The Trolleyville Times

November 2015

Bowser and Volkmar Meier are working on an HO scale model o

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CURRENT EVENTS:

Foothill Gold Line Station Dedications - Opening Date Announced !

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August and September 2015 were great days for the cities of Arcadia, Azusa, Duarte, Irwindale, and Monrovia as the day when service would begin from Azusa to Pasadena and downtown Los Angeles keeps moving closer to reality. That day is projected to be sometime in 2016. The Gold line was the third of the Light Rail lines opened in the Los Angeles area by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA/MTA), following the Blue Line in 1990 (Los Angeles to Long Beach) and the Green Line in 1995 (Norwalk to Redondo Beach). The Expo Line opened in 2012 from Los Angeles to Culver City and should open from Los Angeles to Santa Monica in 2016. The Crenshaw Line which connects the Expo Line to the Green Line and will serve Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) is scheduled to open in 2019. The largest project is the Regional Connector (RC) which will unite the Gold and Blue Lines, making one system for the first time. The Gold Line has been totally isolated since it opened. The RC is projected for operation in 2020 but the new CEO of LACMTA, Phillip Washington wants to accelerate that.

During these two months, there were station dedications at all five of the cities mentioned above. Representatives of the Southern California Traction Club (SCTC) attended all of them. Starting with the Duarte/City of Hope Dedication ceremony mentioned in last month's issue, there were similar ceremonies at Arcadia (August 22) and Irwindale (August 28). At the Arcadia Station Dedication, the same two Breda cars 737 and 746 provided a backdrop for the occasion, but this time they were not powered up and the pantographs were locked down.

The Irwindale Station Dedication was scheduled for 5:00 PM on Friday, August 28th due to the fact that the majority of workers in Irwindale are not present on Saturday. Trolleyville and the SCTC were present at this dedication also. The same two test cars were used as a backdrop but they did have catenary power at this station. We were present when the pantographs on both cars were raised. LACMTA CEO Phillip Washington was not present at this ceremony. In recognition of the heat wave gripping southern California during this period, the ceremony was held under the Irwindale Avenue overpass, shielding many from the hot sun.

The final two station dedications were at the Monrovia and Azusa Stations on September 12 and 19th, respectively. All of the stations had special pins made to celebrate the occasion and they were available to the dedication attendees. Starting in the upper left corner, the first row shows the pins for the Operational Campus (which itself was dedicated on May 23rd), Duarte/City of Hope, Arcadia, and Irwindale. The second row starts with a special alternate pin distributed at the Irwindale Station dedication, and then the pins for the Azusa Downtown and Azusa Citrus College Stations.

On October 22, at LACMTA Headquarters, the announcement was made that the Foothill Gold Line Extension to Azusa will open to the public on Saturday, March 6, 2016! A ride from Azusa to Los Angeles Union Station will take 50 minutes. Trolleyville will be there!

Lesser known U.S. Streetcar Projects and Updates!

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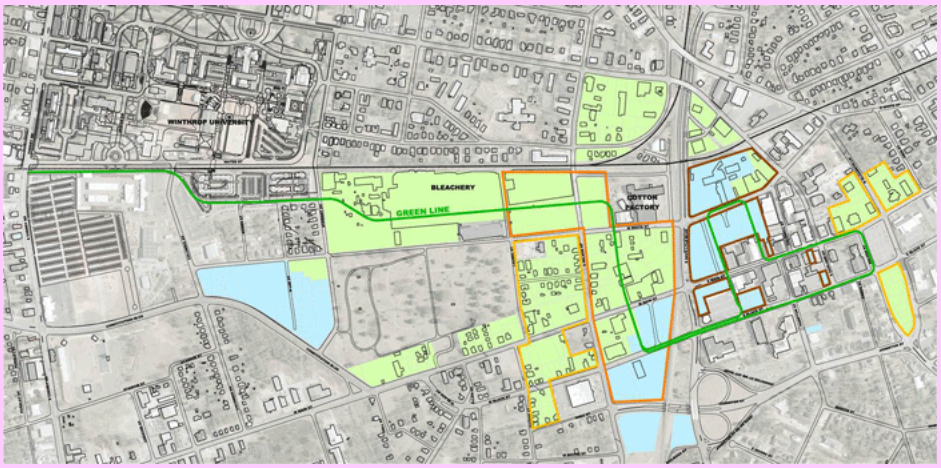
by Edward B. Havens

Some U.S. streetcar projects in the planning stages only have received local media attention in their respective towns. A common theme in the South is linking downtown with college or university campuses. One is the Rock Hill, South Carolina, heritage streetcar patterned after Little Rock River Rail in Arkansas which uses Gomaco-built double truck replica Birneys for rolling stock.

Rock Hill, 23 miles southwest of Charlotte, North Carolina, is proposed by a developer for a Knowledge Park business campus in a former textile factory district near Winthrop University. Business leaders have formed the volunteer Knowledge Park Leadership Group chaired by Andy Shene, who

told WHRI news-talk-sports radio that a streetcar would convey “some sense of permanence,” he said. “When an investor comes to an area they can point to it and say, ‘that’s not going anywhere." The car line would link downtown, the business campus and university.

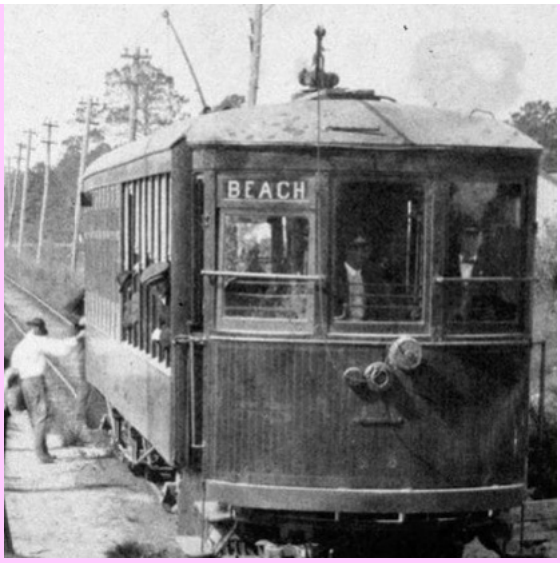


In North Carolina, about 11 miles west of Charlotte, a plan is moving forward for a tourist streetcar on former Piedmont & Northern interurban traction spur trackage now owned by the state Department of Transportation.

A J. G. Brill single truck semi convertible shown above, similar to the now famous HO scale Mantua/Tyco trolley, that once served in Portugal has been acquired for service from Belmont Abbey College to Belmont's historic business district. The Belmont Trolley nonprofit bought the streetcar from a museum at Vancouver, British Columbia, according to Gastonia Gazette.

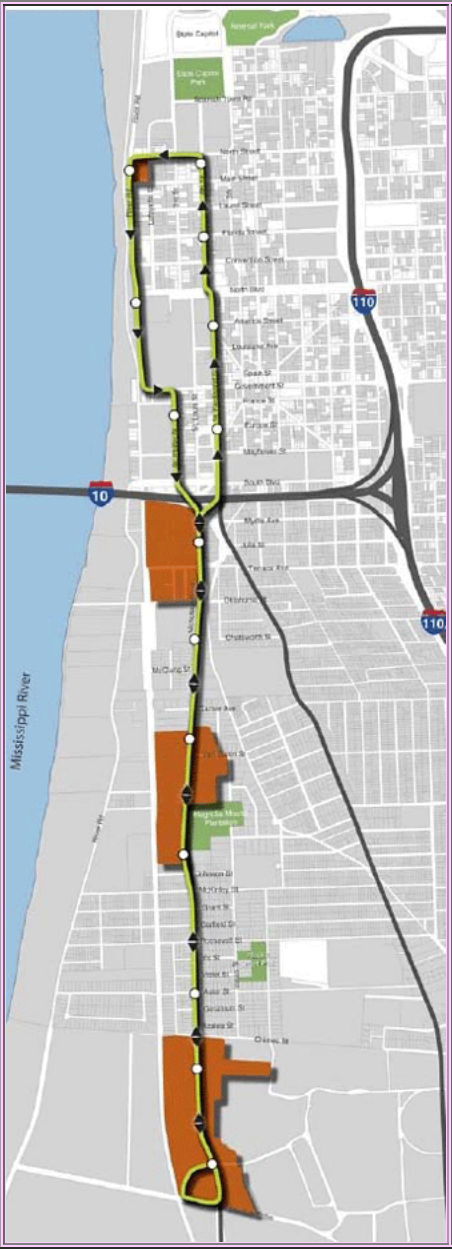
Elsewhere in North Carolina at the coastal city of Wilmington, the city has a vision of moving the CSX railroad freight tracks across the Cape Fear River more than a mile from any housing and using the existing track for a trolley line from neighborhoods to downtown, Star News Online reported.

Consolidated Railways, Light & Power Co., formed in 1902, at one time ran a trolley from downtown Wilmington to the beaches at Carolina Yacht Club. The last car ran April 26, 1940.



Gainesville in northern Florida's Panhandle region is considering an urban circulator streetcar line, the Gainesville Sun reported. The City Commission authorized a consulting contract of up to $100,000 to study a possible route from downtown to the University of Florida campus.

Farther west, Baton Rouge, the state capital of Louisiana, is studying a potential streetcar line.
In April, The Advocate reported that Baton Rouge's plan for a streetcar along the Nicholson
Corridor was chosen among seven U.S. cities for a federal technical assistance program named LadderSTEP. The city previously received a $1.8 million federal study grant for the downtown to Louisiana State University car line. A 7.3-mile line from the State Capitol to LSU Tiger Stadium was estimated by a planner at $100 million.



In the Pacific Northwest, Boise, the state capital of Idaho, is using $500,000 in federal and local funds to study a downtown urban circulator which could be either streetcar or bus. URS consulting is conducting the study. Mayor David Bieter had proposed a streetcar about seven years ago but the idea failed to generate support. Boise once had an interurban traction system:

Rail transit UPS and DOWNS:

-- Kenosha, Wisconsin, operator of an east-west belt line featuring heritage PCC rolling stock, ditched a plan for a north-south extension after a private utility estimated a $5.5 million cost for utility relocation to install track. The City Council voted 14-1 July 6 to kill the project, Kenosha News reported. The council gave up $8.1 million federal funding for the streetcar and reallocated the $2.8 million local match to street repairs.

-- Sacramento, California, the state capital, returned with a new local financing plan for a downtown to West Sacramento streetcar line via Tower Bridge, Sacramento Bee reported Oct. 14. Downtown property owners could be asked next spring to assess themselves $30 million toward the $150 million, 3.3-mile car line. Earlier this year, residents within a few blocks of the route rejected a tax to help build the system and that vote included renters and others, not just land owners.

-- Little Rock, Arkansas, the state capital, could lose its heritage streetcar branch to the Bill Clinton presidential library visitor attraction under a plan being consider to rebuild Interstate 30 over the Arkansas River, the "arkansas online dot com" site reported in mid-October.

-- Cincinnati, Ohio, southern Ohio's largest city, reached a milestone October 16 by completing the final weld downtown for its modern streetcar line track. Cincinnati Business Courier said the infrastructure, including track, overhead trolley wire and car house, is 95 percent complete. The city is awaiting delivery of streetcars from the U.S. subsidiary of Spain-based C.A.F. which has an assembly plant at Elmira Heights, N. Y.

TECHNICAL ACTIVITY:

Adding CurrentKeeper™ *(Soundtraxx Stay Alive Device)* to a Bowser Tsunami Sound Equipped PCC!

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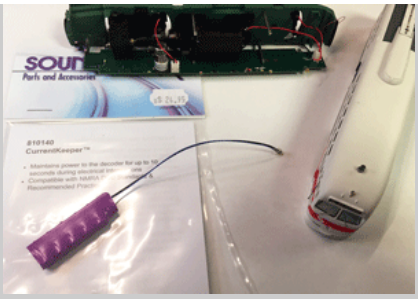
by Kevin Honda, Arnie's Model Trains

Soundtraxx released their Stay Alive Device along with the release of their Econami line of sound decoders. Stay Alive devices can allow a car to continue to run for brief periods during power interruptions. The Soundtraxx Stay Alive device is called called CurrentKeeper™. Unlike their long running Tsunami series, the Econami decoders do NOT need a booster for programming. However, the Soundtraxx CurrentKeeper™, see photos below, is shaped a little differently from the TCS Keep Alive™, which up to this time has been only used in the non-sound-equipped Bowser PCC car, so some other methods of installation had to be attempted.



I obtained a Tsunami-equipped PCC car from Custom Traxx, a model of SEPTA 2185, SKU 12669, now sold out at Bowser, in late August. I studied the various ways to install the CurrentKeeper™. The Custom Traxx car already had installed weights in the area between the trucks so I had to find another location from the one described in our last issue by Harvey Simon in installing the TCS Keep Alive™. Here is a step by step process of how I installed the SoundTraxx Currentkeeper™, part 810140, into a Soundtraxx Tsunami-Sound-Equipped Bowser PCC.

Note: When removing the shell from the chassis, be mindful that the main circuit board sometime sticks to the roof of the car so be gentle in dislodging it. There are several small wires that connect the main circuit board to smaller boards on the front and rear that contain the lights. Also, Toronto, Philadelphia (SEPTA) and some Pittsburgh cars have lights on the roof that are connected to the top of the main circuit board via a three-pin plug so remove the shell slowly and note the position of the plug. It can be reinserted up side down and if done so the roof lighting will either not work or the effects will be reversed between the two lights.

After you have disassembled the Bowser PCC car, carefully remove the Soundtraxx board from the four mounting posts. Take great care not to break the small wires going to the front and rear lights. Once you have done that look for a small orange looking resistor with a black stripe. After you have located that on the board use a fine tip on your soldering iron and solder the blue wire to the left of the black stripe and the black wire to the opposite side as shown in Figure 1 below.

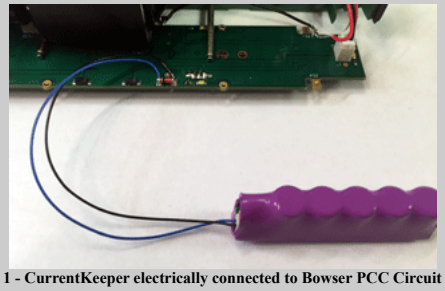
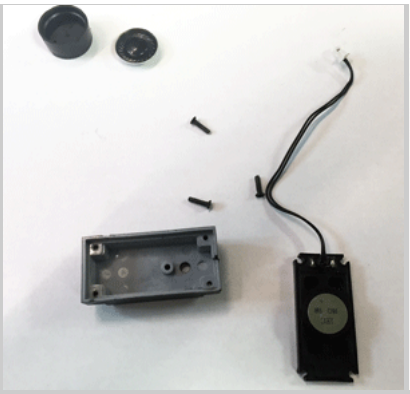


Figure 1 - CurrentKeeper electrically connected to Bowser PCC Circuit Board.

Because of the space considerations, you will not be able to use the stock speaker that comes with the Bowser PCC car. I used Soundtraxx's round 15mm by 4mm speaker, 810089, and baffle kit, 810108, in this installation as shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2 - Soundtraxx speaker and hardware with Bowser PCC Chassis

Remove the existing speaker and baffle from the car using the screws that attach the baffle to the chassis. Take the stock speaker out of the baffle and unsolder the the wires from it. See below left, Figure 4A. After you have taken out the stock speaker from the baffle, unsolder the wires and solder it to the 1/2" speaker. Your new speaker and baffle install should look like the picture below right, Figure 3B.



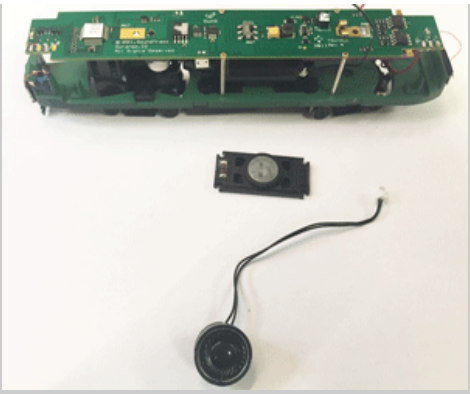


Figure 3A (above left) - Stock Bowser Speaker and Baffle
Figure 3B (above right) Soundtraxx Speaker with Baffle

Using emblem mounting tape, secure the Currentkeeper™ under the board in the location formerly occupied by the stock speaker and baffle as shown in the next photo. Note you may have to trim a small bit of the protective covering around the Currentkeeper™. When finished your install should look as shown in Figure 4 below:

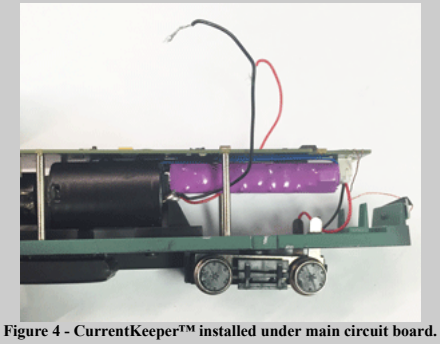


Figure 4 - CurrentKeeper™ installed under main circuit board.

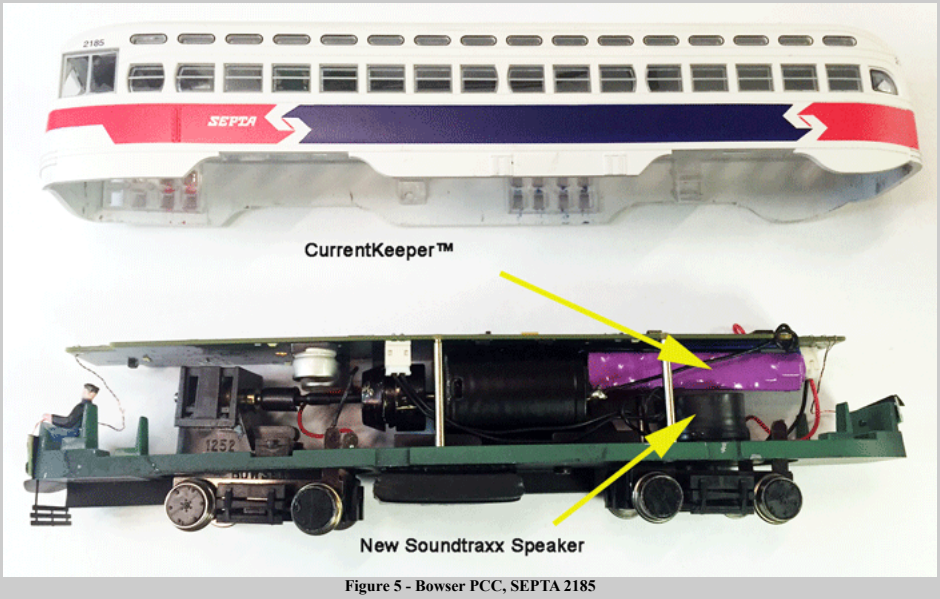
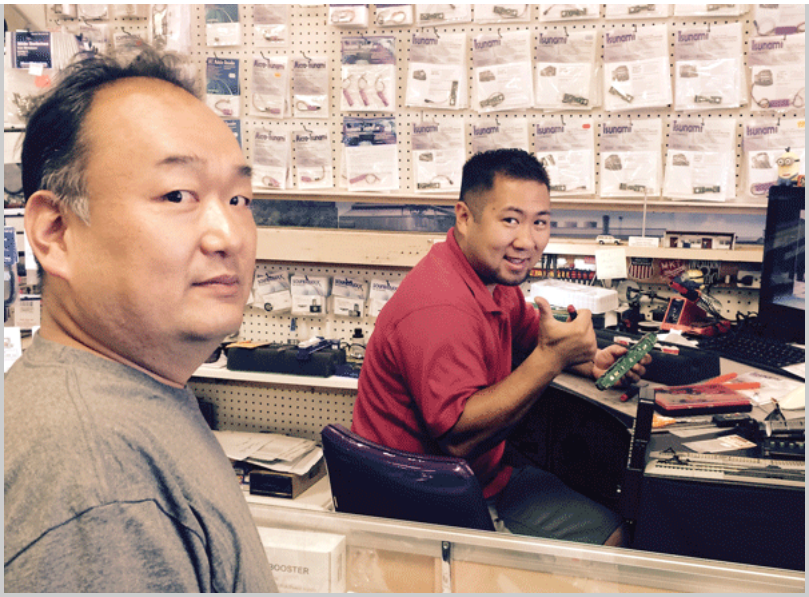


Figure 5 - Bowser PCC, SEPTA 2185

When completed your PCC car should look like the car shown in Figure 5 above. Remember to take your time! Also don't forget that when doing wiring insure that your wires are placed nice and clean so they do not cause any binding, especially when replacing the PCC shell.

Kevin is shown in the next photo in the store while working on the above streetcar chassis. With him is Toshisuke Matsumoto, lifetime member of the Southern California Traction Club. Toshisuke was instrumental in the forming of the SCTC while a student at Harbor College in the late 1990s.



Car 2185 was taken to the Southern California Traction Club (SCTC) test track where is was tested on the test track and on a layout with dirty track and wire. Soundtraxx claims that *"Properly installed, the CurrentKeeper maintains power to a decoder for up to ten seconds (depending on the load and locomotive/car) during electrical interruptions."* We found that it performed sufficiently to assist in running with moderately dirty overhead wire.

You are cautioned that completion of this modification may void your warranty so please consider your skill level when attempting this modification. Neither Kevin Honda, Arnie's Model Trains or the Trolleyville Times assume any responsibility for damage to cars that occurs during this process.

For questions on this installation, please feel free to call Kevin Honda at Arnie's Model Trains, (714) 893-1015!

By the way, Kevin Honda, store Manager for Arnie's Model Trains is an avid traction modeler. The model shown in the next photograph is one of his models. It is a Car Works Pacific Electric 300 series "Blimp", with the original motor replaced with a NWSL motor, Miniatures by Eric poles, and a Soundtraxx Econami Decoder with Soundtraxx Current Keeper™. The bridge ia a Walthers' Cornerstone product and the ballast and ground cover s Arizona Rock and there are numerous Woodland Scenics products throughout. The photo was taken on Kevin's home traction layout.

Adding the ESU LokSound Power Pack *(ESU Stay Alive Device)* to a Bowser ESU Sound Equipped PCC!

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Bowser switched to ESU for their sound-equipped streetcars beginning with the release of their models of the New Orleans 900 series cars and any PCC cars released subsequently. At that time, Bowser wished to go to a "plug and play" type operation with a 21 pin plug used by the decoder. By installing speakers in all the cars made, any modeler could upgrade a non-sound, DCC-ready car to sound by removing the 21-pin plug board and adding a plug-in decoder.

Kevin Honda of Arnie's' Trains took on the task of finding how to add a Stay Alive device to these ESU-Sound-Equipped cars also. He contacted ESU, Matt Herman, and obtained a sample of their Power Pack for installation,

shown below in Figure 1.

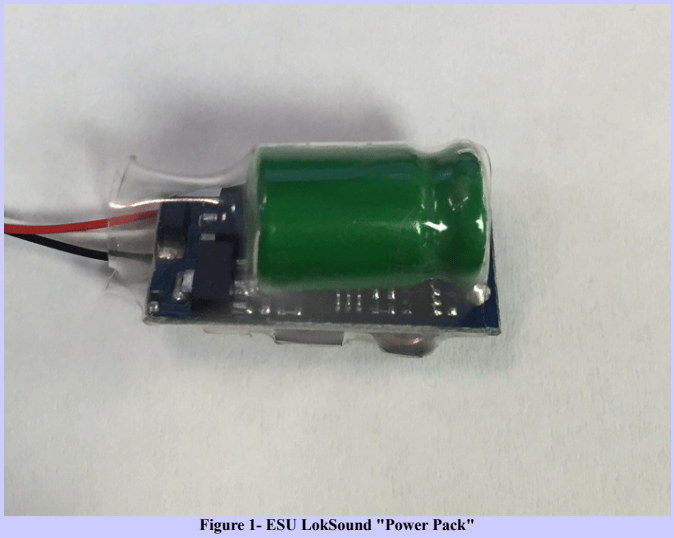

Figure 1- ESU LokSound "Power Pack"

The ESU Power Pack consists of one assembly and its 22mm X 10mm x 14mm size allows installation in front of the rear seat. Custom Traxx supplied a Bowser PCC, SEPTA 2730, SKU 12694 for this conversion. These cars may be still available at Bowser. Although some modelers may feel that this Stay Alive device could have possibly been installed leaving the original stock Bowser speaker and baffle in place, Kevin did not feel that there would be sufficient room with the original speaker baffle still present so he replaced them with a Soundtraxx Speaker and Baffle. He has performed this change out in all his Bowser Stay Alive additions.

Note: Only the ESU-Sound-Equipped cars have the overhead wire/track switch located on the bottom of the floor in the area normally used by modelers to add weight. Weights should be added in such a manner as to not obstruct this switch.

Figure 2 - Soundtraxx Speaker and Baffle

The next step is to electrically connect the Power Pack to the main circuit board. For the Bowser ESU-Sound Equipped PCC, the Power Pack is attached directly to to the decoder. Kevin unplugged and removed the decoder, which uses a 21-pin plug to attach to the main circuit Board, and soldered the three wires to the first three pads (Red-White-Black) as shown in the next two illustrations.

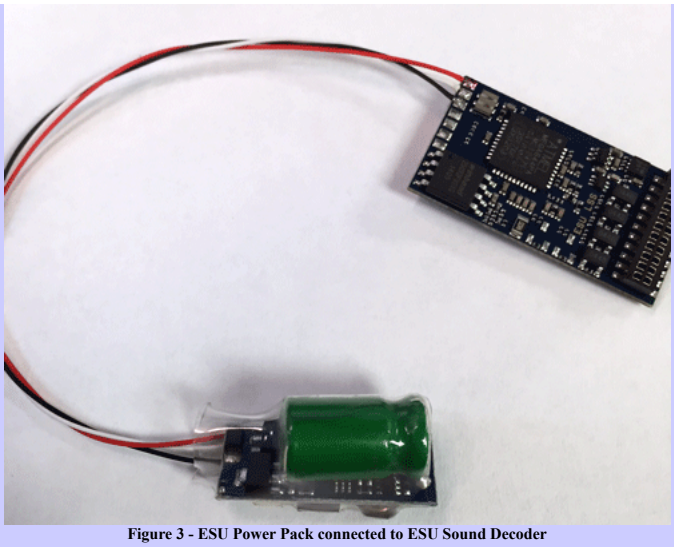

Figure 3 - ESU Power Pack connected to ESU Sound Decoder

The instructions enclosed with the ESU Power Pack were not intended for use in the Bowser PCC so the next illustration is a close up of the decoder with arrows pointing to the proper location to attach (solder) the three wires. Remember to make the wires between the Power Pack and the decoder just long enough to connect them and no longer.

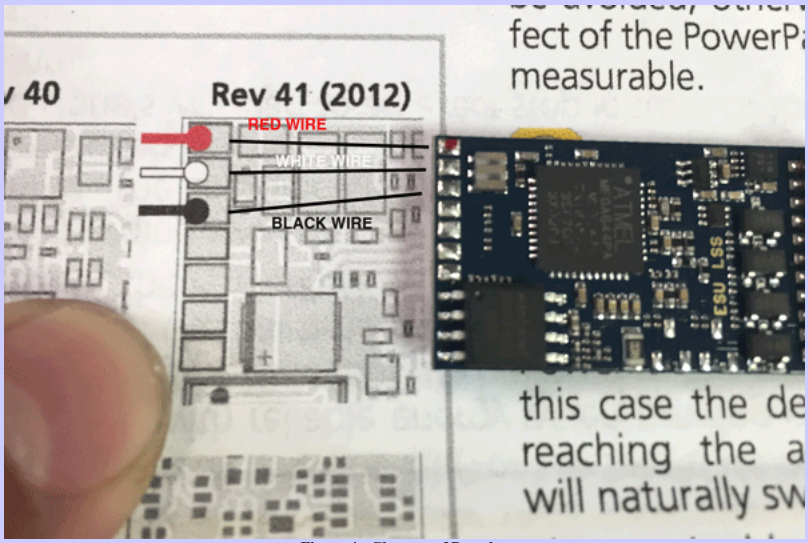

Figure 4 - Close up of Decoder

The Power Pack will be installed in the area just in front of the rear seat that is part of the floor casting. Be careful not to break the small wires that are connected to the rear lights. The last two photographs, Figures 5 and 6, are close ups of the final installation and location.

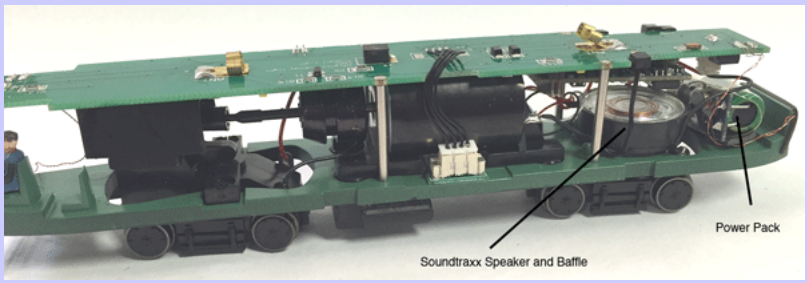

Figure 5 - Power Pack and Speaker installation (Right Side View)

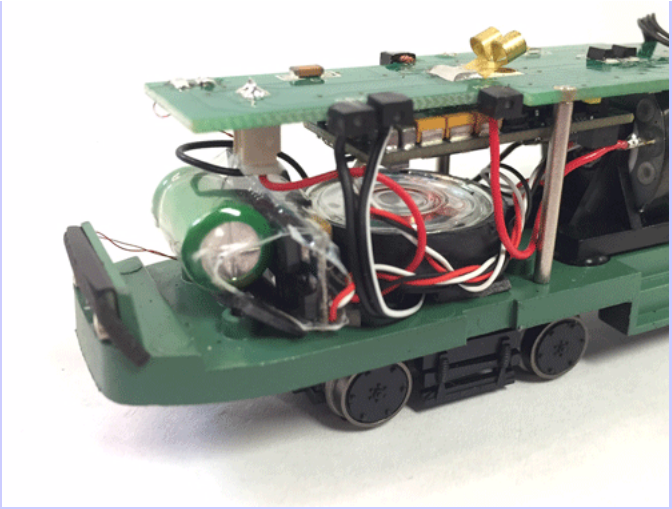

Figure 6 - Close Up of Installation (Left Side View).

For questions on this installation, please feel free to call Kevin Honda at Arnie's Model Trains, (714) 893-1015!

Testing of HO scale Models of the Siemens S70 LRV!

(See the units for yourself at Arnie's Model Trains!)

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As we have been reporting over the past five months, Bowser Manufacturing, Custom Traxx and Volkmar Meier are working on a future model of the Siemens S70 LRV. This vehicle comes in many versions, however, the LRV version used in San Diego, CA and Salt Lake City, UT and the streetcar version as used in Atlanta, GA have been chosen for the first model to be produced.

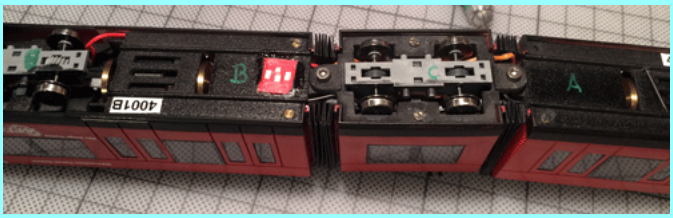
Volkmar has done much of the preliminary work. He obtained the plans from Siemens (not an easy task) and created the 3D drawing and produced the first shells via 3D printing hat were first seen at the East Penn Traction Club Meet last May. He finished the first test unit in San Diego Metropolitan Transportation System (SDMTS) Red and Black and added two Halling Drives and sent the unit to Custom Traxx for testing in July 2015. Custom Traxx added decals and Kato couplers and ran the unit at Southern California Traction Club displays with an MTS brass SD-100.

Preferring to use the Bowser drive due to price and ruggedness, units 2 and 3, fabricated with floors that accept the Bowser drives, arrived at the Custom Traxx facilities on October 15. Both of these units would have only one Bowser drive each. Volkmar has several video clips on You Tube showing how smooth these units operate and if Bowser/Custom Traxx testing does not find problems with single motor / multiple unit operation, production units may be made with one motor and that would help the final price greatly.

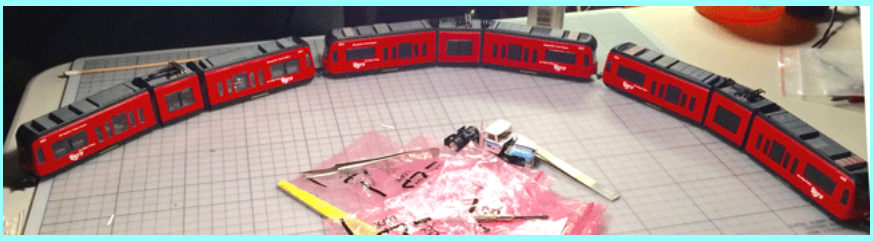
Custom Traxx' experience led them to lean towards units with two motors similar to the prototype. When the Bowser 125147 drive/mechanism was being developed for the AHM/IHC/Mehano HO scale models of the Boeing SLRV, single motor drives in multiple unit combinations just did not seem to be perform sufficiently so the results Volkmar is showing on You Tube with his S70 models was surprising at the least. One difference is that the Bowser 125147 used aluminum and pewter floors while the S70 models so far has a plastic, much lighter floor.

So Custom Traxx began testing the two cars when they arrived on October 14. After the individual cars were operated individually and one of them could negotiate a 9" radius curve, the two units were run in a train and the first unit, equipped with two Halling drives was spliced in between them for a three-car-train operation. Couplers used were of Volkmar's own design.

The first unit, now dressed as SDMTS 4001 was then modified so that the DIP switch which allowed a choice between overhead wire power and track power was accessible from the bottom of the floor rather than inside the B unit.



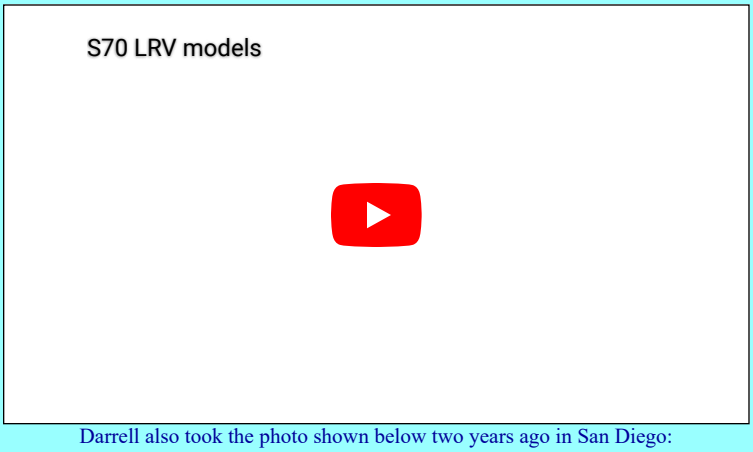
The second and third test units, now decorated as SDMTS 4012 and 4053, with floors designed for Bowser power, already had this capability. The next photo is of the three units just before operation on the SCTC test track and LRV Display.



The three-car train was operated at the NMRA Los Angeles Division Model Train Show at the South Coast Botanic Gardens on October 24-25, 2015. Performance for the three units was better than expected. One of the units has since been sent to Bowser with recommendations.

The development process will proceed concurrently with evaluating the market for such a vehicle. The potential modeler of these cars will be much different than the modelers of PCC and conventional streetcars. Most of these modelers have never seen some of these older vehicles in service except for heritage streetcar lines (e.g. San

Francisco's F-line or the various museums) so we need to get these modelers to let us know that they would like to have one od more of these models. Then there are decisions to be made based on both financial and operational considerations. Models could be made with a plastic floor similar to Halling's models. We have acquired some of them and tested them extensively. The model would be made with a die cast floor and there could be one or two trucks powered. Recently test models were operated for a weekend at the South Coast Botanic Garden Train Show in Rancho Palos Verdes, CA. Show visitor and prospective LRV modeler Darrell Clark took the following video during that show.



Darrell also took the photo shown below two years ago in San Diego:

Southern Californians can see these cars for themselves. These test cars will be in operation **Saturday, November 7th (10:00 AM to 6:00 PM) and Sunday, November 8th (11:00 AM to 5:00 PM)** at Arnie's Model Trains at 6452 Industry Way in Westminster, CA (south east of Los Angeles). Come down and see for yourself what great production models these are going to be.

PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGE:

Caution When Using Some USPS Mail Drops!

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We were speaking to one of the Trolleyville vendors last month concerning credit cards and some of the things that happen with them. The vendor only started taking credit cards a few years ago and for most customers this worked fine. But he mentioned that he had a few customers who while they had credit cards, did not trust using them via email or fax. Some would tell the information over the phone but others insisted on sending checks through the mail. They were extremely distrustful of internet shopping and believed that the Post Office is the safest way or order their items. We were thinking that due to the aging of the hobby there may be many more out there with this feeling.

Then we discovered that this may not always be the case.

The above left photo is a typical drive-up mailbox. This one is located in a large California city. The above right photo is a unsuspecting patron using the box. We were recently made aware that these two particular receptacles (and probably many others) has been the target of mail thieves who spray glue on the opening and the inside of the box and then return with glue soaked devices to fish the mail from the box through the drop slot.

One recent incident brought this home for a member of the Trolleyville Staff. Mail was stolen from one of those two pictures receptacles around the **end of August**. The mail in the receptacle at that time included many payments for monthly bills. The "sludge" that removed the bills "washed" the checks and readdressed them and got a bank to cash them. Yes, the staff member will eventually get their money back but not after a plethora of trips to the bank and other payees to straighten out the problem, not to forget the late charges that will now be applied.

The management of this Post Office could not care less. **Two** attempts to visit the facility to speak with management resulted in "Not in" responses. **Two** attempts to email the person in charge resulted in "out of the office" automatic responses which as of this date have **never** been answered. An official complaint was filed using the USPS system but as of the **end of October** there has been no response from the surrogate management of the USPS.

We found that at this particular USPS facility, the management is **well aware** of the situation and although they may be powerless to do much about it, **they continue to refuse to notify customers that there is a distinct possibility using the drive-up box may result in your mail being stolen.** Meanwhile, the window clerks even knew how the thefts were being accomplished and they told selected customers. The thieves were dropping a very sticky object into the mailbox which was attached to a string or chain and pulling out the mail. They stated that sometimes you could even feel the "stickiness" around the opening of the box. **This is such clear negligence and such a breach of fiduciary responsibility that it cries for some response.**

Private businesses seem to look out for their customers. I have seen signs on the front doors of businesses in certain neighborhoods warning you not to leave visible items in your car or to remember to feed the parking meter. But do not expect that type of caring from these clowns. And people wonder why Donald Trump is currently so popular or that some people want politicians to serve two terms, one in office and another in jail!!

We must recommend that this mail drop and maybe other similar drops not be used, especially after the Post Office is closed and especially on Sundays and holidays. In some places using these drops **even during the day** may be taking a chance. **Park and take your mail into the Post Office.** The seconds you save may cost you weeks of anguish.
