



February 2019

Welcome to Trolleyville! We are continuing our efforts to get production of modern urban transit

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**CURRENT EVENTS.....**

## Urban Commuter / Light Rail / Modern Streetcar News!

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**KANSAS CITY, MO** - In 2018, the KC Streetcar registered 2,114,886 rides, up from 2,060,327 in 2017. The 2.2-mile system at one point recorded seven straight months of monthly ridership gains.

The streetcar last year logged its highest one-day ridership on July 6th at 19,181 trips and reached a one-month record of 262,593 trips in July 2018. Since opening in May 2016, rides had totaled more than 5.5 million through December 2018. The system marked its 5 millionth ride in September 2018.

Also last year, the KC Streetcar averaged 5,794 rides per day and boosted ridership in December by more than 19,000 trips to 169,254 trips.

"The steady increase in streetcar ridership is a direct reflection of the residential and employment growth downtown," said Tom Gerend, executive director of the Kansas City Streetcar Authority, in a press release. "For every new housing unit built, the KC Streetcar gains another rider."

In 2019, KC Streetcar plans to expand its fleet by acquiring two more vehicles.

"This will help to decrease waiting times for passengers and allow for additional capacity during large-scale downtown events," authority officials said.

**LOS ANGELES, CA** - According to a report From Progressive Railroading on January 24th, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) has scheduled a series of community meetings to review the Artesia-to-downtown LA light-rail project, which also is known as the West Santa Ana Branch Transit Corridor (WSAB).

The environmental study for the project is underway and the agency's board last month approved a series of project refinements that will be discussed at the meetings to be held Jan. 30, Feb. 2 and Feb. 7.

Metro is evaluating a new 19-mile light-rail line that would connect downtown LA to southeast LA County. The project's name originates from the southern portion of the route south of the Metro Green Line that follows the old Pacific Electric streetcar alignment known as the West Santa Ana Branch Corridor, Metro officials said in a project summary. The project is anticipated to start in 2022.

## West Santa Ana Branch Transit Corridor Project Overview



The project refinements include an aerial structure over Interstate 10 and the addition of five aerial grade separations along the corridor. Project components that have been removed from further consideration are: three proposed stations at Washington, Vernon and 183rd/Gridley; an optional Bloomfield extension and station; and the Pershing Square design option.

Metro plans to conduct a separate feasibility study on a potential station at the LA River and Rio Hondo confluence site in South Gate. The agency seeks to determine whether to advance that proposed station to an environmental review after the completion of the project's environmental process.

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority officially launched the "New Blue Modernization Project." on Tuesday, January 26th. The \$350 million project will be designed to improve reliability, upgrade safety and enhance the customer experience on the Blue Line, which opened in 1990 and is the authority's oldest rail line, Metro officials said in an announcement. The 22-mile line runs between downtown LA and downtown Long Beach, California.

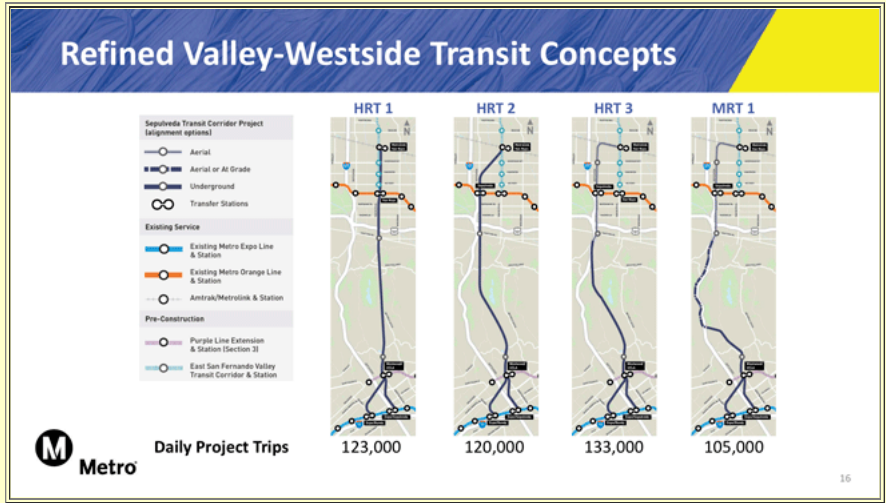
"This vital work will modernize the Blue Line and bring it up to the specifications of [our] newer rail lines," Metro officials said. The project will require rail service on the line's southern half to be replaced by bus service through late May, Metro officials said. Northern half closures will occur from late May until September.

The work also will require an eight-month closure of the Willowbrook/Rosa Parks Station, which will be rebuilt to improve safety and ambiance, expand capacity and improve connections to local transit and the surrounding community, Metro officials said. The next photo shows some of the original cars in the Blue Line fleet in the second of three paint schemes that they would wear during their 28 year service life.



A three-car train of NipponSharyo P865 vehicles that opened the line in 1990, now all (except for one) scrapped!

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) has chosen four potential concepts for the [Sepulveda Transit Corridor](#). The project calls for building a high-capacity transit line between the San Fernando Valley and Westside through the Sepulveda Pass. Metro is seeking to build a portion of the line in time for the 2028 Olympics and Paralympics, which will be held in Los Angeles. Three of the four proposed concepts are heavy rail — which is used on Metro's Red/Purple Line subway — and the other is a monorail. The chosen concepts are part of an ongoing feasibility study for the project, which has garnered nearly \$10 billion in funding from Metro's Measure R and M sales tax measures that were approved by LA County voters in 2008 and 2016, respectively, authority officials said in an announcement.



Metro also received Measure R and M funds to build a 9.2-mile light-rail line between the Orange Line's Van Nuys Station and Metrolink's Sylmar/San Fernando Station. Known as the [East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor](#), the line already has been approved by the Metro's board and is slated for a 2022 construction start and 2028 opening.

## East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor Project Study Area



"A planning challenge for the Sepulveda project has been figuring out whether it's best to extend the Van Nuys light-rail line to the Westside to allow a one-seat ride, or use a different type of train and build a good, easy transfer between the two lines," Metro officials said. The authority's staff determined light rail doesn't offer as much future capacity for the Sepulveda line as heavy rail or monorail, since light rail has shorter trains and smaller cars. Modeling conducted by Metro shows that the Sepulveda project would also greatly increase ridership on the Van Nuys-to-Sylmar/San Fernando light-rail line because it provides a reliable way for passengers to reach the Sepulveda line.

The monorail concept wouldn't need as much expensive tunneling as the heavy-rail concepts, but would be slower and have lower ridership than heavy rail, Metro officials said.

**MILWAUKEE, WI** - Ridership on The Hop streetcar reached 76,044 in December 2018 during the system's first full month of operations.

The streetcar, which launched on November 5, 2018, averaged 2,453 rides per day in December. From November 5th to November 30th, it averaged 2,297 rides per day.

The December gain was driven in part by ridership increases in the early part of the week, with average Monday ridership jumping from November's 1,357 to 1,789, and average Tuesday ridership rising from November's 1,622 to 1,952.



"Our ridership numbers show that the city is embracing this new asset, and that people are riding for a wide variety of reasons," said Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett in a press release. "We've seen some fantastic crowds on weekends as the streetcar attracts business and activity downtown, and we're also seeing an uptick during the week as more and more riders utilize the system to connect with their jobs, residences and other destinations."

From November 5th through December 31st, the streetcar logged 152,169 total rides and averaged 2,382 rides per day, excluding the opening weekend. The system marked its highest one-day ridership so far at 4,882 on Dec. 15.

**NEW JERSEY TRANSIT** - Bombardier Transportation announced on January 9th that it obtained a \$669 million contract to supply 113 Multilevel III commuter-rail cars to New Jersey Transit. The contract includes options for up to 886 additional cars.

The Multilevel III cars will feature on board video surveillance systems, intelligent LED lighting systems and positive train control equipment. The contract includes cab cars, trailer cars, restroom-equipped trailer cars and new power cars that can replace locomotives and create self-propelled trains, providing NJ Transit with increased operational flexibility, Bombardier officials said in a press release.

The car contract is the company's third with NJ Transit. Under contracts awarded in 2002 and 2010, Bombardier provided 429 Multilevel I and II cars that remain in operation.



"We are confident that our new Multilevel III cars, with their enhanced technical features and passenger amenities, will provide exceptional service and meet passengers' evolving expectations," said Bombardier President Pierre-Yves Cohen. "Additionally, the Multilevel III cars will be fully compatible and interoperable with the Multilevel I and II cars."

Atlas Model Railroad Company has just announced N scale models of the NJ Transit ALP-45DP locomotive and the multilevel coaches now in use.

**SAN FRANCISCO, CA** - The Market Street Railway organization reported on December 12, 2018 that The US Department of Transportation has granted San Francisco \$15 million to help pay for the first phase of the city's vision to remake Market Street.



Included in that first phase is a critical improvement to the F-line historic streetcar service, shown above: A bi-directional loop track will be constructed at Civic Center, using the short first block of McAllister Street and the northerly extension of Seventh Street (called Charles Brenham Place) to allow F-line streetcars to reverse in either direction. The streetcar tracks are a little hard to see in the drawing above. The green markings show bicycle paths/crossings.)

The loop turns right off outbound Market Street, just where the old 5-McAllister streetcar did, then turns left onto Charles Brenham's southbound curb lane, where there is an ADA ramp and layover space. The tracks diverge there to allow either a left turn to return toward the Ferry Building, or a right turn toward Castro. Another switch allows inbound streetcars on Market to turn onto McAllister and then return outbound.

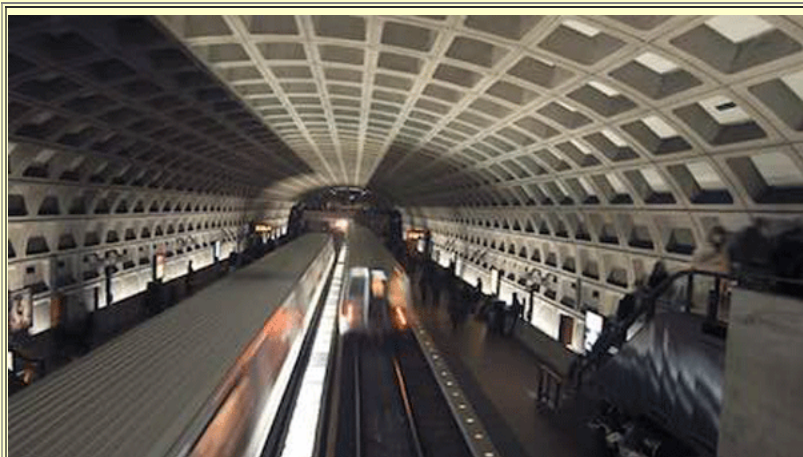
Market Street Railway was delighted that Muni staff embraced their recommendation for its exact location. There is no other place on Market Street where a turning movement like this can be carried out in such a short length of new track. And the location is convenient, dropping passengers off within a short walk of City Hall, the Main Library, and the Asian Arts Museum, and right next to newly restored landmarks such as the hot Proper Hotel (which the loop literally loops around) and the venerable Hibernia Bank Building at Jones and Market (the location, coincidentally, of the terminal of the old Jones Street cable car shuttle, which closed in 1954).

This loop will add immense flexibility to the F-line. First and foremost, it is the most efficient and effective way to increase F-line service along the highest ridership stretch of the route, from Fisherman's Wharf to the Union Square/Powell Street area downtown. Today's F-line service levels are constrained by terminal capacity at both ends. There's not enough room for additional streetcars laying over at the ends of the line without blocking street space. This has been a sore subject at the Castro end of the line in particular, where 17th Street is narrow and residential almost right up to the terminal. Layovers are kept shorter there than at Fisherman's Wharf to minimize the problem, but adding more service to Castro (that usually isn't needed west of Powell) would inevitably clog the terminal there.

The current turnaround spot at 11th Street and Market, near Van Ness is really not a loop but a "wye", where streetcars have to turn onto a stub track on 11th, and then back out onto Market, a much more difficult move than in past decades because of changed traffic patterns and the routing of the 9-line articulated buses onto 11th. The wye is actually the last remnant of Muni's original H-Potrero streetcar line, and was never optimally designed for reversing single-end streetcars.

Muni's initial plan when the loop is completed is to add extra F-line service from the Wharf area to the loop to alleviate some of the current crowding. This would likely happen from late morning through late afternoon. Of course, the loop is important for other reasons as well: it will give Muni the ability to balance service and reduce bunching on a regular basis to fill gaps; allow the majority of the F-line to keep operating when part of Market Street is temporarily blocked, and provide a place to load a chartered streetcar or divert a streetcar with an operational problem from the main line.

**WASHINGTON, DC** - Progressive Railroading reported on January 23rd that FOUR senators representing the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's (WMATA) service area are calling on the agency to mitigate cybersecurity risks as it seeks to procure new 8000-series rail cars. In a letter sent late last week to WMATA General Manager and Chief Executive Officer Paul Wiedefeld, the senators raised concerns about potential security risks should the rail-car contract be issued to manufacturers funded by certain other foreign governments. The lawmakers noted foreign governments' growing interest in participating in local and state procurements in the transportation sector, particularly in the production of cars.



In September 2018, WMATA issued an RFP that called for the cars to include technologies such as automatic train control, network and time line control, video surveillance, monitoring and diagnostics and data interface.

The article points out that the China Railway Rolling Stock Corp. (CRRC) has used low bids to win **four** of **five** large U.S. transit car contracts since 2014, according to The Washington Post.

"While other cities have welcomed this kind of investment, we have serious concerns about similar activity happening here in our nation's capital, particularly when it could involve foreign governments that have explicitly sought to undermine our country's economic competitiveness and national security," the letter stated. In September 2018, WMATA issued an RFP that called for the cars to include technologies such as automatic train control, network and time line control, video surveillance, monitoring and diagnostics and data interface. "Many of these technologies could be entirely susceptible to hacking or other forms of interference if adequate protections are not in place to ensure they are sourced from safe and reliable suppliers," the senators' letter stated. They also pointed out that WMATA's RFP noted that there are "no Buy America or Disadvantaged Business Enterprise requirements for this contract, raising further questions about what protections will be in place to ensure the integrity of these components." The letter calls on Wiedefeld to respond to a list of questions, including whether WMATA has received briefings from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and related agencies on "the attempts of foreign adversaries to infiltrate our critical infrastructure and the significant cyber vulnerabilities that can stem from them doing so." They also call on WMATA to get approval from the DHS and the U.S. departments of defense and transportation before awarding a contract to a foreign adversary.

The senators have raised the issue of prioritizing cybersecurity measures in the past, they wrote. In response, Wiedefeld has stated that WMATA follows industry best practices to protect the agency from cyber attacks.

"We urge that you prioritize adopting robust cybersecurity protections, going beyond industry best practices if necessary, given the new threats that we now face and the unique nature of the threats facing the nation's capital," the senators wrote.

Signing the letter were U.S. Sens. Mark Warner (D-Va.), Tim Kaine (D-Va.), Benjamin Cardin (D-Md.) and Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.).

## Custom Traxx Visits China! (For the Fifth Time!)

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In 2007, Custom Traxx joined with Bowser Manufacturing Company to produce their current line of HO scale Ready-To-Run streetcars. Lee English, Bowser CEO, knew that the then current line of four vehicles: (1) 1945 All-Electric PCC Car, (2) 1906 Brill double-Truck Semi-Convertible, (3) IRR Lightweight interurban and (4) the Lehigh Valley Transit 800 series wooden interurban, produced with Zamac bodies in a kit form, would not survive unless they were to be provided Ready-To-Run (RTR). Lee contacted George Huckaby of Custom Traxx and discussed the issue with him just prior to the East Penn Traction Club Meet in May 2007. He was told the Lee English parameters for a successful model run and began to serve as a Product Consultant.

It was not long before it was decided to produce models of the 14 PCC cars purchased by San Francisco's Municipal Railway for their heritage F-line, which started service in September 1995. Custom Traxx, as a decal maker, had all the paint colors and lettering schemes and they had a long standing relationship with Karl Johnson, then a critical and knowledgeable Muni official of the F-line and the operator of Light Rail Products, a model railway business catering to G (Large) scale modelers.

Bowser and Custom Traxx visited China in May 2008 to select a manufacturing facility for these new San Francisco trolleys. We visited AFFA, Sanda Kan and Yongde among many but eventually selected AFFA, owned and operated by K. K. Ku of Hong Kong, who as one time actually worked at Sanda Kan, a long time model train manufacturer. Bowser had already upgraded their trolley mechanism which itself had its origins with Pennsylvania Scale Models (PSM) and the late 1940s. Bowser had acquired PSM and continued to produce the four cars as Bowser products after some small but overdue tweaks were made with the original truck mounted motor.

At the end of 2009, HO scale RTR models appeared of 1052 (*Los Angeles Railway*) 1055 (*Philadelphia Transportation Company 1955*), 1057 (*Cincinnati Street Railway*) and 1061 (*Pacific Electric*). The models of 1055 and 1061 actually sold out before the models were unloaded from China. Because the prototype cars were considered tourist attractions, Bowser decided to make unpowered (souvenir versions) available and the San Francisco Railway Museum purchased quite a number of them.



San Francisco 1050 in San Francisco colors.



San Francisco 1061 dressed for Pacific Electric.

Before the end of the year 2010, models of 1051 (*San Francisco SFMRy-1960s*), 1053 (*Brooklyn*), 1054 (*Philadelphia Rapid Transit 1938-1940*), 1056 (*Kansas City Public Service*), 1057 (*Cincinnati Street Railway*), 1058 (*Chicago Transit Authority*), 1059 (*Boston Elevated Railway*), 1060 (*Public Service of New Jersey-Newark*), 1062 (*Louisville Railways*) and 1063 (*Baltimore*) were available in HO scale, Ready-To-Run and DCC ready. The first runs of these are easily distinguished by the fact that the trolley catchers are the same color as the body as they were on the prototype when they began service. Catchers were later painted black so that they could be quickly interchanged among the cars without color clashes. Subsequent runs of the 1050 series San Francisco cars reflected that change.

The next run of Muni PCC cars included Muni 1050 (*San Francisco/SFMRy-1950s*), 1058 (*Chicago Transit Authority*), 1059 (*Boston Elevated Railway*) and 1063 (*Baltimore Transit*) and they became available in February 2010. The final six cars; 1051 (*San Francisco Municipal Ry - 1960s*), 1053 (*Brooklyn*) 1054, (*Philadelphia PRT - 1938-1940*), 1056 (*Kansas City Public Service*), 1060 (*New Jersey Public Service - Newark*) and 1062 (*Louisville Railways*) were available by the end of 2010.

Because this was the first RTRR HO scale streetcar, process improvements were continuously made. First the track brakes and wheels were upgraded to represent the six-nut pattern visible on the exterior face of the Super Resilient Wheels (SRW) used by the ex-PTC PCC cars. The track brakes and sideframes were upgraded to resemble the B-2 truck. DCC/Sound became available and was added, at first from Soundtraxx but later from ESU Lok Sound. Lee wanted to have a 21-pin plug used for decoders in all RTR trolley cars and at that time Soundtraxx was totally resistant to it. Lee wanted his non-sound-equipped cars to be capable of upgrade to sound without soldering. Speakers were placed in all cars including those only DCC-ready. From the very beginning, all Bowser RTR streetcars cars were capable of being operated from either track and overhead wire power but the selector switch was initially inside the body shell. It was eventually moved from inside the body to beneath the floor so the user did not have to remove the shell to change the power source.

Due to the success of these 14 models, PCC cars of other cities such as Cleveland, Detroit, Minneapolis, Pittsburgh and Toronto were made, most of which sold well.



With the cooperation of San Francisco Municipal Railway, models were made of the New Orleans 800-972 class streetcar. 35 of these cars still operate on the Saint Charles Line in New Orleans; several exist in museums and San Francisco has two cars, 913 and 952. These were very standard Brill 1920 era double truck steel cars so arrangements were made to provide similar cars painted for other cities such as Atlantic City, NJ; Chicago, IL and Philadelphia, PA.



AFFA, in China's Guangdong province, was selected to produce the trolleys and they produced other products for Bowser. For their visit, Custom Traxx was concerned only with the RTR streetcars. The products using the 1999-era proven traction drive had proven to be reliable, and durable. So few problems were experienced that visits to the China supplier were infrequent, having subsequently occurred in 2010, 2012, 2014 and in May 2018.

In July 2018, the AFFA plant suddenly closed. This was a real surprise since we had visited just two months previously. and there were no warning signs at that time. The note shown below, left, appeared on the factory door:



## 通告

致：东莞石碣雅富五金制品有限公司全体员工

首先非常抱歉的告诉大家，因雅富顺老板病重没有办法经营及正常管理公司业务，导致公司业务不能进行经营下去，故公司需要在2017年7月31日前终止工厂所有业务。

员工6月份的工资厂部会安排在7月27日发到员工工资卡内

员工7月份的工资厂部会安排在8月10日前发到员工工资卡内

涉及到所有员工的工龄工资厂部会协调石碣四村村委及劳动局相关人员一起配合协商解决，望各位员工稍安勿躁，敬等消息。

从明天开始厂部会安排各部门员工陆续放假，请放假的员工不要在厂部逗留，留下你们的联系电话到部门主管处，有事情方便联系，谢谢大家的合作！

English Translation by Xue Yong, San Diego, CA at right!

To: All Staff of Dongguan Shijie  
AFFA Hardware Products Co.,  
Ltd.

First of all, I am very sorry to tell you that because the owner of AFFA is seriously ill and unable to operate and manage the company's business normally, the company's business can no longer operate as usual. Therefore, the company must terminate all the factory business before July 31, 2017. *(Believe they meant 2018!)*

The employee's salary in June will be scheduled to be distributed to the employee's salary card on July 27th.

The employee's salary in July will be scheduled to be distributed to the employee's salary card on August 10th.

The staff of the seniority wages involved in all employees will coordinate with the relevant staff of the Shijie Village Committee and the Labor Bureau to discuss and resolve the dispute. I hope that all employees will be calm and wait for news. Beginning tomorrow, the factory will arrange for the employees of various departments to begin holiday. Please leave the staff to stay in the factory, leave your contact number with the department head office, there are things to contact, thank you for your cooperation!

The workers were told in the above note that their June pay would be available to them on July 31 and that their July pay would be given to them on August 10th. After that they were on furlough. K. K. Ku was not available for comment. *(Note: Speculation still abounds about the health and whereabouts of K. K. Ku to this very day!)*

Lee English, Bowser President-CEO, knew immediately that he needed to go to China ASAP and secure a replacement manufacturing facility, but some family issues prevented him from leaving the local area at the time. Meanwhile, Lee used his extensive excellent networking skills with both domestic and in-country contacts to proceed with selecting, evaluating and securing candidates for production and developing the correct methodology for getting his property out of the closed plant. Anyone who has done business offshore, knows that this is a really big issue depending on why the original manufacturing facility ceased operations in the first place. By Christmas Day 2018, the family issues were no longer an issue and sufficient progress had been made that there were several candidates in both GuangDong and GuangXi provinces ready for inspection and evaluation. So the trip was scheduled for January 2-9, 2019.

The business relationship developed over the years with Electronics Solutions Ulm (ESU Lok Sound) was very beneficial. ESU had an office in ShenZhen, China (GuangDong Province) and since by this time they were a good customer of Bowser, they were able to give a good rundown of possible replacement manufacturing facilities and to recommend some methods for the swift removal of Bowser owned property from the plant. So arrangements were quickly made and on late Thursday evening, January 3, 2018, Lee English, CEO, Bowser Mfg; George Huckaby, CEO, Custom Traxx, and Jurgen Lindner, CEO, ESU Lok Sound met at the Baggage Claim area of the Hong Kong International Airport to begin a six-day visit to discuss possible new projects. During one of those sessions, an HO scale 3D printed model of the Brookville Liberty modern streetcar with two different propulsion methods was examined.

Lee and George first headed to the ESU offices in ShenZhen, China office. ShenZhen is a relatively new city with lots of new construction evident. It is also a center of electronics and cell phone manufacturing.



Later that same evening, the same group checked in to the Huaqiang Plaza Hotel where the main lobby is on the 23rd floor and our rooms were on the 30th floor. Businesses occupy the first 22 floors. For 640 yuan/RMB per night (\$96), this room provided was very nice (shown below):



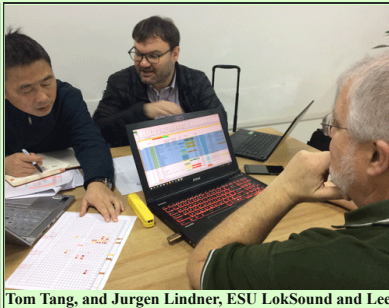
A major purpose of this trip was to inventory and check the condition of Bowser-owned property removed from the old AFFA plant. This began in earnest on Friday, January 4th after on-site contact Tang "Tom" Yu had completed an effort to remove all property owned by both ESU Lok Sound and Bowser from the AFFA facility and those items had been placed in another location for examination. The major reason for Custom Traxx involvement was to locate and purge the obsolete mold slides for the Bowser PCC cars. When Bowser was developing the first PCC trolley in 2008-2009, the first mold made by AFFA, a product of which is shown below in yellow had many errors. We wanted to remove those molds from inventory prior to sending the molds to the next producer of Bowser PCC cars as we did not want those molds erroneously used. In the next photo is that first PCC shell provided in 2008 along with the mold slide for the front of the car which was incorrect.



The entire mold, shown below, for the project now designated AF641-1, shown below could now be scrapped. Only those molds designated as AF641-2 would be retained.



Examining the ESU and Bowser molds removed from the AFFA plant!



Tom Tang, and Jurgen Lindner, ESU LokSound and Lee English, Bowser Mfg, discussing future production issues.



Lindner, Lee English and Tom Tang just before lunch in ShenZhen on January 4th!



The entire set of mold slides for project AF641-1 marked for scrap!

The next part of the trip was to visit some suppliers to replace AFFA. On Saturday, January 5, Lee English, George Huckaby, Tom Tang and Jurgen Lindner went over to GuangXi province to a supplier that Bowser had just started using for freight car kit production. To get to this supplier required the use of the China High-Speed Rail (CRH). We boarded the train in ShenZhen at 8:47AM and arrived in GuangZhou about one hour later. The fare was 99.5 RMB (yuan) (\$15.00) and we arrived in GuangZhou in less than one hour. The trip from GuangZhou to ZhanLiang was about 3 hours long and cost 249.0 RMB (\$37.00). Following that was a two-hour trip by automobile. (6 hours total!) The train from GuangZhou to ZhanLiang routinely topped 300 km/hr.



After business was concluded, we made the return trip on the next day. Some of the railway tickets are shown below:



This train consisted of two 8-car semi-permanently coupled units. Below is the train just after we all disembarked at GuangZhou. Some trains consist of a 16-car semi-permanently coupled set.



The above photo is of a similar train leaving GuangZhou, It was photographed by us as our train was leaving for GuangXi. Sharp eyed readers can see the location of the coupled two trains.

This is the busiest train station that we have ever encountered, almost completely filled with hi-speed trains on which we traveled at speeds as high as 186 mph. The ride was smoother and less bumpy than the Boeing 777 in which we flew from Los Angeles to Hong Kong.



Guangzhou Train Station - Sunday, January 6, 2019.



China also has numerous conventional trains. The next photo shows a push-pull train at one of the stations that is shared with the high speed trains. There is an identical locomotive on the other end of the train.



This manufacturing facility in GuangXi province is actually carved out of a hillside and even though it is not yet completed, is already producing excellent freight car models.



The next photos are a summary of the visit to the same supplier in GuangXi province. Starting below left are one of the assembly rooms; one of the test tracks, the new paint booths, the business/admin area, a meeting with the factory staff around one of the test tracks and one of the floor exit indicators,





For a relatively new supplier with an unfinished building, the product quality observed was remarkable with at least the same level of quality with which Bowser has become accustomed. That evening, we stayed at the MV Hotel in downtown ZhanJiang where this was the night view:



Sunday, January 6th found us visiting the ShenZhen offices of ESU Lok Sound, where Bowser CEO English held discussions with Tom Tang about several future projects. Bowser uses ESU exclusively for its DCC decoders after finding those decoders to be among the best in the business.



For those of you who like to travel, be advised that while China uses 220-240 volt power, appliances that are marked or compatible using 240 power, can now be used without the use of plug adapters. We noted that the wall outlets had been changed to allow just that.



We noted during our May 2018 visit and again at this one that the Chinese have adapted an improved format for their electric outlets, employing the arrangements used at some of the major countries. Note the six large openings in the top of the plug outlets in the above photo. So if you have an electrical device, and want it to work on China, all you need is this adapter available at most stores. All you need to do is check for a notice whether the unit will safely operate on 240 volts. If so, it could be safely operated in the areas in China that we visited.

Another observation is that the number of cars in use has mushroomed in the last ten years to the point that there are standstill traffic jams, especially in the downtown areas of cities such as ShenZhen and DongGuan. At the time of this visit, Google and Facebook are totally unavailable along with Google Maps and some Gmail email accounts.



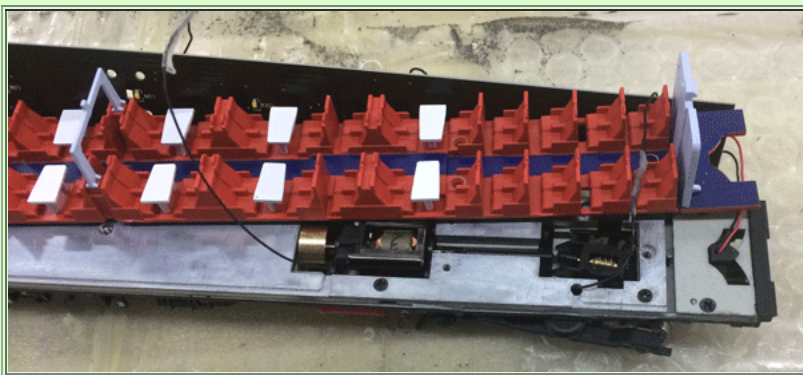
Evening

rush hour traffic jam, January 7th, 2019, as seen from the 27th floor of the Huaqiang Plaza Hotel!

Monday, January 7th was a trip to another factory in DongGuan, China, about one hour from ShenZhen. This potential Bowser manufacturer had designed and produced some outstanding locomotives for USA, Canadian and European markets. We were able to discuss different motor mounting techniques and test operate our first Brookville Liberty model.



While we were at the facility, we examined a very quiet underfloor drive for a DMU that they were producing. The quietness of this drive was amazing and could be used in a model of a modern streetcar or light rail vehicle.



This supplier had a very neat and organized facility and had hired at least five workers that had worked at the AFFA facility. One of those workers actually remembered George Huckaby from a previous AFFA visit.

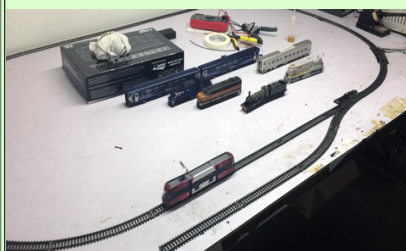




George Huckaby shown with Liao Jin Yan, former AFFA employee who recognized him from a previous visit to AFFA.



Lee meeting with DongGuan factory owners discussing possible projects, including SD-40-2 and SD-40-2F (Red Barn), PCC trolleys and New Orleans Streetcars!



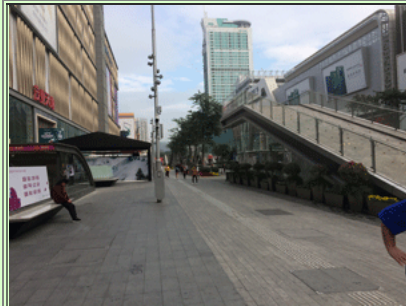
Testing the Interurban Models Brookville Liberty Model with the first version of the Bowser traction drive at DongGuan Factory.



Lunch on January 7th with DongGuan factory owners!

At the end of the day, it appeared that Bowser might be using these services for some of the model diesel locomotives and their HO scale RTR trolleys but negotiations were still in progress as of press time.

You might as well forget those old movie scenes of ancient China. Today's Chinese cities are modern with automobiles, traffic jams and working Metros that are well used along with stores that open for the convenience of the working class. Here are some scenes taken around the Huaqiang Plaza Hotel in ShenZhen, China on the morning of January 8, 2018:





One more thing. we will not speculate on what are the source of the issues, but during this trip, we processed through the immigration and security of United States (LAX), mainland China, Hong Kong and Japan. It seems that all of these nations have found the resources and intelligence to handle these two issues without undue harassment to passengers. Even U.S. Customs when returning to the US at LAX was smooth as silk. That is all except LAX Security!

Hong Kong Airport even provides a nice little area with small seats for the little folks to entertain themselves. The Cathay Pacific Air-Bus aircraft for our four-hour trip from Hong Kong to Tokyo (Narita) is in the background being prepared for our trip.



As the team was sitting at Hong Kong airport on Wednesday morning, January 9th, waiting for their flights back to the USA, they agreed that of the five trips to China, this was the most enjoyable. George Huckaby got to use some of his recently acquired Mandarin language abilities since of the two owners of one of the DongGuan firms, one could speak English well enough for basic conversation but the other could not converse in English at all. Stay tuned for more on this as it develops.

But at this time it appears that Bowser's issues caused by the unexpected closure of AFFA may now be solved.

## **The Great Train Show Visits Ventura, CA!**

*(For the first time since 2008!)*

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The Great Train Show staff finally visited Ventura, CA for the first time since 2008 on January 26-27, 2019. The show was at the Ventura county Fairgrounds Seaside Park complex which is wedged nicely between the US101 freeway and the Pacific Ocean.



The show encompassed two buildings with all of the vendors San Miguel Hall, shown in the above photo at right and most of the layouts in Anacapa Hall, shown in the above photo at left. Several model railroad clubs were present including:



The show was managed by Bill Grove, a veteran of model train shows dating back to the old Great American Train show. Bill, shown above left, was seven days shy of 30 years in the train show business and is one of the company's expert shown presenters. doing a show with him managing always results in the easiest move-ins and move-outs. Custom Traxx demonstrated their 3D printed Los Angeles, Boston and Minneapolis Light Rail Vehicles along with the first prototype Brookville Liberty model decorated for Oklahoma City.



Finished West Coast Traction Supply 3d printed models of Los Angeles P3010 LRVs, 1044, 1047, 1044. The 1047 is one of the first models of a "wrapped" car that we have seen to date!



Interurban Models first 3D printed prototype model of Brookville Liberty modern streetcar decorated for Oklahoma City!

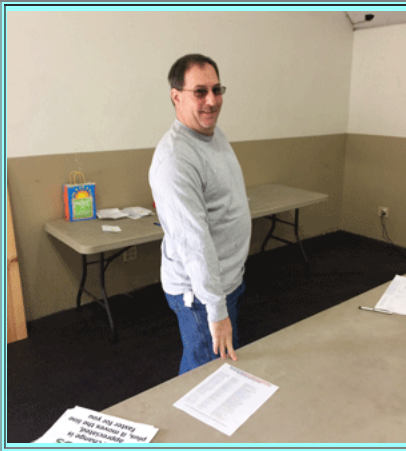
Painted

The Great Train Show (GTS) has its roots in the old Great American Train Show (GATS) which evolved from a local train show started many years ago in Wheaton, IL by members of the Elmhurst model Railroad Club. They have the following shows scheduled in the Western United States in 2019:

Colorado Springs, CO	Colorado Springs Event Center	February 2-3
San Jose, CA	Santa Clara County Fairgrounds	February 23-24
Costa Mesa, CA	Orange County Fairgrounds	March 2-3
Phoenix, AZ	Arizona State Fairgrounds	March 9-10
Pleasanton, CA	Alameda County Fairgrounds	March 23-24
Pomona, CA	Fairplex	August 3-4

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This show was managed by Bill Grove, a veteran of model train shows dating back to the old Great American Train show. Bill, shown above left, was seven days shy of 30 years in the train show business and is one of the company's expert shown presenters. Doing a show under his direction, as a vendor, always results in the easiest move-ins and move-outs. Custom Traxx demonstrated their 3D printed Los Angeles, Boston and Minneapolis Light Rail Vehicles along with the first prototype Brookville Liberty model decorated for Oklahoma City. Both he and the other main principal in the company, Randy Bachmann, have turned the company into a family operation with both of their wives, Mellisa Grove and Holly Bachmann participating in the company operation at various levels. Bill is shown below left and at right, Bill's wife, Melissa is shown along with Custom Traxx' George Huckaby.



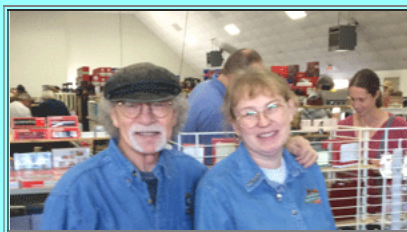
As the model train hobby continues to broaden, new vendors with 'different' lines more in tune with today's public are showing up at the shows. One of them is Donna and Rob Zanin ([donnarobzanin@gmail.com](mailto:donnarobzanin@gmail.com)) of Hemet, CA.



They have an interesting line of traditional and specialty railroad-related items including wind-up wood kits of a steam locomotive, a streetcar and a funicular. Only the steam locomotive was available for view at the show.



Another vendor is Paul and Sharilin Peters of Fountain Valley, CA that sell a line of rail related jewelry:



Paul and Sharilin are business-minded professionals that have been involved in railroad-related enterprises for many years and have served very professionally in so many management positions at the Orange Empire Railway Museum (OERM).

<p>Paul was: Vice President, Visitor Experience for 3</p>	<p>Paul &amp; Sharilin were: Bookstore Managers for 3 years, Facilitation Managers for the Thomas the Tank Engine events for 10 years.</p>
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<p>years, Chief Financial Officer for 3 years,</p> <p>Membership Manager for 11 years, Member of the Board of Directors for 13 years, Project Manager for the OERM Front Entrance, Project Manager for Refurbishment of the OERM Headquarters Broadway Building.</p> <p>Sharilin was:</p> <p>Corporate Secretary for 11 years, Newsletter Editor for 2.5 years,</p>	<p>Paul &amp; Sharilin were Project Managers for the restoration of:</p> <p>OERM Alco RS-1 Diesel Loco 1956, OERM Alco RS-1 Diesel Loco 1975 , UP25129 Caboose, SP1213 Caboose ., SDERy 508 PCC Streetcar, and LARy 1201 Class H Streetcar</p>
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*Note: We just could not fail to notice that both of these vendors, along with the webmaster of this site, are former members of management at the Orange Empire Railway Museum in Perris, CA, an enterprise slowly but surely becoming noted for the growing number of former high-qualified business-oriented members who are no longer interested in the place. Some responsible OERM member will have to look into the real reasons for that someday.*

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