



IrwinsJournal.com Presents:

The Unofficial Micro-Trains® Release Report Issue #325 – January, 2024

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Hello again everyone! We begin Year 28 of this modest enterprise with, among other things, two automobile cars-- one with a plane (!) inside, a mid-month Ches-C, the release of five pre-ordered Z Scale passenger and business cars, and of course, the Year End Survey of the Top Hits... I mean, Body Styles, of 2023.

First, though, some news from UMTRR HQ: As you read this, I am in process of shifting the website from my previous hosting service to another one. Let's just say my customer dissatisfaction was already up to 11 for numerous reasons, not least of which was the replacement of all live help with a "knowledge base." Note the quotes around that term... Anyway, there may or may not be, or have been, some disruption in the availability of the overall IrwinsJournal.com website and associated e-mails. If you get a bounce or website error, please try again a day or two later. I'm told it could be from 24 to 96 hours of lag time from when I "hit the button" to when the changes are fully populated across cyberspace.

In addition, we've learned that the same technical restrictions that apply to senders to Gmail addresses were **also** adopted by Yahoo and AOL and likely all associated domains (Verizon, Bell Atlantic, etc.) and that means more work here to try to ensure that those of you who receive these bytes through one of those e-mails actually keep getting them. This is **not** my idea of a good time. But presenting the news and views **is** my idea of a good time, and off we go...

N SCALE NEW RELEASE FREIGHT EQUIPMENT:



058 00 861, \$29.95.

Reporting Marks: NADX 3029.

36 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator Car with Vertical Brake Staff, W.S. Reister and Sons.

#2 in the Poultry and Eggs Series (pre-orders taken August 2023). Yellow sides, brown

roof, ends, and bottom door sill; black hardware and bottom sill. Black lettering including "North American Despatch" and reporting marks on left and company name and location and "Poultry and Eggs" on right. Red, black and white Reister trademark on right. White end markings. Approximate Time Period (ATP): 1925 (based on build date) to no later than 1938.

So I figured I would find nothing online about W.S. Reister and Sons of Washington, Iowa, and I was right. Results other than obituaries of other Reisters not named W.S. were less relevant than even that. I can tell you that Washington, Iowa is the seat of Washington County, it's

located in the southeastern part of the state, its current population is about 7300, and it once played host to three railroads: the Burlington, the Rock Island and the Milwaukee Road. A train station—not sure whose— still stands along a single track line through Washington, although I don't think the garage door cut into its west end is original equipment. Ouch.

Well, at least there's the bingo photo, found on Page 51 of the book **Billboard Refrigerator Cars**. The photo is undated and not placed, but NADX 3029 is sitting in a bit of snow. On the previous page it's noted that North American Car bought 150 new thirty-six refrigerator cars from Pressed Steel Car Company in 1925, numbered 3000 to 3149. They had "distinctive doors with only four hinges per door" – that's two on each side, versus the usual three, including on the MTL 058 (and Z Scale 518) body style. "Many of these cars were leased when new to poultry and egg shippers."

The Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER) for April 1928 shows that series with these dimensions: inside length 29 feet 4 inches, inside width 8 feet 4 inches, inside height 7 feet 7 inches, outside length 36 feet, extreme width 9 feet 9 inches, door opening 4 feet wide by 6 feet 1 inch, crushed ice capacity 130 cubic feet or 5830 pounds, lading capacity 1883 cubic feet or 80,000 pounds. All 150 cars were in place at the time, among the relatively small 1100 car total (not counting tank cars, of which there were 2287). The series appears again in the April 1935 ORER, but with no car count. There was a division in the series at that time, with the main series carrying MCB Designation RA and three exceptions with MCB Designation RPA. And how about this: the exception was for *mechanical refrigeration*! I wouldn't have expected to see that in the 1930s. (They were numbered 3000, 3049, and 3064, if you're keeping score.)

What we did see in the 1930s was the closure of the Billboard Refrigerator Era. While we can't be sure how long NADX 3029 wore the paint and lettering of W.S. Reister and Sons, we do know that the practice was out of bounds no later than 1938. So I'll call the Approximate Time Period there, but of course Rule #1 ("It's your railroad") always applies.



095 00 090, \$47.95.

Reporting Marks: B&O 631664.

PS-2 Covered Hopper, Baltimore and Ohio/Chessie System.

Yellow with dark blue underframe and truck frames. Mostly dark blue lettering including reporting marks on left, large "Ches-C"

herald in center and Chessie System roadname at top right. White on black double COTS panel and multicolor ACI Label at lower right. Yellow lettering on hopper bays. Body mounted couplers and metal wheels. Approximate Time Period: 1974 (service date on car) to late 1980s. This item is scheduled for mid-month release.

Another N Scale PS-2, another non-opportunity to leverage the coverage of the Z Scale release (a virtual two-pack, road numbers 604112 and 604116, released February 2007, at right). Alrighty, then, let's start fresh.



B&O 631664 was part of the series 631100 to 631679, built for the B&O between 1955 and 1957 by Pullman-Standard. According to the **Chessie System Color Guide to Freight Equipment**, Page 29, these Class H-7 cars were "probably the most numerous of all B&O covered hoppers at the time." It's noted that by 1978 the car count had dropped to 450 from the original 580; in 1981 that was down to 334 and by 1987 all of these cars were out of revenue service-- but we'll perhaps dispute that last data point shortly. We pick up B&O 631608 from the series as of July 1985, already pressed into company service for sand loading but still looking pretty sharp in Chessie colors. Presumably also in company service at this point, B&O 631304 was captured in August 1987, sporting the paint scheme more like what's on the Z Scale models than this N Scale one. That image is on RailcarPhotos.com. Going back to the beginning, there's a builder's photo of B&O 631513 on the Canadian Freight Car Gallery, taken in 1957 by Pullman-Standard and showing the original class N-43. None of these are bingo photos, however I'm sure Micro-Trains has one.

The April 1974 service date on the car, along with the repacked date of April 30, 1974 (just below the ACI Label) looks like a good call to start the ATP, as does the fact that there's an ACI label. By the late 1970s ACI Labels were on the way out, though some remained for a long time afterward. Given that, we'll look at the ORER for July 1974 for the dimensional data, or I could take them right off the MTL artwork: inside length 29 feet 3 inches, inside width 9 feet 5 inches, outside length 37 feet 9 inches, extreme height 13 feet 2 inches, and capacity 2003 cubic feet or 154,000 pounds. The car count was 534 at that time... but don't expect that they were all painted in Chessie colors.

Although the **Color Guide** has all cars out of revenue service by 1987, the July 1987 Equipment Register still has 110 cars in the main series and another 75 in subsets which differ by weight capacity. The 631664 might or might not be one of the remaining cars. The car count dropped to 78 total in the July 1989 ORER, and they were all gone by the October 1991 edition.

You might have already recalled that gift that Micro-Mouse received on the Christmas Car for 2021 (N Scale Version, Catalog 102 00 170, at right) was a Chessie PS-2 hopper! Well, Mr. Mouse, here it is. Sorry for the delay.





180 00 401 and 180 00 402, \$29.95 each.
Reporting Marks: GN 39816 and 39853.
50 Foot Steel Boxcars, Single 10 Foot Door, No Running Board (Roofwalk), Low Brake Wheel, Great Northern.

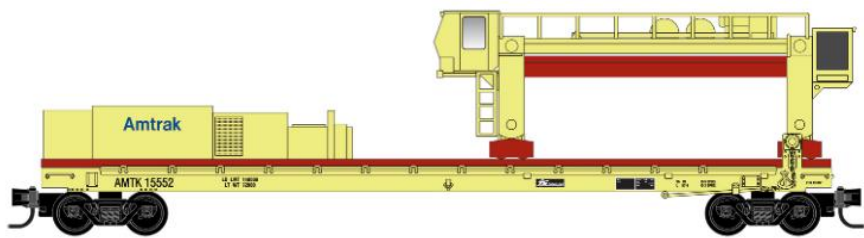
Green (the GN's "Glacier Green") with red door. White lettering including reporting marks on left and roadname and "Cushioned" on right. Black, red and white side-facing goat herald on left. White simulated reflective rectangles at nine

points along bottom sill. Cushion underframe and body mounted couplers. Approximate Time Period: 1966 (build date) to mid-1980s.

This virtual two pack represents 100 cars bought by the GN from Pullman-Standard in 1966, the series 39800 to 39899. Cars from that series, but not bingos, are on Page 70 of **Great Northern Equipment Color Pictorial Volume One**. We see GN 39833 as of August 1967 and GN 39839 behind a barbed wire fence in Minneapolis in June 1968. It's noted that these cars had the following: "Pullman-Standard rolled ends, twelve side panels, panel roof, 10 foot wide Camel doors and roller bearing trucks." As built, these cars didn't have running boards and did have the brake wheel in the lowered position. We also get the inside dimensions: length 50 feet 6 inches, width 9 feet 4 inches, height 10 feet 5 inches, and the capacity, 4940 cubic feet or 148,000 pounds. The extended draft gear reinforces the "Cushioned" legend on the right side of the car. Online, there's a photo of GN 39816—bingo!—on George Elwood's "Fallen Flags" site (www.rr-fallenflags.org), found in June 1967 in Wishram, Washington.

From the January 1967 ORER I'll fill in the few dimensions I usually relate: outside length 55 feet 2 inches, door opening 10 feet, and AAR Designation XML. Curiously, there's no extreme height listed; even more curiously, the line is tagged with both a "denotes increase" symbol and a "denotes reduction" symbol! How's that again? Well, the car count is down to 98 from the original 100...

And 94 of the 100 cars were transferred over to the Burlington Northern as of that railroad's first ORER listing, April 1970. The AAR Designation had been changed to XL, the extreme height of 14 feet 11 inches is given, and an end note, well, notes that the cars have DF or DF-2 loading equipment. The car count was 82 in the April 1976, consisting of the main series of 40 cars with the XM designation, another 4 XLs with "Pallets, considered part of car" (e.g. don't steal them, shippers or receivers), and another 38 cars designated XM. There were a total of 29 cars in the series as of the January 1985 ORER, but they're gone by the July 1987 Register. I don't know if these were repainted for the BN. Also keep in mind that ACI Labels and FRA/COTS panels would have been added to these cars, within a year or two after the build date for ACI Labels and a bit after the BN merger for the panels.



In addition to the above, the single release Amtrak Cement Tie Loader (064 00 500, \$39.95, Reporting Marks AMTK 15552) is expected to be available mid-month. UMTRR coverage was in the

November 2023 issue. And I made an Oops in that coverage, implying, quite wrongly, that this was going to be on the forthcoming 60 foot flat car. I should have realized from the catalog number that it wasn't; it's actually on the already existing 57 Foot TOFC Flat Car, which was introduced in July 1987.

N SCALE REPRINTS:



078 00 021, \$28.95.

Reporting Marks: GN 35432.

50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Double Doors and End Doors, Great Northern.

Red (the GN's "Vermillion") with white lettering including reporting marks on left

and slant-style roadname on right. Black, red and white side-facing goat herald on left. White simulated reflective rectangles at eleven points along bottom sill. White equipment trust information at top left corner. Lowered underframe and body mounted couplers. Approximate Time Period: 1956 (build date on car) through at least the early 1970s. Previous Release: as Catalog Number 78020, Road Number 35449, December 1996.

The 78000/078 body style returns to the MTL lineup for the first time since April 2019 (and we'll see that release with the next commentary), with a car which had its first and only release in December 1996. That's so early that there's no official MTL image of that first run, so we'll settle for an Unofficial Photo of the copy in my accumulation (at right). This is a "not a reprint" by virtue of its lowered underframe and body mounted couplers alone, but the inclusion of equipment trust data in the top left corner makes the "not a reprint" designation official.



My December 1996 coverage was, by the current standards, rather lacking, so it's a do-over for sure here. Let's start with Page 83 of **Great Northern Equipment Color Pictorial Volume One**. "Series 35400 to 35499 was a group of double door cars that was used to transport automobiles... built by the Great Northern in 1956." Author Scott R. Thompson also describes how automobile manufacturers didn't like to use boxcars for shipping vehicles and that trucks became less expensive options; with the coming of autoracks in the 1960s railroads won back a lot of business and automobile boxcars were reassigned to general service.

The same page in the book has bingo photos of both releases. GN 35449, the first release, was in Fort Worth, Texas on the Santa Fe in December 1967. GN 35432, this month's offering, was in Portland, Oregon in September 1973, still looking pretty good 17 years after it was built. There's what may or may not be the ghost of an ACI label at the far end of the car; given the three-quarter view it's hard to make this out exactly. I also needed strong light and a magnifying glass to determine that these cars had riveted, not welded, sides, so there's a delta to the MTL 078 body style. Another is that the cars had 7+8 double doors while the Micro-Trains model has two eight foot doors, yes, I know, a "door thing." I note that the photo of the 35432 in 1973 shows its running board still intact.

The ORER for January 1958 has all 100 cars in the series with these dimensions: inside length 50 feet 5 inches, inside width 9 feet 4 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 51 feet 11 inches, extreme height 14 feet 11 inches, side door opening 15 feet, end door opening 10 feet 1 inch wide by 9 feet 4 inches high, and capacity 4953 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. An end note calls out nailable steel flooring. Since we have the bingo photo for this month's car from 1973 I can jump to the October 1972 Equipment Register, where there are 93 cars in the GN series under the Burlington Northern's entry. The end door dimensions aren't called out in this entry, but they are in the listing in the ORER of January 1978 — how about that, just when I thought they would have been welded shut by that point. (That doesn't mean they were utilized at that point.) The car count was 43 in that issue of the ORER. Only five cars remained in the April 1982 Register, which is where I stopped looking. The later it gets, the more likely that the running board has been removed which would end the ATP.



078 00 031, \$31.95.

Reporting Marks: UP 161109.

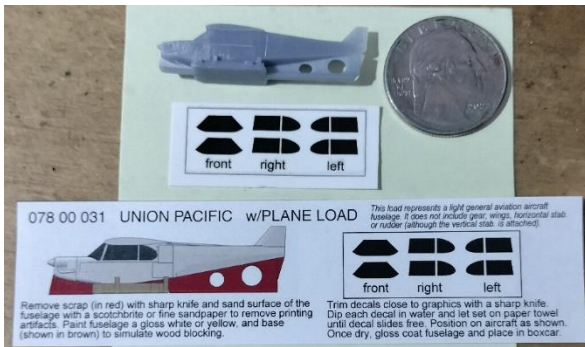
50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Double Doors and End Doors, Union Pacific.

Brown with white and yellow lettering including "Automobile," road name and

reporting marks on left and car class A-50-15 at bottom right. Yellow slogans "Route of the Streamliners" and "Serves All The West" on opposite sides of the car. Lowered underframe and body mounted couplers. Includes boat load, unassembled and undecorated multi-media kit with waterslide decals. Approximate Time Period: 1938 (build date) into the 1940s based on paint scheme. Previous Releases: as Catalog Number 78030, Road Number 161100, May 1997; as Catalog Number 078 00 030, Road Number 161106, April 2009.

Since the open doors are obscuring part of the car lettering in the official MTL image of this run, here's the official MTL image of the both side of the previous release from April 2009 (at right).





Courtesy of the UMTRR Spy Network we also have a photo of the plane load. As you can see from the quarter used for size comparison, this is definitely on the smaller side with respect to aircraft. The instructions seem pretty easy to follow. I have a full size image (4MB) from the Spy Network if anyone is interested.

From there I'll reprint myself from that coverage in terms of an ORER lookup. The January 1940 ORER is our first stop. The series 161000 to 161199 is described as "U.P., Automobile, Steel, Staggered Doors, Z-Bar." Why repeat the Union Pacific name? Because other series carried reporting marks for the Oregon Short Line (O.S.L.) or the Los Angeles and Salt Lake (L.A. & S. L.) or Oregon-Washington Railway and Navigation (O-W R. & N.) so it was necessary at the time to, well, Be Specific. (Sorry.) The inside length of these cars was 50 feet 6 inches, inside height 9 feet 4 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 52 feet 2 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, side door opening 15 feet, end door opening in an arch from 9 feet at the top to 9 feet 4 inches at the widest point, and 9 feet 2 inches to 10 feet 1 inch at the highest point. Capacity was 4961 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds and there were 198 cars out of the possible 200 in the series. But there were only 87 cars listed in the January 1945 Register, which surprised me. I know from the May 1997 coverage of the first run that there were 26 cars in the January 1964 ORER and that the end doors remained in use. I did not note at the time that there is a "door thing" in that the MTL model has two 8 foot doors while the prototype has a door opening of 15 feet in an 8 + 7 combination that was typical of these cars.

However, certainly by the 1960s it's unlikely that these cars' as delivered paint, which is what we see on the Micro-Trains car, was still in place on the prototype cars. So the ATP is going to be considerably shorter in my estimation than the life of these automobile cars. The Railroad Roman of the reporting marks and roadname was replaced by the much more familiar Gothic font in 1939. Lettering was changed from white to yellow in 1947. The "Serves All The West" slogan was replaced by the "Be Specific-Ship Union Pacific" slogan in 1949 and "Be Specific" supplanted "Road of the Streamliners" on the other side of the car in 1953. Any one of these variants could have been used to redo cars in this series. That's exactly what we saw with April 2019's Runner Pack #152, the most recent previous release of this body style, for example, with service date October 1956 (at right, individual catalog numbers 078 5x 170).



Terry Metcalfe's book **Union Pacific Freight Cars 1936-1951** has comprehensive coverage of the A-50-15s including official drawings and photos of both the exterior and interior of these cars. It's quite the treat to view images of the inside of these cars with the end doors open.

Among other things, they were wood-lined inside, roof, ends, and side, and had wood floors. Metcalf notes that this was to prevent damage to the lading and to prevent condensation from getting the load wet. Also noted in the image of UP 161100 is that the inside of the doors had the reporting marks stenciled in small print.

And as for an Automobile Car carrying a **boat**... well, to use a slogan from much later than the 1938 build of this car, "If it fits, it ships." (That's a registered trademark of the United States Postal Service, by the way.) I'm far too lazy to dig this out, but I do recall seeing photos of things other than automobiles being loaded into automobile boxcars, probably on the Steam Era Freight Cars (RealSTFMC) list on groups.io. I'll leave that exercise, and figuring out whether they used the side or end doors or both to get the boat inside the car, to the reader.



135 00 063 and 135 00 064,
\$31.95 each.

Reporting Marks: DTTX
56786 and 56799.

70 Foot Well Cars, TTX
(Trailer Train).

Yellow with silver details and mostly black lettering including reporting marks on left and TTX symbol on right. Approximate Time Period: early 1990s (1992 build date previously given by MTL) through decade of the 2000s. Previous Releases: Runner Pack #133, Road Numbers 56811, 56812, and 56816, October 2017; then a Sixteen Pack of Clean (Unweathered) Cars, Road Numbers 56779, 56782, 56791, 56803, 56813, 56819, 56823, 56826, 56831, 56840, 56847, 56853, 56858, 56865, 56870, 56873, January 2019 (Individual Catalog Numbers 135 xx 061); then a Sixteen Pack of Weathered Cars, Road Numbers 56780, 56785, 56790, 56797, 56805, 56814, 56824, 56829, 56833, 56844, 56851, 56856, 56860, 56864, 56869, 56871, February 2019 (Individual Catalog Numbers 135 xx 065).

At some point, someone's going to ask what Micro-Trains car has the largest number of releases, and I'm going to stop being lazy and actually check on this. I'm not sure this one is Number One on that chart, but with this being the 36th and 37th road numbers, it's almost certainly in the Top Ten.

So yes, I've told this car's story before, in commentaries for both N and Z Scale releases of this particular "interesting double-stack car" (as Colleen and I call them; note invisible sarcasm hashtag, also, get off my lawn, you kids). Trailer Train officially became TTX in 1991 so these cars, built in 1992 according to previous MTL car copy, would never have been marked with the original name of the company, which many of us continue to use (or at least parenthesize).

The ORER for October 1993 shows the Trailer Train series DTTX 56775 to 56873 with AAR Classification FC and description "Flat." The AAR Car Type Code S312 translates to Stack Car, 48 foot well, single well (or FC again), and the load type, which can consist of two 20 foot or one 40, 45 or 48 foot container in the well and one 40, 45 or 48 foot container stacked above. The inside length is, as you'd probably guess, 48 feet, the outside length 71 feet 8 inches (notice

the round-up from the Gunderson spec) and the capacity is 164,000 pounds. There were 98 cars in the group in October 1996 and 95 in the January 2006 ORER. However, given the movement toward a 53 foot standard for domestic service, the 48 foot containers were on their way out by the start of the present decade, and so were these cars. In the October 2014 Equipment Register just 13 were left; that's down to three in the January 2018 ORER and two in October 2020, the latest ORER I have. No "to Present" this time. Add the change in the TTX logo to the "heritage red" and I think the decade of the 2000s is a reasonable end to the ATP.

N SCALE NEW RELEASE PASSENGER CARS: No new releases, but see "N Scale Multi Packs" below for a pre-order announcement which should please L&N fans.

N SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES:



092 44 540, \$32.95.

Reporting Marks: NS 235249.

Two Bay Center Flow, Norfolk Southern/ex-Southern Railway.

#9 in the Norfolk Southern Family Tree Series (pre-orders taken December 2022). Gray with mostly black lettering including restenciled reporting marks on left and Claytor style Southern roadname in center. White on black COTS panel at bottom right. Yellow horizontal conspicuity stripes at five points along bottom of side. Moderate to heavy weathering and rust effects and scrawl graffiti. Approximate Time Period: After 2005, given conspicuity stripes, to at least 2014. Previous

Releases: Technically none, but Catalog Numbers 092 44 531 and 092 46 531 from the Southern Weathered Four Pack (983/993 05 037, December 2022) have a similar base paint scheme.



Here's a companion car, if you will, to the Southern Weathered Three Pack (at left), or at least two-thirds of it – well, if you can see under all that weathering and rust. The reporting marks of those two were SOU 91809 and 91849. Perhaps this release, NS 235249, came from this same series?

Well, no, as confirmed with the data accompanying the bingo photo on RailcarPhotos.com. The car was formerly SOU 91315, part of the series 91000 to 91599 built by American Car and Foundry in March and April 1971. They became the NS Class HCS-38, numbered 235100 to 235674. These cars had a 3300 cubic foot capacity, a bit larger than the CF2970 which is the prototype for the MTL 092 body style.

Conspicuity stripes were applied starting in 2005, and the bingo photo is from September 2013, so that's the minimum

Approximate Time Period. The ORER for April 2013 shows 119 cars remaining in the series, specifically including the 235249 in a subset that for some reason has the extreme height four inches taller than the rest of the group, 15 feet 5 inches versus 15 feet 1 inch. The car is also called out in the October 2014 ORER, but just six cars are left in the series in the January 2018 issue. There's just a single car remaining from the entire group in the October 2020 Equipment Register, so we don't get a "to present" ATP here.

In addition to the above, the following was announced on the Micro-Trains website and via the "E-Line" newsletter on January 16.



123 44 014, \$49.95.

Reporting Marks: TBOX 665822.

60 Foot High-Cube Exterior Post Double Plug Door Boxcars With Modified Door Hardware, TTX.

Yellow with aluminum roof and black doors. Mostly black lettering including reporting marks on left. Red, blue and black "Next Load/Any Road" logo on left. White on black TTX logo on right. White on black double COTS panel on far right. Orange vertical conspicuity stripes across car. Tops

of ends are white (denoting excess height car) with black reporting marks. Approximate Time Period: 2018, plus or minus. Previous Releases (Unweathered): TTX Three Pack with Road Numbers 665118, 665138, and 665141, November 2020; then single releases as follows: Road Number 665113, July 2022; Road Number 665130, August 2022; Road Number 665148, September 2022.

Well, it's hard to read that road number under all of that, ahem, additional unauthorized decoration, but 665822 it is. It's part of the series 665500 to 665999, built between July and October 2003 by National Steel Car Company of Hamilton, Ontario, as their Job 5165. They carry TTX class XHN60, as did the 665000 to 665499 from which all the previous road numbers were taken by MTL. There are plenty of example photos of this group on RailcarPhotos.com and there's what looks like a builder's photo of sister car 665829, seven numbers away, on Fallen Flags. Oh, and there are six photos of the 665822 on RRPictureArchives, the last of which is from March 2018 and shows, ahem, unauthorized additions, right over the reporting marks. So that's where we'll take our "plus or minus" ATP this time out.

While not quite in the class of the 86 foot auto parts boxcars of the 1970s, these cars are still big, with a light weight of 78,400 pounds and capacity of 7528 cubic feet. To illustrate how railroads have changed with the times, this big a car now fits into the Plate F dimensional specifications.

The ORER for October 2020 shows that out of the original 500, 482 are still on the rails. Let's get the usual dimensions: inside length, 60 feet 9 inches, inside width, 9 feet 6 inches, inside height, 13 feet, outside length, 67 feet 2 inches (clearly extended couplers, here!), extreme height, 17 feet, door opening, 16 feet wide by 12 feet 4 inches high. How many of them still have the previous TTX logo? I would say, plenty... And how many are still looking like they just came from the factory? I would say, zero...

Micro-Trains calls out something in their description of the car that might not be obvious: "modified door hardware." From the UMTRR Spy Network we learned that this change was made to enable the depiction of, ahem, additional unauthorized painting, on these cars. If you head over to the "Making of the Micro-Trains TBOX" video on their website (down the left hand column on their home page) and freeze it at about 2:18, you'll see that the vertical bars on the doors are separate parts. On the previously released Canadian Pacific Weathered TBOX cars (last month, 123 4x 073), that hardware is molded directly into the doors, thus, the paint, including the, ahem, well, you know, can be applied right over those parts, instead of the impossible job of decorating them separately. It's more innovation from the folks at Talent! Was I not told about this, I wouldn't have noticed.



983 05 067, \$68.95, with Jewel Boxes.

993 05 067, \$59.95, with Foam Nest packaging.

Reporting Marks: UPFE 458383 (Catalog Number 081 44 030) and UPFE 458649 (Catalog Number 081 45 030).

Union Pacific Weathered Two Pack.

Consists of two 51 Foot Mechanical Refrigerator Cars, Rivet Sides, Without Running Boards. Both cars are yellow (the Union Pacific's "Armour Yellow") with white roof

and mostly black lettering including reporting marks on left. The 458383 has a small red, white and blue UP shield herald on right. The 458649 has a medium UP shield herald above the reporting marks on left and stepped "Union Pacific Fruit Express" lettering on right, with the first letter of each word larger and in white with black outline. Moderate to heavy weathering and rust effects. Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 1978 for the 458649, and late 1980s for the 458383, into the decade of the 2000s. Previous Releases: None.

We go to Page 227 of the book **Pacific Fruit Express** to read of the company's finale: "In March 1978, PFE ceased to operate as a jointly-operated property of UP and SP, and the assets were divided among the two owners. The Southern Pacific kept all of the "old" PFE rolling stock while the "late" PFE cars were split between the Union Pacific and Southern Pacific, including the entire Class R-70-21, Road Numbers 458101 to 458700, which we see represented here. (Most of the reporting marks were actually changed in the period 1971 to 1973 in anticipation of the breakup, but the paint schemes were not.)

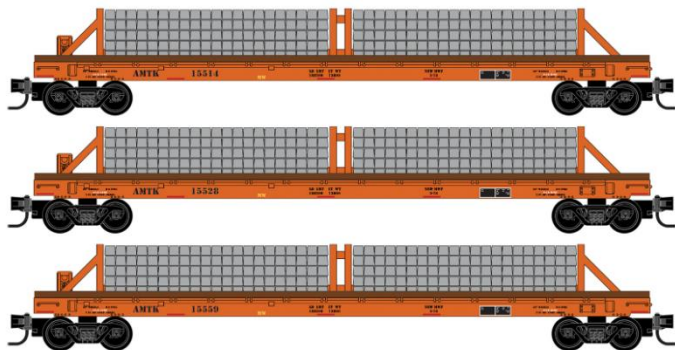
The prototype for the MTL 081 body style is actually the PFE's R-70-12, built in 1960, while the R-70-21s were constructed in 1970, though both classes were the product of Pacific Car and Foundry. Starting with this class, PFE mechanical refrigerators were built with a distinctive shallow slightly flattened arch roof, a delta to the MTL 081 body style, but a somewhat subtle one unless you're looking carefully. I would have missed this were it not described and pictured in detail in the PFE book. There are differences in the number of ribs to the right of the door and that they don't go all the way to the top. The R-70-21s were built without running boards making the 081 series the best choice for this release.

The 458649 is painted – under all that dirt – in the first post-PFE scheme of the Union Pacific Fruit Express. The second scheme, introduced in 1988, skipped the stepped lettering and moved a smaller version of the UP shield herald to the right side; the third scheme which followed, which we see on the 458353, has a smaller medallion. The base color was the UP's standard Armour Yellow in all cases, after a short-lived and rejected experiment with lime green. The start of the ATP given above doesn't count the accumulation of dirt, grime and rust, so adjust accordingly.

The 458353 was found, rust and all, in July 2005 on the UP in Kearney, Nebraska; that image is on RRPictureArchives. The 458679's portrait is also on that site, captured from above in Kansas City, Missouri in May 2003. The rust on the roof is quite evident!

The ORER for July 1980 has the UPFE cars under the main Union Pacific registration. The R-70-21 cars are combined with other classes to result in the series UPFE 457601 to 458700, which had 1036 cars. They are described as "Refrigerator, Mechanical, Cushion Underframe, Load Dividers" with AAR Designation RPL and these key dimensions: inside length 50 feet 10 inches, inside width 9 feet, inside height 9 feet 4 inches, outside length 63 feet 9 inches, extreme height 14 feet 11 inches, door opening 10 feet 6 inches, and capacity 4269 cubic feet or 130,000 pounds. By the October 2004 Equipment Register the car count was all the way down to 150, The car count was 131 in the July 2007 ORER and then 73 in the October 2007 ORER – quite a bit of attrition between single issues. Sometime between then and the January 2011 Equipment Register, the next one on my shelf, the entire UPFE listing was deleted from the Union Pacific registration. By then, of course, the Southern Pacific and whatever it had left of the former PFE fleet was back under one corporate roof – and that was exactly one mechanical refrigerator with SPFE markings. Also by that time, the UP was using a different set of initials for its refrigerator equipment, namely, ARMN, a vestige of the American Refrigerator Transit Company which it had picked up when it purchased the Missouri Pacific in 1992.

N SCALE MULTI-PACKS: Runner Pack #219, also known as the Pacific Fruit Express Four Pack (983 00 218, \$129.95, with Jewel Cases; 993 00 219, \$114.95, with Foam Nest Packaging) is now available, confirmed via online listings. UMTRR Pre-Order Coverage was in the August 2023 issue. The individual catalog and road numbers are as follows: 049 51 970, 35199; 049 52 970, 35207; 049 53 970, 35248; 049 54 970, 35316. These are the first through fourth road numbers for this item, which hasn't been previously released. The reverse side of these cars, not shown in the official MTL image, has the Union Pacific "Overland" Shield Herald.



The Amtrak Cement Tie Loader Three Pack (983 02 234, \$126.95, with Jewel Boxes; 983 02 234, \$114.95, with Foam Nest Packaging) is expected to be available mid-month. UMTRR coverage was in the November 2023 issue, and like the Amtrak single release, said pre-order coverage contains my mistaken notion that these cars would be on the forthcoming 60 foot flat car, not the 54 Foot TOFC Flat Car. The

individual catalog and road numbers are: 064 51 510, 15514; 064 52 510, 15528; 064 53 510, 15529.

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



Targeted Delivery June 2024:

983 00 224, \$111.95, with Jewel Boxes; 993 00 224, \$99.95, with Foam Nest Packaging. Reporting Marks: C&O 126000, 126766, 127039, 127917.

Chesapeake and Ohio Hopper Four Pack (Runner Pack #225).

Scheduled to consist of four 33 Foot Two Bay Hoppers (body style TBD, see text). Black with white lettering including Futura style reporting marks on left and later "C&O For Progress" herald on right. White horizontal simulated reflective stripes along bottom of

side. Approximate Time Period: 1961, based on service date, to no later than 1975. Previous Releases: None. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary. Loads are not shown in the artwork.

Micro-Trains notes in its car copy that the series C&O 124000 to 128999 – five thousand cars! – was built in 1935. That means I can find it in the book **Freight Car Equipment of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway August 1, 1937**. This book, published in 1980 by the C&O Historical Society, was the expansion of a booklet of the same name issued by the C&O in, well, August 1937. The book, which doesn't have page numbers, is instead arranged by the "Plate Number" of the original booklet. The full group of these cars is even larger than the series cited above; it runs from 124000 to 133499, a total of 9500 cars! That's larger than many railroads' entire rosters of rolling stock.

American Car and Foundry, General American and Pullman-Standard all contributed to this fleet of hoppers. The forthcoming numbers in this runner pack correspond to two builds. The first three, 126000, 126766, and 127039, were in the set 126000 to 127499, constructed in 1935 and 1936 by Pullman. The fourth car, 127917, was in the set 129000 to 130799, built by AC&F in 1936. According to the text, "These cars were built according to the Association of American Railroads' Standard Practice for 50-ton steel hopper cars, as adopted in 1935. Cars of this design were referred to by many railroads as 'A.A.R. Hopper Cars.' Most of the cars in this group were built with Dreadnaught ends and extensions which were shown in a C&O diagram in the book. The top of these ends, which have what I will just call, perhaps incorrectly, corrugations, don't align with any current MTL body style. The closest match is the 87000/087 series hopper with arch end. That car has only been done twice: for the Interstate Railroad in 1994 and for the Nickel Plate Road in 2000 (at right). But the MTL artwork doesn't show the arch end so I'm calling a TBD for the exact body style.



When delivered, the cars carried rather large reporting marks and the then-standard full roadname across the car. The later version of the "C&O For Progress" herald – the one that has the straight line to the right of the word "For" instead of the original wavy line (which suggested a steam locomotive's smoke) was introduced in 1954, which would indicate the earliest possible start of the ATP. But there's also the use of the white reflective stripes, and I don't have a good date on when that started.

The service date on the artwork is May 1961, and that's what we see in the bingo photo on Page 42 of the **Chesapeake and Ohio Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** of C&O 126000, as found in Columbus, Ohio in April 1964. What's called "radial ends" are evident in this photo, although they are mostly in shade. (There's a better view of the Dreadnaught construction on the next page via a shot that includes C&O 132272, from that same large group of hoppers.)

It's noted in the **Color Guide** that the 126000 was reconditioned in the early 1950s. In the 1960s, there were several different rebuild programs for these cars, which then emerged as ribside

hoppers, as well as a program which sold hoppers out of this group to a subsidiary which then leased them to the Baltimore and Ohio. The net of it is that any hoppers numbered 124000 to 128999 that weren't in these programs were off the roster by 1975, so that's the latest possible end of the ATP.



Targeted Delivery June 2024:

983 02 246, \$180.95, with Jewel Box Packaging; 993 02 246, \$159.95, with Foam Nest Packaging.

Louisville and Nashville Heavyweight Five Pack.

Scheduled to consist of the following:

- Road Number 1447, MTL 147 Series Baggage Car.
- Road Number 1116, MTL 140 Series Railway Post Office Car.
- Road Numbers 2507, 2510 and 2512, MTL 160 Series Single Window Coaches.

All cars are blue with black underframe and trucks and gray roof, with yellow lettering and

striping. Lettering includes "Palmer Script" style roadname by the L&N) at top center (in letterboard) and road number at bottom center. Baggage car has "Railway Express Agency" with messenger star in center. RPO has "United States Mail / Railway Post Office" above road number. All cars have six wheel trucks. Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 1946, based on paint scheme, into the 1960s. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

Perhaps the first scholarly book I ever read in the general category of railroads was **History of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad**, published in 1972 as part of the "Railroads of America" series. Weighing in at a hefty 524 pages plus Appendix, this detailed view of the company begins at the chartering of the line in 1850 to the November 1, 1971 date when the Seaboard Coast Line increased its ownership of the L&N from 33 percent to 98 percent. Merger rumors were put to rest at the time, but we know how that turned out – see December 31, 1982, when the L&N officially became a Fallen Flag, after operating under its originally chartered name for over 120 years. Although the book seemed dense with facts and figures, I enjoyed it, and read it several times. It's apparently available to logged in members of the Internet Archive – no need to even visit a local library! I'll keep the hard copy, though, which moved from my father's accumulation to mine after his passing in 2013.

From that mostly text volume we turn to a book with mostly photographs: the **Louisville and Nashville Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume 2**. I don't have this as a hard copy, having been my one and so far only experiment with buying the digital version

from Morning Sun. (This results in my first having to find out where on my PC it is, and second, having to locate the Adobe Digital Editions reader in order to open it.)

On Page 16 of that **Color Guide** we have an August 1960 photo of RPO Number 116, one of the series 1105 to 1117. These were delivered by American Car and Foundry over the period 1918 to 1927. These cars had six evenly spaced windows per side, bracketed by two side doors. This differs from the MTL 140 body style, which has a 3/3 and 4/2 window arrangement, and, while we're at it, a bit of a different roof.

Go two pages farther on in the book to find the 1447, a heavyweight baggage car built by Pressed Steel Car Company sometime between 1923 and 1926. It was part of the series 1425 to 1472, which were identical to cars 1402 to 1424 built by AC&F between 1912 and 1924. This was the largest group of baggage cars on the railroad, and they lasted a while: the 1447 was photographed at Atlanta Union Station in June 1968! That certainly helps with the ATP. The cars had two 5 foot 6 inch doors evenly spaced, while the MTL 147 body style has two different sized doors and again, a bit of a different roof. The prototype and forthcoming model both have six wheel trucks.

That brings us to the three single window coaches. They are from the series 2500 to 2516, described on Page 22 of the **Color Guide** as 79 foot 2 inch coaches with end men's smoking room and women's lounge room. These cars were renumbered into the 2500s in 1940 when they were refitted with reclining seats, bringing the capacity down from 68 to 58 passengers, and certainly making the longer distance trips more comfortable. There's a photo of the 2510 as found in Jacksonville, Florida in October, 1964. It was originally the property of the Louisville, Henderson and St. Louis Railway, which went into the L&N in 1929. There was one fewer window on the side of the prototype that we can see in the photo, which had been plated over by the railroad that "attests to a change in the women's lounge area." These cars also rode on six-wheel trucks. The cars that went into this series were all built by AC&F during the period 1917 to 1930, in several variations over that time period.

While all this is nice, what I was really looking for was the start of the ATP for these cars based on the paint scheme. It's noted in the **Color Guide** that the L&N, like many other railroads, used Pullman Green before going to this attractive blue and gray. We can also infer that it would be after 1942, since "at the time L&N assigned names to its heavyweight dining cars, Pullman Green was still being used on the company's passenger cars." UMTRR Gang Member Thomas Davis helps us here, for which many thanks, citing the book **Louisville and Nashville Passenger Trains, The Pan American Era 1921-1971**. "The first use of dark blue on passenger cars is 1946. At the same time as the Georgian and Humming Bird [name train] cars were being delivered, L&N was rebuilding some heavyweight cars into the 2551 series coaches. The Georgian/Humming Bird cars were aluminum clad, with a dark blue window band and letterboard. The roofs in both cases were painted gray (or maybe just un-polished aluminum in the case of the streamliners). On the streamline cars, this weathered to black rather quickly, and the aluminum sides went gray. Some diners, lounges and sleepers were done in 'shadow stripe' to match when added to the trains in the early 1950s. Other heavyweights were painted blue as they were rebuilt, or shopped, and in 1953, the "shadow stripe" cars, and

Georgian/Humming Bird cars were also painted blue, to match new sleepers from Pullman. While I am sure the occasional coach or baggage car remained green on a local here or there, by the end of 1953, blue was the standard color seen on most L&N trains. By this point, the Chicago and Eastern Illinois and the Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis had also adopted the scheme for the cars most commonly interchanged with L&N."

I'm not sure that the ATP lasted all the way to the coming of Amtrak. It's noted on the site American-rails.com that "the L&N was so quick to call it quits that it discontinued the Humming Bird in the middle of its run in 1969, stranding passengers and making news all over the country!" Some of the L&N's passenger equipment went into company service after that, but it's not clear whether any of the specific cars in this forthcoming five pack were among them.

Thomas Davis also mentions the lettering color: "Lettering is variously listed as 'Dulux' gold or imitation gold. While the authors of **Louisville and Nashville Passenger Trains, The Pan American Era 1921-1971** use the term 'imitation gold,' my opinion, based on the photos I've seen, is that Dulux gold (a sort of deep yellow) is correct, but I suppose that is open to interpretation. I need to send an inquiry to MTL about which color they will be using. The gold they have commonly used on passenger cars is more like the pre-Air Conditioning late 1920s-early 1930s imitation gold used by Pullman, not the 'Dulux' color used in the 1940s and 1950s on many cars." Just to confuse things more, the **Color Guide** mentions the word "cream" as in "blue and cream"! Apparently, though, that's a reference to the L&N's passenger locomotives, not the passenger cars.



Targeted Delivery June 2024:

983 02 247, \$121.95, with Jewel Box Packaging; 993 02 247, \$109.95, with Foam Nest Packaging.

Reporting Marks: NOKL 725121, 725300, 725422.

Weathered NOKL With Tire Load Three Pack.

Scheduled to consist of three 054 series 50 Foot Bulkhead Flat Cars. Base colors differ: the 725121 is medium green, the 725300 is dark green, and the 725422 is blue. Mostly white lettering including reporting marks on patch panel on left. White on black COTS panel on right. Yellow horizontal conspicuity stripes at multiple points on car (number and placement varies by car). Includes multimedia large tire load. Approximate Time Period: 2005 given conspicuity stripes to as late as the present. Previous Releases: None. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

patch panel on left. White on black COTS panel on right. Yellow horizontal conspicuity stripes at multiple points on car (number and placement varies by car). Includes multimedia large tire load. Approximate Time Period: 2005 given conspicuity stripes to as late as the present. Previous Releases: None. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

I wonder if anyone else thought of cross-training when first looking at the load on these cars. I have a friend who does more than dabble in this, and a number of years ago she took me to one of the facilities where she coaches. Yes, there were Very Large Tires that are flipped one

or more times as part of the circuit of exercises. But these are in the category of Extremely Large Tires! Not likely to be found at your local neighborhood cross-training location. Unless they are next door to a heavy construction equipment dealer!

We have three cars and three stories here, part of which is that the builder of each car is different and therefore the details of the cars differ from each other as well. But I think the ATP is relatively common, and recent. Let's take each car at a time, in numerical order. All three of these cars can be found on RailcarPhotos.com, as can the information I'm citing unless otherwise noted.

NOKL 725121, part of the series NOKL 725100 to 725149, was found in Altoona, Pennsylvania in August 2019 by Collin Reinhart. It's the former Minnesota, Dakota and Western 1121, from the series 1100 to 1149 built by Thrall in February and March 1978. The medium green of the MD&W is still somewhat visible, as are the small pine tree trademarks of MD&W parent Boise Cascade at the far left and right of the car. (Two examples of the series when in the MD&W roster are on RRPictureArchives.) This car's inside length is listed at 61 feet 1 inch and outside length 70 feet 6 inches, which is longer on both than the MTL 054 body style. The bulkheads' inside lining is metal and their shape is a bit different than on the MTL car as well. The ORER for October 2020 shows a total of 230 cars in the larger group MDW 725000 to 725239. But that most recent Equipment Register in the Research Accumulation is now more than three years old. So a "To Present" ATP is likely but not guaranteed.

NOKL 725300 in darker green was caught in Little Rock, Arkansas in October 2019. It was built by Evans-SIECO in 1981. It also has all metal ends and lengths of 61 feet even and 72 feet 4 inches respectively. The car was originally in the Longview, Portland and Northern series 61000 to 61099, then went to the Hampton Railway in series HLSC 1000 to 1075. Then it was over to the NOKL as part of the group 725250 to 725325. The October 2020 ORER listing is for the series 725250 to 725347 with a car count of 95. RRPictureArchives has shots of the cars in service for the Hampton Railway, but the three examples there aren't in dark green. That site also has LP&N 61081 as it appeared in 1989, and it's already looking worn out in a faded shade of orange.

And NOKL 725422 was found just last March in Arlington, Kansas by that prolific photographer "Rusty Hinges." (Is that his real name?) It was built by Bethlehem Steel in 1979 or 1980 for the Mississippi and Skuna Valley Railroad, part of the series 400 to 484, then went to the Buffalo and Pittsburgh Railroad where it was BPRR 9115, before coming to the NOKL. When assigned to the MSV, it was a nice shade of blue, but only vestiges of it remained at the time it was photographed. It too, has all metal ends and a length, well, longer than the Micro-Trains car. As of the October 2020 ORER it was among the largish group NOKL 725349 to 725777, which had a total car count of 116.

Our Special Correspondent David Grothe wondered about tires as loads also. Here's what he found: "None of [the NOKL cars] are pictured with the tire loads as shown in the announcement. After a search on the internet I was only able to find two photos of bulkhead flat cars with large tractor tires, <https://flic.kr/p/W9gvwR> (Indiana Harbor Belt 4259, photo

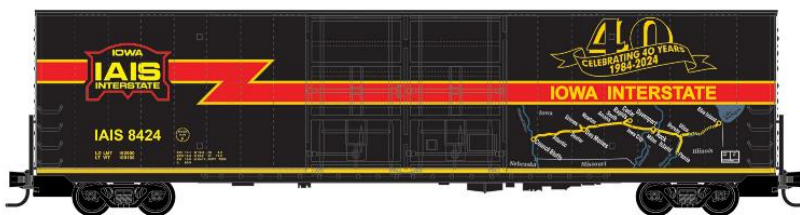
date August 29, 2016) and <https://flic.kr/p/Vy5acJ> (IHB 4260, same date). These have a different stacking arrangement than the Micro-Trains offering but the photos do prove that large tractor tires can and are shipped on bulkhead flats."

N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES: The January Micro-News shows the **Medford, Talent and Lakecreek 57 Foot Flat Car with Micro-Trains Trailer (064 00 190, \$39.95)** as "Available Now!" although it was available last month (and I've got a copy right here waiting to be put into my inventory records). More importantly, the **MT&L/Southern Oregon Orchard Co-Op Mechanical Refrigerator (070 00 090, \$29.95)** is also shown as available this month, and it has hit MTL dealers after a couple of delays.



The truth is out there, no, wait, it's right here: **The Area 51 Four Pack (983 02 238, \$154.95, with Jewel Cases; 993 02 238, \$139.95, with Foam Nest Packaging)** is scheduled for mid-month release. UMTRR pre-order coverage was in the September 2023 issue. I didn't have the exact list of individual items at "press time" so I'll provide incremental information on these when I can, and it'll be on the UMTRR website later as well. Helper Service: If you add this set to your accumulation (or you're a dealer!), I'd appreciate that individual item data.

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



Targeted Delivery June 2024:
102 00 300, \$28.95.

Reporting Marks: IAIS 8424.
60 Foot Excess Height Boxcar,
Single Door, Iowa Interstate 40th
Anniversary Car.

Black with red and yellow lightning stripe across middle of car. Mostly yellow lettering including reporting marks on left, roadname on right inside lightning stripe, and 40th Anniversary banner at top right. Red and yellow "Iowa Interstate" herald at top. White, yellow and blue system map at bottom right. White on black COTS panel at bottom far right.

When the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific, also known as the Rock Island and just “The Rock,” abruptly shut down on March 31, 1980, a non-trivial number of communities and shippers were left in the lurch without service. Over the next few years following the demise of the Rock Island, a number of other companies stepped in to pick at what remained viable out of the 7000 miles of line, some already well-established (Southern Pacific) and some just startups. Some failed and were rather short-lived and some succeeded. The Iowa Interstate was in that latter category, though it wasn’t easy at first.

Among the casualties of the end of The Rock were its Chicago to Council Bluffs, Iowa main line, which ran through Bureau, Illinois, and Rock Island, Illinois, the former railroad’s namesake. After a previous failed attempt to salvage this line, in October 10, 1984, the Heartland Rail Corporation, with the help of a loan from the State of Iowa and other resources, purchased 553 miles of the former Rock Island Railroad from Council Bluffs to Bureau for \$31 million. Heartland’s owners included Maytag, Pioneer Seed, CRANDIC, and Pella Rolscreen. They selected Iowa Interstate Railroad, a separately owned company, as its operator, leasing the infrastructure to them. After trackage rights into Chicago were obtained from CSX and METRA (the Chicagoland commuter rail authority), the line between Chicago and Council Bluffs was put back in operation starting on April 29, 1985. According to the company’s website (iais.com), Heartland purchased the Iowa Interstate outright to combine property and operation. The Railroad Development Corporation, based in Pittsburgh, invested in the IAIS and took an option to purchase it, which it did in January 2004. In 2006 the railroad completed three transactions which added land in Council Bluffs, former CSX trackage in need of rehabilitation, and a line down to Peoria, Illinois. It also dispatches the Cedar Rapids and Iowa City Railroad (CRANDIC) which was among the original participants in Heartland. From a company that also almost didn’t make it as the operator of the former Rock Island Line, the Iowa Interstate has become a “quiet success” as reported by The Gazette of Cedar Rapids in September 2023 (www.thegazette.com/business/iowa-interstate-railroad-enjoying-quiet-success/). The railroad’s carloadings, mostly agricultural, have increased from under 49 thousand in 1994 to about 140 thousand in 2023. Most of the business is online with some but not a lot of “overhead” traffic. As noted in MTL’s car copy, the Iowa Interstate is the only Class II railroad which connects to all of North America’s Class I lines (BNSF, UP, CSX, NS, CN and CPKC).

While the company did have a rolling stock roster of 502 cars as of the October 2020 ORER, the vast majority of which were covered hoppers, the company is probably better known for its twenty General Electric ES44AC diesels, two of which are painted in Rock Island-inspired heritage schemes. The standard livery for these diesels, black with a red and yellow lightning stripe and yellow lettering is the basis for the decoration on the forthcoming Micro-Trains commemorative boxcar. The IAIS herald, also to be present on the car, reaches back to the Rock Island’s long time herald.

Z SCALE: It’s the return of the passenger cars, but first, more poultry and eggs...



518 00 861, \$29.95.

Reporting Marks: NADX 3029.

36 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator Car with Vertical Brake Staff, W.S. Reister and Sons.

#2 in the Poultry and Eggs Series (pre-orders taken August 2023). Yellow sides, brown

roof, ends, and bottom door sill; black hardware and bottom sill. Black lettering including "North American Despatch" and reporting marks on left and company name and location and "Poultry and Eggs" on right. Red, black and white Reister trademark on right. White end markings. Approximate Time Period (ATP): 1925 (based on build date) to no later than 1938.

Please see the commentary above on the N Scale release (058 00 601) but please note that the Z Scale version is on a 40 foot car while the N Scale version is on the more correct 36 foot car.

Micro-Trains catches up with all of the previously pre-ordered passenger cars that hadn't yet been released. UMTRR pre-order coverage for all of these cars was in the November 2022 issue.



The **Union Pacific 83 Foot Lightweight Dome Car (551 00 240, \$29.95, Road Number: 9004)**. This is the fifth road number for this item.

The **Norfolk and Western 83 Foot Lightweight Dome Car (551 00 011, \$30.95, Road Number: 9004)**. This item hasn't been previously released.



The **Pennsylvania Railroad 83 Foot Heavyweight Business Car (556 00 021, \$29.95, Road Number: 180)**. This is the second road number for this item.

The **Union Pacific 83 Foot Heavyweight Business Car (556 00 061, \$29.95, Road Number: 180)**. This is the second road number for this item.





The Norfolk and Western 83 Foot Heavyweight Business Car (556 00 021, \$29.95, Road Number: 180). This item hasn't been previously released.

Finally, the War of the Worlds F7A Diesel and Center Cupola Caboose (980 01 550, \$119.95; 535 00 510, \$29.95) are expected to be available mid-month, delayed from December.



MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS: There wasn't any official news from the folks in Talent, although this issue heads "to press" prior to the Amherst Railroad Show in Springfield, Missouri. The UMTRR Spy Network will hopefully be in attendance.

DISCONTINUED ALERT: Beginning as usual with 2023 N Scale items, perhaps the big news on the bye-bye board is that **both** versions of last month's N Scale Southern Pacific Eight Pack of "Overnights" boxcars (983 / 993 00 827) are already on it. Also outta here are the War of the Worlds FT-A locomotive (987 01 913) and Caboose (100 00 600). Another caboose which has rolled off is the SP Rio Grande Division Safety release (050 00 250, October). And here's a surprise, to me, anyway: the Wescott and Winks Refrigerator Car, also known as Poultry and Eggs Series #1, has flown the coop (058 00 600, December). Also gone from last month are the Conrail Waffle Side Excess Height boxcar (103 00 210), Great Northern Mill Gondola (107 00 051), and Norfolk and Western "Safety Car" (146 00 540).

The reprinted Burlington Northern Hy-Cube boxcar has left the building (101 00 091, February). Both numbers of the Department of Defense Depressed Center Flat Car (109 00 27x, September) have been discharged. The Chessie System/Western Maryland Plug Door Boxcar (181 00 310, June) and Illinois Central Plug Door Boxcar (181 00 330, also June) round out the single release outs for the year just past.

But wait, there's more from 2023! Runner Pack #218 of three AGP/TILX tank cars has been drained (983 00 218, November). The Jewel Box version of the Union Pacific Weathered Four Pack of Center Flows (983 05 052, July) is gone; with the Foam Nest version already sold out, we also attach the Dreaded 'D' to the individual cars (094 4x 351) in the 2023 Release Table. Both versions of the Soo Line Weathered Two Pack went away as well (983 / 993 05 047, April). The Foam Nest version — only — of the Rio Grande Weathered Four Pack of Gondolas has sold out (993 05 036) but the Jewel Box version remains in stock so we don't discontinue the individual cars... yet.

Let's finish 2023 with the Z Scale outs: The Pennsylvania Railroad Sleeper (550 00 061, March) and Coach (552 00 061, April) and the Union Pacific Baggage Car (553 00 011, also May) have all left the station.

Backward to 2022: The Z Scale TTX Well Car reprint has rolled away (540 00 016, October). In N Scale, the CP Rail boxcar (068 00 540, December), the first number of the CSXT/NYC Center Flow (092 00 521, November), first number of the BNSF Covered Hopper (099 00 351, also November), are all gone. The Jewel Box version of the Cotton Belt/Golden West Weathered Three Pack of Center Flows (983 05 029, October) is sold out, and with the Foam Nest version already gone, that puts the Dreaded “D” on the individual cars. From 2021, two Z Scale Sweet Liquid Tank Cars have been drained: the OK Corn Syrup (#2, 530 00 500, April) and the Union Starch car (#10, 530 00 570, December). And that completes the Bye-Bye Board this time.

INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT: UMTRR Gang Member Alex Postpischil confirmed that the N Scale War of the Worlds FT-A Diesel (987 01 913) does in fact have a pre-applied “reinforcement panel” attached to the loco on both sides. It’s pre-painted laser cut wood. Alex also tells us that the engine also includes a drawbar to replace the rear coupler, and instructions on how to that and remove the front coupler. Drawbars were supplied with the early FT A and B sets released by Micro-Trains and if I recall correctly the units are closer together with a drawbar than with a coupler.

I mentioned during my pre-review last month of the Kansas City Southern Inspection Car (123 00 90) that I couldn’t find a photo of the roof. David Grothe did: It’s four cars back from the locomotives, one of which is the Norfolk Southern / Penn Central Heritage Unit! The image is at flic.kr/p/2pgztuk and the solar panels can be seen on the roof.

Jeff Maurer checks in with more on the forthcoming Southern Pacific Flat Car Three Pack with LTV(A)1 Tank Load (983/993 02 245), specifically where I might find a photo. In Tony Thompson’s excellent book **Southern Pacific Freight Cars Volume 3**, the answer is yes...and no. “There is one, and only one, as delivered photo of the F-70-2 flat cars still numbered for the 79700 series of cars on page 246. It is the 79700 in what appears to be a builders photo taken at the Sacramento Shops in Jan 1941 but there is nothing on top of the flat. While the MTL flat car isn’t correct for the SP flat, the lettering does appear to be mostly correct for the SP at the time period. The only possible inaccuracy would be the location of the SP initials and number, because all we currently have is an artists rendition of what the cars will look like. If the actual cars reflect the drawing, then the road name and number will be too low on the car. The name and number should be centered top to bottom on the narrow part of the frame instead of lining up with the bottom of the narrow part of the frame. This may have been changed by MT to make printing easier because of the stake pockets, but we will have to see what the actual cars look like once they are released.”

Jeff also notes, “Other classes of cars built around the same time were much larger... But if you wanted to put a LTV on a flat car, the SP only had a total of 600 50 foot flat cars (all built before 1938 and all but one rated for 50 tons maximum) before the F-70-2 cars were built in 1941, so I guess if you want a 50 foot flat with a heavy military vehicle as a load, the choices are limited.”

Eric Hansmann opines on a frequent question: “What is Box Car Red?” Check out designbuildop.hansmanns.org/2023/12/22/what-is-box-car-red/ . Eric has an extensive blog as well, mostly on HO Scale topics but of general interest as well I think. He models the 1920s.

From the MFCL (Modern Freight Cars List) on groups.io we have another citation to a New York Central prototype—if you count the Central's subsidiary Merchants Despatch Transportation, that is. I do!

Pacific Car and Foundry built 50 mechanical refrigerator cars for the NYC in 1956. They received reporting marks NYMX 1000 to 1039 and 1040 to 1049 and an attractive scheme, one of the few cars with the unusual New York Central herald that sort of came between the oval and the cigar band. Dick Dawson commented on the discussion thread about these cars: "The only difference I can find in the NYC Freight Car Directory between the two groups of cars is that NYMX 1000 to 1039 had an inside height of 7 feet 10 inches while NYMX 1040 to 1049 were 8 feet high inside. The outside dimensions shown in the diagrams for the two lots were identical. Both had 70 ton trucks and 6 foot sliding plug doors."

This series has been modeled by MTL in N Scale twice: first in June 1995, Road Number 1025, Catalog 69080, then in June 2004, road number 1049 (at right), Catalog 069 00 080. MTL did the same road numbers as a virtual two pack in Z Scale in February 2014 (Catalog 548 00 03x).



Builder photos are on the NYCSHS photo archives, at this link (glue it together if need be): nycshs.omeka.net/search?query=Nymx&query_type=exact_match&record_types%5B%5D=Item&submit_search=Submit.

This is way too late to provide a bingo photo, George:

The April 1967 issue of **Model Railroader**, another stop on my long-duration chronological perusal of every issue of MR's 75th Anniversary DVD, contains a prototype image of Canadian Northern refrigerator car 16272, which was offered by Micro-Trains in May 2009 (official MTL photo at right). This car carried "natural



ice" from ponds and lakes. It's noted that the door below the roadname provided easy access to the ice bunker for removal of sticks, mud and other debris that dropped to the bottom of the compartment as the ice melted. The photo was included in an overview of the use of refrigeration, from ordinary boxcars with sawdust and a layer of ice in them, to the traditional ice-cooled cars to the latest in mechanical refrigeration. By the time of the article, mechanicals had largely replaced the ice-cooled cars, but "cryogenics" were still some years in the future. Just after that article is another one showing two Pacific Fruit Express cars, one of which is PFE 301213, a class R-70-12 51 foot mechanical refrigerator, which is the prototype for the Micro-Trains 70000/070 and 081 body style in N Scale and the 549 body style in Z Scale. An example of the MTL N Scale model, from 2003, is at right.



OOPS PATROL: An Oops from October: I put the wrong prefix on the individual catalog numbers of the Burlington Northern Weathered Covered Hopper Three Pack (983/993 05 064); they are **099** 4x 091.

FINALLY, THE 2023 BODY STYLE SURVEY: Hi, I'm not Casey Kasem, and this isn't **American Top 40**. Welcome to our annual countdown of the top body styles released by Micro-Trains over the year 2023.

Before we get into this year's survey, let's recap the top body styles for 2022. In Z Scale, the Number Three body style was the 502 series 40 Foot Plug Door Boxcar. There was a three-way tie for the Number Two slot, shared by the 511 series 50 Foot Exterior Post Plug Door Boxcar with Plug Door, the 520 series Despatch Stock Car, and the 540 series Gunderson Well Car. That does assume that all of the 511 series cars were actually issued in 2022 as originally reported, since four of the twelve cars have since been announced as available this year as well. All along in the Number One spot was the 500 series 40 Foot Single Door Boxcar. In N Scale, the Number Three body style for 2022 was the 047 series 40 Foot Wood Refrigerator Car with End Mounted Brake Wheel. At Number Two was the 045 series 50 Foot Fishbelly Side Flat Car. And Number One for the year was the Modified 101 series 40 Foot Hy-Cube Boxcar. Will that body style keep its number one position for a second straight year? Or will something else move into the top spot? What was the top body style in a relatively quiet year for Z Scale?

Let's count them down, starting with Z Scale, which had 42 releases on 13 different series for 2023. There is a four-way tie for third place, with three releases each: the 525, 533, 550 and 552 body styles, or the 40 Foot Flat Car, Offset Two Bay Hopper, Streamlined Sleeper, and Streamlined Coach. Only three body styles had more than three releases in 2023. One of those three gets a UMTRR Asterisk, because among the seven releases, four of them were originally reported as being released in December 2022. So we'll put the 511 body style, the 50 foot x-post boxcar with plug door, in the Number Two position. In the Number One slot are two other body styles which also have seven releases each, but they were definitely all released only in the calendar year. Numerically first is the 518 body style, the 40 foot wood double sheathed refrigerator car, mostly consisting of War of the Worlds releases. And also in that tie for the number one spot among Z Scale items is the body style that's also Number One on the Locomotive Chart this year: the 980 series F7A Diesel.

That brings us to N Scale, where we have a brand new number one body style, among the 66 different series that totaled to 361 different releases, counting each item in a multi-pack individually.

At Number Five, we have the 54 Foot General Service Tank Car, the 110 body style.

Before we continue, let's have a look at the top of the other charts. We've already noted that Number One on the Locomotive Chart is the Z Scale F7A Diesel. Number One on the Passenger Car Chart is the 142 Series Pullman 12-1 Sleeping Car. And Number One on the Intermodal Chart is the 451 Series 45 Foot Smooth Side Trailer. And making perhaps its best ever showing in the Year End Survey, that same trailer is tied for fourth place with the 094

Series Three Bay Center Flow with Trough Hatches. All alone at Number Three is the former Number One body style, the 105 Series 50 Foot Gondola, which held the top spot in both 2021 and 2022.

At Number Two, moving up three positions from last year, is the 108 Series Three Bay Open Hopper, helped by a late surge through the BNSF Eight Pack released in December.

There's only one spot left to tell you about, and it's the Top Spot. And it might be Tanks A Lot for this particular body style in 2023, as nine of the thirty releases for this car during the survey period came with those military loads. But we can't leave out the nine other cars that were released with the appliances needed to carry ribbon rail, either. All in all, it's a move from Number Two in 2022 to Number One in 2023 for the 045 Body Style, 50 Foot Fishbelly Side Flat Car.

And there you have it, the top body styles for the year just past. I'm not Casey Kasem, and until next time, keep your feet on the ground and keep reaching for the stars! And do the best you can.

Cheers,
George

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