



*IrwinsJournal.com Presents:*

## **The Unofficial Micro-Trains<sup>®</sup> Release Report Issue #335– November, 2024**

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Hello again everyone! As mentioned last month, this issue has a shorter effort time allotment here at UMTRR HQ, so let's get right to it ...

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



**051 00 360, \$35.95.**

**Road Number: 56 (will be "NKP 56" in UMTRR website listings).**

**34 Foot Wood Caboose, Straight Cupola, Nickel Plate Road.**

Red sides with light gray band at top, black ends and underframe, yellow side grab irons. White NKP herald and road number below cupola.

Black "Nickel Plate High Speed

Service" script lettering inside band across top of side. Body mounted couplers. Approximate Time Period (ATP): 1955 (repaint date on car) to early 1960s.

Multiple railroads were brought together to become the final version of the New York, Chicago and St. Louis (NYC&StL), far better known as the Nickel Plate Road. One of these lines was the Lake Erie and Western, which was acquired in 1923. The LE&W's caboose fleet went into the NKP roster. According to the **Wabash/Nickel Plate/DT&I Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, the series of cabooses numbered 47 to 100 were not really a series at all, but "cars of varying styles... in length, cupola placement and number of windows and were originally built between 1888 and 1904." In other words, if you've seen one of these cabooses, you've seen one of these cabooses. The NKP kept the road numbers and put them all into their Class C4.

The Nickel Plate Historical and Technical Society archives has the bingo photo for NKP 56 (direct URL: [archive.nkphts.org/object/3503-nkp-caboose-56-muncie-9-58](https://archive.nkphts.org/object/3503-nkp-caboose-56-muncie-9-58)), taken in Muncie, Indiana in September 1958. With respect to the MTL 051 body style, there are differences in the number of windows, the shape of the cupola and the presence of truss rods. If you're willing to do a bit of work, though, I have a suggestion from Page 75 of the **Color Guide**: NKP 869, part of the NKP series 865 to 894, is more like the Micro-Trains model, although not an exact match. The basic paint scheme is the same, so changing the road number is all that's needed. This group of cabooses came to the NKP from the Wheeling and Lake Erie, which was leased to the NKP in 1949.

Before noticing the repaint date on the Micro-Trains car artwork (which was posted prior to the actual car photo), which gives us the start of the Approximate Time Period for this particular car, I sought out the start for the well-known slogan that appears at the top of this and other NKP cabooses. According to a 2007 post by the late Andy Sperandio on the Trains.com discussion board, the first Nickel Plate caboose to wear the “Nickel Plate High Speed Service” slogan was NKP 1076, repainted at Conneaut, Ohio, in August 1946. The slogan became the standard for NKP cabooses, but it took a year or so before all were repainted; some 1947 photos show cabooses without the slogan. Andy also noted that the stripe along the top of the carbody was a very light gray, not white as sometimes represented on models or incorrect historical restorations.

It's noted in the **Color Guide** that the mix of former Lake Erie and Western cabooses, including the 56, were assigned Norfolk and Western road numbers 557346 to 557447 following the lease of the Nickel Plate by the N&W in 1964. I'll call the ATP at the early 1960s for that reason, since it's possible but not known (to me, anyway) whether the caboose modeled here lasted long enough to be included in the Norfolk and Western roster.



051 00 370, \$35.95.

Reporting Marks: PRR 492894.

**34 Foot Wood Caboose, Straight Cupola, Pennsylvania Railroad.**

Yellow (the PRR's "Camp Car Yellow") sides, black ends, underframe, and side grab irons. Black lettering including circle keystone herald just below cupola and reporting marks below keystone.

Body mounted couplers. Approximate Time Period: 1965 (service date on car) into late 1960s.

Here we have a Company Service caboose – make that “cabin car,” George, since that’s what the Pennsy called them-- with a mix of lettering styles. The circle keystone was used from 1930 to 1954, while the reporting marks better align with the “plain keystone” scheme which was introduced in late 1961. According to the **PRR Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume 3**, Page 116, the railroad transferred some of its N6B class cabin cars from freight service to company service in the 1950s and 1960s. They received the “Camp Car Yellow” paint upon their transfer. The bingo photo for the 492894 is on that page of the **Color Guide**. Since the use of the circle keystone could have been a one of a kind, I’m basing the ATP for this particular car on the repaint date on the MTL artwork; in addition, the later reporting marks style would restrict the ATP to 1961 and later.

As noted with the release of a PRR cabin car in July (050 00 260, Road Number 980020), the line’s N6 series including the N6B didn’t look much like the MTL model. They were wood sided, to be sure, but had just two windows per side spaced fifteen feet apart center-to-center, a different looking cupola with an arched roof, and a length of just 31 feet 2 inches over the

striking plates. There's an official diagram and a floor plan of the N6B subclass on "Rob's Pennsy Page" ( [pr.railfan.net](http://pr.railfan.net) ).

When, or if, this car lasted into the Penn Central era is an open question. The bingo photo in the **Color Guide** is undated but shows the paint scheme looking rather worn. My speculation here is that the cabin car went to the scrap line in the yellow and black, possibly before the official start of the Penn Central in 1968.



076 00 501 and 076 00 502, \$29.95 each.  
**Reporting Marks: UP 168043 and 168086.**

**50 Foot Steel Boxcars, Combination Plug and Sliding Doors, No Running Board, Full Side and End Ladders, Union Pacific.**

Yellow sides, aluminum roof, ends, side sills, and trucks. Black lettering including reporting marks on right and class BC-70-6 at bottom right. Large red, white and blue shield herald on left. Multicolor "Automated RAILway" logo on right.

Lowered underframe and body mounted couplers. Approximate Time Period: 1966 (build date) into the 1980s.

"History doesn't repeat itself, but it does rhyme" is a statement frequently misattributed to Mark Twain--including by me until I researched it prior to using it here! While I doubt that were he alive today, our celebrated and uniquely American author and observer would have referred to the use of similar paint schemes on boxcars issued just four months apart, it seems to fit here. Witness one of the virtual two pack 033 00 61x from August (at right) which was also on a combination door boxcar.



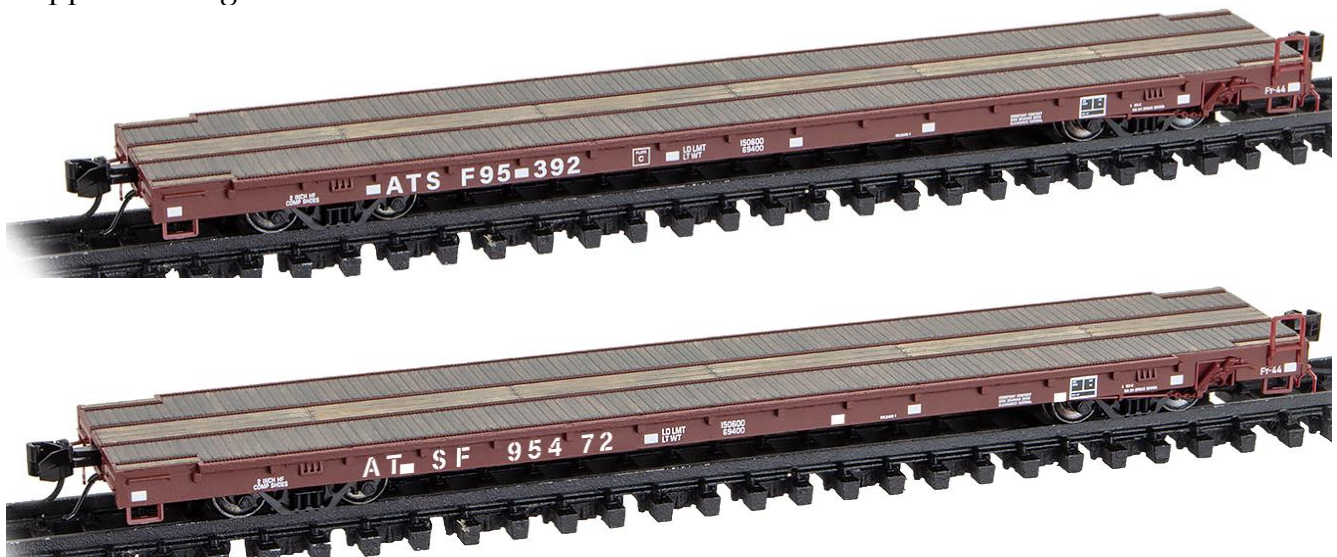
But the comparisons stop there. The July releases depict the UP's class BC-50-9 built in 1963, while this month's pair are models of the UP's class BC-70-6 which were constructed in December 1966 by Pullman-Standard. Those three years made a big difference: these cars are rated at seventy tons versus fifty for the BC-50-9, and were constructed without the running board. Based on a bingo photo of UP 168086 on *Fallen Flags*, which appears to have been taken not long after it was built (no reweigh date for example), it appears that these cars were also built with a low mounted brake wheel and short side and end ladders. If true, that's a delta to the MTL 076 body style. (When Micro-Trains tooled the 18x body styles, they did single, double and plug door, but not combination door, so this is the closest MTL car possible.) It also has that annoying diagonal seam either side of the door, which often appears on UP



boxcars from this time period. Meanwhile, the same bingo photo of UP 168056 appears on both RailcarPhotos and RRPictureArchives. It's from approximately ten years after the build date according to the photographer and shows that car with patched dimensional data (white over boxcar red), an ACI Label below and to the right of the "Automated RAILWay" logo, and a fair amount of dirt.

The Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER) for October 1969 shows the series UP 167600 to 168099 with 495 of the possible 500 cars in service. The description was "Box, Steel, Staggered Doors, Cushion Underframe" with AAR Designation XME. End notes called out side wall lading anchors and "flush type auxiliary side doors" – what we call plug doors – in this case, with width of 8 feet. Other key dimensions were: inside length 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 58 feet 6 inches, extreme height 15 feet even, door opening 16 feet, and capacity 5059 cubic feet or 147,000 pounds.

My next stop in the ORER pile is October 1976, around the approximate time of the bingo photo of the 168056. The car count is down just a bit to 467, and the end notes have been moved into the car description in the listing. Ten years later in the October 1986 ORER, there are only 83 cars in service in a slightly smaller series, 167603 to 168088. Five years after that in the October 1991 Equipment Register, just 15 cars remain, numbered 167627 to 168086. That's where I stopped looking.



**134 00 041 and 134 00 042, \$34.95 each.  
Reporting Marks: ATSF 95392 and 95472.  
60 Foot Flat Car, Santa Fe (AT&SF).**

Brown (mineral red) sides with simulated weathered wood deck. Mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and class FT-44 on far right. White on black COTS panel on right. White simulated reflective blocks along sides. Metal wheels and body mounted couplers. Approximate Time Period: Early 1980s as painted into the decade of the 2010s.

"The Burlington Northern Santa Fe kept the Santa Fe's car class FT-44 when they renumbered the series ATSF 95388 to 95487 to BNSF 585002 to 585076," I wrote in last month's UMTRR when the BNSF version of these cars was released. While I certainly expected that a Santa Fe

version of these cars would be released, I certainly did not expect it to be the very next month! Well, let's see if I can reprint myself without making any mistakes...

These cars were built by Thrall for the Santa Fe in late 1966 and early 1967. The cars were described as "Flat, Axle Spacing 5 Feet 9 Inches, Truck Centers 49 Feet 6 Inches, 20 Inch Travel [Cushion Underframe], Tie Downs." The AAR Designation was FMS, and the inside length was 60 feet even, outside length 67 feet and capacity 146,000 pounds. Interestingly, five cars remained in the original Santa Fe markings even as the BNSF series was gone by January 2018! No "to present" for the Santa Fe flat cars though, as that series is gone by the October 2020 ORER. But yes, the original and successor paint schemes were contemporary from the start of the BNSF until the end of the Approximate Time Period.

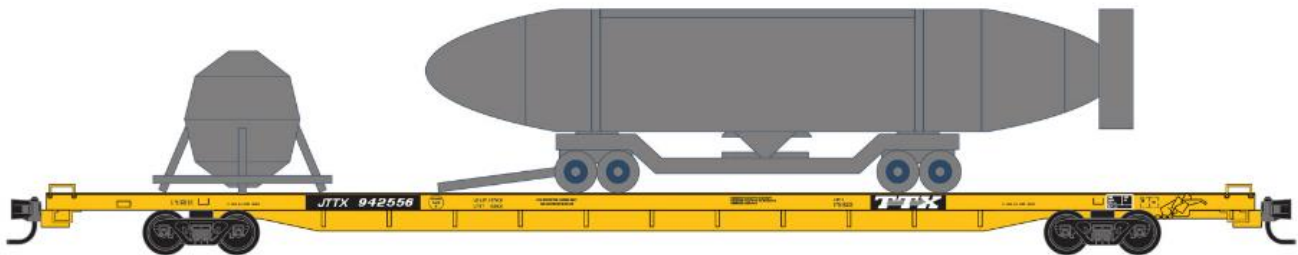
That having been said, these cars as modeled aren't in their original Santa Fe markings. Note the use of the Gothic font here, which dates to 1982, replacing the Railroad Roman lettering which likely would have been the "as delivered" version. That original scheme might have included "Super Shock Control" in white on red paint, which could be issued by MTL at some point... but let's not get too far ahead of ourselves here.

There are three images of interest on RRPictureArchives. First, from August 2005 is a bit washed out photo, but still a bingo, of ATSF 95392. It shows the car carrying two pieces of equipment from Case. It looks like a much more sunshiny day in August 2010 for the image of ATSF 95472, shown without a load from trackside. Another bingo from December 2016 shows the 95472 loaded with what looks like concrete forms of some kind. I'm not sure what they are! Whatever they are, they were also being carried in July and September 2016 on the same 95472; both of those bingos are on RailcarPhotos.



In addition to the above, the **Iowa Interstate 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Boxcar** (074 00 500, \$28.95) is expected to be available mid-month. UMTRR pre-order coverage was in the September 2024 issue. This is ahead of schedule as it was originally targeted for January 2025 delivery. This car shouldn't be confused with the Special Edition version (102 00 300, \$28.95) which is, incidentally, still available per the November Micro-News.

*The following is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is as noted below. UMTTR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close **November 30**.*



**Targeted Delivery April 2025:**

**071 00 940, \$39.95.**

**Reporting Marks: JTTX 942556.**

**89 Foot Flat Car, TTX, with Deep Submergence Rescue Training Vehicle.**

Yellow with white reporting marks on black panel on left and white TTX logo on black panel on right. Black lettering otherwise. White on black COTS panel at far right. Approximate Time Period: 1991 (based on TTX logo) to 2008 (based on end of the DSRV program, see text). MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

The October 2020 issue of the magazine **Proceedings**, published by the U.S. Naval Institute (a private, self-supporting, not-for-profit professional society that publishes **Proceedings** as part of the open forum it maintains for the Sea Services), included an article titled “Submarine Rescue: The past, present, and future of deep submergence rescue.” (The article is available on the USNI website but non-members get limited article views per month.) The history of rescues from disabled submarines dates back to 1939 when the USS Squalus sank off the New England coast; the “Experimental Diving Unit” was deployed to save 33 of the 59 crew members aboard, using the “McCann Rescue Chamber” for the first time.

The “Handling Training Vehicle” atop the flat car here was part of a significant advance beyond what was used to aid the Squalus. It’s part of the DSRV-HTV combination that was developed by the Navy following two submarine disasters: the loss of the USS Thresher in 1963 and the USS Scorpion in 1968, both in extremely deep water with no survivors. The DSRV-HTV was succeeded by the Submarine Rescue Diving Recompression System (SRDRS). Fair use quote from the article: “Using commercial-off-the-shelf parts where feasible, this system was less militarized than the DSRV and more akin to a deep-diving research submersible. The new design overcame several DSRV shortfalls. It added decompression chambers for survivors, eliminated the need for either a mother submarine or one of the two specialized submarine rescue ships to be present, and overcame general obsolescence concerns. Brought into service in 2008, the SRDRS and its deep diving rescue vehicle, the Pressurized Rescue Module (PRM), allowed the DSRVs to be retired.”

So this time, we approach the end of the ATP for this pending release via the load, and not the flat car on which it sits. The start of the ATP is no earlier than the change to the TTX logo in 1991. That’s assuming, of course, that the specific car, JTTX 942556, was on the roster the entire



time... and how important that is to the modeler anyway. (In other words, Rule #1 – “It’s your railroad.”) For the record, though, there is a relatively large series, JTTX 940515 to 942848, which had a total car count of 447 in the July 1992 ORER, then 69 cars in the January 2000 ORER, 96 cars in the October 2004 ORER, and 40 cars in the October 2007 ORER.



**N SCALE REPRINTS:** The TTX/TBOX 60 Foot High-Cube Exterior Post Double Plug Door Boxcars (123 00 021 and 123 00 022, \$51.95, Reporting Marks TBOX 667028 and 667107) are expected to be available mid-month – confirmed via online listings. UMTRR pre-order coverage was in the July 2024 issue. These are the fourth and fifth releases for this item; the previous three were in the 993 01 850 Three Pack released in September 2021.

There are no other releases or pre-order announcements in this category this month.

**N SCALE NEW RELEASE PASSENGER CARS:** No releases or pre-order announcements this month, but see N Scale Multi-Packs for the release of the Frisco Heavyweight Five Pack and pre-orders of Strates Shows Two and Three Packs.

### **N SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES:**



027 44 440, \$30.95.

**Reporting Marks:** QC 77181.

**50 Foot Exterior Post Boxcar, Plug Door, Québec Central/ ex-East Camden and Highland.**

Release #8 in the ex-Per Diem series (pre-orders were not taken for this

series). Orange with white band in center of side. White restenciled reporting marks on black patch panel on left. Black lettering otherwise including remains of State of Arkansas map on right inside white band. White on black double COTS panel at bottom right. Orange vertical conspicuity stripes at six points along bottom of side. Moderate to heavy weathering and rust effects. Scrawl and multicolor graffiti. Lowered underframe and body mounted couplers. Approximate Time Period: after 2005 given conspicuity stripes into the decade of the 2010s at least. Previous Releases: Based on catalog number, 027 00 410, Reporting Marks EACH 2455, December 2016, Unweathered.

Here's the "clean" version of this car, lettered as delivered, from December 2016, part of the original Incentive Per Diem Series (at right). In my coverage I asked whether the East Camden and Highland was still in business and it was. It's a relative newcomer, having been founded



in 1971. The line runs about 48 miles from an interchange with the Union Pacific (formerly Cotton Belt) in Eagle Mills, Arkansas to East Camden, where it services the Highland Business Park. That location was formerly the Shumaker Ordnance Depot and was converted to civilian use in... 1971. The EACH is a subsidiary of Highland Resources, Incorporated which operates the park. Its website summarizes: "EACH is a full service, short-line railroad established to provide rail service to the tenants of Highland Industrial Park and on-track storage of railcars in East Camden, Arkansas and Minden, Louisiana." That second location, off the Kansas City Southern, is the Louisiana Army Ammunition Plant. I confirmed that the company remains in business; in fact, its website ( [eachrailroad.com](http://eachrailroad.com) ) now notes "a proven 50-year track record emphasizing customer commitment and satisfaction." The original release, EACH 2455, was part of the series EACH 2351 to 2500, built in April 1979 as FMC's lot 18011. This was followed by the group 2501 to 2700 in October 1979, Lot 18069. These were 5327 cubic foot boxcars, just a few percentage points larger than the 5077 cubic foot cars that are the basis for the MTL 027 body style. However, the general design of the Micro-Trains car matches the prototype. Eighty-four total cars remained on the EACH roster as of the July 1987 Register but they were all gone by the July 1989 ORER, giving us a pretty tight end to the ATP for the original lessor.

So we'll transition over to the Québec Central. Originally incorporated in 1869, the QC ran from Québec City in the province roughly south to Sherbrooke with two branches. In 1912, the Canadian Pacific leased it for 99 years, but it was operated separately. In 1926 the QC leased a shortline which continued south to Newport, Vermont. This enabled passenger service to Québec City from the United States. It was a joint venture of the QC, the Boston and Maine, and the New Haven, including the **Connecticut Yankee** train.

Passenger service on the QC ended in 1967 and freight service in November 1994, followed by official abandonment in December 1994. The leased line down to Vermont was torn up in 1992. However, since the CP did not directly own the QC, it could not dismantle it and the right of way and trackage remained in place. There was a brief attempt to revive service which lasted from 2000 to 2006 but the railroad is again out of service with what's left of it owned by the Ministère des Transports du Québec (Ministry of Transportation and Sustainable Mobility of Quebec or just Transports Québec or MTQ).

While the QC itself is out of service, the reporting marks remained in service. For example, they were used on a different series of exterior post boxcars with plug doors which were built by National Steel Car in 1980 and sported the CP Rail multimark, at least for a while. More relevant to this commentary, the QC series 77100 to 77199 came from the EACH series 2501 to 2700. I first pick these up as part of the larger group QC 77000 to 77249 in the ORER for July 1987, but that's well before the application of conspicuity stripes which are present on the MTL model. That's also the same ORER in which the EACH roster is down to 48, strongly



suggesting that there was a direct transfer from the East Camden and Highland to the Québec Central. The cars were described as “Box, Plug Doors, Steel, 100 Ton, Newsprint.” That would make them attractive to the Canadian railroad since there was a fair amount of that commodity being shipped out of that region of Canada at the time.

Jumping to the January 2006 ORER which was after the start of conspicuity stripes, the car count for QC 77000 to 77249 remained at a healthy 122, with the reporting marks included in the Canadian Pacific registration. The October 2020 Register shows 62 of these still in service at the time.

There are plenty of photos of this series of cars on the usual go-to sites, although I didn’t locate a bingo for the 77181. (I’m sure Micro-Trains has it.) What is apparent is that when transferred over from the EACH to the QC, they were not repainted; though it looks like the former operator’s name at the top left was patched out, the State of Arkansas map was left in, perhaps leading to a bit of geographic confusion! Photo dates I saw ranged all the way up to 2019, so between that and the January 2020 ORER, I’ll append an “at least” to the rather wide ATP I’m calling out here.

*The following was announced on the Micro-Trains website on November 15.*



**020 44 997, \$29.95.**

**Reporting Marks: PRR 24018.**

**40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Door, Pennsylvania Railroad.**

Brown with mostly white lettering including roadname, “Don’t Stand Me Still!” and road number on left, and car class X29D at bottom right.

Black and white shadow keystone herald on right. Multicolor ACI Label left of door. Light to moderate weathering and rust effects. Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 1967 into the 1970s. Previous Releases: Unweathered, Road Number 24115, October 2018.

Let’s start with the unweathered version of this release (at right), which was, well, released, just over six years ago. Even without the weathering, there are a few “not a reprint” points, including the use of an ACI label on this Weathered Car and the change to white for the “Don’t Stand Me Still!” slogan. Photo evidence shows that both white and yellow were used by the PRR for this wording – including yellow on the 24115 and white on the 24018 – so MTL is spot on here.



According to “Rob’s Pennsy Page,” ([pr.railfan.net](http://pr.railfan.net)), there were 3100 of the Pennsy’s venerable X29 boxcars rebuilt between 1952 and 1956. These were essentially new bodies on old underframes. The new bodies were significantly larger than those they replaced, so the MTL

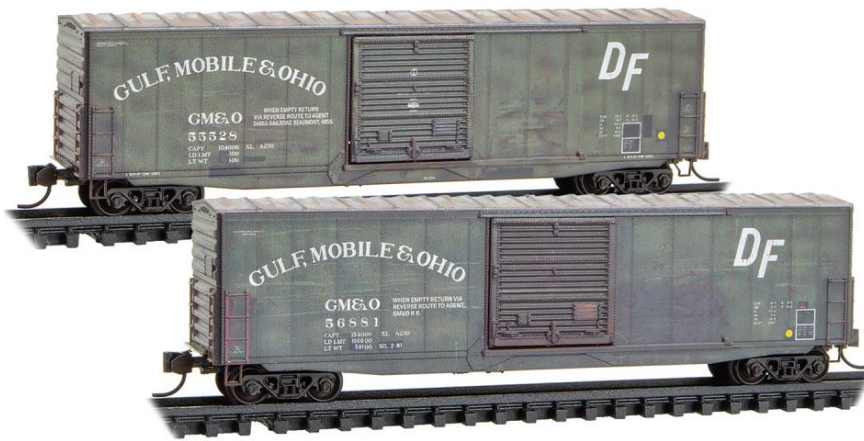
020 body style is closer in form than the MTL 120 body style, which is modeled after the original X29 design. (Before I forget: no hyphen between the "X" and "29," please.) Images of the 23963 and 23635 right on Rob's site show that there are deltas: first and foremost, a "door thing" as the prototype's was eight feet wide. That can be addressed as it looks like there's just enough space to refit an MTL eight foot door without encroaching on the road name and ACI Label on the left. There's plenty of room on the right. See the page "Door Thing" on the UMTRR Website for how I did this on another car: [www.irwinsjournal.com/umtrr/ms-door.htm](http://www.irwinsjournal.com/umtrr/ms-door.htm).

An official PRR drawing also on Rob's site shows that the ends and side sills are a bit different as well. The car weighed 51,000 pounds all by itself and was rated to carry another 100,000 pounds of lading. Its inside length was 40 feet 6 inches, coupled length 44 feet 9 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches at the eaves and 10 feet 11 23/32 inches at the center, inside width 9 feet 2 inches and extreme height to the running board 15 feet 1 and 23/32 inches.

Of the 3100 rebuilt cars, 500 cars received the "Don't Stand Me Still!" direction, the 24018 being one of them. The bingo for it – times two-- is on Page 36 of the **PRR Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume 2**. In the caption it's noted that "While X29B featured a z-section side plate, the new X29D used the new zu-section which gave the roof a sort of overhanging effect." Reduced to 1/160<sup>th</sup> actual size I think this would be difficult to call out! The two photos are undated and no location is specified, but they appear to have been taken on the same day at the same place... wherever that was. The load limit and light weight are painted out, just as they are on the MTL model.

It's not possible to read the small lines of lettering which appear just to the left of the X29D class code. I suspect this lettering might have given us a service date or some other clue to the strictly speaking ATP, but I can't see it, and so much for that. Instead, we'll need to back into this. ACI Labels were made a requirement in 1967; though there was limited testing prior to that, it's quite unlikely that the 24015 would have had on before that year.

The Pennsylvania Railroad was officially merged into the Penn Central in February 1968, but Rob's Pennsy Page cites the PRR entry in the ORER for April 1968 as including 2083 cars in the PRR series 23600 to 26500. The Penn Central registration in the April 1970 ORER showed a total of 1140 cars. However, we might have to think about both running board removal and repainting, though neither is a sure bet. Just 32 made it into Conrail as of the April 1976 Equipment Register.



983 05 082, \$59.95.

**Reporting Marks:** GM&O 55528 and 56881 (Catalog Numbers 180 44 430 and 180 45 430).

**Gulf, Mobile and Ohio Weathered Two Pack.**

Jewel box packaging. Consists of two MTL 180 series 50 Foot Steel Boxcars with single door, without running board and with low brake wheel. Green

with mostly white lettering including semi-circle roadname, reporting marks, and return instructions (different for each car) on left, and large "DF" on right. Remains of ACI Label, plus white on black double COTS panel, and yellow on black U-1 wheel inspection "dot" at bottom right. Moderate weathering including rust effects. Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 1978 given U-1 "dot" through the 1980s. Previous Releases: None.

Before we get to what this two pack is, let's mention what it **isn't**: a reprint of the very first release on this body style, Catalog 180 00 010, Road Number 58108, July 2017 (at right). It's also not a reprint of the weathered version of this car (Catalog 180 44 010, Road Number 58715, October 2017). Those two cars represented new builds with cushion underframes. These cars are models of other series of GM&O boxcars that didn't have that feature.



In addition, we're looking at two different series for each car in this two pack. The 55528 is from the series 55300 to 55599, built by Pullman-Standard in May and June 1971. The bingo for this car is on Fallen Flags; it was taken in August 1989 at Deshler, Ohio. Based on the position of what's left of the ACI Label, the U-1 "dot" and the COTS panel, I'd say this is the exact image used to develop the Micro-Trains car. While I can't get the best look at the ends and roof, I think the MTL 180 body style is a good match to the prototype here. This series of cars became the Illinois Central Gulf series ICG 567600 to 567899 following the 1972 merger of the GM&O with the Illinois Central. There is what looks like a builder's photo of the first car in this group, GM&O 55300, from the James Kincaid collection, posted to the Railgoat website. That car has a slightly different door than the 55528 did at the time its photo was taken.

The 56881 is from the GM&O series 56700 to 56999 which was, despite the higher road numbers, built earlier: also by Pullman-Standard, in February 1969. That bingo is also on Fallen Flags and taken in Chicago in January 1988. The lettering appears to be mirror what's on the Micro-Trains car, down to the "SCL 2-81" service information. Also, I see sister car GM&O 55425 on the Canadian Freight Railcar Gallery as of August 1973, with an ACI Label and without the U-1 "dot" or COTS stenciling. There is also what may be another builder's photo from the Kincaid collection, this one of GM&O 56594, on the Railgoat site. This series became



ICG 568400 to 568599. Again, there is a good match between the MTL 180 body style and the car.

Of course, as modeled these cars were still in their as delivered colors. I don't have to be concerned with the slightly split build dates with respect to the start of the "strictly speaking" Approximate Time Period. Both cars have the U-1 "dot," which did not appear until March 1978. So we can start the check of the ORER stash with the ICG listing in the January 1978 edition—close enough. Caution: it's a little complicated!

The 55528, as noted, is in the series GM&O 55300 to 55599, with AAR Designation XL and description "Box, 4 Belt DF-2 Loaders, Lading Strap Anchors, 50K." The key dimensions were: inside length 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 4 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 55 feet 6 inches, extreme height 14 feet 11 inches, door opening 10 feet, and capacity 4952 cubic feet or 154,000 pounds. The car count was 135 for this group, but that listing was immediately followed with 58 "exceptions" in the subset 55300 to 55399, which were AAR Designation XM and were not described as having DF belts.

The series which includes the 56881, GM&O 56700 to 56999, has the same key dimensions as the one which includes the 55528. This time, the "main group" of 131 cars doesn't have the DF belts and 85 exceptions do—but that doesn't include the 56881. No worries, though, as it's clear from the bingo photo that the "DF" was never removed from the lettering. Rounding things out there are another 21 cars without DF belts and with "pallets, considered part of car" (as in, shippers, don't take them, they're ours).

Given the 1988 and 1989 dates for the bingo photos of these two cars, let's jump to the ORER for July 1989. And yes, that's after the ICG reverted to the Illinois Central Railroad name. We find that there are just seven cars remaining in the 55300 to 55999 series, though they've retained their DF belts, and 36 cars left in the 56700 to 56999, none of which have DF belts. The car counts are down to five and 21 respectively in the January 1991 Equipment Register, which is where I stopped looking; that's good enough to get our ATP through the decade of the 1980s.



983 05 083, \$109.95.

**Reporting Marks:** FURX 815063, 815207, and 816446 (Catalog Numbers 094 44 890, 094 45 890, and 094 46 890).

**First Union Rail Leasing Weathered Three Pack.**

Jewel box packaging. Consists of three MTL 094 series Three Bay Center Flow Covered Hoppers with Trough (Long) Hatches. Cars differ in base color: the 815063 is light blue, the 815207 is light gray, and the 816446 is yellow with gray

bleed through (or the opposite). Black lettering including reporting marks on left (style differs by car). All cars have white on black COTS panels (position varies by car) and orange horizontal conspicuity stripes along bottom of side. Moderate to heavy weathering including rust effects, heaviest on the 815207. Scrawl and multi-color graffiti including Christmas-themed on one side of the 815207. Approximate Time Period: For the 815063, 2004 to 2009, plus or minus; for the 815207, 2017, plus or minus; for the 816446, 2022 through 2024 at least, plus or minus (but none before 2005 given conspicuity stripes). Previous Releases: None.

Two of these three cars can be traced back to the Rock Island. A 2009 bingo for FURX 815063 on RRPictureArchives includes that it was the former RUSX 800063; from RailcarPhotos we can add that it was originally part of the Rock Island group 800000 to 800199 built by American Car and Foundry in 1978. RUSX was a First Union Rail Services reporting mark which was eliminated in 2016 according to Ian Cranstone (via his nakina.net website), but then reappeared under the Wells Fargo Rail Corporation registration, which makes sense given that Wells Fargo was the successor bank to First Union (with Wachovia in between, but that's way off topic). This is a 4600 cubic foot car, while the MTL 094 body style is a CF4650 version of the AC&F Center Flow. The "Bankruptcy Blue" of The Rock remains the base color here, with patching to cover the large "R" and original roadname. The dimensional data is in the unusual style used by "The Rock," which helps confirm its heritage. A 2014 bingo, also on RRPictureArchives, shows the opposite side of the car, which doesn't have as much, ahem, unauthorized additional decoration. The 2009 photo date looked pretty good for a "plus or minus" ATP but then I found a 2004 photo of the same car, and the same side, on Fallen Flags. So I can "bookend" the "plus or minus" here.

From RailcarPhotos we learn that the 815207 is part of the FURX series 815200 to 815499, which began as the ROCK 800200 to 800449 built by American Car and Foundry in 1978. These were also 4600, not 4650, cubic foot cars. When new these had the "Route Rock" paint scheme, and obviously the 815207 doesn't any more. In between ROCK and FURX reporting marks, there could have been others such as SSW (Cotton Belt) and RUSX. If it spent time on the Cotton

Belt, it could have been repainted gray. It's noted that "the 815200 to 815499 series is inclusive for First Union-owned cars, some cars from series remarked to SMW, NOKL, NDYX, and FURX reporting marks." And so we have the NDYX reporting marks bleeding through the FURX initials on the 815207 in a 2017 photo posted to RRPictureArchives, though with the same road number. It's noted that this car was also NOKL 815207, TQEX 4103, and KSW 4107, the last of these being the Kansas Southwestern Railroad which operated from 1991 to 2000. It's not just former Incentive Per Diem boxcars that make the rounds of different operators, I guess! I could not get a good handle on when the NOKL reporting marks flipped to FURX – for example, in the October 2014 ORER there are both NDYX 810028 to 815516 and FURX 815000 to 820514 – **and** NOKL 802000 to 824507! -- so this "plus or minus" ATP is my weakest guess among of the three cars, photo evidence notwithstanding.

FURX 816446 is a CF4650 car, matching the MTL 094 body style. Its heritage includes time as NDYX 816446, RUSX 1225, and PCN 1225, that last set being for the Point Comfort and Northern Railroad, a shortline in South Texas founded in 1948 that's currently part of the Genesee and Wyoming empire. The bingo photos on RRPictureArchives are from December 2022 through January 2024 could easily bring "to present" inside the "plus or minus" ATP I'm calling for this car. But that could also mean that the ATP's of the individual cars don't overlap. I didn't find the car with NDYX reporting marks, but I did find NDYX 816445, one number away, as of January 2015. This does suggest a later ATP for this car than for the other two, and also a later build date, June 1980. Well, there's always Rule #1 ("It's your railroad").

## N SCALE MULTI-PACKS:



**Runner Pack #229, also known as the Union Pacific Four Pack (983 00 229, \$119.95, Jewel Case Packaging)** is now available (confirmed via online sale listings). UMTRR pre-order coverage was in the June 2024 issue. The individual catalog and road numbers are: 108 51 101, 18125; 108 52 101, 18141; 108 53 101, 18182; 108 54 101, 18189. These are the fourth through seventh releases for this item, which are officially reprints given their catalog numbers.



**The Frisco (SL-SF)  
Heavyweight Five Pack**  
(983 02 255, \$145.95,  
Jewel Case Packaging)

is expected to be available mid-month (confirmed via online listings). UMTRR pre-order coverage was in the June 2024 issue. The individual catalog and release numbers are as follows: Heavyweight



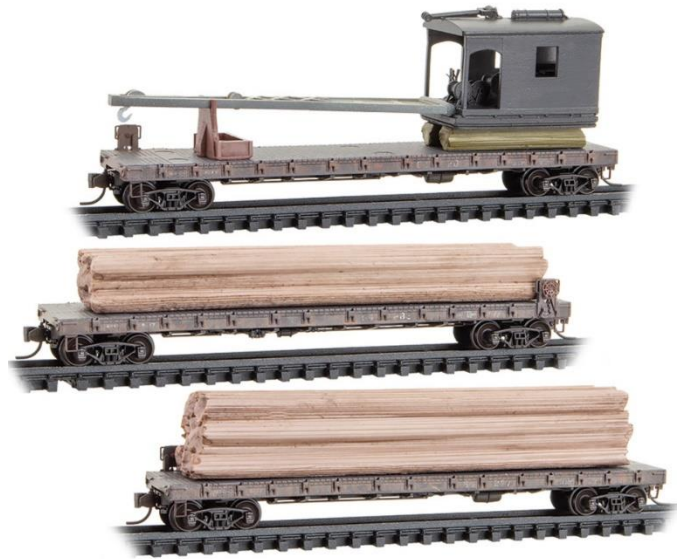
3-2 Observation Car, Catalog 144 51 580, Road Number 8; Heavyweight Paired Window Coaches, Catalog 145 52 580, Road Number 1060, Catalog 145 53 580, Road Number 1063, and Catalog 145 54 580, Road Number 1097; and Heavyweight Baggage Car, Catalog 147 55 580, Road Number 348. These items haven't been previously released. Note that the catalog sequence is sort of "backwards" as it starts with the observation car having "51" as the middle digits of the catalog number.



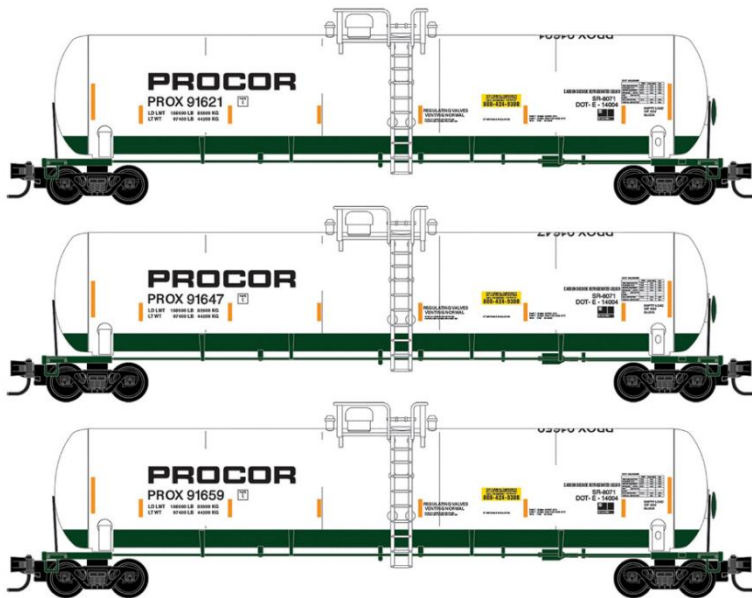
**The CTRN/ex-BN Weathered Four Pack with Sugar Beet Load** (983 05 075, \$129.95, Jewel Case Packaging) is also expected to be available mid-month. UMTRR pre-order coverage was in the June 2024 issue. The individual catalog and release numbers are as follows: 108 51 670, CTRN 193; 108 52 670, CTRN 502; 108 53 670, CTRN 914; 108 54 680 (note catalog number change), CNW 135161. These items haven't been previously released. Note that this is one of the uncommon instances of a Weathered Pack for which MTL used the pre-order protocol.

It'll be listed on the Weathered Packs page on the UMTRR website... as soon as I can get to it...

Meanwhile, via online listings, I can confirm the availability of the **Log Car and Log Loader Three Pack (983 02 254, \$99.95, Jewel Box Packaging)** which was expected to be available mid-October. At right is the official MTL image.



*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 **November 30**.*



**Targeted Delivery April 2025:**  
983 00 234, \$124.95.

**Reporting Marks:** PROX 91621, 91647, and 91659.

**Procor Three Car Runner Pack (Runner Pack #234).**

Jewel box packaging. Scheduled to consist of four MTL 110 series 56 Foot General Service Tank Cars. White with green underframe, details and tank bottom. Black lettering including "Procor" and reporting marks on left, reporting marks on top of tank, and "Carbon Dioxide Refrigerated Liquid" wording on right, and tank qualification stencil on

far right. White on black COTS panel at bottom right. Black on yellow Chemtrek stencil right of center. Orange vertical conspicuity stripes at eight points along car side. Approximate Time Period: 2005 to as late as the present. Previous Releases: None. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

Yes, there's been a white Procor tank car previously released by Micro-Trains (Catalog 110 00 090, September 2006, at right, and yes, all white cars remain a challenge to add to white "paper"); no, this forthcoming Runner Pack won't be counted as reprints of that car.



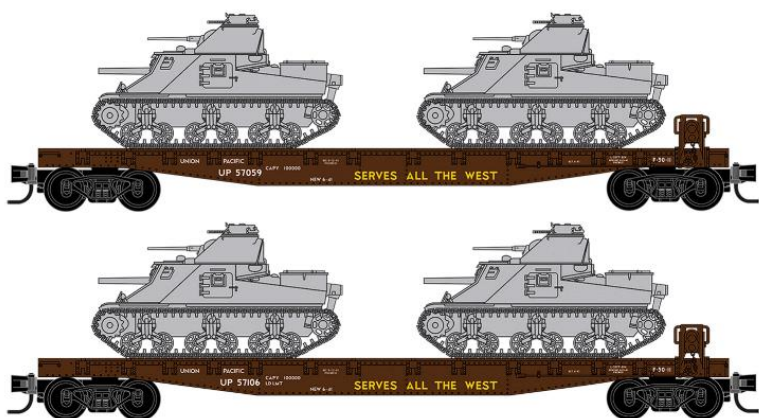
Determining the start of the ATP raises a bit of an interesting question with respect to the conspicuity stripes. They were mandated starting in 2005, however, according to RailcarPhotos, the series PROX 91606 to 91663, which includes these three, was built by Trinity from December 2004 through March 2005. Does that mean that these tankers were delivered with conspicuity stripes, or not? I'm going to say that December 2004 was close enough to the mandate start and therefore they were. Besides, there's not a lot to conspicuity stripes; in fact, you can order striping tape online, whether you own railcars or not. No worries with respect to the Tank Qualification Stencil, though, as it was mandated on all tankers on North American railroads by July 2000. An article by Stuart Streit in the September 2000 issue of **Railroad Model Craftsman** has more details on that lettering requirement.

An April 2007 bingo photo of PROX 91621, the first of the three tank cars coming in these pack, is also on RailcarPhotos. It, well, illustrates, another reason why these cars won't be a reprint of the 2004 white Procor release: the tank car bottom is actually dark green, not black, and certainly not white. The preliminary MTL artwork shows this, particularly when expanded to "actual view" in my beat up image editing software. And yes, the conspicuity stripes are present. There is a single, somewhat traditional looking, manway cover dead center of the car. I don't think this is an expansion dome seen on earlier tank cars, but it does look somewhat like one. This is a difference from the MTL 110 body style, as is the placement of the ladder at the center of the side (it's offset a bit on the model). The prototype is straight across with no "swayback" seen on other contemporary tank cars, and that does align with the Micro-Trains car.

A second photo of the 91621, from February 2010, shows the car with some, ahem, unauthorized additional decoration. By the way, if you'd like to add the Hazardous Materials code to the modeler-installed diamond placards that should accompany these cars, the number you're looking for is 2187. This from the page [theleif.org/tools/hazmat.php](http://theleif.org/tools/hazmat.php). There are four photos of the 91647 on RRPictureArchives, ranging from August 2008 to June 2021. Rounding out the bingo photos, there's a trackside shot of the 91659 on the Canadian Freight Railcar Gallery, taken in Burlington, Ontario in February 2006 – well, Procor **is** a Canadian company!

ORER information is mostly useless when it comes to modern tank cars, so I'll just note that the January 2020 Equipment Register has a main series PROX 80422 to 99434 – you're kidding, right? – and fortunately a subset of 64 cars with AAR Type Code T946 that appears to include the three road numbers in this set, 91621, 91647, and 91659. "As late as the present" is where we'll go with the ATP here.





*Targeted Delivery April 2025:*

**983 02 263, \$69.95.**

**Reporting Marks: UP 57059 and 57106.**

**Union Pacific Flat Car with M3 Tank Load Two Pack.**

Jewel box packaging. Scheduled to consist of two MTL 045 Series 50 Foot Fishbelly Side Flat Cars with multimedia load kits. Brown with mostly white lettering including roadname and reporting marks on

left and UP Class F-50-11 on far right. Yellow slogan right of center: "Serves All The West" shown on the MTL artwork, opposite side should have the slogan "Road of the Streamliners." Approximate Time Period: 1941 (build date) through at least 1949 (for the flat cars). Previous Releases: Catalog 45050, Road Number 57000, August 1999; then Runner Pack #10 with Road Numbers 57016, 57055, 57124, and 57133, February 2008, then Road Numbers 57066 and 57074, two of the three flat cars in the "Wing Carrier Flat Car Three Pack" (993 02 182), April 2022. There were also two previous releases, Catalog 45050/45082, Road Number 56932, May 1975; and Catalog 45080, Road Number 56922, January 1991, which have the "Road of the Streamliners" slogan on both sides, i.e. all following cars are "not a reprints" of the first two. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

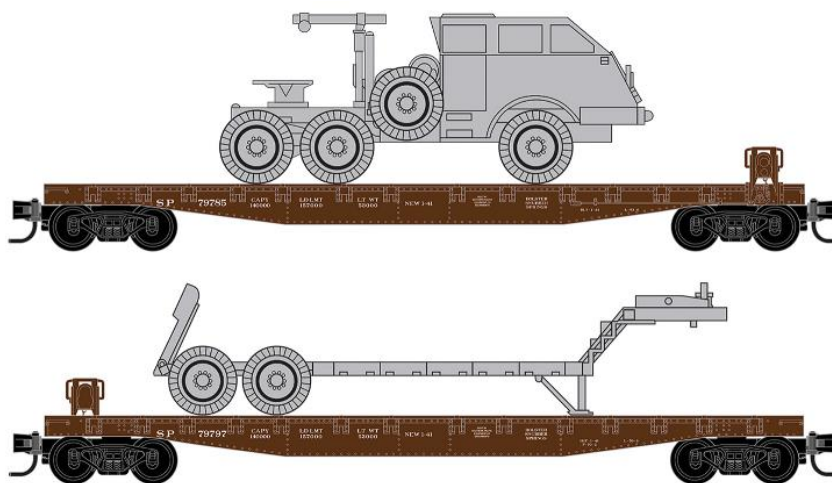
Micro-Trains provides information on the loads in its car copy, which I will quote here. The M3 Lee Tank was an American medium tank used during World War II. Design commenced in July 1940, and the first M3's were operational in late 1941. This was to meet the need of the US Army to have a medium tank armed with a 75 mm gun and coupled with the United Kingdom's immediate demand for 3,650 medium tanks. The design was a compromise meant to produce a tank as soon as possible and serve only until replaced by the following M4 Sherman tank. The Sherman Tank was introduced in 1942, so in theory, there's a pretty short Approximate Time Period for this load; but I don't think that the M3s were all taken out of service when the Shermans appeared.

So let's focus here on the flat cars on which these tanks will ride. They're in the Union Pacific Class F-50-11. For more on that group, we turn to the book **Union Pacific Freight Cars 1936-51** by Terry Metcalfe. (Which I should have looked at in October 2021 when the "Wing Carrier Flat Car Three Pack" was announced for pre-orders!) Three hundred cars numbered 57000 to 57299 were constructed for the railroad by Pullman-Standard in 1941. There are builder's photos on Page 129 of the book which show the alternating slogans; "Serves All The West" on UP 57059—bingo!—and "Road of the Streamliners" on UP 57000. They also show that the brake wheel was a collapsible type, not the side mount version on the MTL 045 body style. The UP's official drawing of these cars is reproduced on Page 130 and includes a list of where most of the parts were sourced, for example, the journal bearings came from Magnus Metal Corporation. It's noted that these cars were the prototype for the AAR Standard 50 Ton Flat

Car, and that drawings for it and the “War Emergency” version appear in the 1943 edition of **Car Builders Cyclopedia**.

The ORER for January 1943 shows the series with all 300 cars and these dimensions: inside length 53 feet 6 inches, inside width 10 feet 8 inches, outside length 54 feet 2 inches, extreme height 4 feet 11 inches, and capacity 100,000 pounds. So this flat car has the typical delta to Micro-Trains flat cars: the body is shorter than the prototype but the overall length is more than the prototype.

In 1949 “Serves All The West” was flipped to “Be Specific - Ship Union Pacific” which would mark the beginning of the end of the Approximate Time Period for this set. (I’m not considering the load here.) But here’s something interesting, also in the book **Union Pacific Freight Cars 1936-51**: a photo of UP 57028 after it was repainted out of the paint scheme with the slogans... in March 1973! I’m not ready to extend the ATP to then, but how’s that for escaping the paint shop for more than forty years?



*Targeted Delivery April 2025:*

**983 02 264, \$69.95.**

**Reporting Marks: SP 79785 and 79797.**

**Southern Pacific Flat Car with “Dragon Wagon” Load Two Pack.**

Jewel box packaging. Scheduled to consist of two MTL 045 Series 50 Foot Fishbelly Side Flat Cars with multimedia load kits. Brown with mostly white lettering

including reporting marks on left. Approximate Time Period: 1941 (build date) into the 1950s. Previous Releases: Road Numbers 79700, 79753, and 79795, as Three Pack with LTV(1)A Load, May 2025. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

It’s noted on the Railgoat website that Southern Pacific’s F-70-2 series of cars were constructed in 1941 by the SP Equipment Company and “featured fishbelly side sills, 16 stake pockets, Columbia Steel trucks, poling pockets, overhanging wood decks and riveted construction.” Webmaster Lee Gautreaux also notes that an article on these cars by Allen Wood appeared in the November-December 1976 issue of **Western Prototype Modeler** including prototype and model photos.

Following the pre-order announcement of the Three Pack with LTV(1)A Load in December 2023, which used the same series of SP flat cars, UMTRR Gang Member Jeff Maurer told us that “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 of the book **Southern Pacific Freight Cars - Volume 3 - Automobile Cars and Flat Cars** [out of print]. It is the 79700 in what appears to be a builders

photo taken at the Sacramento Shops in January 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." Jeff noted that the lettering could be a little off given the position of the stake pockets; on the prototype, it's higher up the side, in between the pockets.

A "shrink table" on the Railgoat site, compiled from actual SP rosters (not ORERs) shows 50 cars in the original series in April 1960, then 12 in July 1963 and just four in January 1965. This presumes that the paint scheme remained as delivered that entire time, something I'd be skeptical about, even for the SP. (I'm not anything approaching expert on the railroad's flat car paint schemes, but a builder's photo of an F-70-7 from 1950 shows the full roadname and road number somewhat left of center instead of reporting marks on the left.) In a renumbering, these cars were combined with the F-70-5 class to yield the group SP 560001 to 560423, which is where some of these cars ended their time on the railroad.

Oops... I didn't include an ORER lookup for these cars when the previous Three Pack was announced. Let's fix that with a check of the Equipment Register for January 1943. The series SP 79700 to 79824 was shown with both inside and outside length of 52 feet – which doesn't make a lot of sense, but that's what it says – outside width of 9 feet, height to top of platform of 3 feet 10 inches, extreme height of 6 feet 1 inch, and capacity of 140,000 pounds. All 125 cars were present and accounted for at the time.

Now, let's have a look at the load, and just what is a "Dragon Wagon" anyway? For the answer, we go to the website warhistoryonline.com and a guest author there, Matthew Gaskill. Gaskill became a history teacher at least partially because of learning about his uncle's World War II experiences in the European Theatre. He and others note that the M25 was the original designation for what became known as the M26 in the latter part of the war. The trailer that was paired with the M26 was the M15 trailer. This pair is what's coming as the load in this two pack. Start quote:

"As American tanks got bigger towards the end of the war, a new more powerful transporter was needed. The Dragon Wagon carried a seventeen liter 240 horsepower Hall-Scott engine with chain driven tandem axles and was capable of towing 80,000 pounds/40 tons, which was more than enough to carry the newer Sherman tanks."

"The truck/trailer combination was approximately sixty-four feet long (truck 25 feet 4 inches /trailer 38 feet 5 inches). The truck was eleven feet high, and ten feet wide – a monster. What made it really unique was its modern design: the Dragon Wagon would look at home on today's battlefields with its sloped armor (front 19mm/sides and rear 6.4mm). This differed greatly from previous military towing vehicles, which were not armored at all. Additionally, the M26 carried a .50 machine gun for self-defense."

"Production of the Dragon Wagon ceased in 1955. Two thousand one hundred Dragon Wagons were built, in two variants, the M26, and the M26A1 (which was unarmored). Many of the vehicles went to private ownership, but they were not practical for anything but heavy vehicle



towing in very limited areas (such as towing train cars).” Train cars? How about that! This idea should spawn some interesting repurposing of the forthcoming Micro-Trains model...

As for the nickname of the M26? Gaskill explains, “‘Dragon’ was not a play on words for ‘dragging’ or towing something. [It] had nothing to do with the vehicles purpose, but everything to do with the flames that would periodically burst forth from the trucks mighty exhaust.” Yikes!

For more on the Dragon Wagon, there’s a video available. You can view it here: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=fHwGDzShFv4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fHwGDzShFv4).

Oh, one other thing: while the Dragon Wagon was designed by the San Francisco-based Knuckey Truck Company, that small firm couldn’t keep up with demand, so production was instead awarded to Pacific Car and Foundry. Yes, the same one that built freight cars!



Heavyweight Diner, Road Number 12, and one MTL 144 Series Heavyweight 3-2 Observation Car, Road Number 5, Car Name “Hamburg.”



Names “Raleigh” and “Clearfield.”

All cars are in the multicolor “Duke Ash” paint scheme in cream, silver and black with multicolor decoration, featuring the company name on a blue band at the bottom of the car, and car name on a red band at top center (except the Diner). All cars have road number in

*Targeted Delivery April 2025:*

**983 02 265, \$59.95.**

**Strates Shows  
Passenger Car  
Two Pack.**

Jewel box packaging.  
Scheduled to consist of  
one MTL 146 Series

*and*

**983 02 266, \$89.95.**

**Strates Shows  
Passenger Car  
Three Pack.**

Jewel box packaging.  
Scheduled to consist of  
one MTL 141 Series 10-  
1-2 Sleeping Car, Road  
Number 2, Car Name  
“Syracuse,” and two  
MTL 143 Series 28-1  
Parlor Cars, Road  
Numbers 3 and 6, Car

white on a red and yellow curlicue device at bottom left and right. All cars have six wheel trucks. Approximate Time Period: early 1960s (sources vary between 1961 and 1963) to at least 1970. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

It's not every day that the subject of a Micro-Trains release announces it on **its own** Facebook page (!), but the Strates Shows did: "We are proud to announce a partnership with Micro-Trains Lines to bring a model of our famous show train to N Scale. Working with Micro-Trains designers, and utilizing existing N Scale tooling, hundreds of archival images were studied to accurately depict the 'Duke Ash Era' paint scheme & decorations used from 1962 to 1965."

The James E. Strates Shows was a 1929 rebranding of the Southern Tier Shows, which was itself a rework of "Lee Schaefer's Athletic Show" founded which a young James Strates joined in 1919 – as a professional wrestler. The use of a train to carry the show from site to site began in 1934 with the purchase of flat cars. Other equipment including passenger cars were added.

One of those cars was named "Hamburg," for the town in Western New York a bit south of Buffalo. The Erie County Fair in Hamburg is the oldest stop on the Strates circuit. The year 2024 marked the one hundredth (!) anniversary of its appearance there. It was also the last time that the Strates Train was used to transport equipment, and that was a bit of a special honorary train to mark the milestone year. Strates actually gave up the train for truck transport of their equipment in 2019. There are plenty of videos of the Strates Trains available for viewing, though, including from the 1960s, and including the company's official YouTube channel and Facebook page. By the way, the Number 12 wasn't the only James Strates observation named "Hamburg." There was also a smooth-side streamlined car, Road Number 7, the former Pennsylvania Railroad Road Number 8427, "William Wallace Atterbury," according to the late Jerry Laboda's "Passenger Car Photo Index."

The cars had been repainted from what MTL depicts here into other schemes, so the ATP ends well before the end of the Strates train. Our Special Correspondent David Grothe found the "Syracuse," JESX 2, in one of those later paint schemes in August 2023. That photo is here: [www.flickr.com/photos/davidgrothe/53153331927](http://www.flickr.com/photos/davidgrothe/53153331927) . David relates that it was built in 1929 by Pullman as the "Palm Lane" for the name train "Seminole Limited." It was sold in August 1956 to James E. Strates Shows and became the #2. As David found it, the windows had been boarded up and it was stenciled IMRX 9181. It's now owned by the Illinois Railroad Museum, see [www.irm.org/player/pullmanpalmlane/](http://www.irm.org/player/pullmanpalmlane/) and at this writing, awaits restoration.

I also found the "Danville," Road Number 8, on RailcarPhotos.com. It was in Jersey City (my home town!) in June 1965, with almost the same paint scheme as what MTL will be doing. And hidden in the "Royal American Shows and RBB" page on Fallen Flags is a shot of Road Number 21, "Orlando Florida," a balloon roof observation car in the scheme that matches the artwork. More to the point, though, Jerry Britton has collected multiple photos of cars in this scheme – including bingos on all five (!) and has them on a page of his website: See [jbritton.pennsyrr.com/index.php/research-blog-index/684-the-james-e-strates-shows-1963-paint-scheme](http://jbritton.pennsyrr.com/index.php/research-blog-index/684-the-james-e-strates-shows-1963-paint-scheme) . And note that he calls this "The 1963 Paint Scheme." Looks like the ATP is a little bit fuzzy here. The Strates Shows also refer to this "Duke Ash" version as the "circus

tent” scheme. By the way, there’s a profile of Duke Ash, a 1986 article the magazine **Signcraft** available. See [www.signcraft.com/articleindex/pdfs\\_for\\_article\\_index/1986/06/031-066.pdf](http://www.signcraft.com/articleindex/pdfs_for_article_index/1986/06/031-066.pdf) for that. Ash passed away in 1990 at the age of 75, leaving a large legacy of carnival artwork.

This is just speculation on my part, but it seems to me that reproducing this intricate and ornate paint scheme probably wouldn’t have been possible prior to the introduction of the CYMK decorating process by the folks in Talent. Even if you don’t consider yourself to be the target market for this particular release, take a moment to have a look at the preliminary artwork. There’s a lot going on! I can only imagine how much work it was to paint the prototype back in the early 1960s. And I suppose I’m not surprised that other paint schemes followed. How many were there? Well, Jerry Britton has another page on his site with photos of at least some of them: [jbritton.pennsyrr.com/index.php/post-pennsy/other-railroads-articles-blog/latest-articles-blog-postpennsy/674-the-james-e-strates-shows-train-car-paint-schemes](http://jbritton.pennsyrr.com/index.php/post-pennsy/other-railroads-articles-blog/latest-articles-blog-postpennsy/674-the-james-e-strates-shows-train-car-paint-schemes).

Oh, one other thing: the Facebook post from Strates Shows calls this “the initial release.” Hmm...

**N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES:** There are no pre-order announcements this month.



**The Honoring Class I Railroads Series Car for the CPKC (102 00 846, \$29.95)** is now available. UMTRR pre-order coverage was in the June 2024 UMTRR.



**WITH JEWEL CASES**

Also, the **Medford, Talent, & Lakecreek Railroad Christmas Set (983 21 388, \$249.95, Jewel Box packaging)** is now available. This is an apparent slight delay from mid-last month. There’s an official MTL photo now which seems to confirm this. We also get to see the “snow effects” on the equipment... neat!



**Z SCALE:** No new releases or pre-order announcements this month.



There are official images of the **Burlington Northern 60 Foot Flat Cars (524 00 043 and 044, BN 630815 and 630822, \$23.95 each)**. These were expected mid last-month but based on the image file names, the actual availability may officially be this month.



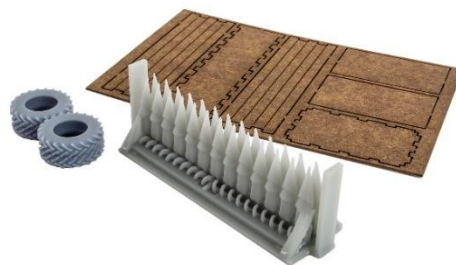
And there are also official images of the **2024 Micro-Mouse Christmas Car (507 00 750, \$29.95)** which is confirmed as available from MTL. UMTRR pre-order coverage was in the September 2024 issue.

**HO SCALE:** There are no new announcements this month. Expected for mid-month release, moved up from "early 2025," is the **Burlington Northern Three Bay Center Flow Hopper Kit (2000-002, \$49.95, Reporting Marks BN 481170)**. It's Grit 'N Grime Series Car #12 by my unofficial reckoning. Also expected mid-month is the **Grain Storage Kit (900 56 010, \$54.95)**. At "press time," I had not yet seen these two available.



Also, the **2024 Micro-Mouse Christmas Car Kit (5900-001, \$49.95)** is expected to be available mid-month and is listed as "in stock" on the MTL website as of November 23. The official photo is on the MTL site as well. I've seen these for sale online.

**MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Suitable for the N Scale 60 Foot Flat Cars, and possibly other rolling stock, is a **Combine Corn Heads with Tire Load (499 45 035, \$12.95)**. This looks multi-media for certain: a 3-D printed load, plus laserboard parts, and, well, I'm not sure about the tires. I also wasn't sure what a "combine corn head" **was** (George, you city boy!), so I checked: [cultivateconnections.org/what-is-that-combine-heads/](http://cultivateconnections.org/what-is-that-combine-heads/) .



**DISCONTINUED ALERT:** While my mind is still mostly on HO Cars, I'll note that the MTL website shows that they are all still available at this writing, so no need for the Dreaded "D" — so far. Moving down to this year's Z Scale releases, I'm a little confused on the status of the 2024 Christmas Car (507 00 750): the Micro-News notes that it's still available, but it's not listed on the MTL website. I think I'll hold on a call on this until next month. Also not shown on the MTL website are the Union Pacific x-post boxcars (511 00 16x, February), but I think I'll conclude that those have left the building. Same for the Union Pacific 60 Foot Flat Cars (524 00 20x, August). Rounding out the bye-bye board for 2024 are the second number of the Burlington Northern well car (540 00 024, April, first number already gone) and the first number of the Southern Pacific well car (540 00 043, March, second number still available).

That brings us to the N Scale items for this year. I had mentioned last month that given that it appeared that nothing was outta here based on the website, that this might be a catch-up month. And... it is. We start with most of the Ex Incentive Per Diem boxcar series... gone are the SRN/ex-Corinth and Counce (025 44 141, April, #1 in the series), the CIC/ex-Seattle and North Coast (030 44 241, May, #2), the SRN/ex-Greenville and Northern (025 44 210, June, #3), the CIC/ex-Oregon and Northwestern (030 44 320, July, #4), the EEC/ex-Berlin Mills (025 44 931, August, #5), and the SRN/ex-Port Huron and Detroit (025 44 366, September, #6). Also weathered and also gone is the Norfolk Southern/ex "old" Norfolk Southern x-post boxcar (025 44 286, February, NS Fallen Flag Series #10). The D-Day Great Britain flat car and load has shipped out (045 00 781, June). The brown Pennsylvania Railroad caboose (050 00 260, June) — not to be confused with this month's yellow Pennsylvania Railroad caboose! — is sold out. The Santa Fe 40 foot plug door boxcar has left the building (074 00 190, February). The Weathered Norfolk Southern/ex-Southern Railway two bay Center Flow has emptied out (092 44 540, January, NS Family Tree Series #9). The Weathered Golden West/HPJX Center Flow has as well (094 44 900, August). The first number of the B&O/Chessie System PS-2 Covered Hopper has run out of lives (095 00 090, January, second number still available). The "Honoring Class Ones" cars for the Union Pacific (102 00 844, July) and Norfolk Southern (102 00 845, September) have rolled away. The August release of the Weathered TBOX boxcar (123 44 017, well, August) is gone, and so is the clean but restenciled TBOX/ex-AOK/previously UP 60 Foot Boxcar (123 00 130, October). The Conrail 50 foot boxcar with plug door is outta here (181 00 360, September). Wow, I'm having to reuse alternate phrases for "discontinued" and I still have multi-packs to cover. OK, then, we can close out four Runner Packs: the Jewel Box version of #220 of four CSXT boxcars (983 00 220, February); the Foam Nest version of #224 of four C&O hoppers (993 00 224, June), both versions of #226 of four Burlington Northern Center Flows (9x3 00 226, August), and #228, which was Jewel Boxes only for four Florida East

Coast Ortner Hoppers in the reporting marks only “spartan” scheme (983 00 228, October). Finally, both versions of the Northern Pacific Drop Bottom Gondola with Sugar Beet Load have emptied out (9x3 02 248, July). All of the individual items for the above packs were also marked as discontinued in the UMTRR 2024 Release Table.

**INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT:** I’ve now noted online sale listings for the N Scale Billboard Kit (499 90 503, \$20.95) which was targeted to be available mid-October.

**OOPS PATROL:** A pricing mistake that goes back through the entire year: I had the MSRP for the Weathered TBOX Cars (123 44 01x) at \$49.95, when it is actually \$52.95. That’s been fixed in the 2024 Release Table and will be correct in the Back Issues when they’re posted.

The road number for the Northern Pacific 40 Foot Single Sheathed Boxcar with Lumber and Car Unloader (028 44 251) released last month is **20315**, not 601. That was a copy/paste goof from a previous car—the Western Pacific caboose, to be exact. And get me rewrite on the individual items in the Log Car and Log Loader Three Pack (983 02 254): they are 044 51 130, 84201; 044 52 130, 84217; and 044 53 130, 84283, 50 foot flat cars with Straight Sides.

**SEE YOU NEXT MONTH!** Until then, do the best you can!

Cheers,  
George

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