



IrwinsJournal.com Presents:

The Unofficial Micro-Trains[®] Release Report Issue #330 – June, 2024 – *Early Edition*

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Hello again everyone! This is an “Early Edition” of the June issue, for two reasons: First, we’re attending the National N Scale Convention; second, as this goes “to press” there are still issues with the Micro-Trains website, meaning that I can’t get all the information I usually do to prepare these bytes. (That also means that I needed to pull some graphics from the June Micro-News instead of the website.) This “Early Edition” doesn’t include the mid-month Weathered Releases, which will likely be announced just as we’re heading down from UMTRR HQ to Bethlehem for the festivities. It also doesn’t include the Discontinued Alert or individual catalog number detail for June’s multipacks. We’ll pick up this information in the July UMTRR. Off we go...

N SCALE NEW RELEASE FREIGHT EQUIPMENT:



025 00 316, \$29.95.

Reporting Marks: CSXT 140903.

50 Foot Exterior Post Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, CSX Transportation/ex-Seaboard System.

Black with mostly yellow lettering including large Seaboard System

roadname and CSXT reporting marks on left. Yellow and red herald on right. White on black COTS panel at bottom right. Approximate Time Period (ATP): no earlier than 1986, or 1987 based on service date on car, to no later than 1991. This item has a lowered underframe and body mounted couplers.

Well, it didn’t take long for me to take back my comment about black boxcars with respect to last month’s Reading, Blue Mountain and Northern release! Seaboard System—the name given in 1982 to what was previously called “Family Lines”—used it on some of its boxcars. And the Family Lines had used black as well. Perhaps to be fair... to myself... it had been years between SBD and RBMN boxcars in black. We see here an example of a quick relettering without full repainting, which with CSX Transportation was a common occurrence.

The Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER) for July 1989 has the series CSXT 140889 to 140971, described as “Box, Steel, Sheet Metal Lining, Lading Strap Anchors, Anti-Pilferage Locking Device” with AAR Designation XM. The key dimensions were as follows: inside length 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 11 feet, outside length 55 feet 6 inches, extreme height 15 feet 5 inches, door opening 10 feet, and capacity 5277 cubic feet or 154,000 pounds. There were only seven cars in the main series at the time, plus three exceptions

marked just “Box, Steel.” In that same CSX Transportation listing, there are also Seaboard System series SBD 140890 to 140926 and SBD 140931 to 140965, containing 15 more cars and having the same dimensions as the CSX set. Could this have been just a change in reporting marks? It’s possible but I couldn’t confirm this. The July 1989 ORER is the first in my Research Accumulation in which there is a CSX registration which actually has CSXT lettered cars; the previous one on the shelf, July 1987, has the CSX listing but no cars yet with CSXT reporting marks.

The July 1989 ORER is also the only one in which I see this CSX series: it’s completely gone by the next one on the shelf, October 1991. And how about that for a short ATP. No wonder a bingo photo eluded me. (Incremental Information always appreciated.) I’ll point out, though, that pretty much any restenciling job should include at least a little bit of weathering on the base car. An example of this is the CSX Family Tree car #8, a Seaboard System/CSXT boxcar of a different type (180 00 330, May 2022, at right). The modeler can address this if desired: just mask the CSX reporting marks and apply just a bit of dirt and grime. Since that base Seaboard System paint wouldn’t have been applied any earlier than 1982, just a few years before the coming of CSX, a major weathering job isn’t required.



025 00 406, \$29.95.

Reporting Marks: CNW 156069.

50 Foot Exterior Post Boxcars, Single Youngstown Door, Union Pacific/Chicago and North Western.

Brown with aluminum roof. Mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and class code B-70-62 at bottom right. Small red, white and blue Union Pacific shield herald on right. Orange horizontal conspicuity stripes at six points along bottom of side. Approximate Time Period: after 2005 given conspicuity stripes to as late as the present. This item has a lowered underframe and body mounted couplers.

The spartan scheme with heritage reporting marks returns here. We last saw it a year ago with a UP boxcar with Southern Pacific reporting marks (025 00 306, at right). Same idea here, although this time with conspicuity stripes and without the cushion underframe (although the lowered underframe and body mounted trucks are still part of this body style).



The bingo photo of this car, found on RRPictureArchives, shows something else that isn’t on the model: additional unauthorized decoration. Union Pacific doesn’t allow manufacturers to include graffiti on releases bearing its roadnames, but of course they can’t enforce this at the individual modeler level. The car was found in November 2008 in Fort Worth, Texas.

According to RailcarPhotos.com, the series CNW 155600 to 156199 was built by Berwick Forge and Fabricating in August and October 1977. They were assigned class B-70-62 when assimilated into Borg... I mean, merged into the UP. The site has several other examples of cars in this series as redone, some with no, ahem, incremental paint. There are also photos of cars in earlier CNW schemes. Micro-Trains did one of those earlier schemes in October 2010 (025 00 710, Reporting Marks CNW 155898, at right).



I'll cheat a little and copy and paste myself from that October 2010 coverage to provide the information out of the April 1981 ORER. The cars are described as "Box, Steel, Cushion Underframe, Odd and Even Numbers, 25K" and numbered from 155600 to 156199. There were 585 cars in the group at the time. The inside length was 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 10 feet 7 inches, outside length 57 feet 11 inches, extreme height 14 feet 11 inches, door opening 10 feet, and capacity 5106 cubic feet or 152,000 pounds. Interestingly, that cubic foot number doesn't align with the 5077 cubic foot capacity noted on RailcarPhotos. The prototype for the MTL 025 body style is an FMC 5077 cubic foot boxcar, and there are differences, most notably the ends, though the roof is a bit more "peaked" as well.

As of January 2006, more in keeping with the ATP of this month's car as painted, there were a total of 367 cars in the group CNW 155600 to 156199 under the UP's registration. The car count was 78 in the October 2020 Equipment Register, so we might just squeak into The Present.



105 00 680, \$29.95.

Reporting Marks: EL 16575.

50 Foot 15 Panel Fishbelly Side Gondola, Fixed Ends, Erie Lackawanna.

Black with white lettering including reporting marks on left, roadname in center, and small diamond herald on right. Simulated load included. Approximate Time Period: 1964 to mid-1980s.

George Elwood's "Fallen Flags" site (rr-fallenflags.org) has a considerable amount of space devoted to the Erie Lackawanna and its predecessor lines. Included in that section is a table of EL gondolas, including the series 16500 to 16599. These were 70 ton gondolas with wood floors, "solid" ends, and Wine loading bar anchors ("Wine" is a brand here, not a beverage). Alas, what's not here is a bingo photo, nor is there one anywhere else I checked.

We see a build date of April 1964 on this car. It's not in the January 1964 ORER; the next one in the Research Accumulation is from January 1967 so we'll need to go there. The series EL 16500 to 16599 is described much the same way as how George Elwood put it: "Gondola, Solid Ends, Steel Sides, Flat Bottom, Wood Floors" and the AAR Designation is GB. An end note calls out the Wine loading bar anchors. These were the key dimensions: inside length 52 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 3 feet 6 inches, outside length 54 feet 4

inches, extreme height 7 feet 6 inches, and capacity 1761 cubic feet or 140,000 pounds. Of the possible one hundred cars, 96 were in the main series while there were three exceptions which had coke racks and the AAR Designation GBC.

Eighty-one of these gondolas including the three with coke racks were conveyed to Conrail as shown in the April 1976 Equipment Register. Only thirteen, again including the three in coke service, remained in EL markings in the April 1981 ORER. In the April 1985 Register, several EL groups of gondolas were combined into a listing for EL 16000 to 16989, with a total car count of 16. That's where I stopped looking. "Mid-1980s" seems reasonable for the end of the ATP, but strictly speaking, you'd want to add ACI Labels and COTS panels as appropriate for your layout's specific time period. Given that the cars were around 12 years old when moved to Conrail they could have been repainted. Conrail's GE51 class of cars were 15 panel gondolas with fixed ends and fishbelly sides, so that could be where these EL cars went.

The UMTRR Spy Network reports that if you take the two piece load and join the pieces at the flat part, you have something on the order of a large turbine. We'll let the reader confirm this.



107 00 090, \$33.95.

Road Number: 439048 (will be "PRR 439048" in UMTRR website listings).

65 Foot Mill Gondola, Pennsylvania Railroad.

Brown (the PRR's "Freight Car Color") with white lettering including roadname and road number on left and circle keystone on right. PRR Class G26 on right. Metal wheels and body mounted couplers. Simulated H-Beam steel load included. Approximate Time Period: 1930 (build date) through the decade of the 1950s. Micro-Trains recommends a minimum 15 inch curve radius for this item.

The bingo photo for this car is on Rob's Pennsy Page (prp.railfan.net) on the page which covers the PRR's Class G26 gondolas. These were built at the railroad's Altoona, Pennsylvania shops in 1930 and 1931, the series 439009 to 440709. That's 1700 gondolas, more in this one class than many railroads had on their entire roster of freight cars.

The 439048 appears in an official company photo, taken from a 3/4 perspective with the side mounted brake wheel prominent in the view. There's also an equipment diagram which provides plenty of dimensional data: inside length 65 feet 6 inches, inside height 3 feet 6 inches, inside width 7 feet 7 1/2 inches, length over striking plates 67 feet 9 inches, coupled length 70 feet 3 inches, extreme width 9 feet 5 3/4 inches, extreme height 6 feet 11 and 7/8 inches (or 1/8 inch short of 7 feet even). The capacity of the "box" was 1738 cubic feet to which another 409 cubic feet of "heap" capacity could be added. The car weighed 62,000 pounds and had a weight capacity of 140,000 pounds.

From the drawing we see 20 panels and drop ends, same as the MTL 107 body style, but most of the side ribs don't reach all the way to the bottom of the side, and the closest ribs to each end are wider than the others. There's also the use of grab irons instead of a side ladder. I note that there is an N Scale model of this exact G26 gondola available from another manufacturer.

The page also has car counts from ORERs: in October 1944 there were 1650, and in October 1963 there were 1630. There was a big drop from there: the April 1968 ORER has 581. By then, these cars would almost certainly have been repainted from the original "circle keystone" livery to the shadow keystone version, which was introduced in 1964, or even the plain keystone version, which was used starting in 1960. At least one, the 439888, was still in its as delivered decoration as of October 1962; that photograph is on Page 80 of the **PRR Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume Three**.

Oh, and about that simulated steel load: Yes, there **is** such a thing as H-beams, and no, they are **not** I-beams turned on their sides! There is an explanation of the fourteen (!) differences between the two online: see www.machinemfg.com/h-beam-vs-i-beam-steel/ for that.



123 00 120, \$51.98.

Reporting Marks: NS 471161.

60 Foot High-Cube Exterior Post Double Plug Door Boxcar, Norfolk Southern.

Brown with mostly white lettering including NS Speed Lettering herald and reporting marks on left and class code B224 at bottom right. White on black COTS panel on bottom right. Black on yellow "This Car Excess Height" warning at bottom left and bottom right. Black lettering on white band at top of ends. Metal wheels and body mounted couplers. Approximate Time Period: 1999 (build date) to at least 2005, then add conspicuity stripes and go as late as the present. This item is expected to be available mid-month and is not on Micro-Trains dealer standing orders.

Here's a bit of a surprise and perhaps another example of Economies of Scale from the folks in Talent. Given the virtual two pack of Union Pacific cars and the GATX car and the weathered TBOX cars, why not get at least one more roadname out as long as the tooling is in use? But mind that "not on standing orders" note: that might mean a smaller than usual supply. You've been cautioned. This is actually the first non-weathered release in this body style that wasn't a pre-order based item.

According to RailcarPhotos.com NS 471161 belongs to the series 471150 to 471249, built in 1999 by Gunderson's Concaril, Mexico Plant in December 1999. The bingo photo, in the paint scheme which matches the MTL artwork, was taken in January 2007. The car doesn't yet have conspicuity stripes. There are several other examples of this group of cars on RailcarPhotos as well, including NS 471199 as of August 2022 with some, ahem, additional decoration and badly worn paint at the top of the end we can see. The 123 body style is based on a National Steel Car prototype; this car has eight posts (ribs) either side of the double doors while the MTL car

has seven, and the top of the ends and door details also differ a bit between the model and the real thing.

The ORER for January 2002 shows this group of Class B224 cars combined with the Class B223 cars, which were built at the same facility in October and November 1999, to result in the series NS 470950 to 471249. These cars are big: inside length 60 feet 9 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 13 feet 1 inch, outside length 68 feet 5 inches, extreme height 16 feet 10 inches, door opening 16 feet, and capacity 7568 cubic feet with a gross rail weight of 286,000 pounds. There were 300 total cars at the time. Jumping to the October 2020 Equipment Register, there's a different prototype series to which this car belongs: NS 471150 to 471319, of 165 cars. That looks sufficient enough to take us out to The Present, but don't forget those conspicuity stripes.



In addition to the above, the **Santa Fe Flat Car with Boat Load (045 00 750, \$29.95, Reporting Marks AT&SF 91500)** is now available. UMTRR pre-order coverage was in the February 2024 issue.

At "press time" I didn't have any updates on the GATX/Laurinburg and Southern "TBOX" boxcar (123 00 080) which was originally scheduled for release in mid-April.

N SCALE REPRINTS:



100 00 471, \$32.98.

Reporting Marks: ATSF 999212.

36 Foot Steel Riveted Side Caboose with Offset Cupola, Santa Fe.

Red with white side grab irons. Yellow stripe across car. Large yellow circle cross herald below cupola. White reporting marks at bottom center. White on black COTS stencil right of reporting marks.

Approximate Time Period: in general for the prototype series, mid-1960s to as late as the 1990s. Previous Release: Road Number 999229, September 2020.

First, let's have a look at that Previous Release, which had a white "Work For Safety 1868 -1976" logo on and an ACI Label in center. This month's item has neither, easily qualifying as a "not a reprint."





But it should be noted that Catalog 100030/100 00 030, released in September 1996 and December 2000 with Road Numbers 999245 and 999131 (the latter at left), are also similar to this month's offering. MTL didn't yet include windows with cabooses when those waycars were released.

The Santa Fe's CE-1 class of waycars (that's the railroad's term for cabooses) had a long history, but for this review, we'll start at the rebuilding of these cars which took place between 1966 and 1968, resulting in the series 999000 to 999314. Back in 2006, S. Roger Kirkpatrick compiled a list of "Captive Cabooses" from multiple Santa Fe classes, including this one, and the data includes when they were rebuilt. When this work was done, the number and type of windows were changed. Cushion underframes were also added, and to designate this the paint color was changed from the traditional mineral red (i.e. brown) to a much brighter red. These cars were also in pool service, as opposed to each crew having an assigned caboose. By interpolating the chart in the "Captive Cabooses" page, we get a 1968 rebuild date for the 999212, assuming that they were done in numerical order, good enough to start the ATP. (The 999212 is not on that "Captive Caboose" list.) The MTL 100 body style is based on a Missouri Pacific/Texas and Pacific prototype so there are some differences, the window count and arrangement being the most notable.

The overall end of the ATP for this class of waycars might be best summarized by Kirpatrick, writing on the same "Captive Cabooses" page on atsf.railfan.net: "Santa Fe's fleet of waycars shrank from hundreds of cars in a dozen classes in the mid-1980s to less than one hundred in only two classes (CE-8 and CE-11) at the time of the BNSF merger a decade later." But bingo photos of this particular car on RRPictureArchives suggest that the end may have come sooner than that. There are two shots of the 999212 – literally coming and going-- at the end of a train in Cajon, California in July 1977. The car looks like it's already ready for retirement. It also has a white cupola instead of a red one, on which the "212" is stenciled in black on both ends. The paint on the sides is worn considerably, to the point where it's hard to make out the road number.



105 00 527, \$27.95.

Reporting Marks: CNW 741042.

50 Foot 15 Panel Gondola, Fixed Ends, Fishbelly Sides, Union Pacific/Chicago and North Western.

Brown (the UP's "synthetic red") with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and class code G-100-80 at bottom right. Small red, white and blue Union Pacific shield herald on right. Orange vertical conspicuity stripes at seven points along of side. Approximate Time Period: after 2005 given conspicuity stripes to mid-decade of the 2010s. Previous Release: Road Number 741048, December 2010.

When this car (MTL image at right) was previously run, I found a bingo on RailcarPhotos.com, caught in Texas in December 2003. This is a 15 panel gondola with fixed ends, to be sure, and it's a UP Class G-100-80 if I'm reading the small print correctly. The use of the Union Pacific's font for the CNW reporting marks is accurate, though perhaps a bit blasphemous to C&NW fans.



Given the above photo date I went to the October 2004 ORER, to find in the Union Pacific registration the series CNW 741000 to 741099. This is a mix of AAR Designated GBS and GB gondolas, all with inside length of 52 feet 6 inches, inside height of 4 feet 6 inches (with one exception at 4 feet 5 inches), outside length of 56 feet 11 inches, extreme height of 8 feet 5 inches, and capacity of 2244 or 2246 cubic feet. We don't get weight capacities in these later ORERs, just Gross Rail Weights which are 263,000 pounds. There were 54 cars in the main series at that time plus 13 more in four subseries. From the dimensions, the MTL model is a bit less long than the prototype, and also a little less tall. The key consequence to the model is that the herald looks a bit squeezed up against the consolidated stencils. Also from RailcarPhotos I found that the cars were built by Thrall from June to September 1973 for the Rock Island, their series 180000 to 180099.

Just to see how far back this group went, whether it was painted as MTL depicted it or not, I traced back through my ORER stash. All one hundred possible cars were shown in the October 1996 Equipment Register under the Union Pacific, into which the Chicago and North Western was merged in 1995. But the gondolas go back farther than that on the CNW roster. The full complement is shown in the April 1984 ORER, and then there are 52 shown as a partial series in the April 1981 book. That fits with the transfer of cars to the North Western following the demise of "The Rock" on March 31, 1980.

In fact, based on other images on RailcarPhotos.com we can see that the C&NW paint scheme was green with yellow reporting marks, white lettering, and the black, white and red C&NW herald. At least one from the group, the 741097, remained in that decoration through May 2007. This could make for a follow on release for Micro-Trains. This also means that we can't be sure of how many gondolas in this group actually have been repainted in the UP "synthetic red." And the use of conspicuity stripes puts the start of the ATP for this "not a reprint" after 2005 anyway. We don't get to The Present here: after a car count of seven in the October 2014 ORER, the series is absent from the January 2018 Register.

N SCALE NEW RELEASE PASSENGER CARS: No single items this month, but see below for the release of a pre-ordered set and the announcement of a new pre-order set.

N SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES:



025 44 210, \$30.95.

Reporting Marks: SRN 7174.

50 Foot Exterior Post Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Sabine River and Northern/ ex-Greenville and Northern.

Release #3 in the ex-Per Diem series (pre-orders were not taken for this series).

Green with aluminum roof and mostly white lettering. Faded Greenville and Northern roadname on left and herald on right. Restenciled SRN reporting marks on blue patch panels on left. Moderate to heavy weathering. Scrawl graffiti on one side and multicolor graffiti on other side. Yellow conspicuity stripes along bottom of car. Approximate Time Period: at least 2011 to 2021. Previous Release (Unweathered, as Kadee Micro-Trains Catalog 25210): Road Number 8128, August 1984. This item has a lowered underframe and body mounted couplers.

RailcarPhotos.com has a shot of this very car – bingo! – as of August 2011, without any, ahem, additional decoration. After being built by American Car and Foundry in November 1976 as part of the Greenville and Northern series GRN 8000 to 8049, they went to the Hartford and Slocumb / HS Railway as the group 5353 to 5401, then landed in the Sabine River and Northern series 7155 to 7181. Obviously the changes to original Greenville and Northern paint scheme were the Minimum Necessary! As an AC&F product, this car does differ from the MTL 025 body style, which uses the FMC 5077 x-post boxcar as its prototype. When built, the car had an ACI Label; there are remnants of it on the Micro-Trains model just above the COTS panel.

The earliest photo of any car in the GRN series was from October 2009. I'll hasten to point out that at least a couple of these cars were finally, and perhaps mercifully, redone in plain brown no later than November 2013. From three additional bingo photos on RRPictureArchives, this wasn't one of the cars that got that treatment, though it certainly got plenty of attention from unauthorized painters. These images were taken in November 2014 (two) and October 2018. It's noted that this car was GRN 8038, then HS 5390 before becoming SRN 7174, and was retired on November 10, 2021.

Just to complicate things, the January 2004 ORER has a series SRN 7154 to 7251, which is shown as being of 5344 cubic foot boxcars. Right in the middle of this group is a subset of 5300 cubic foot cars that includes the 7174 and other road numbers between 7155 and 7181. Considering that it takes from the middle of Page 679 to the middle of Page 692 of this Equipment Register to list out 2892 cars on the Sabine River and Northern's roster, you'd think they could more properly split out these cars? Anyway, here's the dimensional data: inside length 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 11 feet even, outside length 56 feet 9 inches, extreme height 15 feet 5 inches, door opening 10 feet, and gross rail weight 220,000 pounds.

We'll close out this car commentary with a UMTRR Archives shot of the first release of this car from August 1984, yikes, almost thirty years ago (at right). And guess what... there's a sister car on RailcarPhotos.com So some bonus coverage: GRN 8148 was part of the series 8100 to 8149 built by FMC in May 1979. It went to the Hartford and Slocumb as HS 14050 to 14099 in 1987, then to the Midsouth Railway as MDR 8401 to 8450 in 1992, and over to East Erie Commercial in 2003 and 2004. The prototype was a 5237 cubic foot car from FMC, a little larger than the Micro-Trains 025 body style.



The June mid-month Weathered Releases will be covered in either a supplement to this issue or in the July 2024 UMTRR.

N SCALE MULTI-PACKS: Runner Pack #224, also known as the Chesapeake and Ohio Hopper Four Pack (983 00 224, \$111.95, Jewel Case Packaging; 993 00 224, \$99.95, Foam Nest Packaging) is now available, confirmed via online sale listings. UMTRR Pre-Order Coverage was in the January 2024 issue. Road Numbers are 126000, 126766, 127039, and 127917. Note that these cars do not come with loads, but Micro-Trains has made separate coal loads available this month. See the "MTL Announcements" section below.



What I wasn't sure of when I did the "pre-review" of this pack was the exact body style for these cars. From the official image we can now see it's the 33 Foot Two Bay Offset Hopper with Arch Ends, also known as the MTL 87000/087 body style. There's not been a regular run release on this body style since May of 2000 (87020, NKP 33324, at left).

Also, the **Louisville and Nashville Heavyweight Passenger Car Five Pack (983 02 246, \$180.95 with Jewel Cases, 993 02 246, \$159.95 with Foam Nest Packaging)** is expected to be available mid-month. UMTRR pre-order coverage was in the January 2024 issue.



The individual items are as follows:
140 series 60 Foot Railway Post Office,
Road Number 1116;



147 series 70 Foot Baggage Car,
Road Number 1447;



and 160 series, Single
Window Coaches, Road
Numbers 2507, 2510 and 2512
(only the 2507 is shown here
for illustration purposes).



And the Northwest Oklahoma (NOKL)
Weathered Bulkhead Flat Car Three Pack
with Tire Load (983 02 247, \$121.95 with
Jewel Cases, 993 02 247, \$109.95 with
Foam Nest Packaging) is also expected
mid-month. UMTRR pre-order coverage
was in the January 2024 issue. The road
numbers are 725121, 725300, and 725422.



*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 **June 30**.*



Targeted Delivery November 2024:

983 00 229, \$119.95, with Jewel Box Packaging (no Foam Nest version).

Reporting Marks: UP 18125, 18141, 18182, and 18199.

Union Pacific Hopper Runner Pack (Runner Pack #229).

Scheduled to consist of four 108 series Three Bay Open Hoppers. Brown with yellow lettering including reporting marks on left and large roadname in center. Approximate Time Period: 1964 (build date) to late 1980s. Previous Releases: as Catalog Number 108100, Road Number 18122, February 2003; then as Catalog 108 00 100, Road Number 18121, October 2008, and Road Number 18119, September 2014. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

Here's what the first release of this item looked like (at right). In addition to these, MTL has modeled another series of UP hoppers which had white lettering in an eight pack (993 00 814, October 2017) and a single Weathered Release (108 44 360, December 2017). The preliminary artwork looks pretty close to the previous runs of this car, so these may or may not end up getting 108 5x 100 designations, and also may or may not be exact reprints. Or they may or may not be "Not a Reprints" either, but I digress...



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Bethlehem Steel built a lot of 12 panel 3 bay hoppers for the Union Pacific, starting with this series which was given UP class H-90-1. There's a listing of these in the July 1996 **Rail Model Journal**, and photos of cars from later UP series that were also built by Bethlehem in the September 1996 **RMJ**. Meanwhile, the **UP Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume 2**, Page 37, has a shot of UP 18122, that first road number run by Micro-Trains. The prototype car looks a bit less tall and more long than the MTL 108 body style. There's a contradiction between the caption, which notes that these were 100 ton cars, and both the painted capacity of 180,000 pounds and the UP Class itself H-90-1, the "90" standing for 90 ton cars.

In the January 1964 ORER is listed the Union Pacific series 17950 to 18199, of 250 cars that had an inside length of 45 feet, outside length of 48 feet 1 inch, extreme height of 11 feet 1 inch and capacity of 180,000 pounds. Between April 1970 and October 1972 the capacity rose to 100 tons. That's frequently a function of the trucks under the car rather than the structure of the car itself,

and might explain the caption in the **Color Guide** as well. In the October 1972 ORER the collection is down to 248 pieces; in the October 1986 edition that's down to 97 cars total and in the October 1991 Register it looks like there's just one left.

Targeted Delivery November 2024:

983 02 255, \$145.95, with Jewel Box Packaging (no Foam Nest version).

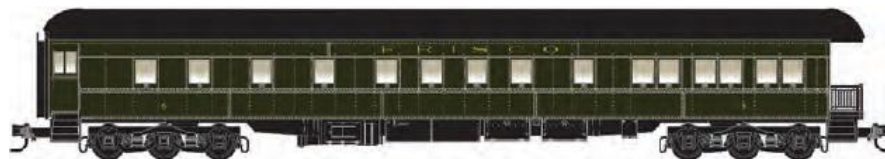
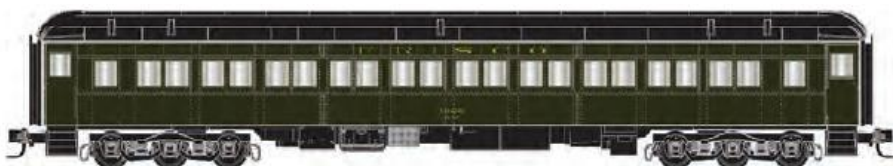
Frisco Heavyweight Five Pack.

Scheduled to consist of the following:



147 series Baggage Car, Road Number 348;

145 series Paired Window Coaches, Road Numbers 1060, 1063, and 1097 (only the 1060 is shown here for illustration purposes);



1447 series Modernized Business Car with Balloon Roof, Road Number 8.

Each car is Pullman Green with black roof, underframe and trucks. Delux Gold lettering including Frisco roadname in center of letterboard, and road number and small "SL-SF" at bottom center; except on the Business Car which has the road number only at bottom left and right. Baggage Car also has lettering "Railway Express Agency" below roadname in center. All cars have six wheel trucks. Approximate Time Period: varies between cars, but in general, as early as the early decade of the 1910s to as late as the 1960s except for the business car. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

There is not as much prototype information available as I'd like with respect to this announcement, so we'll have to take what we can get. It does appear based on various photos I've seen online that the Frisco kept the classic Pullman Green and Delux Gold paint on some of its heavyweight equipment all the way to the end of its passenger service, which would put the general end of the Approximate Time Period into the 1960s. Its corrugated streamliners were stainless steel with a red center band and black roof, and these two types of cars co-existed. When a few of the heavyweights were put into company service, they were repainted into silver-gray.

Here's a question: Could the prototype baggage car in this forthcoming five pack go back as far as the October 1919 Official Railway Equipment Register? Well, there is a series numbered 302 to 368 with 55 "Baggage" cars listed as being in the "60 feet and under 70 feet" range. There

is no other information provided, like, for example, whether these baggage cars are all steel. It might have had company also: there is a series of “Coach, First Class” numbered 942 to 1073, then another set numbered 1096 to 1099. Both series had a seating capacity of “70 to 86.”

Jumping quite a bit through time to the Official Register of Passenger Train Equipment for March 1943, we have the 348 listed as part of the series 343 to 361 and of 64 foot length. Coach 1060 is there, of 79 feet length and seating 50 people, Coach 1063 is the same length with a capacity of 63 passengers, and Coaches 1097 seats 84 people and is listed at 78 feet. All three coaches were noted as having air conditioning. Coach 1097 is not listed in the ORPTE for January 1953, but the other two coaches and the baggage car remain on the roster.

From there we go to the website of the Springfield-Greene County Library District of Springfield, Missouri, where there’s a bingo photo of Baggage Car 348 from June 1954. It’s at an unknown location but it appears to be in a train that’s being pulled by a diesel of some sort that isn’t an E or F unit. The real 348 had a clerestory roof, six wheel trucks, and different width doors. Details will differ from the MTL 147 body style, including an end on the real car that’s got an interesting look to it, a partial overhang of sorts that’s a bit hard for me to describe. Think of an extension down from the roof. Or just look at the photo itself: thelibrary.org/lochist/frisco/friscoline/images/photos/P00327.jpg . And how about the foresight of this particular organization to get itself the website name “thelibrary.org”?!?

On the same site there are two images of Coach 1097 but I believe they have the same source picture. The first is identified as being from June 1949, in Springfield, Missouri, direct URL thelibrary.org/lochist/frisco/friscoline/images/photos/p00868.jpg . The second is dated October 1948, thelibrary.org/lochist/frisco/friscoline/images/photos/P00335.jpg . It is noted that the car was built in 1910 by American Car and Foundry—which **would** put it in the October 1919 ORER! It is a paired window coach, though the side we can see in the images has the two leftmost windows and the rightmost window blanked out—I’m thinking for washrooms. The car has a clerestory roof and what I think are air conditioning vents, more than the MTL 145 body style has. The prototype had six wheel trucks as will the model.

There is an interesting view of Coach 1063 on the same site: the inside. Except there are no seats! It’s at thelibrary.org/lochist/frisco/friscoline/images/photos/P00368.jpg . This shot was also taken at Springfield by the Frisco itself, suggesting to me that this was for documentation of whatever they were doing with the car in November 1935. Based on other information on the website, if the 1063 was built at the same time and in the same place as the 1062, then it also would have been an American Car and Foundry product constructed in 1910. The 1062, though, was given a “streamlined style” rebuild no later than 1942. I found a photo of the 1060 with a modified roof on the website Condrenrails.com – and yes, that’s a new reference. The photo is undated however other photos on this page (URL condrenrails.com/Frisco%20Catalog/PASSENGER-CARS.htm) were taken in the 1950s and 1960s.

Business Car Number 8 is the most vexing of this set. The late Jerry Laboda’s “Passenger Car Photo Index” points to a dead link at the now defunct “Frisco Museum” – some of the images

went to the Springfield-Greene County Library District via “Springfield Underground” which purchased the Frisco Museum’s collection sometime after the year 2000. The link caption calls out the Number 8 as ex-“Arkansas”, exx-4, nee-1100. And before being Frisco 1100, it was number 100 for SL-SF predecessor Kansas City, Fort Scott and Memphis. I’m not sure I can, or should, even **guess** at an ATP for the business car as Number 8, so I’ll invite you to invoke Rule #1 (“It’s your railroad”) for it, pending any Incremental Information that may be out there.



Targeted Delivery November 2024:

983 05 075, \$129.95, with Jewel Box Packaging (no Foam Nest version).

Reporting Marks: CTRN 193, 502 and 914, and CNW 135161.

CTRN/ex-BN Weathered Four Pack with Sugar Beet Loads

Scheduled to consist of four 108 series Three Bay Open Hoppers. Three cars are black with white far left panel and white lettering including large Burlington Northern roadname on left and large BN herald on right, and white restenciled reporting marks on left on patch panel (black on the 502 and 914 and brown on the 193. Conspicuity stripes on each car, position varies by car. Fourth car is green with yellow far left panel, yellow CNW reporting marks on left and mostly white lettering otherwise with small red, black and white North Western herald at top right. All cars have orange conspicuity stripes, position varies by car. Former BN cars have multicolor ACI label on right. All cars have white on black COTS panel on far right. Moderate to heavy weathering and fading effects. Simulated sugar beet load to be included for all cars. Approximate Time Period: after 2005 given conspicuity stripes into the decade of the 2010s. Previous Releases: None. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

I recall occasionally seeing a freight car with CTRN markings, and I’d wondered what those reporting marks stood for. Micro-Trains has the answer here: they were registered to the Central of Tennessee Railway & Navigation Company. Thanks to some help from the Wikipedians, we learn that the CTRN was organized to operate a portion of the former Illinois Central line out of Nashville, Tennessee starting in June 1992.

Given the conspicuity stripes, I began my look through the ORERs with the January 2006 issue. Covering the first two road numbers, 193 and 502, there was the series of open hoppers numbered from 54 to 759, and picking up road number 914, there's the small group 913 to 917. They carry the reporting marks CTRN...

...under the registration for the Union Pacific.

Wait, what?

Well, yes, because there's a second part to the story. In addition to the trackage in the Nashville area, which is definitely not UP territory (well, at least, not yet), the CTRN also began operation of a line under the name Longhorn Railroad Company, on trackage which was once part of the Austin and Northwestern Railroad. CTRN operated that line from May 1996 to April 2000. The Austin and Northwestern was originally a three-foot narrow gauge line which after being standard gauged was merged into the Houston and Texas Central, which became part of the Texas and New Orleans and then the Southern Pacific. And that is Union Pacific territory.

When the CTRN had stopped operating the Longhorn Railroad Company, it had also ceased running the Central of Tennessee Railway & Navigation Company, which, as MTL notes in its car copy, was succeeded by the Nashville and Western, which was acquired by R.J. Corman and made a subsidiary of Corman's Nashville and Eastern. I'm still not exactly sure how UP ended up with the CTRN reporting marks out of all of this, but they did, and there you go.

Over on Trainorders.com there was a discussion about these hopper cars. One participant noticed that ex-Rio Grande and ex-Burlington Northern cars "began showing up in mid-summer 2001... operated by UP in UP owned coal and hopper trains (with UP, MP, CEI, MKT, BKTY, SP and DRGW Cars)." A reply to this noted that "the first CTRN's were ex-BN cars, with 'patch job' one, two and three digit CTRN numbers." I note that the October 1993 and April 1995 ORERs both have the CTRN markings under a Central of Tennessee Railway & Navigation Company listing. In the latter, there were 2241 hoppers, all of which had five and six digit road numbers. It was noted that reporting on these cars (repairs, mileage information, etc.) was to be to a company called Transisco Leasing in San Francisco. January 2000 is the last ORER in which I have a Central of Tennessee Railway & Navigation Company listing, and January 2002 is the first in which the CTRN rolling stock is shown in the Union Pacific listing.

All of that took place prior to the beginning of the use of conspicuity stripes, though, and that's where the ATP really begins. So let's head back to the January 2006 ORER and that UP listing. Series CTRN 54 to 759, which includes the 193 and 502, and series CTRN 913 to 917, which includes the 914, had the same key dimensions: outside length 53 feet 1 inch, outside width 10 feet 8 inches, extreme height 12 feet 10 inches, and capacity 4000 cubic feet with a gross rail weight of 268,000 pounds. Jumping to the October 2020 Register, the car count is 77 for the 54 to 759 group, and there is just one car in the 913 to 917 set. I don't think "to present" is a reasonable ATP here.

On to bingo photos on RRPictureArchives. We've got CTRN 193, formerly BN 526531, from April and July 2007, June 2011, and January 2013. It's noted that the car was built by Pullman-Standard. CTRN 502 was caught in February 2013; it's the former BN 529561. And CTRN 914 was in the Las Vegas, Nevada area in March 2014. It was previously BN 529509. All three of these cars are 14 Panel Three Bay hoppers, so the key spotting features align with the MTL 108 body style, though these prototypes are a bit larger than the Norfolk and Western Class H11 hopper that is the basis for the Micro-Trains car. All three have the white panel designating the Rotary Coupler End. From the **Burlington Northern Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, Page 89, we see that Bethlehem Steel built 500 of these steel bodied cars in 1979, then 100 more were delivered in 1980 and another 100 in 1981. The total road number series was 528900 to 529599; the last 100 catch the former road numbers of CTRN 502 and 914. It's noted in the **Color Guide** that "the outside length and extreme height match the newer aluminum-bodied coal gondola cars—the goal was to keep the outside length uniform for loaders and dumpers." The BN 526531, which was flipped to CTRN 193, was among the series 526400 to 526999 built by Pullman-Standard in 1975.

Pullman-Standard also built the fourth car to be represented in this quartet in 1975: CNW 135161 was in the group 135000 to 135199. There are three photos of this car, from May 2014, June 2016, and August 2017, all on RRPictureArchives. Amazingly, in the August 2017 image, there is no, ahem, additional decoration, to be seen. Maybe the, uh, artists, abided by the Union Pacific's "no graffiti" rule? Well, MTL certainly does, anyway.

According to James Kincaid, writing in his **C&NW Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume Two**, Page 109, this series was assembled at the P-S plant in Butler, Pennsylvania. Some of these cars were later modified with a rotary coupler for dump service and received the yellow end panel designating this. The **Color Guide** has a shot of CNW 135196 which has Railroad Roman style reporting marks. Although the green and yellow paint was prevalent among the pictures I found of this series online, there were other paint schemes.

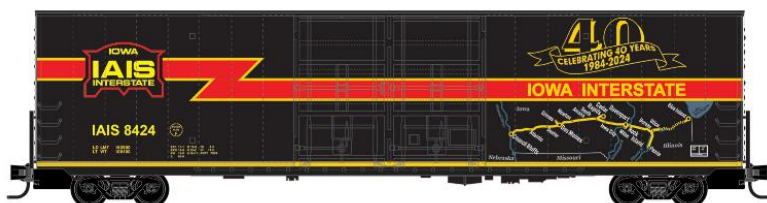
The ORER for January 2006 has a total of 128 cars in the series CNW 135000 to 135199. These are split almost evenly, 65 to 63, between AAR Type Code H350 and H351. The latter code indicates the rotary coupler. The dimensions are the same otherwise: outside length 53 feet 1 inch, outside width 10 feet 8 inches, extreme height 12 feet 9 inches, capacity 4000 cubic feet and gross rail weight 263,000 pounds. This is also a 14 panel three bay hopper, though, again, it's a bit larger than the N&W Class H11 hopper that is the basis of the MTL 108 series.

The October 2020 Equipment Register shows a car count of 21, again split almost evenly between non-rotary and rotary coupler, 12 to 9. There are images of cars in these series, although not this particular car, from as recent as September 2023 on RailcarPhotos. Could we get "to present" with the Approximate Time Period here? Maybe, maybe not. I'm thinking no.

N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES:



The **50th Anniversary of D-Day Flat Cars with Loads (United States, 045 00 780 and United Kingdom, 045 00 781, \$31.95 each)** are now available (confirmed via online sale listings). UMTRR pre-order coverage was in the April 2024 issue. The loads are multi-media kits.



The **Iowa Interstate 40th Anniversary Boxcar (102 00 300, IAIS 8424)** is expected to be available mid-month. UMTRR pre-order coverage was in the January 2024 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 **June 30**.*



Targeted Delivery July 2024:

038 00 650, \$28.95.

Reporting Marks: MTLX 524.

Aurora Borealis (The Northern Lights) Boxcar.

Black with multicolor graphic representation of the Aurora Borealis. Black lettering with green outline “Aurora Borealis / The Northern Lights” at top left and reporting marks at bottom left. Approximate Time Period: most notably May 10th through 12th, 2024, but lots of other times if you’re in the right place and it’s not cloudy. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

It might not have been a once-in-a-lifetime event like the “Great North American Eclipse” of April, but it was certainly a Major Unusual Occurrence. It’s not every day that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, or NOAA, the same folks who bring you weather.gov (my go-to and ad-free site for finding out if it’s going to rain tomorrow, by the way), issue an Unusual Storm Watch, upgraded to a warning – for *space weather*. Specifically, it was for the highest-level geomagnetic storm in the Earth’s atmosphere, set off by colossal solar flares and “coronal mass ejections” which were “flinging wave after wave of charged solar particles toward Earth” as noted on Space.com. The G5 storm this caused was at a level that hadn’t been seen since Halloween 2003.

And the result was a spectacular light show. It was of historic proportions not only because of its intensity, but because of its scope. The Northern Lights are usually restricted in coverage to high latitudes. This display was seen all the way down to Florida, and in places where the Northern Lights are usually found, they were particularly intense. I've viewed a number of photos of Aurora Borealis online, and they are truly impressive. We can't leave out our friends and readers in the other hemisphere either: the Southern Lights, or Aurora Australis, were also visible much closer to the Equator than usual. These displays are usually just available on and around Antarctica, but they were seen in New Zealand and Australia as well. (I suppose there could be a follow up car on this phenomenon from the folks in Talent, but then you'd have to run it on your layout upside down. Sorry, couldn't resist.)

I must admit I'm tempted to take my copy of the Solar Eclipse Boxcar from last month (which is quite nice, by the way) and paint overcast skies on it. Such was life on April 8, 2024 at UMTRR HQ. But if I did that, I'd have to do it again on this forthcoming car, except add some rain to the mix, since that's what we had while much of the United States had quite the light show, and I wouldn't know how to represent that well. Okay, I'll quit whining now. Besides, I did get an almost personal view of the Northern Lights back in mid-August 2001, and one of these days I'll post that story on the Irwin's Journal Online section of my website.



Targeted Delivery October 2024:

102 00 846, \$29.95.

Reporting Marks: CPKC 336895.

Modified 60 Foot Excess Height Boxcar, CPKC (Canadian Pacific Kansas City Limited) "Honoring Class 1 Railroads."

Red and black sides with yellow diagonal stripe. White, yellow and red CPKC "heritage" herald and white reporting marks on left. Dual Canadian and United States flags on right. Simulated granite plaque with CPKC roadname engraving in door opening. MTL preliminary artwork shown; actual product may vary.



Targeted Delivery December 2024:

102 00 847, \$29.95.

Reporting Marks: CN 557579.

Modified 60 Foot Excess Height Boxcar, Canadian National "Honoring Class 1 Railroads."

Black and red sides with white diagonal stripe. Dual Canadian and United States flags and white reporting marks on left. CN North America herald on right. Simulated granite plaque with CN "wet noodle" herald in door opening. MTL preliminary artwork shown; actual product may vary.

As with the March 2023 announcement of the Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern editions of the "Honoring Class 1 Railroads" series – and I think we can now conclude this is a series – I'll take these two items together. Last time I briefly looked at how a railroad is designated a Class One. This time I'll get a little more specific about the railroads been honored.

CPKC – yikes, another letters only railroad (looking at you, CSX and BNSF) is easily the newest in the category, having been formed by the April 14, 2023 merger of the Canadian Pacific and Kansas City Southern. It's the only Class 1 to have a substantial presence in Canada, the United States, and Mexico, Mexico via the KCS' "Kansas City Southern de México" operation (the former TFM concession for lines from Laredo, Texas to Mexico City and Monterrey. The only physical connection between the CP and KCS is at... no surprise, Kansas City. Good thing the CP had bought back the Iowa, Chicago and Eastern Railroad that it had spun off!

Prior to the formation of CPKC, it could be argued that the Canadian National had the largest "reach" of the Super Six (CSX, NS, UP, BNSF, CP, CN). Its 1998 purchase of the Illinois Central brought it all the way down to the Gulf Coast of the USA. And unlike CP, which largely retrenched east of Montreal, the CN remains a transcontinental railroad across Canada, reaching from Nova Scotia to British Columbia. (Sorry, Newfoundland; the CN gave up its narrow gauge operation there in 1988.) CPKC barely reaches the Atlantic Coast now, and that's via a former Bangor and Aroostook branch to Searsport, Maine. (It's interesting that CPKC highlights Searsport on its system map even though I can confirm personally that currently there is not much at that location.) But according to its system map, CN gets to Halifax, Nova Scotia on its own rails, and of course Vancouver, British Columbia, a distance that is farther than across the Continental United States from coast to coast (2753 miles, vs. 2659 for Eastport, Maine to Neah Bay, Washington, and there's your useless trivia for today). CN is now the longest lasting name among all Class Ones, and the herald, often referred to as the "wet noodle" is also by far the oldest still in use among these large railroads, if not all railroads. It was introduced in 1960. There's a page about this on the official CN website (URL www.cn.ca/en/stories/20210204-allan-fleming). The CN North America herald which will appear on this boxcar was only used from 1993 to 1995.

Z SCALE: The first two virtual two packs of 60 foot flat cars pre-ordered in June 2023 are expected to be available mid-month:



Norfolk Southern (524 00 181 and 524 00 182, NS 101101 and 101104, \$23.95 each). Only the MTL artwork for the 181 release is shown here for illustration. These are the first and second road numbers for this release.



Union Pacific (524 00 201 and 524 00 202, UP 52033 and 52058, \$23.95 each). Only the MTL artwork for the 201 release is shown here for illustration. These are the first and second road numbers for this release.

HO SCALE: “Grit N’ Grime” Release #4 is expected to be available mid-month. It’s the Two Bay Center Flow Kit in Western Maryland paint with CSXT restenciling (2200-004, CSXT 226699, \$49.95). UMTRR pre-order coverage was in the March 2024 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 **June 30**.*



Targeted Delivery August 2024:

2200-005 and 2200-006, \$49.95 each.

Reporting Marks: DRGW 10000 and 10002.

Two Bay Center Flow Covered Hopper Kits, Rio Grande (Denver and Rio Grande Western).

“Grit N’ Grime” Releases #7 and #8. Base cars are gray with black lettering including reporting marks on left and speed lettering roadname with “The Action Road” on right. Multicolor ACI Label and white on black double COTS panel on far right. Moderate to heavy weathering and fading effects on both cars; patch panels on the 10002. Approximate Time Period: 1974, or late 1970s given COTS

panel, or mid-1980s given weathering, to around 2005, or add conspicuity stripes for as late as the present. MTL pre-production samples shown; actual product may vary. Previous Releases: None.

These cars were done in N Scale as a Weathered Release Two Pack, Catalog 993 05 590, back in December 2019. I’m able to leverage that coverage for these HO Scale versions, with a bit of updating. The prototype series, DRGW 10000 to 10069, was built in 1974 for American Car and Foundry. The 10012 is pictured on Page 86 of the **Rio Grande Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, looking rather dirty as of July 1985, but not quite as bad as the two cars Micro-Trains has done. This series was in cement service, so weather away, MTL folks!

RailcarPhotos.com has a bingo on D&RGW 10000, the first car in the prototype series, as of August 1986. It seems to me that the Micro-Trains car has a touch more wear. Meanwhile, there are two shots of the 10002, one from September 2007 and a second from August 2011. The September 2007 picture appears to be the one Micro-Trains used; note, though, that graffiti that Union Pacific does not allow on its models was present on the real car at the time. (And if you can figure out what it says, you’re good at reading graffiti!) The August 2011 shot has quite the curiosity: what looks like a fresh ACI Label, some twenty-plus years after that identification

protocol was discontinued! The car also had orange vertical conspicuity stripes, including two placed right over the graffiti. Come on, folks, have a little pride in appearance! I note that the prototype cars are the 2970 cubic foot models and have the ribbed reinforcement panel at the top of the sides, which is not present on the model.

The ORER for April 1975 shows all 70 cars with these key dimensions: inside length 37 feet 11 inches, outside length 41 feet 7 inches, extreme height 14 feet 10 inches, and capacity 2971 cubic feet or 200,000 pounds.

Since there's a bingo to the 10002 as of August 2011, I jumped to the Union Pacific listing in the January 2011 ORER. As of that time, 47 of the original 70 cars were in service. Twenty-six of those remain as of the January 2018 Equipment Register, and 24 was the car count in the October 2020 ORER so an "as late as the present" ATP is what I'll go with here, although perhaps that's a little generous at this point.

MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS: As noted above, MTL has made available a two-pack (499 of coal loads for 33 foot hoppers (499 45 024, \$11.95) —like Runner Pack #224 of C&O hoppers. Also available is a three pack of 50 Foot Flat Car Weathered Decks (499 45 966, \$12.95).

DISCONTINUED ALERT: As mentioned at the top of these bytes, the bye-bye board has been delayed since the MTL website was not available. So we'll catch up with what's left the building in the next issue. Meanwhile, I have been updated the UMTRR Release Tables through the May refresh of the Micro-Trains website with what's outta here. Let the record show that I got all three of the usual catch phrases into this issue without actually reporting on any sellouts.

INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT: David Grothe found something I didn't: a bingo photo online for one of the virtual two-pack of Southern Pacific Fruit Express mechanical refrigerator cars released last month (081 00 050). Freight car historian Jim Eager snapped an image of SPFE 450263 in Toronto 1982. It's on the Railgoat website, on the R-70-13 page: www.railgoat.railfan.net/spcars/byclass/reefer/r070-13.htm .

Last month's Canadian National Track Inspection Car (027 00 500) is bilingual, in a sense: the side you can't see in the official MTL photo has "Inspection" and "De Securite" – that is, "Safety Inspection" in French—in the vertical black ribbons on either side of the plug door. UMTRR Gang Member Richard Turney took this photo of that side and shares it with us (at right).



With respect to the Reading and Northern open hoppers... no, not the Weathered Three Pack from last month, but the original (!) run, UMTRR Gang Member Bruce Bird tells us that he'd sent photos of those very cars to the folks in Talent. "[They were] on a Norfolk Southern train in Decatur, Illinois heading south to St. Louis. They were loaded with anthracite, and definitely offline!"

He continues, "In fact, just this past weekend I managed to snap pics of a cut of RBMN hoppers with yellow ends loaded up with anthracite, again in Decatur, but this time headed west to Kansas City. Might have to send some more pics to MTL..." I'm sure they'd appreciate them! By the way, I made an Oops and tagged those first two R&N hoppers as being from 2022, not the correct 2002.

OOPS PATROL: A dimensional problem with my transcription of the size of the prototype for the N Scale Rio Grande trailers from last month (451 00 37x): I typed "45 feet **wide** by 13 feet 6 inches **wide** by 102 inches **high**." No, it's 45 feet **long** by 13 feet 6 inches **tall** by 102 inches **wide**. Thanks to UMTRR Gang Member Jim Young II for catching that. I caught my own mistakes, calling the Reading and Northern Weathered Three Pack a four pack, and calling the CIC/Seattle and North Coast x-post boxcar a single door when it's a double door car (030 44 241).

FINALLY, A...I?!?: In the world outside UMTRR HQ, arguments rage about how the world will look once "Artificial Intelligence" or AI settles into Everyday Life. (Does anyone even use the term "Artificial Intelligence" any more?) Well, if a recent AI-generated listing for an MTL product found on a certain Internet Auction Community is any indication...

This N scale box car from Micro-Trains Line is a must-have for collectors and model railroaders alike. With a detailed design inspired by the C & O railroad company's box cars in the time line of 1941 to 1960, this piece is sure to add character to any layout. Made from sturdy plastic and designed for the two-rail system, this box car is a great addition to any N gauge collection. The operating door feature adds an extra touch of realism to this piece.

... I'm not sure we have to worry about Machines Taking Over The World any time soon. By the way, I ran the above listing through the analysis tool at quillbot.com which resulted in a 100 percent probability that it was AI-generated, whereas a slice of these bytes which you're "holding" was rated at zero percent AI generated.

We'll be back following the National N Scale Convention with either an update to this month's issue or an expanded July issue. Until next time, do the best you can!

Cheers, George

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