Mount Union Development Commitee

rnb3 #1 May 9, 2017, 7:35pm

The original concept was that Mount Union was an Appalachian & Ohio town. The Norfolk & Western and the Antioc & Dover enter and join (from staging) at south (right side) of town using track originally designed and built for the Antioc & Dover interchange. The new concept is that Mount Union is an Antioc & Dover town with the Antioc & Dover entering the scene from the north (left side) of town, passing underneath an Appalachian & Ohio's bridge and gaining elevation through town before joining at south end of the Appalachian & Ohio passing track. The Norfolk & Western interchanges with the Antioc & Dover at south Mount Union. The Antioc & Dover interchanges with the Appalachian & Ohio further south at Ricksburg Yard reached via trackage rights.

Requirements:

1. Antioc & Dover and Appalachian & Ohio share depot.
2. Rail served industries must include a lumberyard; two cars, an oil dealer; three cars, a pulpwood load out; 3 to 4 cars, and a large rail served structure to hide hidden drill track.
3. Existing Appalachian & Ohio main and siding track and signaling is un-changed.

Added values:

1. No interference with existing built-out CTC.
2. Increased Norfolk & Western interchange "play value".
3. Increased footprint for the Antioc & Dover identity; enhances story telling.
4. Cleans up local switching at Mount Union to ease CTC control; eliminating local switching interference with the Appalachian & Ohio main and siding tracks.

Back-story could be that Antioc & Dover abandoned track further south of Mount Union after corporate alignment with Appalachian & Ohio in late 1950s. Old Antioc & Dover main stub south of town is now a pulpwood load out. Antioc & Dover track is lighter rail (code 100) and maintained to branch standards. Antioc & Dover is trainorder controlled with trainorder operator at Mount Union station complete with order board on Antioc & Dover side of depot. Mount Union is the terminus for Antioc & Dover control and trainorder are issued for all movements north (timetable west) of depot. Antioc & Dover trackage between depot and south to Appalachian & Ohio is under yard limit (rule 93) restriction. Appalachian & Ohio dispatcher controls CTC siding including Antioc & Dover interchange switch.

1 Like

rnb3 #2 May 9, 2017, 7:55pm

GAS STATION/GARAGE (Added to concept Sep/Nov 2016 – construction started Nov 2016)
This is a single pump Texaco gas station with an adjoined garage. Two single story brick structures with different heights. The station side has a 45-degree front face at street corner to allow vehicle pass through off the streets. The open garage doors allow full interior detail. Large front windows on the station allow some interior detailing here too. Plenty of brick sidewall area will allow big advertisements and signage.

Actual construction is styrene-laminated walls consisting of two core layers of .040 sheet styrene sandwiched with JTT styrene brick sheets. Cement foundations, and windowsills are styrene laminated over brick sheets. Windows and doors are Grandt Line castings. Garage door is scratchbuilt from styrene.

1 Like

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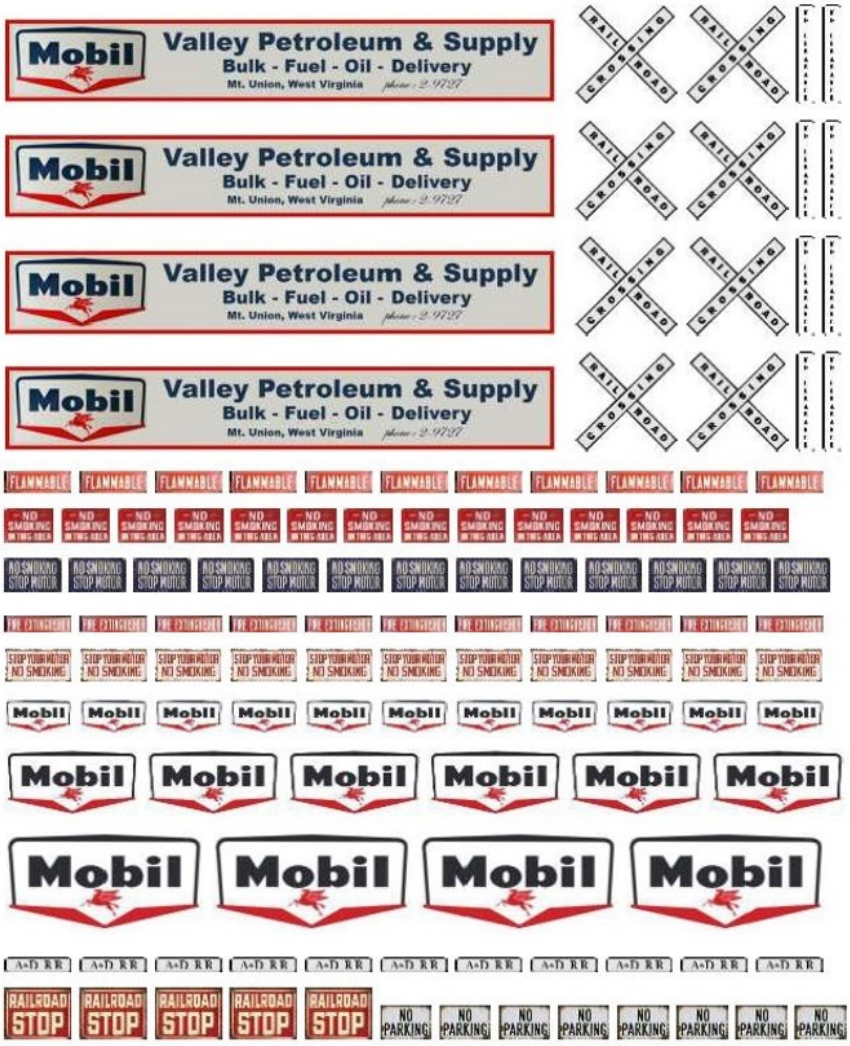
rnb3 #3 May 9, 2017, 9:31pm

Valley Petroleum and Supply (Construction started Dec 2016)
This is a small regional fuel dealership with rail access. There is room for three car spots with two for tank cars and a small dock for packaged product. There is a small office, a warehouse, a couple storage tanks, and some trans-load equipment. Tanks will be a mixture of horizontal and upright tanks equal to about 4 times the railcar capacity. A local delivery truck or two will be used to deliver to local gas stations. There is a fence around the lot with gates for both track and a dirt drive. This is the south end of the street scene.

The first model is the warehouse and is well along in construction. It is entirely scratchbuilt from styrene sheet and strip with one Grandt Line door casting! The base is textured, painted, and weathered to look like wood pilings and cast cement. The large doors allow for interior detailing. The

interior is finished with stud walls. The exterior is corrugated siding. The styrene siding will be painted to appear as multiple individual sheets of siding using a stencil and an airbrush to simulate the shadows that define each sheet. There are numerous castings and details like barrels and pallets that will fill up the interior.

Following some internet research, I have chosen Mobile Oil as the brand name and named the dealership “Valley Petroleum and Supply” based off an ad in a vintage 1968 West Virginia phonebook. I used Micro Soft Office products to generate all the signs for this scene by clipping pictures of real signage and re-sizing them to O scale. Some of the signs where integrated into my own artwork to create the business signage. This artwork is printed on photo paper. I cut the sign out and color or paint the back silver or white, and hit it with a shot of Dulecoat. I think this is an easy way to make good-looking metal signs. The best part is that I can play with the artwork and add things like bolt heads and weathering.



1 Like

ErikLindgren #4 May 10, 2017, 8:25pm

So beautiful just love the work.

Bob #5 May 11, 2017, 8:09pm

Rick -
Yesterday David and I took another look at the gas station in Mt. Union. Wow. You are a talented scratch builder and have a great eye for color. I can't wait to see the town come alive.

So *Texaco* has the gas station and *Mobil* has the fuel distributorship. Sounds like there needs to be a price war on fuel. I clearly remember riding in the car with mom and dad to visit relatives in the wee hours of the night and passing a permanently “indisposed” gas station with the final posted gas price at 19 cents/gallon.

1 Like

Jeff_Tague #6 May 11, 2017, 11:04pm

Hey Rick! I’m pretty good at visualizing a verbal description but could you draw a rough track layout of Mt. Union? Did Bob (NRW) take over the staging you built that entered the South end? Where’s your staging (assume under the Keyford stuff like the prior staging)? Inquiring minds want to know!

1 Like

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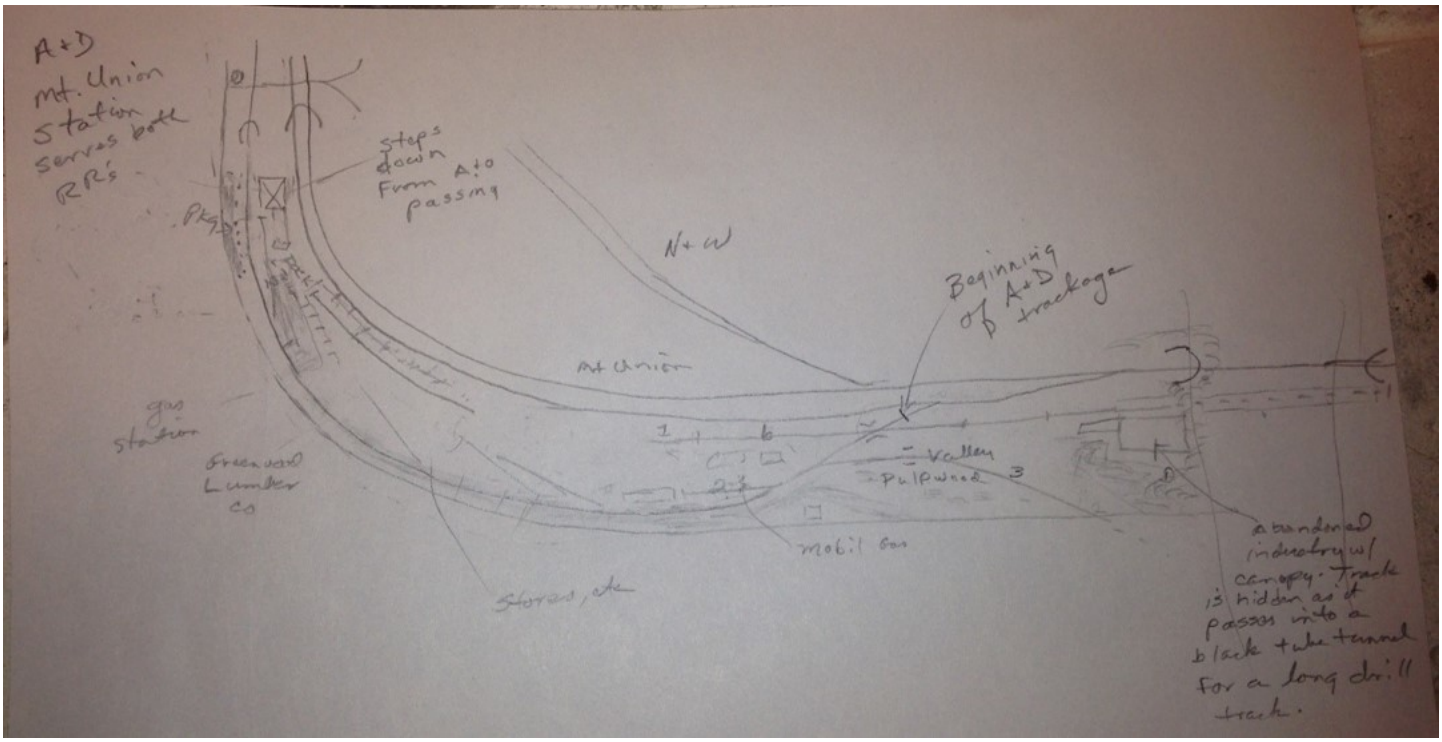
rnb3 #7 May 12, 2017, 10:53pm

Erik and Bob, thanks for the encouraging comments!

Jeff, you have beat me to the punch! I didn’t have time the other day to finish the track plan graphics. So, here goes!

This is David’s pencil sketch. There are three major points here. 1) Make the Antioc and Dover the main railroad in town with the Appalachian and Ohio passing through in the background. 2) Move the Antioc and Dover’s entrance onto the layout from staging farther up the layout. It ultimately ended up in the next scenic section of the layout! 3) The key to the track plan is a double slip switch near where the Antioc and Dover connects to the A&O. This compresses the track plan and prevents switching from interfering with the signaled main and passing siding.



1 Like

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rnb3 #8 May 12, 2017, 10:56pm

The already built Antioc and Dover staging yard will now become a N&W connection. This will be a second interchange for the N&W on the layout, the first being through Bob's NR&W connection further south.

The Antioc and Dover and N&W staging tracks pass through the backdrop and utilize curved shelves behind the back drop. These 2 shelves are actually underneath the town of Kayford inside the isolated Kayford Branch. The N&W is two tracks with a capacity of 15 to 20 cars each. The A&D is three tracks of 20 cars each. That's five trains added to the operating session. As plans and operations advance, the A&D will contribute about seven to eight trains to the layout; three out of staging, three into staging, and a turn from Ricksburg! This is almost like my own layout within David's layout!

Using David's sketch, I continued to work on the Mount Union design. David had stated that he wanted a lumberyard, oil dealer, and pulpwood load out. He also thought the two railroads could share a depot. Here is my concept and track plan.

1 Like

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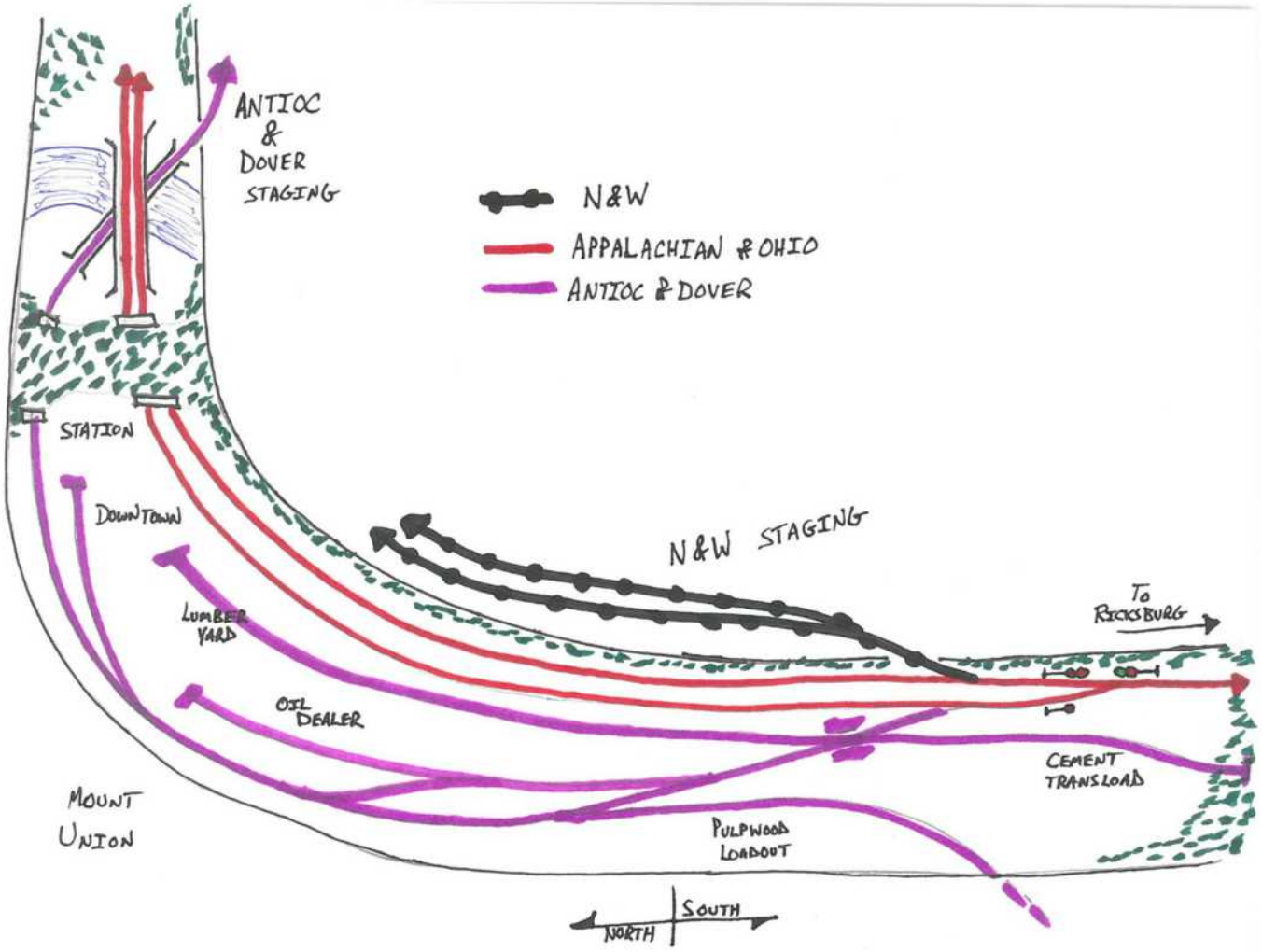
rnb3 #9 May 12, 2017, 10:58pm

David and I spent an evening laying out the track plan using his “bent stick” method. This allowed us to see full size what would actually fit AND look right! By evening’s end, we had a final track plan. I have sketched out this final plan as it is now actually built. The normal A&D track crew laid the track, wired it, and installed the turnouts and controls (thanks David, Bob, Vince, Mark).

I built some foam board mock ups of the downtown buildings, the depot, gas station, and lumberyard structures. These have been on the layout for a while now. I have received some very good feedback from these and make adjustments regarding building heights/sizes, scene composition, and overall three-dimensional fit of the scene. This has been an easy way for me to show how the scene looks in my mind! It has also greatly helped me to bridge the gap between concept and reality. I now have a very accurate idea of what the end state will look like which has allowed me to build models off sight

with a high probability that they will fit when placed on the layout. I can also easily estimate materials needed. Lastly I have been able to use the mock ups to plan out the scene in a modular fashion that allows me to build the entire scene in steps, again a real advantage considering I am doing most of the model work at my house and will be “adding” each piece as I complete them.

Here is the as-built track diagram.



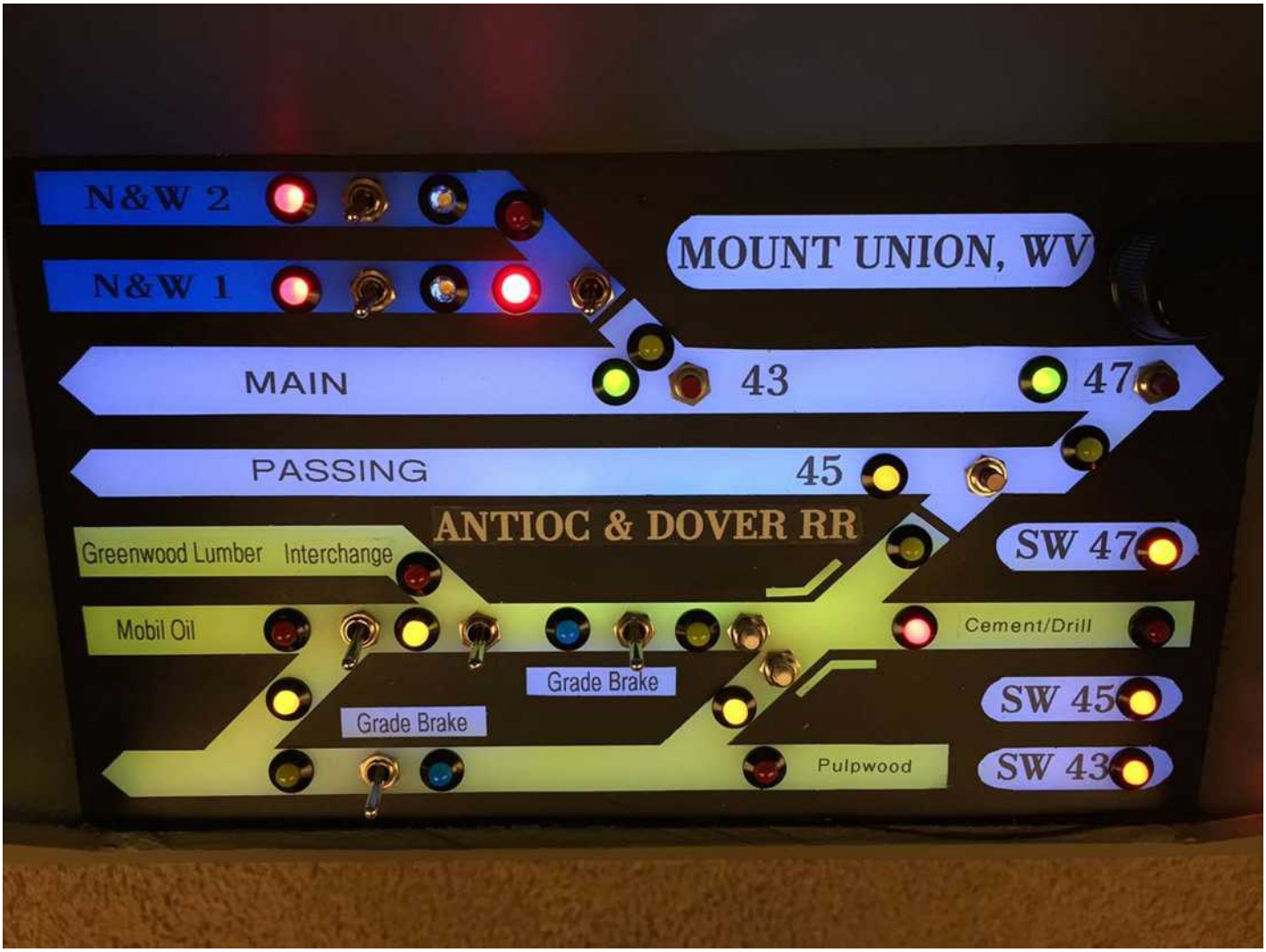
1 Like

Bob #10 May 18, 2017, 1:53am

Today I installed the main Mount Union control panel, but CTC-control tests have not yet been completed. Hopefully this will give additional insight into the design of the revised Mount Union area.

SW47 is a CTC OS-section dual-control switch while 43 and 45 are controlled-lock switches (dispatcher locked.) There will be a second A&D control panel in a pull-out drawer located roughly

underneath the Oil Dealer.



Mainline switches use pushbuttons instead of toggle switches so that, when the dispatcher grants local control, the switches don't move if the toggle was left in an unfavorable position. The pair of white pushbuttons operate the righthand Tortoise motor of the double slip by activating a miniature latching relay. On a double-slip, the right side points determine which track on the left is in play. The unintuitive mapping has been fixed by the location of the pushbuttons. Just press the button on the track you want.

Clear warm-white LEDs on the N&W staging tracks indicate that the switch between tracks 1 and 2 is fouled. When running a train into a staging track, the operator pulls in until the fouling indicator goes out and stays out. Likewise there is red one-car to end-of-track warning on the Cement/Drill. All 3 are homemade infrared beam block "Dayscope" detectors, sensitive enough to be triggered by a coupler knuckle.

1 Like

Craig #11 May 18, 2017, 1:59am

Great looking panel and should be a fun area to operate.

I can attest as well…Rick packs so much detail into those models you just can't pick it all up in the photos.

Looking forward to more updates Rick!!

1 Like

Jeff_Tague #12 May 18, 2017, 6:08pm

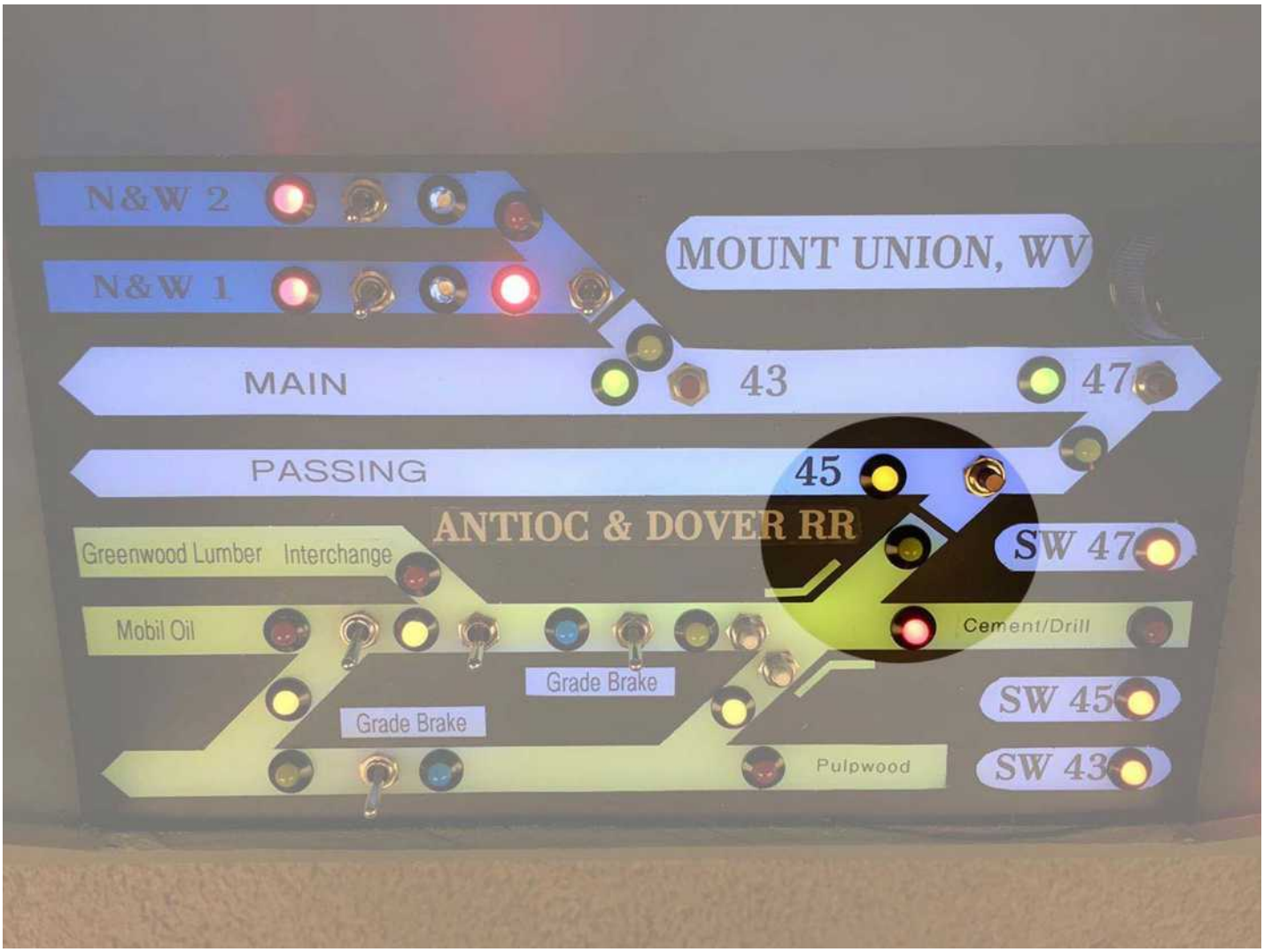
Bob … I don't get how two buttons can select all the routes possible with a puzzle switch. The photo is showing the lower lead into the Cement drill. I want to head to switch 45. How do that happen?

1 Like

Bob #13 May 18, 2017, 6:37pm

Jeff -

The other half of the double slip forms a crossover controlled by SW45. This is normally locked by the dispatcher. When unlocked, the red pushbutton can be pressed to allow movement between the passing siding and the A&D.



1 Like

Jeff_Tague #14 May 18, 2017, 9:19pm

Thanx! I should have seen that one! (Old age.)

1 Like

Bob #15 May 21, 2017, 8:58pm

Jeff -

Hey, no problem. Thanks for your interest!

Since that is a double slip or “puzzle switch” the two white pushbuttons on the left control the switch points on the right, and the red 45 pushbutton controls the points on the left.

As a train enters a double-slip, the first points encountered determine which track on the far side the train will exit. The far-side points (a tip of the hat to cartoonist Gary Larson) determine on which track the train enters.

Because the route mapping through a double-slip is counter-intuitive, the control panel layout has been reversed so that one can just select the tracks on which one desires to run. Hopefully the LED indicators confirm the chosen route. In the photo a train on the Cement/Drill track traveling left will run diagonally down towards the lower grade brake. To extend the run left to A&D staging, an operator would need to also flip up the crossover toggle that leads to Mobil Oil.

All the best.

1 Like

Jeff_Tague #16 May 21, 2017, 11:56pm

OK, Bob. A question I haven’t asked. Assume #45 unlocked and thrown, and forgotten. Does the dispatcher regain the p/siding just by re-locking on the CTC board?

1 Like

Bob #17 May 22, 2017, 3:17am

Jeff -

Although not prototypical, what you surmise for switch 45 is correct. If the crew forgets to restore the switch, once they report that they relinquish track & time the dispatcher can restore it to normal by locking the switch.

On the prototype, the dispatcher couldn’t do that and the crew member who left it unlocked and not restored to its normal and locked position would be fired. That’s not always practical on a model railroad.

I designed the mainline Tortoise control circuit boards in 2009. At that time little information was available to me regarding prototype practice. The A&O functionally mirrors to a large degree what I experienced operating on Doug Geiger’s Granite Mountain. Eventually Bruce Chubb released his version 3 tome on signaling. In the April 2017 issue of Craftsman Bruce goes into considerable detail

about CTC and electric locks. That said, the lack of prototype fidelity will not be corrected.

As a note switch 47 is inside an interlocking plant, control point, or OS section. It is a dual-control switch, meaning that an operator can, after receiving dispatcher permission, insert a key to unlock the switch and take control. The dispatcher can't retake control until the key is removed. In this situation, if a crew forgets to remove the key, the dispatcher can ask the next train to remove it after stopping at a red signal. The DS can also drop a red signal in front of the offending train and arrange for engineer "Darwin" to be temporarily relieved of duty.

1 Like

Bob #18 May 22, 2017, 8:47pm

Jeff - One more thing.

A particular feature of the always-on Tortoise control boards is that they automatically unlock if the CTC system is turned off, disabled, or not yet installed. There is a power relay in line with each of the field SMINI PC boards. All of them power up together when a switch on the CTC machine is thrown.

During layout construction and maintenance, we leave the CTC machine powered down. That way, all Tortoise motors automatically fall to full local control.

A different approach was implemented at the Colorado Model Railroad Museum in Greeley, CO. To throw a mainline switch, the CTC computer must be up and running a special "play mode" program which reads the local control panels and drives the Tortoise control PC boards accordingly. If the CTC system isn't working, there is no local control. While volunteering at the museum prior to the public opening, it seemed prudent to design a means for local control prior to installing any part of the CTC system.

1 Like

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rnb3 #19 July 26, 2017, 1:33am

End of July 2017 update…
I have slowly been working to finish the Valley Petroleum & Supply warehouse shed. Most of the construction was completed back in the beginning of the year. I have been working on color and texture as of late. The shed is all styrene in construction. The siding is JT Models corrugated siding. For ease of construction, I applied the siding as whole sheets sized to fit each wall and attached with spray adhesive. On the outside, to simulate the individual siding sheets that would be used on a

prototype, I made a template approximately 3 by 8 scale feet and scored the sides around it with a hobby knife. I used a small pointed punch to replicate nail holes. The entire structure (minus the roofs, doors, and base was painted with Killz brand white primer. This primer has a heavy tooth that takes stains well.

I hand brushed the interior wall studs with a light brown craft paint. I was not too concerned about complete coverage or being neat, but rather allowed the brush marks to give the impression of wood grain. This was a little tedious due to reaching into the model from above or below. I made sure any stud visible through the two doors was painted. This is important since most of the finished Mt Union scene will be visible from all sides. I did not want Bob's camera to find an unfinished angle later! History has shown there is little predictable limit to where his camera might look! A good cheat for this is to use my iPhone to shoot tons of angles and flip through the shots a few days later to see if anything pops out. It is a 90% solution! Game on Bob!

To make the detail of the scribed panels on the outside stand out as well as highlight and shadow the corrugations, I used a wash of gauche and Windex on each side, letting each side dry before rotating the structure. My main gauche colors are black and brown. A tiny dot of color mixed with about a tablespoon of Windex does the trick. No two batches are the same. A second coat will deepen or darken the wash. If I do not like what I see, a makeup sponge wetted with Windex will wash it all off (or fade it). Q-tips and Windex can be used to spot clean or lighten tight areas.

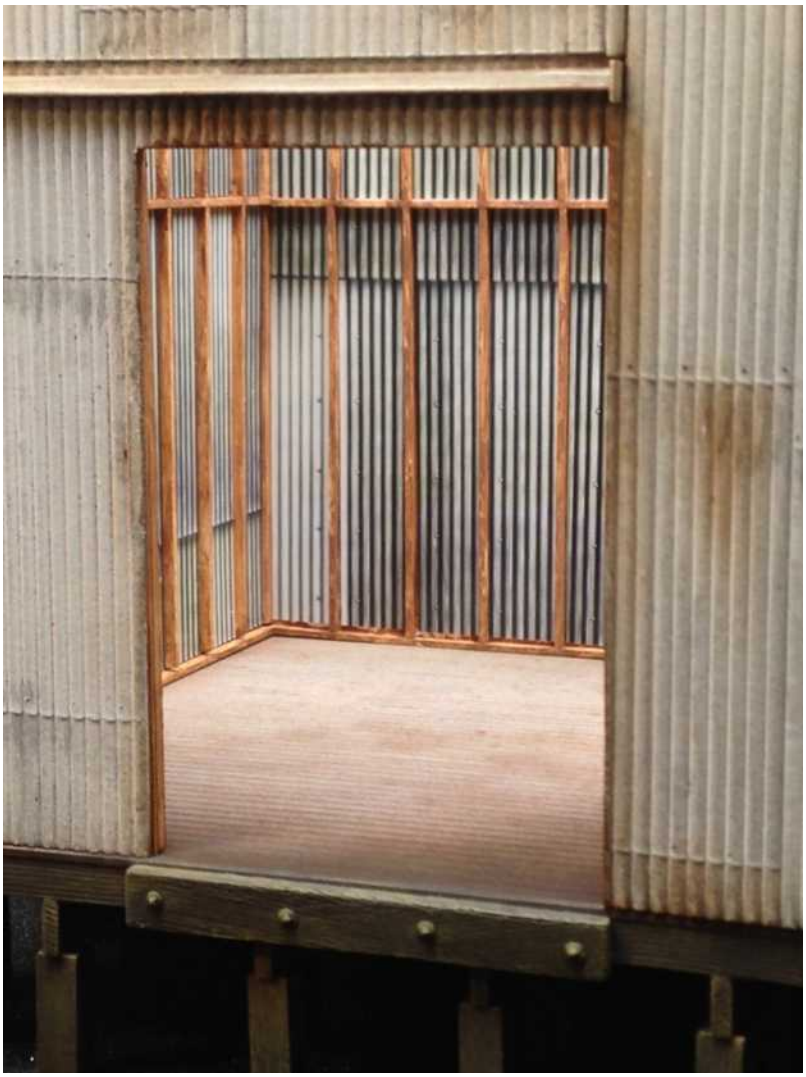
I follow the wash with layers of dry brushing using craft paints. First layer is silver, at the bottom edges of each panel, and around the doorways where there would be wear. This is followed by a brown to make the bottom of each panel pop out. A few soft rust areas finish the dry brushing.

rnb3 #20 July 28, 2017, 2:43pm

The coolest trick on this model is the interior! I want the backside of corrugated siding to be visible inside too. This would not be painted like the outside (this building is painted white). To pull this off, I switched materials. I downloaded a photo realistic cardstock texture from Clever Models. I printed this (to scale) PDF file on some gloss HP photo paper. I simply cut the picture into strips sized to match the gaps between the studs. Full on cheating; every detail visible… nails, shadows, overlaps, it is all a picture! Best bare corrugated siding I have ever seen! Remember folks, this is all an illusion! I use the gloss paper for these prints because it reproduces better details. I'll hit the finished interior with a light Dullcoat to kill any stray shinny "hot spots" that would reveal the lack of actual dimensional texture.

The roofs are tar papered with masking tape and painted with a dark grey craft paint. A little dry brushing with a cream color makes the detail and texture stand out.

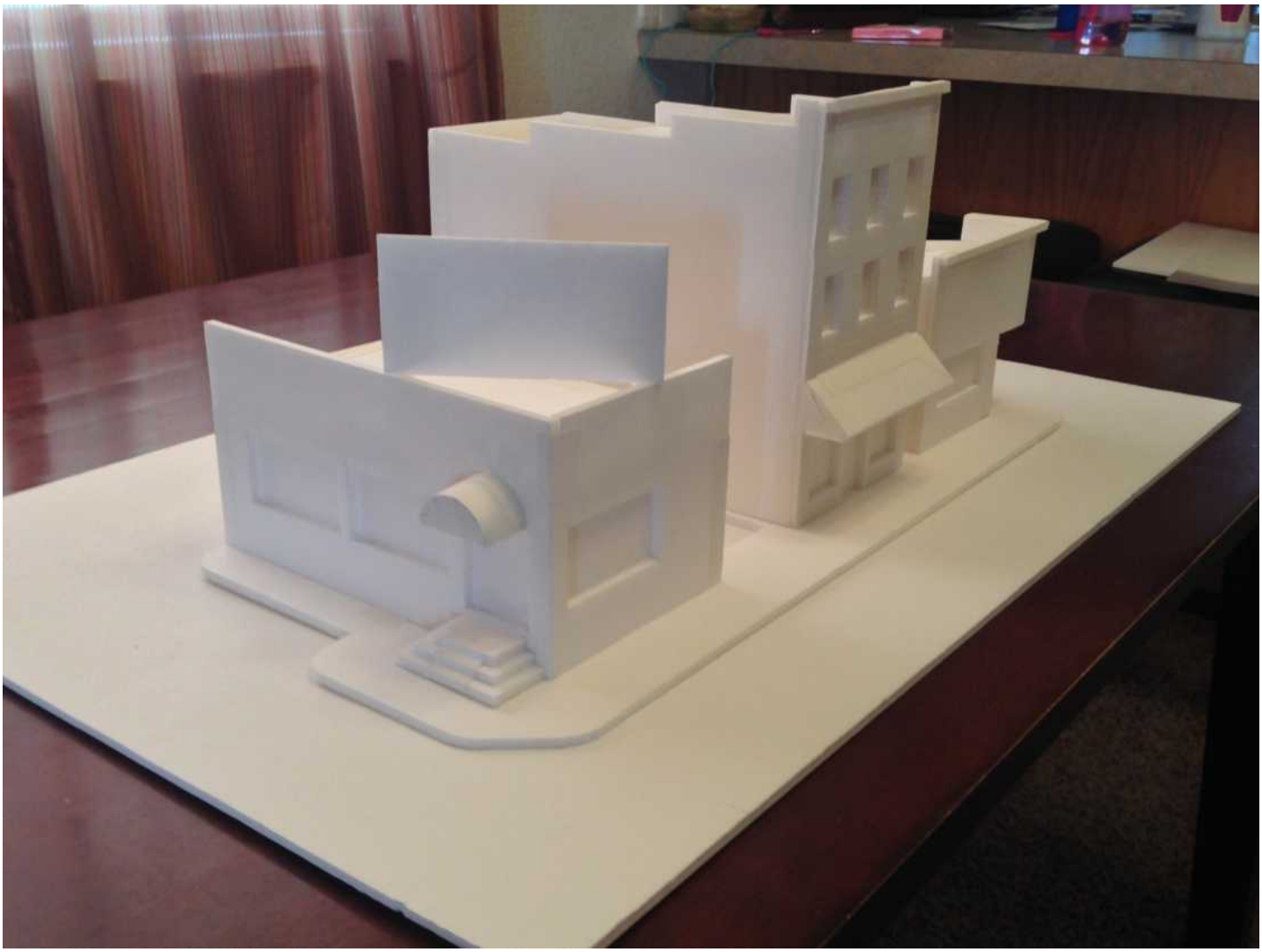
Next up is finishing the detail castings, boxes, and drums that fill up the interior. A couple surface mount LEDs will add some mood lighting. The signs shown earlier in this blog will add some color. I think the back wall will be a good candidate for an invasive kudzu vine (more texture and color).



rnb3 #21 February 13, 2018, 8:48pm

I am slowly migrating back to my hobby workbench after completing a trying period of work/study for my job! The Mt Union downtown “block” is next up. This block parallels the A&D track in the street. To fill out some of the details (matching road signs etc.) I am calling this Railroad St. and the intersection in front of the depot is Front Ave.

This block is all of four buildings long. From north (depot side) to south, the buildings will be 1) a stainless steel “dinner,” 2) a two-story Rx pharmacy, 3) a three-story “Union Hall” with rooms for rent above, and 4) a small town “ACE Hardware” that is also the office for the lumber yard in the rear. My original plans were to have a “burned down” building but I have since decided to go with one more structure; the pharmacy.



rnb3 #22 February 13, 2018, 8:50pm

Construction started with the base-plate. This is a hardboard sheet fitted to the layout space. I laminated .060 styrene sheet to the top. The front and side edges are built up with styrene stock and capped with a quarter round styrene strip. I sanded this to form a “poured” concrete curb look. After all the sanding and shaping the curbs, I scribed expansion lines to simulate the sidewalk areas in front of the future structures. The foam board mockups were a huge help with measuring and spacing the sidewalks. I also notched the curb in front of the dinner to receive a storm drain and drilled the mounting hole for a fire hydrant. The location of these two future details needed to be determined now so I could scribe the associated sidewalk joints to fit.

This base plate is sufficiently rigid, so I can move it around as each structure is fitted to the base. Once the structures are past the roughed-out stage, I will be able to paint and detail the base for the sidewalks and building foundations. After another test fit on the layout, I will be able to locate other

details such as parking meters, signs, and utility poles with streetlights. The base plate will be “keyed” for each structure so they can be individually removable. My intent is to semi-permanently attach the base plate to the layout before completion to allow for a seamless integration of the surrounding scenery and street.

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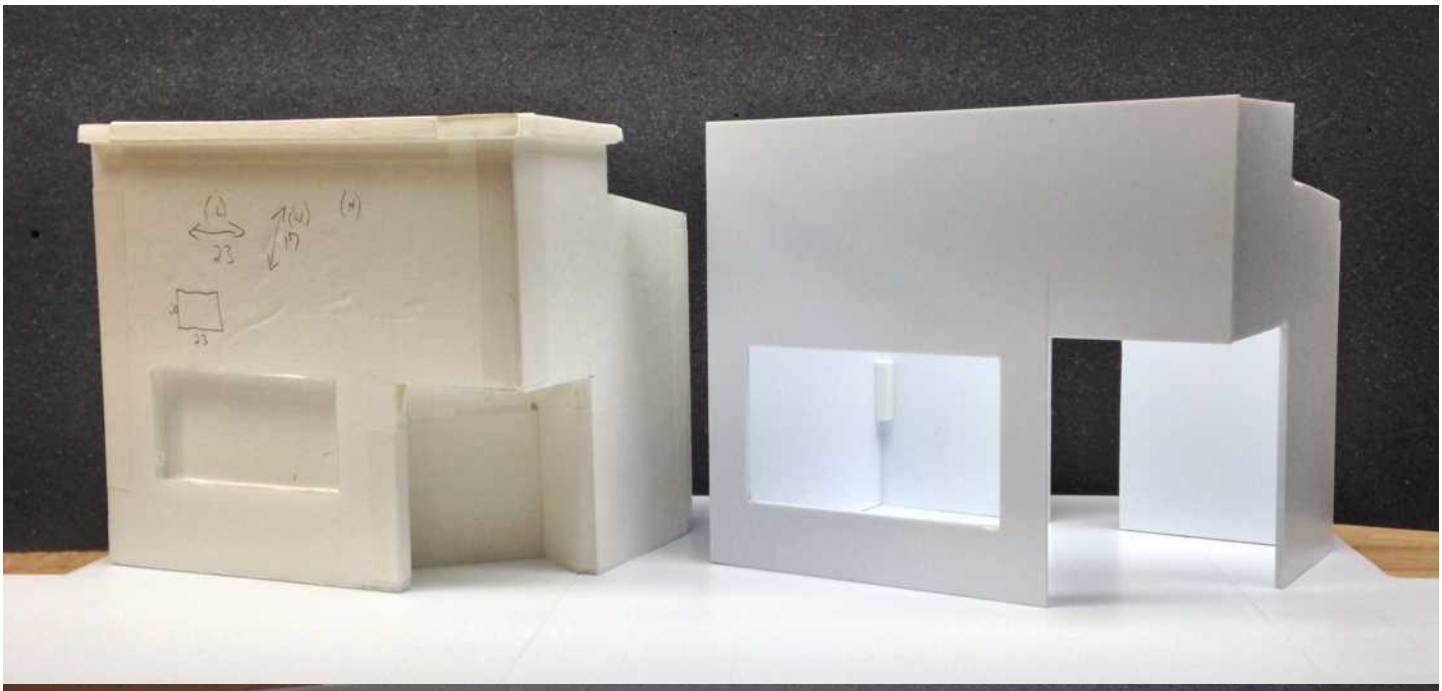
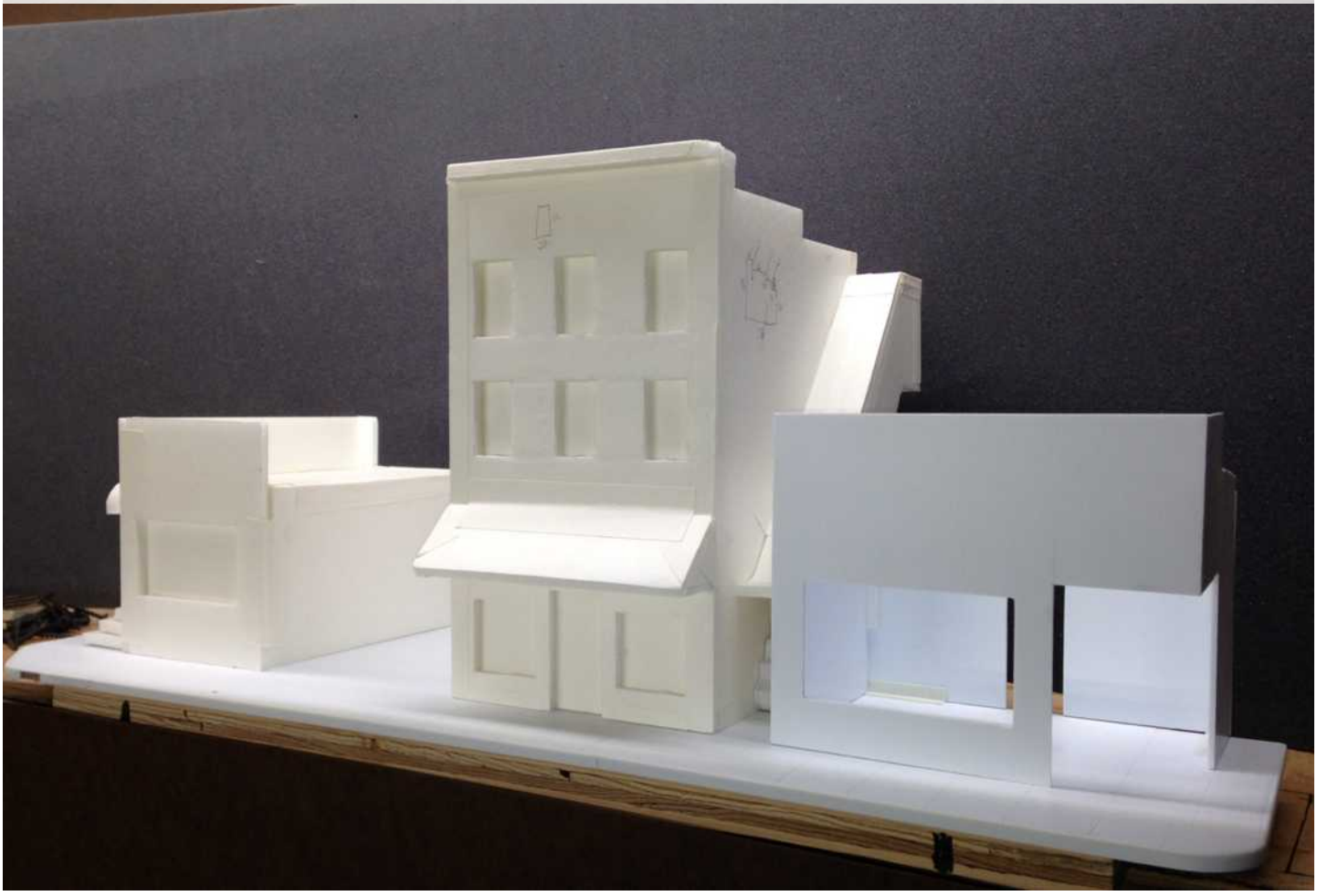
rnb3 #23 February 13, 2018, 8:52pm

The first building is the ACE Hardware store on the south corner. This building has an inset entrance set at a 45-degree angle to the street. Most of the front of the building is a large display window. This will have an era appropriate display behind the glass to show off the wares for sale inside. Signage is proto-inspired to reflect a 1960s era ACE franchise. I’m not sure if ACE is a traditional West Virginia business, but it seems familiar, so I’m going with it!

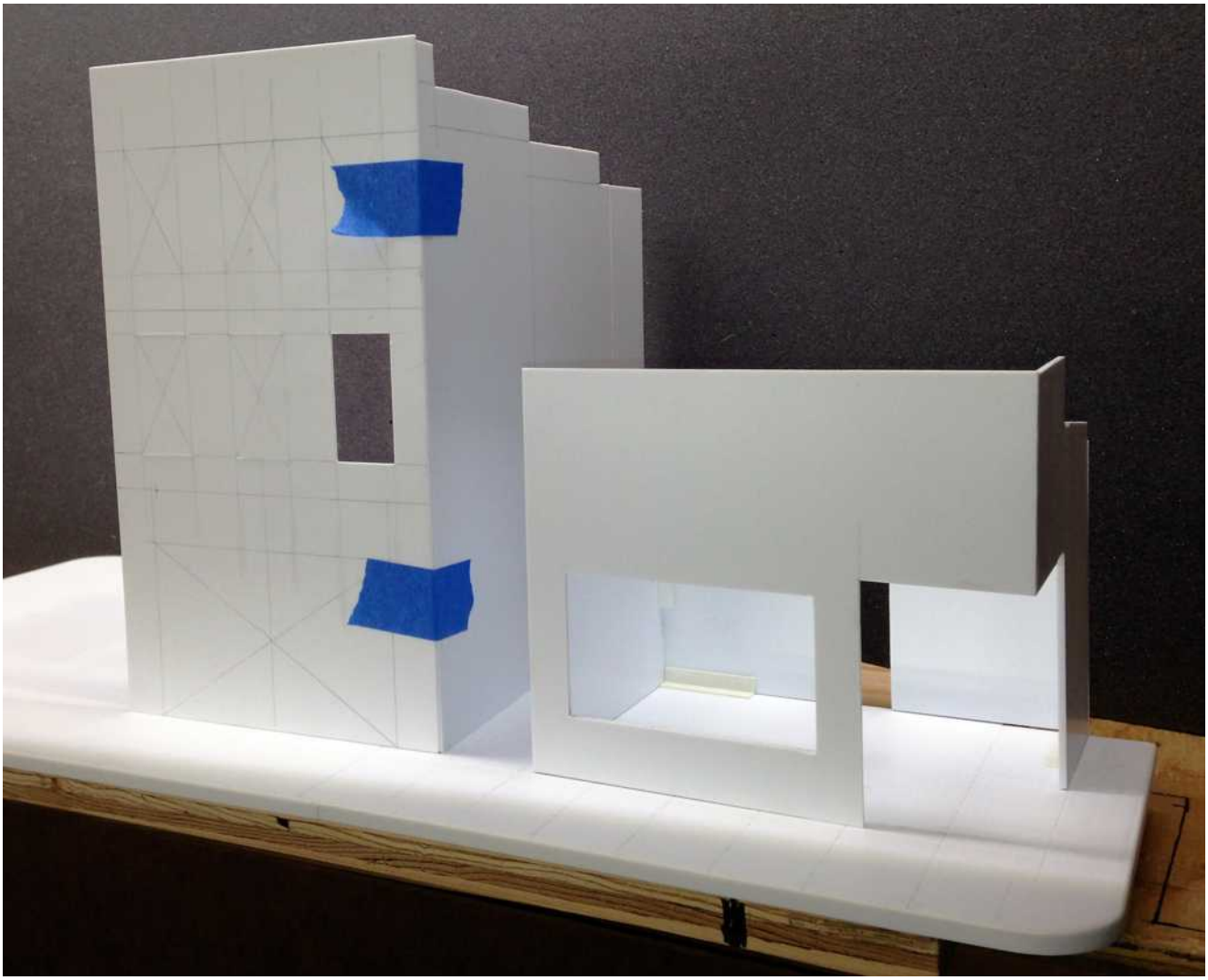
This is a single story brick building with a false front on two sides, and a flat roof. The side street wall will be a large “painted-on” sign. I am using my “standard” laminated core wall construction. Each wall is a .080 styrene core with the outside layered with JT styrene brick sheet. Any interior walls that are visible will be finished with brick or paper texture as appropriate. The front wall with the window is two layers of .040 styrene. This makes cutting out the windows easier and more accurate. My preferred technique to do this is to measure and draw out the openings on the styrene. I score and snap the sheet along the lines of the opening and remove the material where the window/door will be. Next, I glue the pieces back together to “re-construct the wall. The second layer is scored and snapped along perpendicular lines for the openings. When I laminate the two layers together, the perpendicular pieces form a rigid and braced wall. The score lines will not show on the finished model since the outer layer of texture sheet (brick) will cover everything. Any wall that does not have an opening is cut from a single layer of .080 styrene. Once all 4 base walls are cut and laminated they are assembled to form a box. Extra attention is given to insure everything is square and bracing is added to the inside corners. This box becomes the shell that all of the textures and details will be added to. My two main adhesives are 3M Super 44 spray adhesive for laminating, and Tenex-7R for all other styrene joints.

The union hall and pharmacy use the same styrene core and brick laminate construction. I have decided to permanently join all three building cores together. This has greatly increased the rigidity of the structures and eliminates any visible or unsightly gaps between buildings. This will require all three buildings to be finished together.

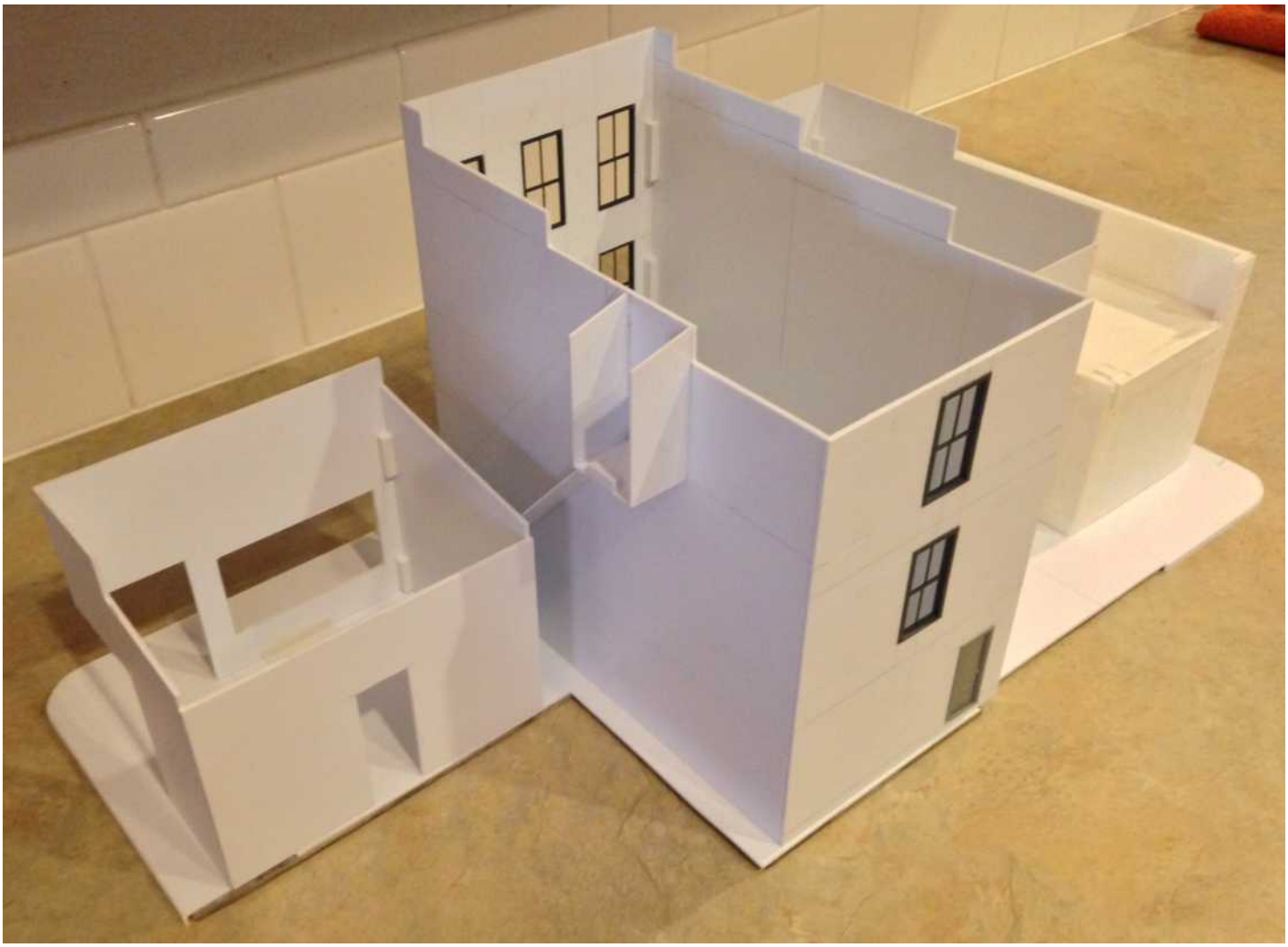




rnb3 #24 February 13, 2018, 8:54pm



rnb3 #25 February 13, 2018, 8:55pm



rnb3 #26 February 13, 2018, 8:55pm

I'm a big believer that the finished model scene should tell its story without the model builder standing nearby to fill in the details! Signage is an important part of this storytelling. I did a lot of Google searching for pictures of mid 1960s vintage signs. Some artwork is printed on gloss photo paper to resemble metal and porcelain signs, and some artwork is printed on regular paper to make "painted on brick" styles signs. I also use printed details to fill in the interiors of buildings. Due to the limited scope and viewing angles through the 1/48 scale windows and doors, photo realistic textures laminated to core shapes can be very convincing. With a few select 3D details, it can be hard to

detect this optical illusion!

Craig #27 February 14, 2018, 3:27am

Bravo Rick. It's looking great! Can't wait to see the progress…

jaybarnaby #28 February 15, 2018, 4:21pm

I'm still trying to figure out where you got in to buildings… 😀

David #29 February 16, 2018, 5:15am

What an eye-riveting, engaging town Mt. Union will be. And *very* WV. Super thought-work and execution, Rick.
David

ErikLindgren #30 February 25, 2018, 4:42am

Rick what a fabulous build; keep them coming!

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rnb3 #31 April 4, 2018, 2:40pm

Thought I'd post a work bench shot of the tools of the trade I am using to build Mt Union. Nothing ground breaking here. I do enjoy building with styrene! It is easy to cut and shape, and fast to glue! When I laminate large areas of styrene together (to increase thickness or add textured sheets like brick) I use 3M spray adhesive. All of the rest of the styrene joints are made using solvents like Tenex 7R or Plastistruct's Plastic Weld.

A side note about X-acto knifes. The published hobby standard is the #11 blade. Growing up, this is what "real modelers" like David Stewart, Shepard Paine, and every author in Model Railroader magazine used! Over the years I faithfully followed suit. The secret to styrene is always use a sharp blade. It turns out to be kind of expensive changing blades all of the time! One day David showed me his secret; he has a little contraption that holds a dull #11 blade and re-sharpens them! Cheater! David is VERY good at finding the best balance of results and economy! Another local and very accomplished modeler (and the gentleman behind Railyard Models), Gene Fusco mentioned a technique he uses; straight razors. I tried this and really liked it! My only complaint is that I prefer to use the blade with out a handle and the hand fatigue is noticeable. Recently I was wandering through a hardware store looking to buy anything when I paused in the cutting tool section. I noticed a variety of retractable razor blade knifes that use those "snap-off" blades. I found one that was refillable and the blades were 5/8 inch wide. This seemed like it might be usable, so I bought a handle and a package of blades. WOW! I have gone through 2 blades on the Mt Union project so far! I snap off the worn tip regularly and have never had this much success keeping my knife sharp and the price is far less than #11 blades, even in bulk! The added weight of the handle reduces the need to push down when cutting, which helps with accuracy and avoiding slips. I still use straight razors, they are great for chopping and making square cuts in thin material, and the trusty old #11 is at times the only tool that works (shaving and twisting).

For safety, I use an old plastic water bottle as a “sharps” container. I drop all of my used razor blades into it and keep the cap on. This keeps the blades out of the trash and protects form accidental surprise stabbings and cuts!

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rnb3 #32 April 4, 2018, 9:58pm

Now that the basic styrene shells are done, it’s time to start bricking things up! Most of the brick work is JTT styrene brick sheet. I cut each “panel” to fit and laminate them to the core using 3M spray adhesive. I usually touch up the edges with liquid solvent to make sure nothing peels away in the future. Special attention is given to make sure that all of the brick courses line up at the corners.

To simulate the architectural feature of inset bricks, I build up the core with an extra layer of styrene. Any special designs or patterns are individual bricks carefully layered on top. Stonework and caps are styrene sheet cut and shaped as necessary.

On a brick structure the window and door openings are flush or inset to the face of the bricks. I either used Grandt Line masonry window castings or modified standard windows by trimming the frames and in-setting the casting to be flush with the brick. Looks OK to me! When applying the brick around the openings, special care was again given to make sure all of the bricks line up.


rnb3 #33 April 4, 2018, 9:59pm

The hardware store at the end of the block has a large display window. I framed the window opening with styrene strip. I also built a “shadow box” for the interior and used printed artwork to finish these walls. There will be 3D details on display also when finished. The front door is a more modern metal and glass insert. It is a combination of styrene strip and sheet around a Grandt Line door casting.


rnb3 #34 April 4, 2018, 10:00pm

I have started the other store fronts and am thinking they will be built as inserts to facilitate easier detailing. At this point there is a lot of details to layer on as well as edges to be dressed. I have to admit, scratch building these structures is a ton of fun!

Bob #35 April 4, 2018, 10:26pm

Wow, Rick! I'm speechless! Maybe not quite. How do you plan to detail the mortar joints?

Must… buy… large… quantities… of… Grandt… Line… windows… and… doors…

jaybarnaby #36 April 5, 2018, 1:01am

I remember that device he has; I think MicroMark sold em. Not sure if they still do. After working at Parkway Plastics I discovered I really like the big red handled knives, #5?, best; much less hand fatigue. A bulk pack of 100 #2 blades is 17 bucks free shipping works out to 1.7 cents per blade. I can handle that. Especially with how much(little) modeling I actually get to do. To extend the life I actually have two on my workbench where one is a new sharp blade and teh other is a duller blade for heavy duty cutting. In the smaller classic #11 size I like the #10 curved blade. Rarely use a #11 any more.

rnb3 #37 April 5, 2018, 10:46pm

Thanks Bob! I am seriously having a ton of fun with this. It is so cool seeing what is in my head beginning to appear in 3D! Honestly though, I'm just making most of it up as I go! My plan based on the gas station already completed (the test bed for a lot of my techniques) is to start the finish with a grey flat primer. This will even the tone and give everything a "tooth". Next I brush paint the brick with craft paint (cheap stuff from Wal-Mart) which will take 2 coats. All of the stone work will receive it's own color appropriate craft paint too. For the mortar I think I will try a couple white based gauche washes. This should pool in the mortar cracks and following darker washes should achieve the mortar correct color. Final highlights will be dry-brushed.

Jay, I do remember you having those bigger handles. I also keep a supply of #17 chisel blades around too.

Craig #38 April 7, 2018, 7:38pm

Bravo Rick. I think your stuff beyond top notch! I'd love to sit down with you and discuss the process you do. The laminating process sounds like a great idea.

On the windows…I agree Bob. But on that front I think the 3D modeling is becoming a good 2nd place. I saw a guy printed some HO scale windows for his passenger car. They looked really good.

rnb3 #39 April 17, 2018, 2:27pm

The store fronts are coming along. I think what I'm going to do is treat the whole lower floor interior and building front as a "drawer". This way I can complete the interior details and solidly mount the front. A simple track or guide will hold the completed "drawer" and keep everything in alignment. The idea is that I can just slide the "cassette-like drawers" into the main structure. We'll see how it goes…

The front of the Union Hall is based on two Grandt Line windows and a door minus its frame. I used my trusty .040 styrene sheet to fill out the front. Notice that the window castings are installed backwards. When I add the brick layer, I overlap the exposed flange of the window casting and butt the brick right up to the window frame. I my eye, this makes a decent masonry type window that is flush to the outside surface of the wall.

Styrene strips are shaped to simulate stonework that matches the rest of the structure and help hide joints.

The Pharmacy building front uses the same "cassette drawer" idea. For this front, I scratch built a more modern business door from styrene strip. I set the doorway to one side to avoid a repeating pattern along the entire row of buildings. Avoiding patterns (or equal balance, symmetry, and/or parallel lines) can improve the realism in a scene. This is a technique I first read about when I was a kid, in Shepard Paine's armor and diorama modeling books. Shep Paine was the guy behind all of the completed models on the box covers for model kits from Monogram Models (planes, boats, and tanks) back in the 70s and 80s. He was a master of visual art, and authored 3 Kalmbach books about his techniques. After I wore out the copies at the library, I bought my own!

I also decided to make this front more of a set in with the door and window recessed into the structure. This required extra brickwork to finish the inset. Under the window, I repeated the 4 brick diamond detail to visually tie the store front to the top of the structure. It is a small detail, but I think it adds some more believable texture to my little story!

rnb3 #40 April 17, 2018, 2:33pm

As of Monday the 16th of April, all of the major construction and brick work on the hardware store is complete! It is now in primer. The interior needs to be finalized and it will be time for painting and finishing! All of the artwork for the signage and interior is complete, now to just bring it all together. I also think it's time to start painting/finishing the sidewalk/curb base.

jaybarnaby #41 April 18, 2018, 8:11pm

Still want to know where you find time. Need advice on that.

rnb3 #42 April 18, 2018, 10:06pm

Jay, I know what you mean! I try to squeeze an hour or two a week after the kids go to bed. I also get some computer based stuff done at work during lunch. As an example, here is the finished artwork for the Union Hall interior. This will be printed full color on photo paper, cut out and laminated to styrene to form the interior walls and some details for the outside of the Union Hall. I use Power Point and Word to modify and scale images I find on the web as well as draw some stuff myself.

David #43 April 19, 2018, 2:43am

Amazing Rick. Great stuff for Mt. Union, WV.

rnb3 #44 April 24, 2018, 6:32pm

This past weekend I put my efforts into the interior of the lumber yard office/hardware store. I combined some rudimentary 3D shapes for counters and shelves with a collection of photo textures to fill the interior. The photo textures are pictures and patterns I found on the web that I re-configured, re-colored, and scaled. I print these in full color on gloss photo paper using my desk jet printer. The 3D shapes are simple styrene shapes or forms made from scrap .020 styrene sheet. These are spray painted with a flat dark brown. The photo textures are cut out and trimmed to size and glued with spray glue.

I fit everything as I went, continuously check sight lines to ensure everything looked right. An easy way to do this is to take cell phone pictures as I go and study these shots looking for mistakes or omissions. During final assembly, I'll add a few select and strategically placed 3D details such as clutter on the counter top to solidify the scene. Also, If I keep up this level of "texture" across the entire Mt Union scene, I hope most viewers will be too busy to find and thin spots in the details!

jaybarnaby #45 April 25, 2018, 12:14pm

Looks fantastic! WIll there be a column under that flying corner?

rnb3 #46 April 25, 2018, 1:28pm

Originally, no! But now that you mentioned it, I think it might “need” one! Maybe a simple metal pole with some fliers stuck to it and a bicycle leaning on it? Seems annoyingly natural!

jaybarnaby #47 April 25, 2018, 6:03pm

I’m not a mason or building engineer but that brick just doesn’t seem like it’d be strong hanging like that. Jst seems like it needs some support, like Woody’s in Greeley.

rnb3 #48 April 25, 2018, 10:34pm

It’s magic model brick…made by D.M. Dorn’s Magic Model Bridge Company!

Bob caught it too! It will be corrected!

Bob #49 April 26, 2018, 12:30am

It’s all magic, Rick! Beautiful interior!

Craig #50 April 28, 2018, 2:18pm

Amazing Rick!! They look great. I love the use of the photo interiors too. They look seamless.

Bravo!!!

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rnb3 #51 May 29, 2018, 4:44pm

End of May, 2018

I have been looking at methods to simulate mortar on brick structures. I tried a white gauche wash, but it didn't work out too well. I also tried using spackling compound (sheetrock mud). I am pretty happy so far with this second method. It is very easy and actually pretty quick! I used spackling in the little plastic container that I bought from the local hardware store. It is also available at big box stores like Wal-Mart, and it is very inexpensive. I prefer the totally white variety, but I imagine the "purple/pink that changes to white when dry" kind works too. I rub the spackling into the brick work with my finger using a circular motion. It is easy to see the mortar lines fill. In areas where I can't get my finger, I use a paper stick (available at art stores in the drawing department) to push the spackle around. After about 5 minute of set time, I use a damp make-up sponge to wipe the face of the bricks clean. I use a diagonal motion to prevent cleaning out the mortar lines. I rinse the sponge often. I will seal everything with Dullcoat before I continue with weathering.

My test bed was the elevator shaft for the Union Hall (some would say it's built like a brick sh… out house!). The door was added after the mortar.

rnb3 #52 May 29, 2018, 4:46pm

The hardware store with mortar. I also added the missing support column under the flying corner!

Craig #53 May 30, 2018, 3:27am

That's a cool method Rick. Going to have to give that a shot at some point.

rnb3 #54 June 12, 2018, 10:20pm

The Mount Union depot has been delivered!

rnb3 #55 June 12, 2018, 10:21pm

What appears to be cribbing involved in the unloading of the Mt Union depot actually is part of my mock up efforts to visualize how the new depot will fit in the scene and determine what modifications the structure will need.

I got the idea for this structure from another O scale 2-railer, Ed Rappe. He used a Mike's Train House ready to run structure for his layout. He changed the windows and doors and repainted the model to achieve a much improved scale look. When I saw his work posted on the O Gauge Railroading forum, a light bulb went off. This could be the answer for Mt Union. $65 bucks on Ebay delivered a copy of the structure to me. This building is held together with small screws, so dis-assembling is a snap.

I spent a couple hours with David mocking up the depot scene. I use a couple extra height boxcars to

find the clearances needed, and to visualize what the scene would look like with trains surrounding the depot. There are several modifications that will need to be made so the building fits. The biggest change will be to raise the structure, by about an inch. His lift will be accomplished by adding a foundation/basement. The overhanging roofs will need to be re-shaped, and a raised platform added for the lower level. Supporting structures like staircases, canopies, and retaining walls will also be added.

I have left the scene mocked up, (maybe for a few weeks) so others can view it and make comments.

rnb3 #56 July 18, 2018, 3:25pm

And the comments are in!

Let me start by saying; in my opinion, the most important aspect of scene composition is…does it LOOK right. Model railroading is an illusion art. Every detail may be present, and every dimension may be exact, but if the illusion isn't convincing, the scene fails. The real trick is knowing were the hard compromises are (real world limits…the actual edge of the layout, $$$, time, etc) and still finding

a way to tell the story that doesn't break the illusion.

The foundation of the Mount Union project has been mock-ups. I have found that for all the advantages these mock-ups provide, the biggest by far has been the feedback they cultivate. Combined with the "friends/relationships first" atmosphere among the A&O family, the mock-ups generate meaningful conversations and very thoughtful examination of the scene. The honest feedback is very helpful!

So, back to the comments! To mock-up the Mount Union station, I used pieces of the actual model "kit" I intended to use as the final model. After about 4 weeks in place on the layout, it has become pretty obvious that this piece of the illusion is way too forced! First Bob defined the "forced" as too tall, too wide, and ultimately too much bulk. I wondered if maybe the orientation of the scene was backwards, with the team track and station being swapped. David and I talked and both agreed that reality dictated that the orientation of the scene could not be changed (would require re-laying tack and turn-out, and a new control panel…big, fat, NO!!!). We tried tweaking the back story to justify the mock-up, but that ultimately violates one of my personal composition rules; if you can't "see" the story without my words, the scene fails.

In the end, the MTH station model that worked so well on other people's layout and looked so good in my mind, didn't work at Mount Union! No harm, no foul! I'll put the model back together and re-box it. I got a great deal on it, so I'll be able to easily recoup any costs!

Funny thing, as I review my notes on Mount Union and my original conceptual thoughts for the depot, Bob's comments were exactly the same as my first concept! Basically, a narrow, single story structure with steps up to the A&O tracks. I also had committed to myself to scratch build all the structures to maximize my flexibility to fit the whole scene together.
On to the next mock-up! I started by doing a little internet surfing for inspiration. I'll work this weekend to generate another foam core mock-up. This one will also begin to incorporate the surrounding area and include platforms, retaining walls, and the A&O stairs.

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rnb3 #57 July 18, 2018, 3:28pm

My original (and now renewed) inspiration is the restored L&N depot at Clarksville, Tennessee. I like the platform and the classic look.!

rnb3 #58 July 18, 2018, 3:27pm

I like the look of a brick base with clapboard uppers. I have altered somebody else's picture of their model to start my visualization process. For the record, the Mount Union depot will be white, not green!

rnb3 #59 July 24, 2018, 6:47pm

July 24, 2018

I have finished the Ace Hardware display for the window. The basic elements for this detail are printed “textures”. I gathered all the signage from simple Google searches and modified and scaled them using Power Point and Word. I also made “wraps” for the 3D items using the same techniques. The paint cans, Radio Flyer boxes, and Red Rider BB gun boxes are simple styrene shapes wrapped with a color printed image I modified. The Radio Flyer wagon is scratch built from styrene scraps. I believe I might have spent more time on the wagon by itself than the rest of the entire display! It has 20 individual parts and took 3 attempts to get the lip around the tub to work! I actually had to quit my first attempt and try it again the next day!

Next step to finish this display will be to build the window glass and trim. The building lighting will allow the display to be lit from above.

rnb3 #60 July 24, 2018, 6:42pm

I also finished a new mock up for the depot. I'm going to try and slip it onto the layout this week so other eyes can begin to evaluate it. I really want to get the depot end of Mount Union composed so I can better resource materials and begin finishing the back layers of scenery like the retaining walls along the A&O tracks as well as define all of the streets and curbs leading to finishing these base layers.

David #61 July 26, 2018, 2:28am

Rick,

Such amazing work. And what a photo spot with a train just poking its nose into the scene from the

foreground street.

I know what you mean about numerous tries. I made an O scale tackle box once (twice, …).

David

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rnb3 #62 August 14, 2018, 7:26pm

Aug 13

Here is a sneak peek of work on the Miner's Union Hall. This is the next structure along Railroad Ave in Mount Union. It is a 3 story brick building. The first floor is the Offices and meeting hall for the local United Mine Workers of America. The top 2 stories are boarding rooms.

For the interiors I am using my standard printed textures that will be supplemented with 3D details like desks and chairs.

Printed curtains in the upstairs windows will limit the interior views of those rooms, but there will be enough texture and detail to look right.!

rnb3 #63 August 16, 2018, 9:12pm

I deleted post 63 because I noticed I had already posted the exact same information and picture around post 40!

“Move on; nothing to see here!”

rnb3 #64 August 16, 2018, 9:06pm

Here is a wider shot of the whole block minus the still to be started diner. As you can see the sidewalks and curbs are in progress too. The hardware store is finished minus the LEDs still to be

built and installed.

Craig #65 August 17, 2018, 2:40pm

Looks awesome Rick!!!

Where did you find the 1913 sign for the building. That is a great touch!!!

rnb3 #66 October 17, 2018, 8:19pm

Hey Craig, I missed your question! Sorry dude!

The 1913 placard is a Grandt Line (now San Juan Shops?) detail. There are a couple different

plaques and a mix of numbers. All styrene. I'm pretty sure these are available in HO too.

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rnb3 #67 October 17, 2018, 8:20pm

For the second and third floor interiors of the Union Hall I decided to try my "cassette" design. Basically this is a stand-alone box structure that contains the interior scene which is built separate from the building and added or plugged in to complete the scene. This allows me to finish the building exterior and add glass and lights without burying each floor under layers of construction.

The cassette is made from .040 sheet styrene formed into a simple box structure. I reinforced the walls with styrene angles and strips. The reinforcement is on the outside of the box. This kept the inside surfaces free of any obstructions. I trimmed all of the joints along the outside of the cassette with aluminum ducting tape to form a light seal at all of the joints. The size of the Union Hall structure will require several different light sources to imply multiple rooms and floors. I don't want any light to "leak" form one enclosure to another and the tape takes care of this. I determined the position of the floors as well as the overall box size by trial and test fitting as I went. My priority was to maintain visual continuity through the building windows first, and then work around the internal reinforcements of the overall building. The cassette naturally rests in place behind the windows. As of now, there is no need to actually attach the cassette to the building. The entire cassette is spray painted flat black. This hides any edges and helps prevent light leaks.

I used my standard photo prints for all of the interior walls and floors. They are cut to fit and laminated in place. I added a few 3D details like chairs, tables, and desks. The total amount of detail parts is relatively few because the limited viewing perspective through the windows (and curtains) is pretty small so too much detail will be lost. I aimed more for the suggestion of detail with no un-natural gaps in the background. The viewer will assume more on their own. Remember the goal is the overall picture!


1913

rnb3 #68 October 17, 2018, 8:21pm

Moving down the block, the Rexall Union Pharmacy is next. Same photo based interior design with a mix of photo details and 3D objects. I will have to admit, the magazines on the shelf are not correct for the 1967ish time period!

Craig #69 October 17, 2018, 11:44pm

Very cool Rick. I think your idea on the cassette is a fantastic one. Let's you do the work you need to in the open…then shove it in once done!

Bravo!

I sure hope you're goi g to bring these to the club contest in November. 🙂

jaybarnaby #70 October 19, 2018, 3:47am

all very impressive and, I think, innovative. But can you build a train? (G)

rnb3 #71 November 19, 2018, 6:01pm

Finally finished the mortar for the Union hall and pharmacy. Same old drywall spackling spread with my finger and wiped off with a damp sponge. It took several hours over 2 days to clean it all up! I hand painted the windows and door using craft paints. After a complete sealing with Dullcoat, I used my favorite black gauche and Windex wash to start the weathering. More weathering to go plus several signs and the awning for the front of the union hall. The very last steps will be window “glass” and shades or curtains.

rnb3 #72 November 19, 2018, 6:02pm

The interior cassette for the 2nd and 3rd floor of the union hall received LED lights. The LED for the 1st floor will also be attached to the cassette. All of the LEDs are tiny surface mount type supplied by Bob Sobol so they will be color matched to the Mothership standards. I typically mount them to a piece of copper clad to ease working with them.

rnb3 #73 November 19, 2018, 6:03pm

The pharmacy interior cassette is ready to insert after the overall building weathering is done.

Craig #74 November 21, 2018, 1:14am

Bravo Rick!!! That's awesome!

I'd like to hear more about how you do the guash wash. How much paint to windex ratio?

David #75 November 21, 2018, 3:16pm

The photo harvesting is incredible, adding a level of detail not otherwise attained. But, how are we going to get operators to not drool while switching Mt. Union? - which has it's first switch job on Friday, BTW.

The Mothership

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rnb3 #76 February 21, 2019, 6:30pm

A busy bunch of details for Mt Union is the variety of street signs. Once again I am going to my fallback, multi-purpose, and simple printed detail technique! Hey, if the shoe fits…

Here is a montage of how I do it:

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rnb3 #77 February 21, 2019, 10:34pm

Step one; artwork. Web search for “vintage street signs” images will yield a ton of pictures of every imaginable sign. I copy the picture and crop and resize them to fit my needs. If I imagine something that isn’t on the web, I either modify what I find, or make one from scratch. When I scratch build my signs I prefer to use Office PowerPoint but any graphic tool will work. It is really just shapes, colors, and letters!

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rnb3 #78 February 21, 2019, 6:32pm

Step two; assembly. I print my art work on glossy photo paper; it prints sharper, and the gloss surface makes nice “metal” or “porcelain” signs. I cut my prints out with scissors or a straight razor blade. I color the back of the sign silver with a silver Sharpie marker. For white/light colored signs, I don’t bother coloring the edge of the photo paper. If the sign is dark, or will be mounted flat on a surface

like a wall, I color the edge of the paper to hide the white edge. This looks better! Finally I glue the sign to a suitable pole of post using either ACC or epoxy. For my Mt Union street signs, I am using .033ish steel rod that I salvaged from those little yard flags that are intended to mark off underground obstructions like sprinkler heads. Be careful, the steel rod WILL damage normal cutting tools. I use a pair of heavy lineman's pliers designed with hardened edges for cutting steel wire. I make my sign poles 2 ¼ inches tall, this works out to a scale 8 ft. pole with a quarter inch for mounting in the scenery. Other pole or post material can be used, and some variety may enhance the scene. For all my Antioc & Dover RR signs, I'll be using a round wood dowel that scales out to about a 6 in. post.

rnb3 #79 February 21, 2019, 6:32pm

This is the type of detail that is best done in an assembly line fashion while watching TV. My best guess is that the Mt Union scene will consume around a hundred individual signs when it's all said and done! My cost for all of these signs is below $5 cash, one Super Bowl, one Daytona 500, and a half dozen lunch breaks surfing the web!

1 Like

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rnb3 #80 February 22, 2019, 5:11pm

So far, all of the buildings in Mt Union are a similar brick store front type construction. I have tried to break up the sameness by using a mix of classic vs modern door and window treatments. I also have varied the number of floors and heights of the false fronts. Another trick I'm going with is to "pop-out" the Union Hall building façade with a canvas awning. It seems common that these awnings have an alternating stripe pattern and often a business logo. I "drew" a stripe pattern in PowerPoint and added the United Mine Workers of America logo in the center. This artwork is set up to print to scale on photo paper. I made sure to print plenty of pattern to wrap all 3 sides of the awning. When I cut the wrap out, I took the time to cut the tiny point fringes along the bottom edge! There is probably a machine for this but I used a straight razor blade. It only took about 30 minutes and I had an indention in my right index finger that lasted a couple hours! Oh well; it looks good!

rnb3 #81 February 22, 2019, 5:12pm

I used some scrap .015 styrene to make a core for the awning. There are two styrene blocks with pins on the backside. These pins fit in matching holes on the building front to mount the finished awning. The pins are a firm fit that isn't glued to the building allowing the awning to be remove if needed. Everything was measured and cut by eyeballing and matching against the building front. I laminated the printed pattern to the styrene using spray adhesive and trimmed everything after the glue had dried. The pattern overhangs the styrene core by a small amount to give the thinner appearance of canvas along the edges.

I think the awning makes for a real neat texture change along the block of buildings.

Craig #82 February 23, 2019, 3:29pm

Bravo Rick.

I've been using a similar method to do my signs on my layout. It's pretty simple, but effective.

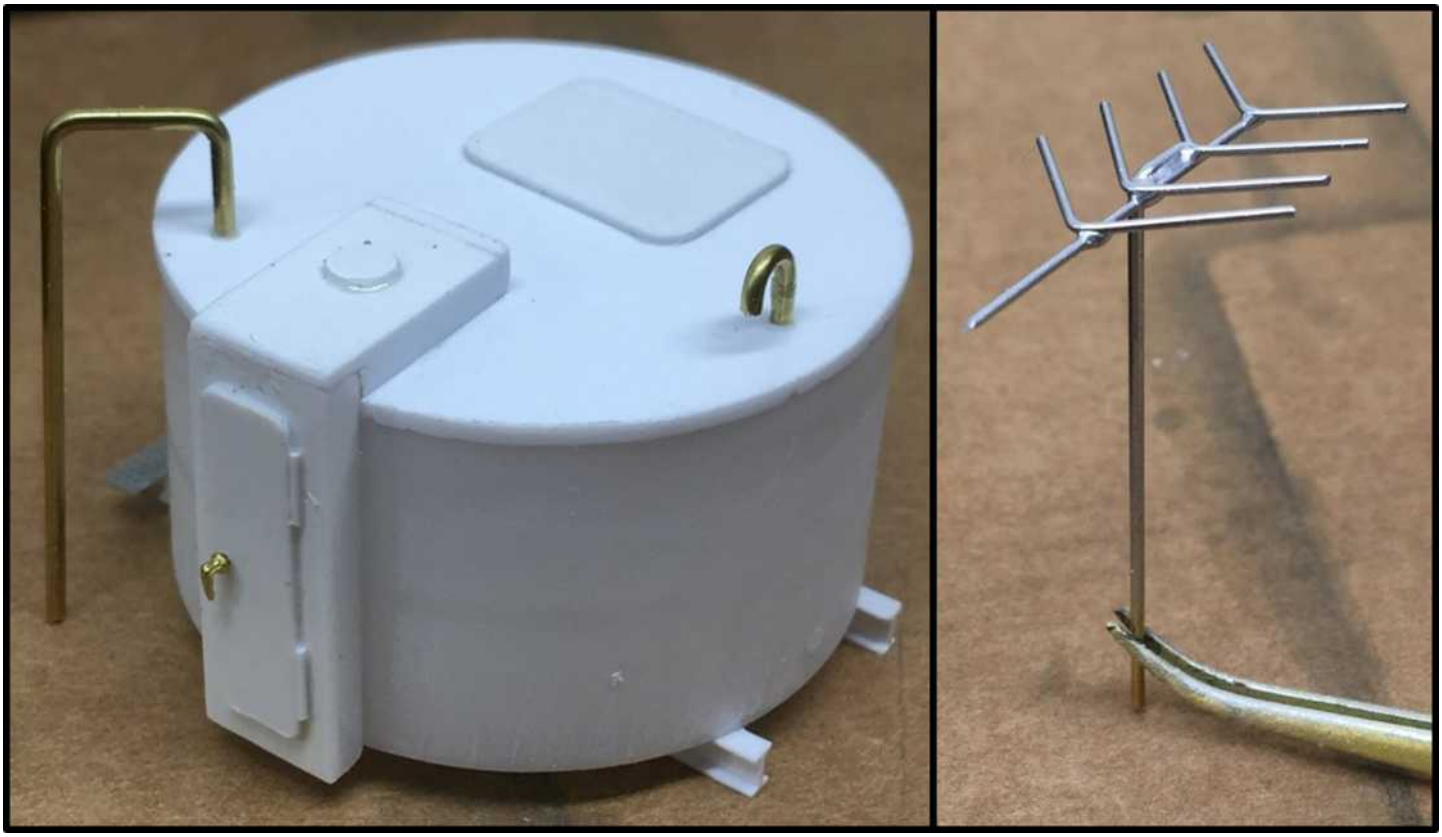
Looking forward to seeing the buildings on the layout.

rnb3 #83 March 27, 2019, 1:09pm

Here is a quick look at some of the ideas and applications I used to fill in the highly visible roof tops in downtown Mount Union.

Obvious appliances are vents and chimneys. Some are purchased castings, others are simple styrene tubing. I thought a TV antenna would seem normal so I made one with some brass wire. I suspect it doesn't really work!

I scratch built a small water tank with some piping and hatches. This piece was fun…it's made from a tape dispenser role! I spray painted it black, added a lot of rust spots, hit it with some Dullcoat, and dry-brushed some silver to bring out the details before super gluing it to the roof.



rnb3 #84 March 27, 2019, 1:10pm

jaybarnaby #85 March 28, 2019, 1:09am

Hadn't thought about it before but in the eras we model pretty much every building should have a TV antenna. Suddenly seems a much overlooked detail.

Craig #86 March 29, 2019, 1:34pm

Great detail work Rick!! They fit in perfectly!!!

Bob #87 April 2, 2019, 10:44pm

Awesome work, Rick! I'm always amazed with what you build.

rnb3 #88 April 17, 2019, 3:54pm

BIG VISUAL IMPACT! I started working on the pavement this week. I am using a process that I found on the web over at the Model Railroad Hobbyist Magazine forums. It is a thread called "Modeling Asphalt Roads" started by a gentleman named Steve S. **https://model-railroad-hobbyist.com/node/17438** I really like the effect Steve achieved.

This technique is based on two types of foam materials. The first type of foam is used for the base or road bed to build up to tie height. It is simple foam core with the paper backing removed from both sides leaving just the white open cell foam. Removing the paper backing prevents the foam from warping when painted, and allows the foam to be sanded in order to shape the road surface. The second type of foam is foam-rubber "craft foam". It is readily available at most craft stores in several thicknesses and colors. I use 1mm thick black sheets, approximately 18 by 10 inch.

This craft foam has a special feature that I am counting on to make this scene work; it's squishy! A big part of this scene composition is the street running trackage. There is quite a bit of rail "buried" in the street. This raises a big concern in regard to flange way clearances need for high quality and reliability of operations. With the paved tracks being at the very front of the scene I want to find the tightest balance I can between the visual and operational aspects. I think craft foam is the answer. With a little testing I observed that I can have very tight clearances, even tighter than NMRA recommendations, without compromising the rail to flange relation due to the "squishiness" of craft foam. Basically an O scale freight car or locomotive has enough heft to push the thin craft foam out of the way!

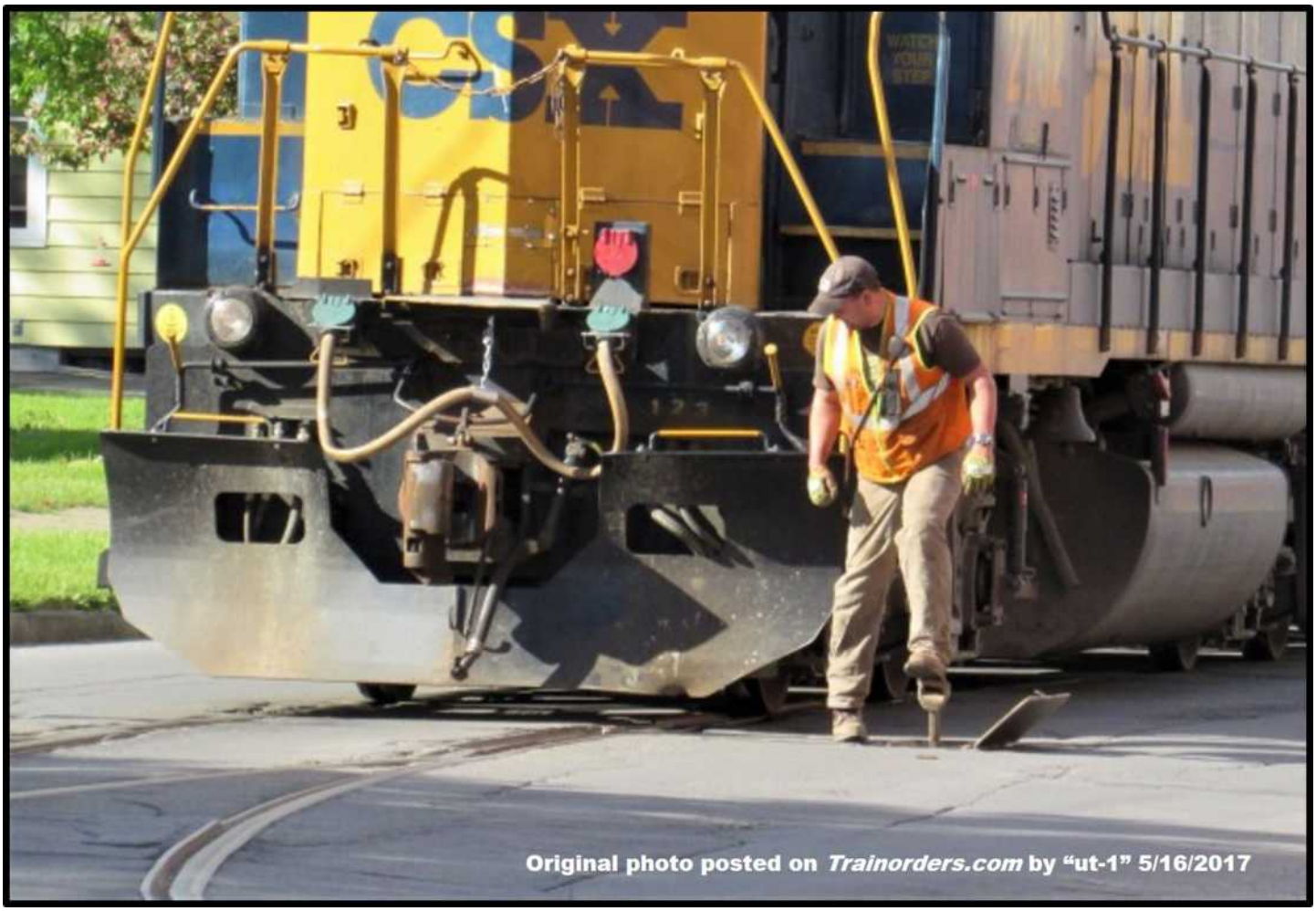
Over the next few weeks, I'll further refine the clearances, color, and texture. There is still a ton of work in Mount Union, but I think this is the biggest visual game changer so far!

jaybarnaby #89 April 19, 2019, 2:22pm

I wonder how often the A&D has to fix the switch stand in the middle of the street…

rnb3 #90 April 19, 2019, 5:12pm

I'm planning on fabricating some rusty metal plates to detail the switch point area. The switch stand would be under the plates, "buried" in the street. Here is a picture from online of an underground switch being thrown.



Bob #91 April 19, 2019, 8:17pm

Rick -

The work you just installed in Mount Union, and especially the street, looks fabulous in person! Well done.

A TV antenna is a must-have roof or chimney detail (and as you surmise, that design wouldn't *quite* work properly, but visually the "fabric" is spot-on.) Of course, back in *those days* we actually had to *get off* the sofa to change channels (or shout-out to a kiddo lying on the carpet a few feet from a glowing cathode ray tube…)

Jim Ferenc has a steam-era C&S layout that operates TT&TO. He hands out scale brakemen who have to run out and protect the rear of a train. Truth be told, more than a few brakemen have been left behind and run over by following trains.

Have you thought about modeling the trap door so it can open and set a figure set nearby to stomp on the handle?

Sorry if I'm going overboard on this…

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rnb3 #92 April 19, 2019, 10:29pm

Challenge accepted Bob! Actually would be pretty easy to do, just has to look right!

Bob #93 April 19, 2019, 11:40pm

I know someone who will be eager to shoot that scene with a camera and tripod!

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rnb3 #94 April 20, 2019, 12:22am

Bob, your camera has been a big motivator for the Mount Union Project! Planning sight lines, color selections, attention to details, contrasts of textures, and even the back side of buildings are all thought through with your photography in mind!

Bob #95 April 20, 2019, 1:23am

Let's bring it on! I love it when a plan comes together!

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jaybarnaby #96 April 20, 2019, 1:39am

i'd love to see one of those to see how they work. By UP rules that guy is fired.

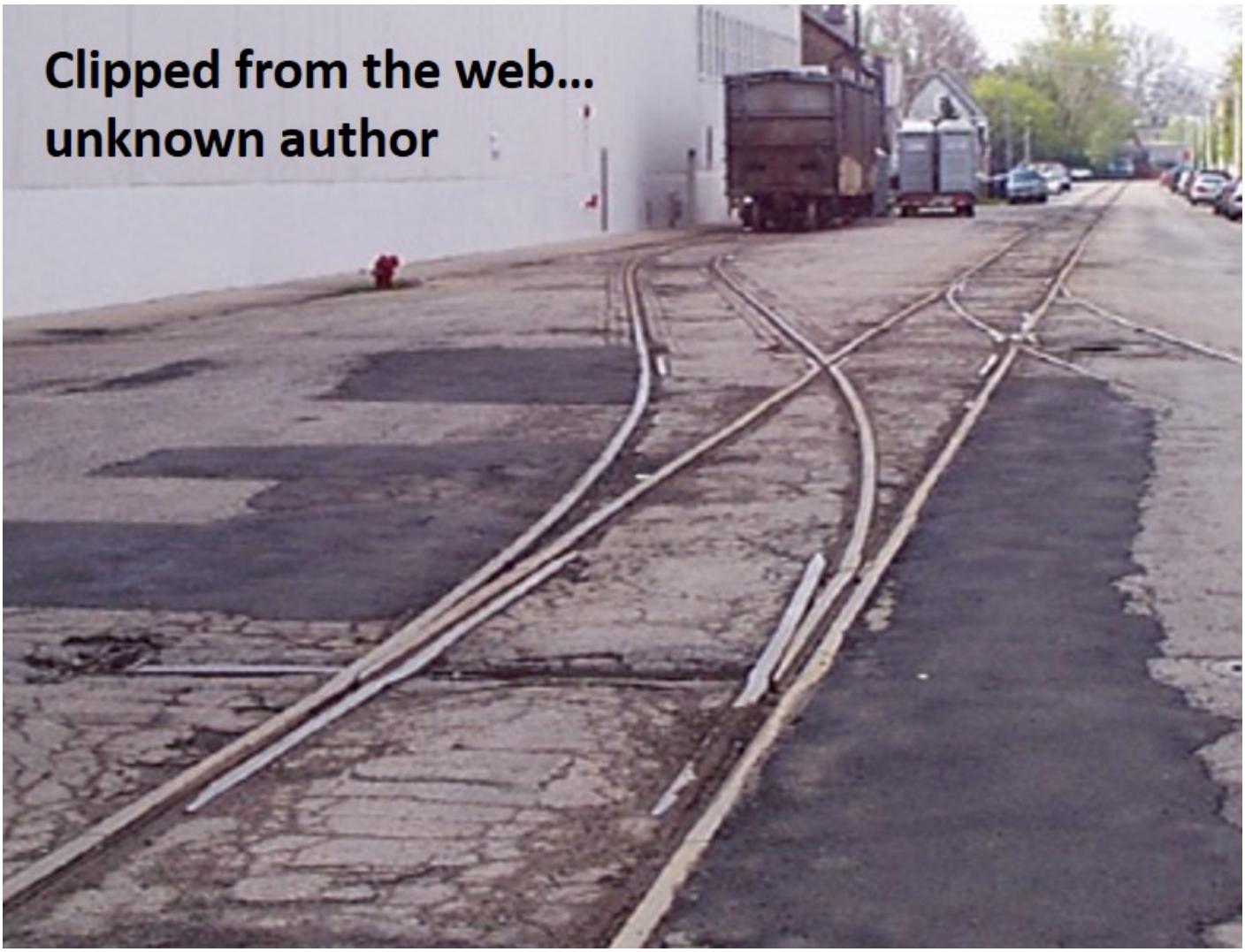
reecol #97 April 20, 2019, 2:17am

“Jim Ferenc has a steam-era C&S layout that operates TT&TO. He hands out scale brakemen who have to run out and protect the rear of a train. Truth be told, more than a few brakemen have been left behind and run over by following trains.”
You mean I’m not the only one to do this? I did this in Dallas once on one of those little foldable triangular paper OPSIG brakemen. I’m still looking in my rear view mirror for a little HO Mini Metals police car coming up fast behind me on the freeway. Oh the guilt…

rnb3 #98 April 30, 2019, 9:58pm

A little detail work for the pavement. The craft foam I’m using is basic black. I using a sponge to apply color to the foam. I dip the sponge into some appropriate colored craft paint and then blot most of the paint off onto a paper towel. Using a rapid dabbing motion the color is applied and blended onto the pavement. A slight speckled appearance is the goal. There is a trick that seems to work well for representing the cracking common with pavement. Before applying the color, I carve the cracks into the craft foam. A peculiar technique is to use a straight pin with the head clipped off and the pin chucked in a battery powered motor tool. I simply draw the cracks with the motor tool on low speed using the point of the pin! Very easy! The cracks are in relief so when I dab on the color, the cracks stand out as the original craft foam color; black!

Here is my inspiration picture (from a long lost and now unknown source) and my effort in comparison.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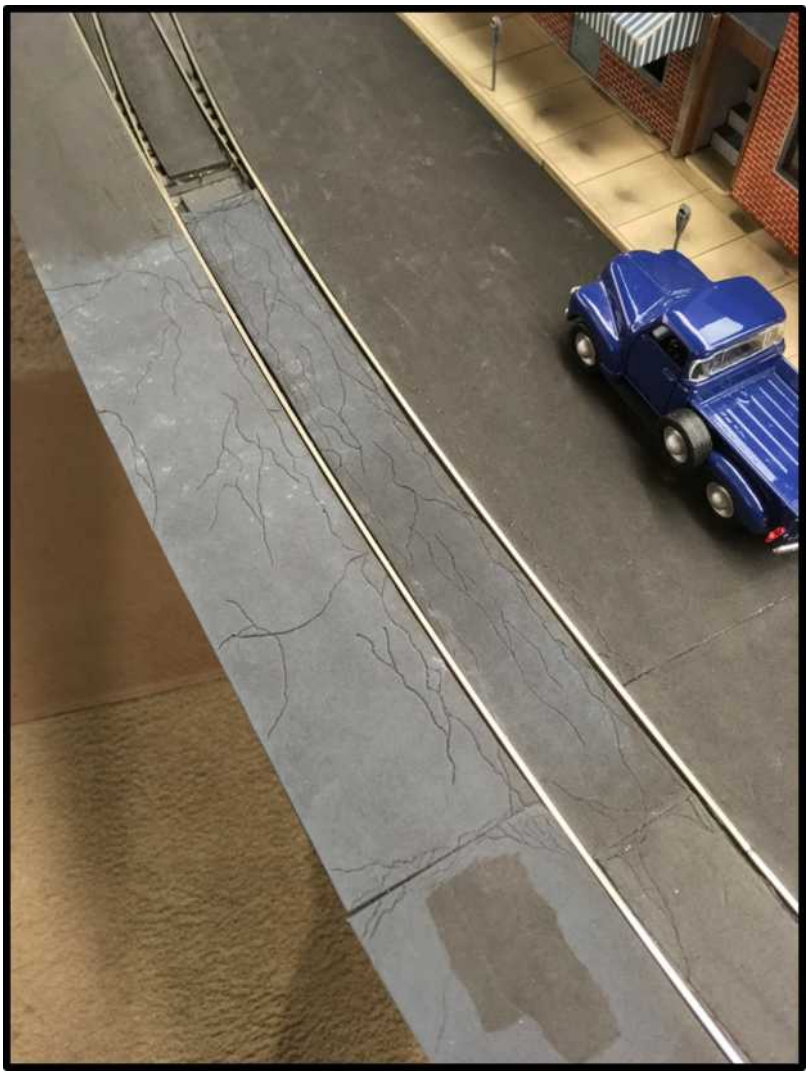

Craig #99 May 1, 2019, 1:45am

That looks great Rick.

rnb3 #100 May 1, 2019, 2:32pm

We are always challenged to maintain progress in our hobby. Life takes priority (or at least it should!) over hobby time. Add to that, I'm building on a layout not in my basement! I have broken the Mount Union project into many sub-assemblies not just to manage the overall project but to facilitate my time and distance constraints.

I had about 20 minutes of hobby time last night, so I knocked out a set of cross-bucks using some sign artwork I had already pre-printed. Cutting out the sign parts, coloring the backs of the signs, cutting and texturing the wooden posts, painting the posts, and gluing it all together…15 minutes! That left 5 minutes to take a couple iPhone shots and day dream about what these cross-bucks will look like on the layout!

jaybarnaby #101 May 2, 2019, 7:30pm

It takes me 20 min just to get settled in at the desk.

jaybarnaby #102 May 24, 2019, 4:03am

I think I like it better as the brick outhouse…

cwebster #103 July 6, 2019, 9:21pm

> Here is a picture from online of an underground switch being thrown.

That's Schuyler Street in Utica, NY. Here's another picture of the steet: **Railpictures #647140, CSX #2732 on UT-1 on April 18, 2017**

Back in the 1980s, the Susquehanna detoured some double-stack container trains over the line.

Bob #104 July 7, 2019, 2:49pm

Thanks for the location info. Google Street View has a nice close-up of the switch. It appears to only have one moving point.

rnb3 #105 July 9, 2019, 8:27pm

Hey Chris, are you "ut-1" on Trainorders? If so, I'd love to give you a shout out for your pictures! I am very curious about what is inside the switch stand "box". Bob has laid down the challenge to build my

model so that the throw handle is position-able. He wants to photograph a scene with a conductor working the switch.

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cwebster #106 July 13, 2019, 8:50pm

No, – I've never been on Trainorders.

However, UT-1 might be the same person who posts as "ParisHill" on RYPN – for example, here's a RYN post showing what Schuyler Street looks like in mid-winter: **Winter Street Running Woes, Utica, NY**

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cwebster #107 July 24, 2019, 3:15pm

Back in the 1980s, Alco C430s used to pull passenger trains of dome cars down the street and over the switch. Here's a recent ebay auction of a slide showing one of those trains, taken just south of Schuyler Street:
Ebay #123827184023 Original Slide Susquehanna RR Alco C430 #3000 Passenger 1982

If you're looking for the location of this slide on google maps, that's the Burrstone Road overpass in the background.

CentralFan1976 #108 July 24, 2019, 5:58pm

The videos are by my friend; UT-1 on trainorders, Paris Hill on RyPN, and Railroading Rambler on YouTube.

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rnb3 #109 January 9, 2020, 12:00am

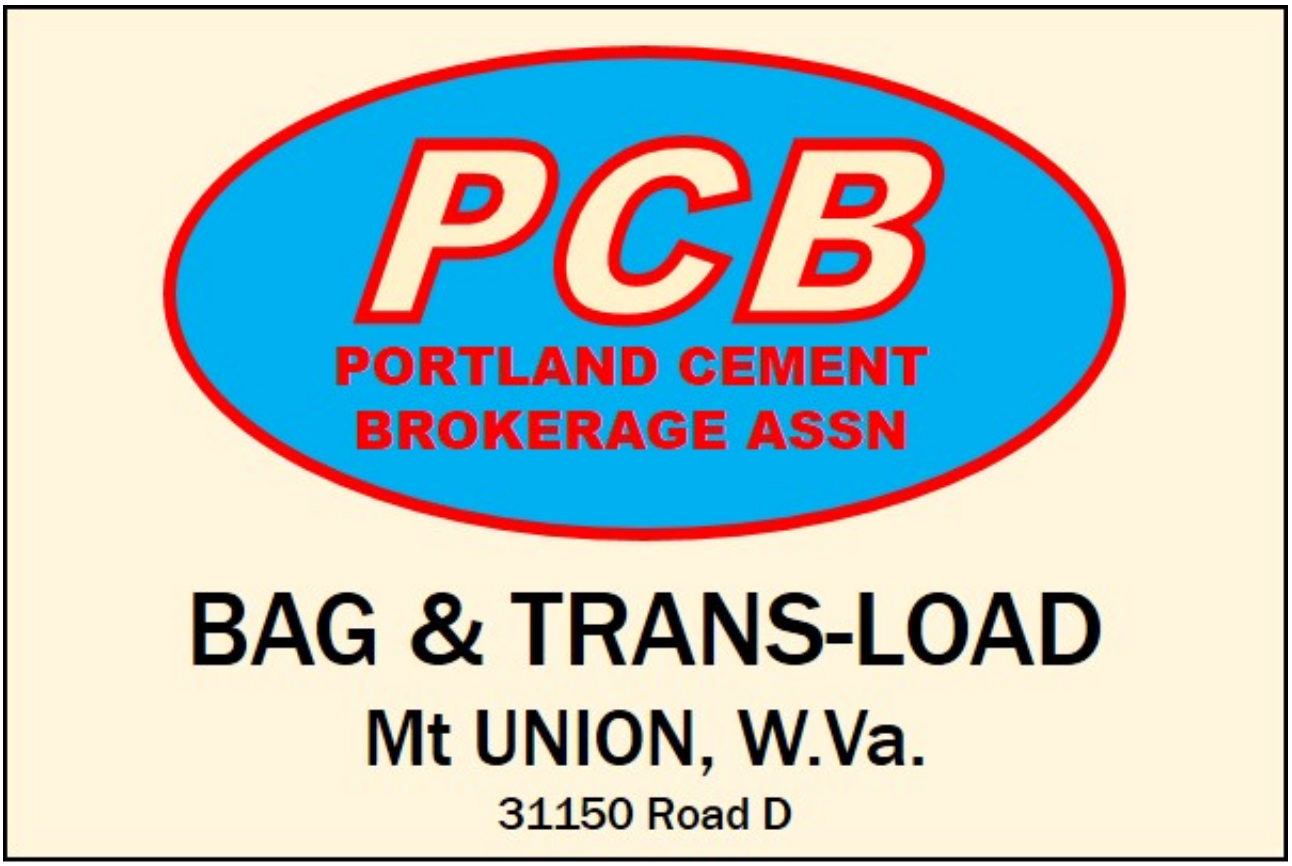
At the far south end of Mt Union, at the edge of town, is a cement trans load facility. The plan is for a tall silo based structure with a track pass through. The bulk of the structure will hide the fact that the tail of the track is actually under the mountain that visually isolates Mt Union from the next section of the layout.

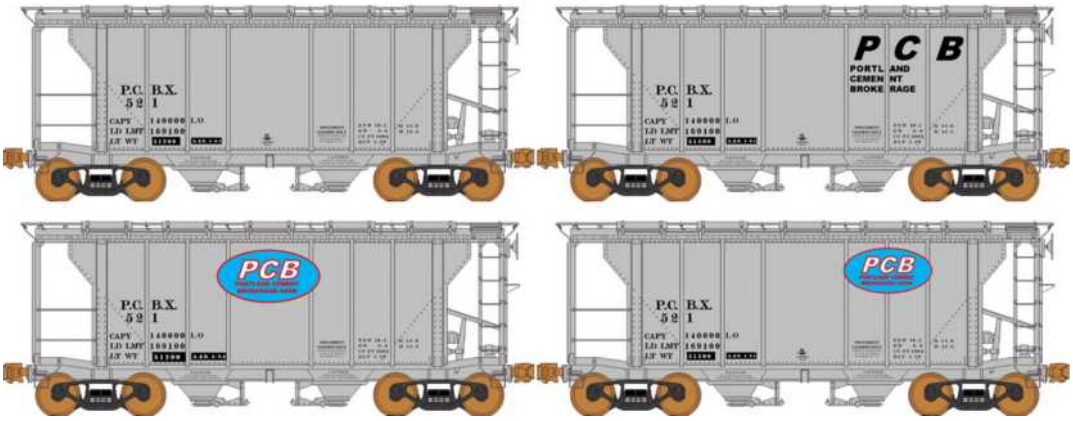
There is a foam board and PVC pipe mock up in place now.

I have decided that this will be a trans-load and re-bagging facility. All the powder cement will be shipped in by rail and the aggregate is delivered from local sources by truck. Everything re-packaged for forwarding by truck as bagged dry pre-mix.

I named this facility the Portland Cement Brokerage Association. They have a fleet of private railcars with PSBX reporting marks. Jay Barnaby found me some Weaver PS2 cement hoppers in my price range ($6.66 ea) and I have designed some artwork for decals. Since the lettering is all black, I'll be printing these myself…we'll see how that works out! A couple cars will have large metal signs mounted on them. This was not uncommon in the 60s and 70s. I will be making these signs using my photo-texture technique.

Here is some artwork for the cars, enjoy!





jaybarnaby #110 January 10, 2020, 1:20pm

Just need to get them to you now…Gonna use all 4 schemes?

rnb3 #111 January 11, 2020, 5:21pm

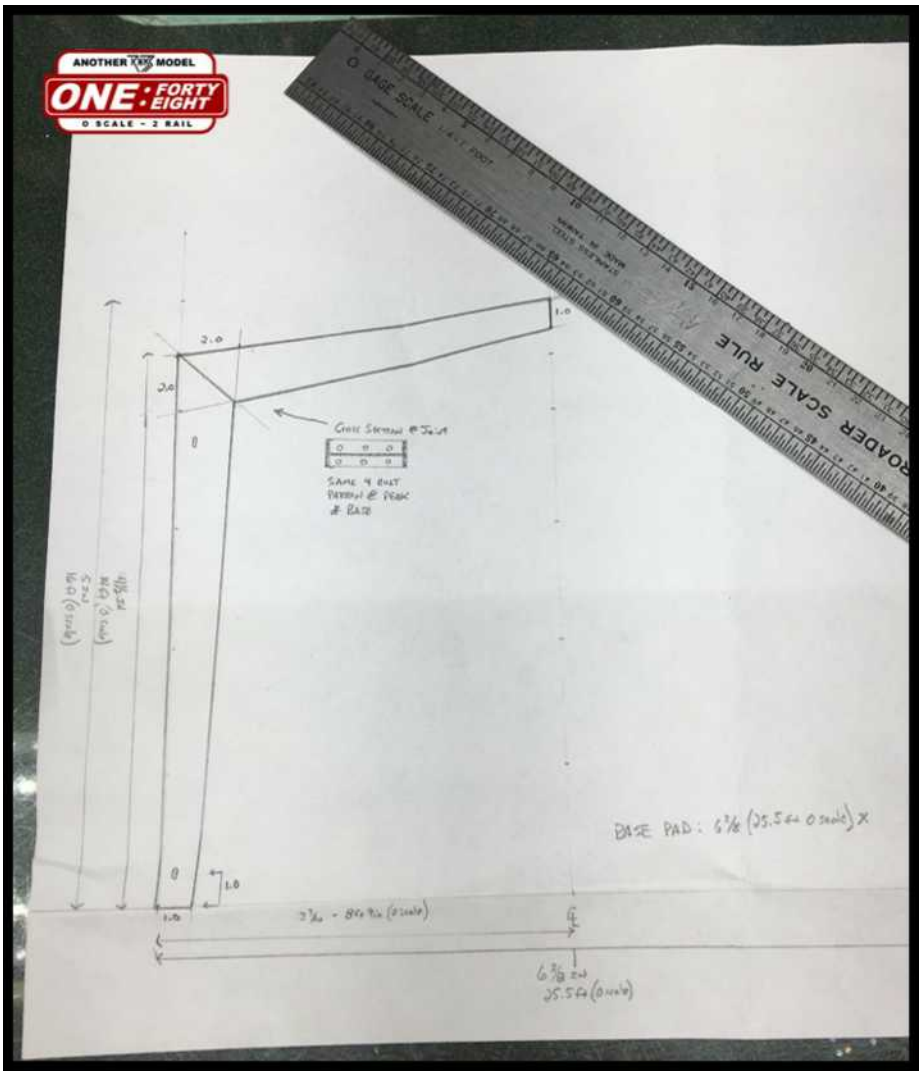
No hurry Jay!

I do plan to produce all 4 schemes. I ran a test for decals this week and its looking favorable so far!

rnb3 #112 March 10, 2020, 3:34pm

It's been a while since I have worked on the Mt Union project. This past weekend, I jump-started the scratch building machine (patent pending) and pumped out another structure! The lumber yard will have 2 sheds and a covered storage area. The covered storage area is the subject of my recent work. It is basically a metal roof held up by four steel support columns. This is the most modern structure in Mt Union. All four sides are open and it has a cement floor. It is approximately 25 scale ft. square. The size and position will also help visually transition the sky line along the street.

Several months ago I drew a simple line drawing for the support columns. The 4 columns are tied together by a pair of tie rods crisscrossing the sides. I think the openness of the structure will meet the need for the skyline transition but still be see through into the lumber yard. Of course with no walls, there is plenty of opportunity for details to tell stories!



rnb3 #113 March 10, 2020, 3:35pm

The columns are made from .020 styrene sheet and strip formed into beams. Details are bolt castings. The tie rods are .033 brass rod with styrene washers and nuts on the outside of the beams. The roof is styrene metal siding. Gutters are styrene angle with styrene rod down pipes.

This structure went together fast, total time so far is about 4 hours. Painting will probably take longer!

antlor #114 March 12, 2020, 3:02pm

Dang that looks good. The bolt castings really make it look complete. Where did you get measurements by chance or did you just eye ball it?

Anthony

rnb3 #115 March 13, 2020, 3:11am

Hey Anthony! Thanks! I really just guessed on the measurements, and of course it has to fit in its spot on the layout! I searched the internet for pictures of similar structures. I also spent the time to draw one side to full size at several different heights. I took a photocopy of my favorite one over to the layout to see it in the whole scene.

One of my base rules is that it's more important to look right than to be right! That whole visual art, optical illusion thing! I'm in big trouble if a actual steel beam shed contractor visits the layout!

1 Like

Bob #116 March 13, 2020, 9:34pm

Rick is very talented at telling a visual story and keeping the audience engaged. The details don't have to be 100% perfect, just visually believable.

When an engineer running a train southbound stops at the home signal in Mount Union, there is already so much detail for the eye to take in. I can't wait to see his finished masterpiece.

1 Like

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antlor #117 March 15, 2020, 4:39pm

Very cool Rick. You and Bob are right, when there is alot of visual things to keep your eye moving small details like exact measurements really dont matter. Very cool again Rick…

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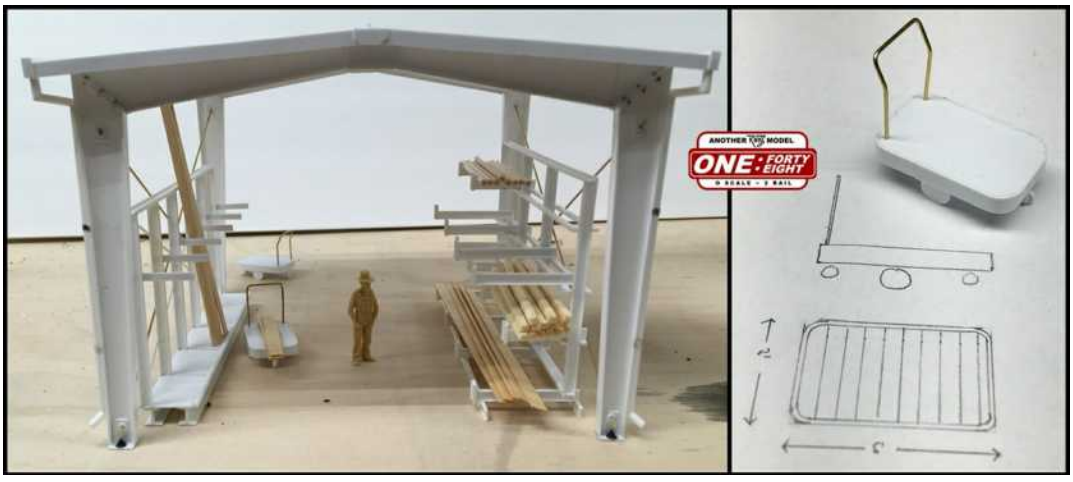
rnb3 #118 March 25, 2020, 2:10am

While everyone hides from the virus, I knocked out a couple lumber storage racks for the covered storage area. One is a vertical rack and the other is a horizontal rack. Both are made from various styrene strips and shapes. I "imagineered" these and built them to fit the shed. I also made a bunch of lumber dollies/warehouse carts. These are based on pictures I found online. They are also styrene with brass handrails.



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rnb3 #119 April 24, 2020, 8:24pm

To go with the lumberyard scene, I need a forklift. Something around 6000 lbs capacity would be

normal for the size of the business, and also able to maneuver in a dirt lot. The only commercially available forklift models I have found tend to be smaller and more in line with an indoor warehouse. I guess I'll just have to scratch build one!

While cleaning out my son's no longer used sand box, I uncovered an inexpensive toy tractor. The tires looked fairly to scale and I thought the wheel base seemed about right for this project. Quick work with a pair of flush cutters and a razor saw, and I was able to salvage the frame and leaving the wheels intact.

rnb3 #120 April 24, 2020, 8:27pm

Based on this frame, I used some cardstock to start to visualize the lines of the body. I was shooting for a 1950s vintage machine, so I tried to add in some retro-like curves. I found pictures of an era similar forklift at an online equipment sales site to use as a reference. These pictures helped me

layout the major details of a generic forklift.

95% of the construction is styrene. I'm very comfortable with this material, and have a very large stock on hand, though this project mostly used material out of my styrene scrap box. The most common stock used was .015 sheet, but there are a few shapes like "C" channel, and tubing also. I didn't use any real measurements, rather just eyeballed it. I was going for "looks right"! Somebody with real forklift experience will notice there are a couple things missing such as the lift chains on the rack and no hydraulic lines. Oh well, life goes on!

rnb3 #121 April 24, 2020, 8:28pm

The seat and the engine grill are from an old resin kit that didn't work out. The louvers and tread plate are Archer Models decals. I really like how easy the Archer products work! For the finish I have decided to stick with the common look and painted it yellow. Weathering will tone the color down and

I plan to do some real heavy rust and wear.

Craig #122 April 25, 2020, 1:13am

I love it Rick!!! That's awesome! Great job my friend.

antlor #123 April 25, 2020, 9:07pm

Very cool Rick. Incredible about of work you did.

David #124 April 26, 2020, 1:16am

The Mt. Union switch job will be so fattening. Too much eye candy!

David

rnb3 #125 April 30, 2020, 11:58pm

I'm done with the forklift!

rnb3 #126 May 1, 2020, 12:00am

A shot from the front. Now I'm building a bunch of wood pallets for this machine to haul around.

Bob #127 May 1, 2020, 12:16am

OK. I fold my hand, too rich for me.

Just one question: Where's the mini-Rick driving the fork lift?

Very well done, sir!

David #128 May 2, 2020, 2:18am

Wow. You continue to raise the bar.

David

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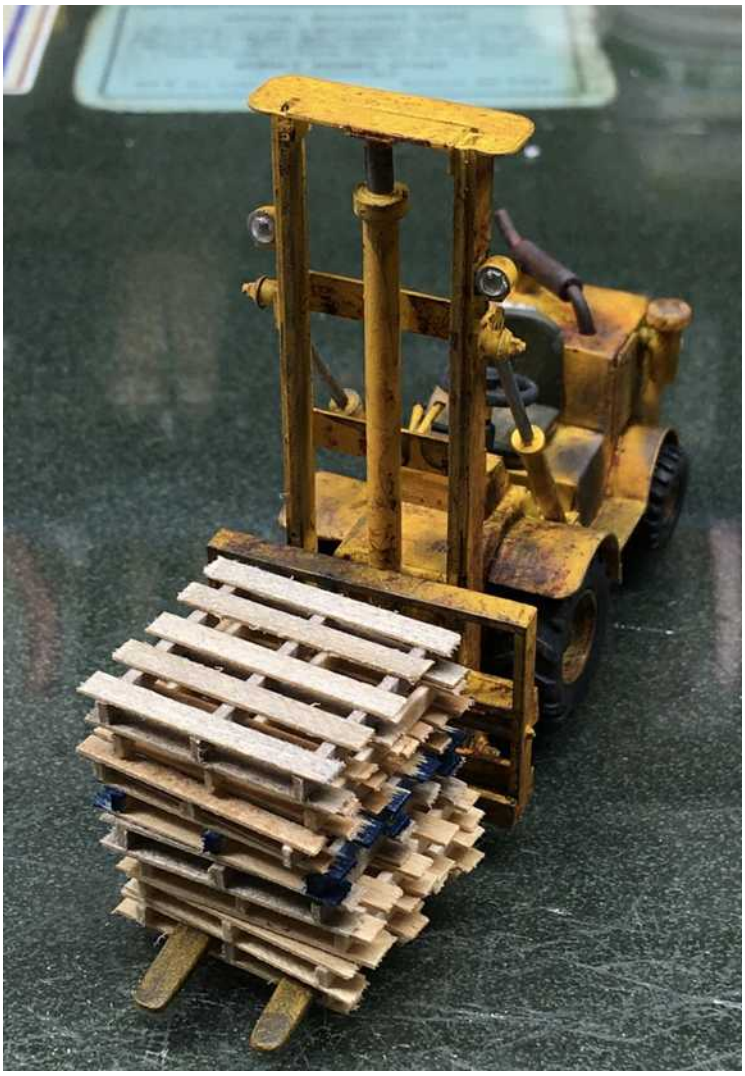
rnb3 #129 May 2, 2020, 2:55am

Made pallets today! Working on the driver now.



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rnb3 #130 May 4, 2020, 6:20pm

Here is Jim the forklift driver with his new hat and repositioned legs. Ready for some primer.

This guy came from an old 1/48 scale aircraft tow tractor model kit. Back in my Don's Hobbies days, a guy from the Englewood, CO area was selling these kits for $2.50 a kit. I bought a dozen! The tractors will show up as a flatcar load someday soon! I only need to finish painting 32 more tires and rims!

jaybarnaby #131 May 7, 2020, 3:53am

steering wheel needs a suicide knob

antlor #132 May 7, 2020, 2:54pm

That came out great Rick. I can smell the oil and grease on it… great job…

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rnb3 #133 June 9, 2020, 5:03am

Here is a short graphic on how I make pallets for the Mt Union lumber yard.

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reecol #134 June 9, 2020, 6:12pm

After you paint him , don't forget to rub the forklift driver down with human sweat machine oil and a cigarette so he smells like the real thing. Its about all you have left out.

David archived #135 June 17, 2020, 2:24am

David unarchived #136 June 17, 2020, 2:25am