



April 2015

**Bowser has begun the development process for HO scale mod**

## The Golden Empire Historical & Modeling Society Show!

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As the number of model train hobby shops and large train shows continue to dwindle, we will be taking time to point out several of these shows still worth attending. With the large halls and security becoming much more of an issue, combined with most clubs dwindling memberships, we have a concern about the future of most train shows. We hope that you will take advantage of these shows when they are in your local area. The trend seems to be less train shows. Combine this with the dwindling number of hobby shops and the opportunity to see and touch items first hand other than on the internet is slowly disappearing or has already disappeared in some areas. We urge to attend these shows before they are fond memories!!!!

In January, 1987, a group of Bakersfield, California, model railroaders got together to try and form a model railroad club. At the first meeting, approximately 40 local model railroaders crammed into a meeting room, at the local Ford auto dealership. From that meeting, the Golden Empire Model Railroad Club—GEMRC—was formed in mid-1987. Since the new club did not have a location to build a layout, it was decided to build a modular layout, in both HO and N scale. The N scale part of the club adopted the Ntrack standards, and the HO part adopted the HO modular standards as established by the NMRA. Around the end of 1987, the club had enough modules to have their first test run. So, the club started meeting one Saturday a month, in whatever local Veteran's Halls were available, as the Veteran's Halls were free to rent for clubs such as GEMRC, to set up both the HO and N scale modular layouts, and advertised the run sessions at the local hobby shops, in the quest for more members. The club was still searching for a more permanent location so that the modules could be set up, full-time. About 1991, the club got an offer to rent a former swimming pool storage warehouse, which was situated along the Southern Pacific mainline, just west of the Southern Pacific passenger depot, on Baker Street, in Old Towne Kern. With no heating or cooling, you can imagine the toll it took, not only on the modules, but on the members (remember your last July or August in Bakersfield?). After putting up with either freezing during the winter, or sweltering in the summer heat, the club found a smaller, but cooled and heated, building in Oildale (north Bakersfield suburb). The club was actually in this location long enough that plans for a permanent HO and N scale layouts were developed—approximately 2 years. The one of the members, who is an architect, heard about the second and third floors, of a former department store—J. J. Newberry—was available as they were not useable by a “normal” business. GEMRC looked into it, and signed the lease on the 2 floors. With both floors at **3,900 square feet**, we finally had enough room to set up the modules and actually start planning on some permanent layouts. The club moved into its current downtown Bakersfield location, in March 1994.



In 2002, GEMRC became the Golden Empire Historical and Modeling Society (GEHAMS), so that they could be incorporated and become a 501(c)(3) IRS tax exempt non-profit organization. The GEHAMS HO layout, which has been under construction since 1997, occupies a 37 X 110 foot room on the third floor of the current clubhouse. The layout has over 848 feet (14 scale miles) of mainline track that cross mountains, valleys, river canyons, and hillsides between the large classification yards and engine facilities located at “Bakersfield” and “Mojave”. The scenery depicts the landscapes typical of southern California with citrus orchards, oilfields, small towns and industrial facilities such as petroleum refineries and loading racks, packing sheds, lumber yards, cattle pens, warehouses, and manufacturing businesses. There is a one mile branch line that serves the rich agricultural town of Norman. Operations are point to point over a single-track mainline that has 5 passing sidings and return loops that allow continuous running. The layout is designed to run along two-sided peninsulas so that the trains traverse separate scenes along the way. The railroad has 160 spotting points to serve 44 customers during operating sessions. There is a strong Santa Fe and Southern Pacific influence to the railroad property.

The layout was expanded in 2010 to include a large 7-track passenger station with REA Express, US mail and LCL freight station facilities. A passenger yard was also constructed to service trains between runs.

In 2013, intermodal and automobile yards were added near “Bakersfield” to operate these high priority trains. Additional improvements and upgrades are ongoing.

The layout uses a Digitrax radio command system, supported by 4 NCE 10 amp boosters and home built power supplies. There are many loco net plugs located around the layout to allow both tethered and radio control of trains.

This was the 22nd Annual Show hosted by GEHAMS and as usual, the show organizers ensured that the Greater Bakersfield area knew about the show. They were featured on local television station KBAK on Wednesday morning, March 11 from 5:00AM to 7:00 AM. Trains were shown running on the layout. This show is one of the shows that attempts to involve the community. Often there are other attractions at the Kern County Fairgrounds which allow the public to discover model railroading. On Saturday, there also was a car show at the Kern Country Fairgrounds adjacent to the train show. Just a few of the automobiles, a Cord, and a GTO are shown below:



The show ran from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM on Saturday and 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM on Sunday. Over 1100 local visitors were on hand to enjoy the model trains, Bakersfield is about a two-hour drive from Los Angeles and many of the vendors, including Custom Traxx, are from that area or even further south. The hall is air-conditioned, such having been installed a few years back. Interior views of the hall are shown next:



On Saturday evening of each show, the club opens its doors to the show attendees and George Huckaby of Custom Traxx, who is also a member of GEHAMS, always brings something to operate on the layout. Remember, this layout takes over one hour to completely traverse, that is go from one end to the other and return back to where you started. This year, a Broadway Limited PRR H-10s pulled four Bachmann PRR Passenger cars over the entire magnificent layout.



Both the show and the club are "must-see" for any model railroader who finds themselves in the Bakersfield area. For more information on the club and the show, which is presented every March, visit their [internet web site](#).

## Saint Charles Line Honored Again!

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The Times recently learned the the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (NORTA) Saint Charles Line has been designated a National Historic Landmark. A ceremony designating such was held at Lee Circle on December 9, 2014. The only other moving National Landmark(s) are the San Francisco Cable Cars. The Saint Charles line is currently recognized as the oldest operating Streetcar line in the world.

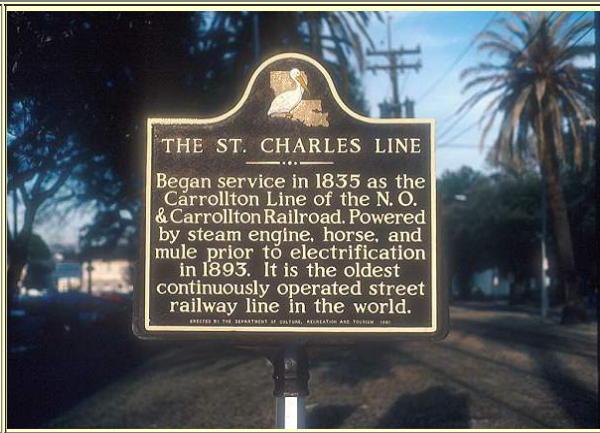


The Saint Charles line, operated by the New Orleans Public Service Inc (NOPSI) for many years, has been operated by the NORTA since 1983. The line provides 24-hour service and has operated uninterrupted except for a period after Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The line, 13.2 miles long from Canal Street to Carrollton& Claiborne Avenues, has been electrified since 1893 and uses the Pennsylvania broad gauge of 62.5 inches. Already on the United States National Register of Historic Places since 1973, the 35 Perley Thomas built streetcars in 1923-1924 have been "grandfathered" to prevent them from having to be modified in sometimes ridiculous manners to comply with the ADA.

For the record, the 35 cars so protected are:

900	903	904	905	906	907	910
911	914	915	920	921	922	923
926	930	932	933	934	937	940
945	947	948	951	953	954	961
962	963	965	968	969	971	972

Below, Cars 926 and 920 are shown in 1964 in practically their original condition. Above are cars 962 and 903 at Carrollton and Claiborne. Car 962 is in the first major modification with the PCC style windows and doors. Car 903 is in the most recent modification which returned the cars to their original configuration except for adding windows in the lower half of the doors.



## Philadelphia's PCC-II

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By now, most electric rail fans have heard of the PCC-II streetcars that operate on Philadelphia's Girard Avenue, these eighteen cars restored streetcar service to Route 15 in 2005 after it had been removed in 1992 when SEPTA management told Philadelphia residents that the PCC cars were "...too old and worn out..." to continue service.

SEPTA's intense desire to rid themselves of the North Philadelphia streetcar system is well documented. They had inherited **five** streetcar lines in 1968 that operated in the Surface Car Subway (Route 10 - Lancaster Avenue; Route 11, Woodland Avenue; Route 13, Chester Avenue; Route 34, Baltimore Avenue and Route 36, Elmwood Avenue) along with the following **nine** street operated mostly North Philadelphia PCC operated lines:

Route 6 - Ogontz Avenue [Killed by SEPTA - 1986]	Route 15 - Girard Ave, Richmond St ["Suspended" by SEPTA - 1992, PCC-II - 2005]	Route 23 Germantown Ave, 11th & 12th Sts ["Suspended" by SEPTA - 1992]
Route 47 - 5th Street , 8th & 9th Sts [Killed by SEPTA - 1968]	Route 50 - Rising Sun Avenue, 4th & 5th Sts [Killed by SEPTA - 1980]	Route 53 - Wayne Avenue [Killed by SEPTA - 1985]
Route 56 - Erie and Torresdale Avenues ["Suspended by SEPTA - 1992]	Route 60 - Allegheny Ave [Killed by SEPTA - 1977]	Route 62 - Yeadon-Darby Shuttle [Killed by SEPTA - 1971]

Every few years they managed to kill one line for some reason or another.

By the 1980s, SEPTA was in the process of upgrading its Subway-Surface Trolley Lines, replacing its fleet of PCCs with new light rail cars. They had already "killed" Routes 6, 50, 53 and 60, but Routes 15, 23 and 56 continued to use PCCs, overhauled in the 1980s into the 1990s. In 1992, SEPTA suddenly ended streetcar service on these three lines as well. In response to public outcry over the conversion, SEPTA boldly lied and stated that the "suspension" of these lines' streetcar service was temporary, (...some of us knew that they were lying through their teeth...) they stated the "...old and worn out..." reason and that streetcar service would be restored in 1997. However, during this time little was done to restore the lines, and as 1997 approached, it became clear that SEPTA had no immediate plans to restore streetcar service to these lines.

The PCC-II project arose when during his second term Mayor Ed Rendell started to pressure SEPTA to resume streetcar service on Route 15. While they stated the "too old and worn out" mendacity and promised to get new cars for all three lines, they promptly rid themselves of the Luzerne Depot from which to operate any North Philadelphia streetcar lines. The project happened because after the SEPTA Board officially said that they were not going to honor agreements made by a previous Board to eventually restore service to routes 15, 23 and 56, Mayor Rendell practically forced SEPTA to restore route 15 trolley service

SEPTA's initial plan was to attempt to procure new low floor cars for route 15, and had at least one company willing to modify an existing design to meet Philly's tight curves. SEPTA put together a specification of sorts and began negotiations. A major issue that came up was a SEPTA requirement that the car be equipped with the Surface Car Subway new signal system that SEPTA had just begun the process of acquiring using penalty money owed for late delivery of the new Market-Frankford El cars. At this early stage, the details of the signal system design and what car equipment would be needed was totally unknown. The car builder therefore put a fairly decent sum of money in his price, gambling that it would be adequate to purchase the new signal equipment needed on the car at a future date when the design had been finalized. The result of doing this was that the car builder's price was above what SEPTA had decided it could afford to spend, and so the attempt to procure articulated low floor cars for route 15 died.

As an alternative, it was decided to consider rebuilding for the third type a number of the GOH PCC cars for route 15, and it was found to be an approach that stayed within budget, so it went ahead. 112 cars from two groups of PCC cars had been chosen for rebuilding (GOH) in the 1980s. These groups were the 100 all-electric PCCs brought in 1947 (2701-2800) and the 110 bought in 1948 (2091-2200). Cars 2091-2140 and 2701-2725 had been equipped by Westinghouse. Westinghouse-equipped cars were preferred by San Francisco and those were the cars that San Francisco Municipal railway selected in 1992.

Philadelphia's maintenance forces traditionally preferred the GE-equipped cars and the 1947 group so the selection of GE-equipped GOH cars to convert to PCC-II was not surprising. Selected PCC cars were shipped to Brookville starting in February 2002 and they began returning to Philadelphia in September 2003. The last car, 2337, arrived in November 2004. See the chart below for a car by car report. Cars 2163, 2170, 2175, 2181, 2191 and 2780 were also provided to Brookville as "parts cars".

Current Car Number	Original Car Number	Date Departed SEPTA	Date Returned to SEPTA	Brookville Builders No.
2320	2750	2/25/02	9/9/03	8912
2321	2738	3/18/02	12/23/03	8913
2322	2770	2/27/02	1/29/04	8914
2323	2798	7/15/02	3/11/04	8915
2324	2777	6/20/02	3/26/04	8916
2325	2741	8/8/02	4/14/04	8917
2326	2197	8/28/02	4/28/04	8918
2327	2747	9/9/02	5/13/04	8919
2328	2726	9/23/02	5/27/04	8920
2329	2182	10/3/02	6/23/04	8921
2330	2730	10/17/02	7/14/04	8922
2331	2758	11/4/02	7/30/04	8923
2332	2196	11/18/02	8/24/04	8824
2333	2746	12/5/02	9/14/04	8825
2334	2753	12/19/02	9/24/04	8826
2335	2158	1/2/03	10/19/04	8827
2336	2790	1/23/03	1/4/04	8828
2337	2783	2/6/03	11/23/04	8829

Brookville had quoted the lowest price for a fully rebuilt PCC with air conditioning and a wheel chair lift at the center doors. Because of the weight increase the cars got new trucks with higher horsepower AC motors, and all new wiring, electrical equipment, etc. The only part of the car that remains from its original construction by Saint Louis Car Co is the frame and some sheet metal, and even the frame got modifications so that the new electrical equipment could be installed under the car. To save costs, the cars received seats from retired articulated SEPTA buses. The rebuilt PCC cars were not required to have any of the equipment needed for them to operate in the Surface Car Subway using the new signal system.

The eighteen PCC-IIs (2320 through 2337) would be the first and only streetcars to date operated by SEPTA to be ADA-accessible. The cars are painted in a unique green, red, and cream livery similar to that of the PCC cars of SEPTA's predecessor, the Philadelphia Transportation Company, and they feature a modified PTC "wing" logo, which features the SEPTA "S" symbol in place of the "PTC" lettering. Of course the aggressive legal minds at SEPTA made sure that they got a copyright for that logo. The paint scheme chosen was able to defuse the desire in some parts of the organization to keep any of the unrebuilt GOH PCCs on the property for historical reasons and thus SEPTA was able to scrap, sell or give away all the remaining cars on the property, thus ensuring the end of the PCC and hopefully the streetcar era. Meanwhile cities all over the United States, some very much smaller than Philadelphia (i.e. Tucson, Atlanta, Salt Lake City) are expending huge sums of money building streetcars lines from scratch. San Francisco's now famous F-line started almost twenty years ago with some of these same "...old and worn out..." cars that SEPTA "shunned".

The first of the rebuilt cars debuted on September 9, 2003, and Route 15 was planned to open little under a year later, when most of the cars were under SEPTA control. However, the line remained closed for another year due to disputes with local residents on 59th Street, over parking on 59th Street. In the decade since Callowhill Depot was made "temporary bus," and the streetcars removed, residents of two blocks of 59th Street had grown accustomed to using the western curb lane of the street to park their cars. Some of you may have heard about the "parking wars" in Philadelphia.



59th Street at Callowhill looking North  
July 2004



59th Street at Haverford looking North July  
2004

Because the northbound rails on 59th Street are located in the exact center of the street, northbound streetcars could not pass without obstructing southbound traffic. So in order for streetcar service to resume from the newly renovated Callowhill Depot, one of two things had to happen. Either the painted centerline of 59th Street must be moved to the side to include the rails (and parking prohibited on the west side of the street), or 59th Street be made one-way north. Naturally, the City of Philadelphia was willing to do neither. Incredibly, the return of streetcars to Girard Avenue, for which years of planning and \$82 million had already been spent, was placed in limbo for over one year by this idiocy. During this time, the cars remained stored in the Callowhill Depot while the warranties ran out, although they were occasionally used for special charters on the Subway-Surface routes.

The PCC-II finally entered service on September 4, 2005 and operate exclusively on Route 15. Some of the residents call it "The Pickle".



Car 2331 on 59th Street having left Callowhill Depot for service on Route 15.



Cars 2323 and 2330 at 11th & Girard

The PCC-II cars have generally been acceptable. The ride quality is mediocre on less than perfect track because the trucks are the same as under the 2001 series New Orleans Canal Street cars that have a much heavier car body. The propulsion package unfortunately is one designed for roof mounting and a removable top cover normally provides access to the interior. Being mounted under the car, the package has to be removed from the car to gain access. The trucks have had a number of problems that Brookville had to fix. The most costly was the gear box torque link which began cracking. To correct this, each truck had to be removed so that a totally new design with new connections to the truck frame could be fitted. Most recently the Czech-built track brakes have suffered major mechanical failures and are being replaced with ones identical with those on the Kawasaki cars. The underfloor electrical boxes are fan-ventilated and the filters on the incoming air stream are designed for the relatively clean air normally found on a car roof. Being under the floor the filters are dealing with much dirtier air and need replacing on a weekly basis. The end result of all the above has been a car of mediocre reliability and it has not been unusual to see a bus or two operating on route 15. It can be assumed that when the Kawasaki cars are finally replaced, route 15 will get identical cars so that the fleet becomes uniform and the PCC-IIs can be retired.



Cars 2322 and 2328 at Broad and Girard.

## Even Los Angeles Getting on the Bandwagon!

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Edward Havens

Facing growing auto traffic congestion on city streets and freeways, the Southern California area around Los Angeles is haunted by memories of the Pacific Electric "Red Car" and Los Angeles Railways "Yellow Car" interurban and streetcar electric railways. Tax funds are now being committed to re-create a shadow of those systems. Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority [LACMTA] has spent billions to build light rail lines to Long Beach (Blue Line opened 1990) and Culver City (Expo Line opened 2012). This line will be extended to Santa Monica by 2016. On the other side of downtown L. A. area, the Gold line which now operates from Union Station to Pasadena-Azusa and East L. A. will be connected to the other light rail lines via an underground Regional Connector now being built. On the west side of the Los Angeles, the north-south Crenshaw LRT is being constructed to link the San Monica Expo line and Los Angeles International Airport, which is served a bit distantly by the Green Line LRT. Even more extensions could follow.

The LACMTA heavy rail rapid transit system (subway) also is being extended with the Purple Line headed to the Veterans Administration hospital at Westwood. LACMTA also is buying new LRVs for replacement and expansion. A contract was awarded to Kinki Sharyo in July 2013 for 78 P3010 cars for the Expo Line and Gold Line Extensions. A total of 235 cars could be purchased if all the options are exercised. Below are the artists concepts of the cars and a photo recently obtained of the pilot car in Los Angeles late last year. Unfortunately, similar to the Los Angeles Port situation and the gasoline refinery issue, a small labor union with a "get mine and the hell with the rest of you" attitude has slowed the production of these cars.



[Image: The Source]



Pilot P3010 Car photo taken December 2014

The light rail system, particularly on the Blue Line from Los Angeles to Long Beach, has numerous at-grade crossings which represent a collision hazard. The rate of incidents is diminishing as residents get used to trains in the area after a long

absence. With heavy investment in the city-to-suburbs light rail system, the trend toward development of urban modern or heritage streetcar systems almost bypassed the L. A. region. Beginning in 1990, things began to change in the City of Angels. The Blue Line opened with 54 [P865] cars from Nippon Sharyo. In 1995, Fifteen more cars from Nippon Sharyo opened the Green Line. Although designated P2020, they are almost identical to the P865 except they are more compatible with the 53 Siemens [P2000] cars which arrived beginning in 1996 for the Green and Gold lines. The next group of cars were the fifty P2550 cars built by Ansaldo Breda which arrived between 2006 and 2011. As things stand today, the Blue Line and Expo Lines are using the 69 Nippon Sharyo P865 & P2020 Cars and about half of the Siemens P2000 cars. The Green line uses the other half of the Siemens cars. The Gold Line is entirely operated with the Breda cars.



*P865 Car 131 on Expo Line*



*P2020 Car 229 on Gold Line*



*P2550 Car 749 on Gold Line*



Los Angeles Railway's yellow narrow-gauge streetcars once provided a rail network for the central city, while Pacific Electric higher-speed standard-gauge interurbans (here sharing a stretch of dual-gauge track with streetcars) provided fast regional service.

*[Photo: Trolleys-California]*

One project, pushed by City Councilman Jose Huizar, is the restoration of downtown streetcar service on Broadway to provide economic revitalization for the corridor and it's been organized as L. A. Streetcar Inc.



The proposed car line would not link with Union Station which is already served by the Gold Line LRT and the Red Line subway. The 3.8-mile downtown loop streetcar line currently is undergoing an environmental review. The project could cost \$270 million funded in part by a special tax assessment on property owners along the route. The Los Angeles Times wrote in September 2014:

"Last fall, the initial cost for the transit loop more than doubled to \$327 million. Consulting firm URS Corp., hired by the city to draw up a new estimate, says the four-mile route could be built for about \$270 million, according to a final draft of the analysis obtained by The Times.

"The streetcar line still faces a significant funding gap: A tax district approved two years ago by downtown voters would raise as much as \$85 million. If the Federal Transit Administration gives the project the full \$75-million grant it seeks, that would still leave a funding gap of more than \$100 million. To make up the difference, Huizar spokesman Rick Coca said in an emailed statement Tuesday that the city plans to arrange a public-private partnership."

Another project that was being discussed in the Los Angeles area is the proposed restoration of the Los Angeles Railways Edgeware shuttle which was operated by four-wheel Birney Cars. However, little has been heard of this proposal in recent

years.



At left, Los Angeles Railway Birney Streetcar #1051 pauses at its terminal at Edgeware and Temple Streets. Please note the gas station to the right of the car and the Pharmacy in the background.



Birney car 1026 - [Photo from ERHA of SC]

Orange Empire Railway Museum in Perris, CA, has five former Los Angeles PCC cars and three of them are currently operational. The first car, 3001 has been restored to the original livery as an example of the first L. A. PCC cars:



Car Number: 3001  
Series 3001 to 3095  
Type: P-1 Air-Electric PCC  
Builder: St. Louis Car Company, St. Louis, MO.  
Built / Retired:  
1937 - 1963  
Notes:  
Operational at OERM  
Car 3001 was Los Angeles' first PCC-type streetcar. It was unveiled on March 22, 1937 by L. A. Mayor Tom Shaw and child film star Shirley Temple, in a ceremony in front of City Hall

The original Los Angeles Railway PCC livery is remembered on one car of the San Francisco F-Market heritage streetcar fleet:



Car Number: 1052  
Series 1050 to 1063  
Type: All-Electric PCC  
Builder: St. Louis Car Company, St. Louis, MO.  
Built: 1948  
Originally: Philadelphia Transportation Company 2110 from 1948 to 1968, then SEPTA 2110 from 1968 to 1992.  
Sold to San Francisco in 1992 and rebuilt by Morrison Knudsen 1993.  
Notes:  
One of 15 cars purchased from Philadelphia for the inception of F-line heritage tram service.

At the east end of the region, 60 miles east of Los Angeles, is Riverside, which once was served by Pacific Electric "Red Cars" as a branch of the L. A. to San Bernardino service. The Press-Enterprise described the proposed revival: "The cost of a Riverside streetcar line is unknown, but the city's high-end estimate of \$25 million per mile would work out to \$300



million for the proposed 12-mile system. The preliminary plan is for first phase running along University Avenue from UC Riverside to downtown and a later segment from downtown to the southwest city limits along Magnolia Avenue."

the first phase would be a four-mile downtown segment. In August 2013, Riverside received a \$237,500 state study grant for the project. In November 2013, Siemens displayed an S70 streetcar which was stated to be bound for Atlanta. The car looks much more like those delivered to San Diego and since Riverside is on the normal truck delivery path from Sacramento Siemens Plant to San Diego, bets are that that car ended up as one of the 4001-4065 class in San Diego. See below:



Siemens S-70 In Riverside



Siemens S70 in Atlanta



Siemens S70 3011 in San Diego

Riverside is not unfamiliar with streetcars. In the next photo, a Red Car, actually an unmodernized "Hollywood" class car, is seen in the next photo at a Riverside stop around 1940. Pacific Electric streetcars served the city and the surrounding areas from 1899 to the mid 1940s.



[Photo - Bill Volkmer Collection]

There are also proposals in Orange County (located south east of Los Angeles) for modern streetcar lines in both Santa Ana and Anaheim. The Santa Ana plan would use a former Pacific Electric Right-Of-Way to reach Garden Grove. In the next photo, a two-car train of well-recognized Pacific Electric 1000 series wooden interurbans is traveling eastbound on 4th Street in Santa ana under the watch of the iconic Spurgeon Building Clock Tower.



The following simulation was provided during the proposal phase.



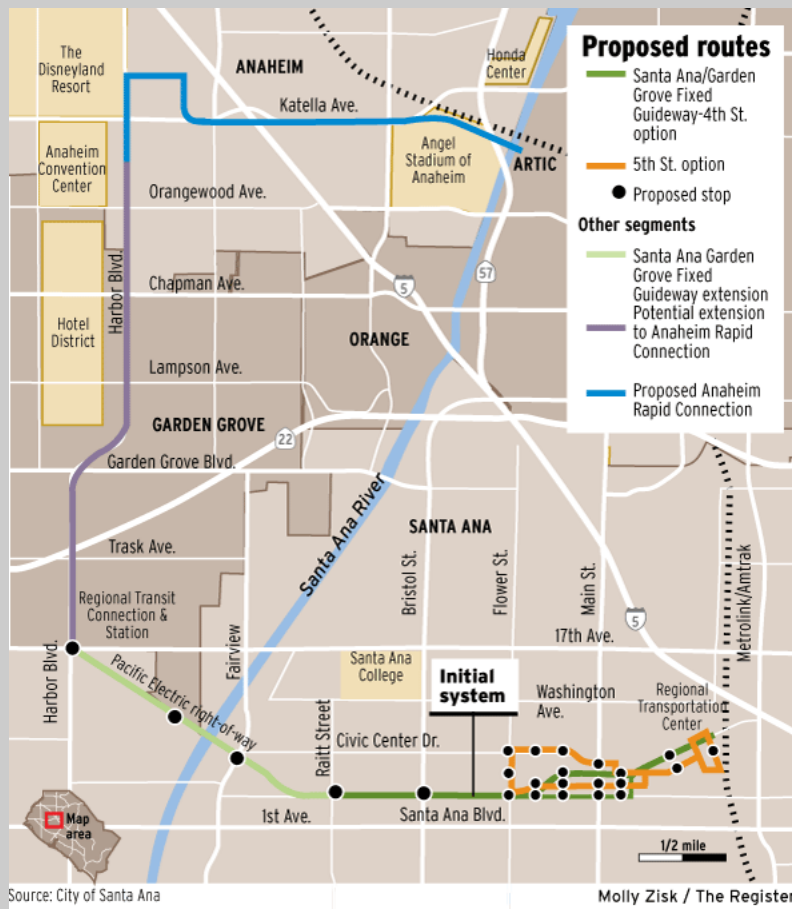
With an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) now approved by the Santa Ana City Council on January 20, 2015, the project, according to the orange County Register, is now in the hands of the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA). In May, the agency will develop a request for proposals for the project's design. A design contract is expected to be issued in the summer with construction beginning in 2017. The streetcar could be running two year after that.

Anaheim is now planning a 3.2 mile streetcar line costing an estimated \$320 million. An EIR due to be released in December 2014 was delayed until later this year. The line will run from the Metrolink Regional Transportation Intermodal Center (ARTIC) to the Anaheim resort area is planned to open in 2018. The line would follow the following route:

## Proposed fixed-rail streetcar route



Both the Anaheim and Santa Ana streetcars could be linked if the myriad of agreements necessary could be successfully concluded:



Let's see how all of this plays out in the coming years.....

## Bowser Manufacturing Burglarized!!

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Bowser employees arrived to work at 7AM on Monday, March 16 in Montoursville, PA only to find that hundreds of model trains were stolen from their model railroad supply store, English's Model Railroad Supply (EMRRS), located in Lycoming County. Montoursville Police estimated that hundreds of trains and train sets were stolen from the shop early Monday morning. Lee English, CEO of Bowser Manufacturing and owner of EMRRS stated "My stomach sunk to the bottom of my

feet and it was quite shocking.” “Looks like we are approaching \$80,000 – \$90,000 in lost merchandise”. Dozens of model trains used to cover the wall. Now some shelves are bare.



“It’s really kind of startling when you walk in and everything is empty,” said Lee. Bowser has been a family-owned business for over 50 years. His late father, started the [business in his basement in Muncy, PA in 1961](#). The store’s surveillance cameras caught two men in masks in the store. “Lionel, Mike’s Train House, American Flyer. They knew what they wanted. Those are very sellable at train shows,” said English. “A lot of the items...we won’t be able to replace them.” stated Richard Cox, Manager of English’s Model Railroad Supply.

At first, English says he wasn’t sure how the burglars got in. Windows were shut. Doors were locked. “I glanced over and underneath one of the desks in the business office, there was a hole going right outside,” said English. A portion of the steel siding in the front of the building was cut away. It has already been repaired, but that is where employees assumed that the *sludge contingent*\* got in. “We had some real very nice shrubbery here and it hid the hole in the wall,” said English. Once inside, English says the thieves filled carts in the store with trains, loaded up, pressed the electric button, and walked out the side door.



“By what I’m hearing left out of here, sounds like somebody who is going to turn around and train show it,” said Larry Fink from Lock Haven. Employees of EMRRS know that many of their customers come from out of state. Larry Fink drives from Lock Haven, PA to buy train supplies. “Money is money. Wherever you can turn a buck at someone else’s expense, some people won’t stop at anything,” said Fink. English’s Model Railroad Supply does have insurance to cover the stolen merchandise but some of the items belonged to Lee’s father and are irreplaceable. What do you say to the owner of the Lionel 262E in the shop for repairs that was removed by the same *“sludge contingent”* that belonged to the customers grandfather? The owners didn’t release the surveillance video, but did say they planned to substantially upgrade their security surveillance system to contend with the recently arrived *“sludge contingent”*. By the time you are reading this, most of the upgrades have now been completed.

*]\*Sludge contingent - a group of individuals with questionable worth to society who believe that your property including your very life are theirs for the taking!....*

*[Editorial Comment: I have known Lee English and his family since 1997. We have served and continue to serve as Product Consultants on the HO scale Ready-To-Run Trolley Projects. Bowser Manufacturing is not a faceless corporation. It is a family. The employees are part of the family and can usually count on Lee to support them in any crisis, whether business or personal. It is a family operation. The business is an extension of Lee’s living room. Lee reacted to this first experienced intrusion into his “personal” space like any one whose home has been invaded. Bowser was purchased by his father in 1961 when Lee was still a teenager and moved it from Redlands, CA to Pennsylvania. Lee has worked at the business non-stop ever since. Lee’s father, Lew, worked at the store every day almost until he day he passed away in 2012. Lee’s mother, still comes to work on her little tricycle and works almost one half day every day. When Lee experienced this intrusion early Monday morning, he shared his anger with his customers on their web site the same day. [Personally, I would have said much worse as I have already experienced the results of the “sludge contingent”.] Such events that were at one time attributed mainly to the inner city, and then to the suburban areas have now crept into small town America. There are many who believe this is the price we must pay for freedom. I am one who does not buy that argument for one second. Those who found his comments objectionable have neither experienced such a personal intrusion, or are just ignorant. How would you like to be reporting this loss to the owner of that precious Lionel 262E? We wish that everyone attempt to understand how this at first was taken to be a personal attack and despite the existence of insurance, this will most likely not be a “Liberty Mutual” situation!*

George L. Huckaby, Jr.

## We Really Would Like To See Your layout!

Traction fans and modelers need to demonstrate to manufacturers how many of us are out there. This is the only way to get new and exciting products. We were aware of the process that Bowser used to design and produce the ready-to-run PCC car and New Orleans 900 series streetcar. We know there are several small traction clubs with just a few people and individual traction layouts hidden away in basements, attics and garages. We are again inviting any of you to tell us about what you are doing, whatever scale that you use. This is a forum for electric railway modeling from 1895 single truck cars to modern multi-section Light Rail Vehicles. Send articles to [Trolleyville](#). The more manufacturers know about our numbers, the better our chances of getting new products.