set was pre-reviewed in the July 2021 UMTRR, I noted that I'd been to three of the "Original" six cities. I can add London and of course San Francisco to that list from this virtual three pack. I have happy memories of touring with the kids in San Francisco, including a partial walk of the Golden Gate Bridge and a photo with them at the posted sample of the suspension cable (27,572 wires used!); as well as a memory of getting lost in Central London whilst being only three blocks from my hotel. Of course I wasn't going to ask directions. Colleen has been to both of these cities as well and still leads my count as she's been to Paris and I have not... yet. Merry Christmas!

That brings us to the third set of Special Editions announced for Pre-Order this month. The soft metric of success of any given Micro-Trains product, indeed any number of products, is whether there are any subsequent offerings along the same lines; i.e., "sequels." The first seven Military Valor Award Cars must have done sufficiently well for MTL (and all have the "Contact Dealer" banner on the MTL site). So here are seven more announced this month for targeted November delivery...

Targeted Delivery November 2022: Military Valor Award Cars, \$31.95 each.

Scheduled to consist of seven modified forty foot Hy-Cube boxcars. Each car's base color will be black, with varying color bands and stripes depending on the car. The general lettering design differs by side of car. The "A" side will have "Military Valor Award" plus the award name on left and the branch of service with its seal on the door. Set inside the car will be a raised relief depiction of the specific award (not an actual award replica). The "B" side will have a description of the award, its inception date and number of recipients to date on left, the branch of service and a representation of the corresponding service ribbon in center, and a rendition of the award on right. This side of the car will not have a door. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary. Cars are as follows:



101 00 767, Navy Cross / United States Navy.



101 00 768, Navy Cross / United States Marine Corps.



101 00 769, Army Distinguished Service Cross.



101 00 770, Distinguished Flying Cross.



101 00 771, Coast Guard Cross.



101 00 772, Air Force Cross.



101 00 773, Bronze Star.

Let's start this look with the subject of the last car in this second set of seven: the Bronze Star. Its scope includes all United States military organizations and other Uniformed Services of the United States, and it can be awarded to foreign soldiers and to civilians as well. The common thread is "heroic achievement, heroic service, meritorious achievement, or meritorious service in a combat zone," the key words being "combat zone." It was established in February 1944 and later made retroactive to any qualifying actions during all of World War II.

The Bronze Star might have been called the "Ground Medal." It was conceived by Colonel Russell Reader as a counterpart to the already existing "Air Medal." Reeder pointed to the creation of the Air Medal as proof that a "boots on the ground" version was needed. Here's an account from the USO website:

While he was stationed in Washington during the war, Colonel Reeder developed the idea for a new award that small unit ground commanders could award quickly in the field to reward combat soldiers that were in the line for long periods, doing their job in a dedicated, meritorious manner or for acts of heroism. In his book, **Born at Reveille**, Reeder said his idea was to recognize the ground soldiers like the air crews had been with the newly created Air Medal, which was more easily earned than the Distinguished Flying Cross award. "At General George Marshall's headquarters we had one day off every 13 days, so I typed up the idea for a Ground Medal [his original name] and hand-carried it [to avoid it getting harpooned as it worked its way through normal channels] to General Leslie McNair, Commander of Ground Forces." It took a few months but the proposal was accepted and established via Executive Order of President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

There were close to 400,000 Bronze Stars awarded to those in World War II alone and as pointed out right on the car rendition, more than two million total have been issued. Some Bronze Stars have devices that denote the number of conflicts the recipient participated in and received awards in and also additional achievements such as the V-device for Valor.

Like the Bronze Star, the Distinguished Flying Cross can be awarded in any branch of the military. The website of the Distinguished Flying Cross has this introduction: "The medal is awarded to any officer or enlisted person of the armed forces of the United States for heroism or extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight. The heroism or achievement must be entirely distinctive, involving operations that are not routine. It is not awarded for sustained operational activities and flights. The DFC is the fourth highest award for heroism and the highest award for extraordinary aerial achievement.

"With the medal design not yet completed, the first Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) award citations were presented to the Army Air Corps crews of the 1926-27 Pan American Goodwill Flight on 2 May, 1927 by President Calvin Coolidge, for their five ship, 22,000 mile flight. President Coolidge presented the first Distinguished Flying Cross medal, on 11 June, 1927, to Captain Charles A. Lindbergh of the Army Corps Reserve for his solo flight of 3600 miles across the Atlantic Ocean in 1927." The first man in the Navy to receive the award was Commander Richard E. Byrd, but for a flight across the Atlantic, not his more famous flight to and from the North Pole. Amelia Earhart was the first woman to receive the DFC; she was also the first civilian. Awards to non-military now require an Act of Congress. There's a short video (at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-yscKkrosjs>) on the DFC which noted that the design is the same for all branches of service. I'm glad I watched that because I wasn't sure how the other crosses fit into the DFC protocol. The short answer is that they really don't.

The Army's Distinguished Service Cross is their second highest military decoration (below the Medal of Honor) for soldiers who display extraordinary heroism in combat with an armed enemy force. Additional awards of the Army Distinguished Service Cross are denoted with oak leaf clusters. (A person can be awarded more than one; that's generally true of all seven medals discussed here.) Note to self: The Distinguished Service **Cross** is only awarded for actions in combat, while the Distinguished Service **Medal** has no such restriction.

After the Medal of Honor, the Navy Cross is the highest award a member of the United States Navy, U.S. Marines, or U.S. Coast Guard may earn. It's the service-specific equivalent to the Army's Distinguished Service Cross. It was established in February 1919 and could be awarded retroactive to April 4, 1917. The designer, James Fraser, also designed the obverse (front) of the Buffalo Nickel. The elevation of the Navy Cross to just below the Medal of Honor was effective starting in February 1942. Among the recipients were those who were involved defending the attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941. The Navy Cross can also be awarded to members of the Coast Guard when operating under the authority of the Department of the Navy, and to members of the Marine Corps as well. MTL is covering this with two additional versions of the Navy Cross car. Some Marines may have received the Army's Distinguished Service Cross instead or in addition to a Navy Cross.

Like the Navy Cross, the Air Force Cross is second only to the Medal of Honor in terms of military decorations. Quoting from the Air Force's Personnel Center, "This decoration was established by Congress, Public Law 88-593, on July 6, 1960, amended Section 8742 of Title 10, U.S. Code to change the designation of Distinguished Service Cross to Air Force Cross in case of awards made under Air Force Authority. This cross, therefore, is the Air Force version of the Distinguished Service Cross." The award could be earned retroactive to the start of the Vietnam War. The eagle against cloud formation design of the center of the medal is taken from the Air Force Crest. The decoration was originally proposed in 1947 following the conversion of the Army Air Corps to the United States Air Force.

Z SCALE NEW RELEASES: The second set of three virtual two-packs of boxcars has been released. All of these were announced for pre-orders in December 2021 and were covered in that edition of the UMTRR. In catalog number order, they are:



New Release:
500 00 116 and 500 00 117, \$27.95 each.
Reporting Marks: WP 19536 and 19539.
40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Western Pacific.
 Brown with orange roadname on left and large orange feather on right. Yellow lettering otherwise including reporting marks on left and "Rides Like A Feather" slogan on right. Approximate Time Period: 1956 (service date on car) to late 1960s.

New Release:

500 00 106 and 500 00 107, \$27.95 each.

Road Numbers: 21056 and 21200 (will be preceded by "SOU" in website listings).
40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Southern Railway.

Brown with white lettering including large "Southern Serves The South" and road number on left and car handling instructions left of door. Yellow "DF" on door. Approximate Time Period: 1965 (service date on car) to early 1970s.





New Release:

500 00 126 and 500 00 127, \$27.95 each.

Reporting Marks: NH 36325 and 36194.

40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, New Haven.

Black with orange door. White lettering including large N over H McGuinness-era herald on left and roadname and reporting marks on right. Approximate Time Period: 1955 (service date on car) to early 1970s.

There were no Z Scale pre-order announcements this month.

Z SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES:

Expected mid-month is the **BNSF/ex-ATSF Weathered Two Pack (994 05 281, \$59.95).**

UMTRR pre-order coverage was in the February 2022 issue. The individual catalog and road numbers are: 548 44 113, 935017; 548 45 113, 935020.

Z SCALE SPECIAL EDITIONS:

Car #5 in the "Railroad Magazine Years Gone By Series" (502 00 644, \$27.95) which features the cover of the July 1946 issue, "After The Show," has been released. UMTRR pre-order coverage was in the October 2021 issue.



MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS: Here's something that relates to the "Freelance Railroad." The "MT&L Official Collector's Box" (995 01 050, \$19.95) has (quoting from Micro-Trains) "a customizable protective foam nest to hold MTL jewel cases, a commemorative, detailed route map poster, designed in collaboration with esteemed railroad author and artist John R. Signor, and a reproduction souvenir railroad stock certificate, each individualized with a unique 'stock issuance' number."

I saw an example of this box at the



Micro-Trains table at the National N Scale Convention last month. It's a colorful way in which to carry your MT&L Freelance Railroad train to N-Trak, T-Track, BendTrack or Any Other Track layouts. One question, though: will all of the expected Medford, Talent and Lakecreek equipment fit in that one box?

While the CSXT/Conrail gondola has a tie load included, you might be interested in more of them. MTL has a tie load for the 105 body style gondolas available as a separate item. Catalog Number 499 45 964 has two in the package for \$14.95.



DISCONTINUED ALERT: We start our look at the Bye-Bye Board with N Scale items, and as usual with last month's items. And leading off those are both Union Pacific "We Can Handle It" boxcars (038 00 570 and 038 00 590). Add to that the Montana Rail Link bulkhead flat car (054 00 330) and the Ukraine Tribute boxcar (101 00 820). Continuing with the rest of 2022, leaving the building from May in 2022 are both packaging versions of the KCS Weathered Three Pack of x-post boxcars (983 05 018 and 993 05 018), with jewel boxes and family foam nest respectively. And it appears from the "Contact Dealer" banner that all seven of the Military Valor Award Car releases from May have marched out in double time (101 00 760 through 766). Car #1 in the Railroad Magazine "Years Gone By" series is gone from the newsstand... I mean, factory (101 00 880, March). And from January, the NS MOW Five Pack is outta here (993 02 200).

But before leaving 2022, wait a moment... after having the "Contact Dealer" banner applied almost immediately after its official release at the end of May, the Union Pacific TBOX Three Pack (993 02 150) is now showing without it, and the July Micro-News included a photo with the caption "Limited Quantities Now Available!" How's that again? Oh, well, time to remove the Dreaded "D" from the website listings... perhaps for a short time. Wish I hadn't led the June UMTRR with that item! And I suppose the boxed set will be back on the bye-bye board before too long.

Now back to 2021. It appears that the Coast Guard Train Set (993 21 360, November) has left port as its entry is missing from the MTL website. Also gone is the Christmas Around The World Set (993 21 370, November) but that's more obvious since it has the "Contact Dealer" banner on its entry. The Virginian Hopper Weathered Two Pack (993 05 940, October) has emptied out, and that's the last of the weathered packs to be discontinued from 2021. Runner Pack 179 of four Western Fruit Express wood refrigerators is gone (993 00 179, August). Grape to Glass Car #12, the Fruit Industries tank car, has been consumed (065 00 116, January), and

the Union Pacific heavyweight observation car has left the station (144 00 420, April). From 2020, the New York Central single door boxcar without running board is gone (180 00 220, December). From 2019, the Northern Pacific 28-1 parlor car (143 00 320) has sold out.

Over to Z Scale, where nothing from 2022 was discontinued since last time. From 2021, the Southern Pacific Weathered Two Pack of 50 foot boxcars was discontinued (994 05 270, October), as was the second number of the Western Pacific 50 foot boxcar (505 00 482, October), and the first number of the Southern Railway gondola (522 00 371, January). That's as far back as we need to go in 1:220. There remains a generous selection of Z Scale rolling stock including some of the items which were reposted to the MTL website after being found last year.

INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT: I suppose that last month's Union Pacific "We Can Handle It" boxcar with black roadname (038 00 590, at right) should have looked familiar if I'd paid more attention to N Scale Collector Special Runs. But in my defense, there are more than a thousand of those by now. Almost the same paint scheme was done for the NSC, now the N Scale Enthusiast of course, in 2005, NSC Number 05-42, road number 499493. The regular release has enhanced graphics including the now-standard ACI Label for those cars that fit into the time period in which they were used, or have it in reference photographs that Micro-Trains uses.

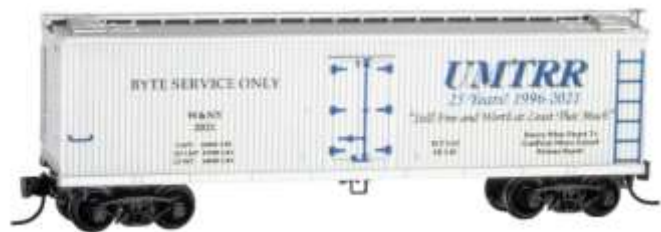


OOPS PATROL: Well, I did say that since I'd only proofread the June bytes once before sending it out, that readers should stay tuned for an Oops Patrol in July... First, the Royal American Shows Warren Circus Flat Cars have Catalog Numbers 139 00 011 and 012, not 193 00 011 and 012. I also should have mentioned that these are the fourth and fifth releases of this item; the first three were in a three pack (993 01 280, March 2016). Wait, that's it? That can't be...

And it's not. With respect to the CSX ex-Chessie Weathered Two Pack issued last month (983 and 993 05 021), there was no previous release of this paint scheme. That was a failed removal of narrative from the KCS boxcar three pack. Also, it was noted that I probably included some irrational dates in the text of the last issue but I'll need to do some more proofreading. One of them was that the Circus Wagons were pre-ordered in December 2021, not December 2011.

FINALLY, UMTRR25 CARS HIT THE BYE-BYE BOARD:

With the last hurrah at last month's National N Scale Convention, sales of the UMTRR 25th Anniversary car have officially concluded. Thanks to everyone who supported the project. The cars turned



out great—I'm biased, of course, but I'm not the only one who says so-- and I hope you're all enjoying running the wheels off of them. What do you mean, running? Yes, that was always the idea.

Colleen and I have one more long trip away from UMTRR HQ planned for August, which will probably make next month's bytes a bit late to your inbox. Until then, do the best you can.

Cheers,
George

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