



The Trolleyville Times



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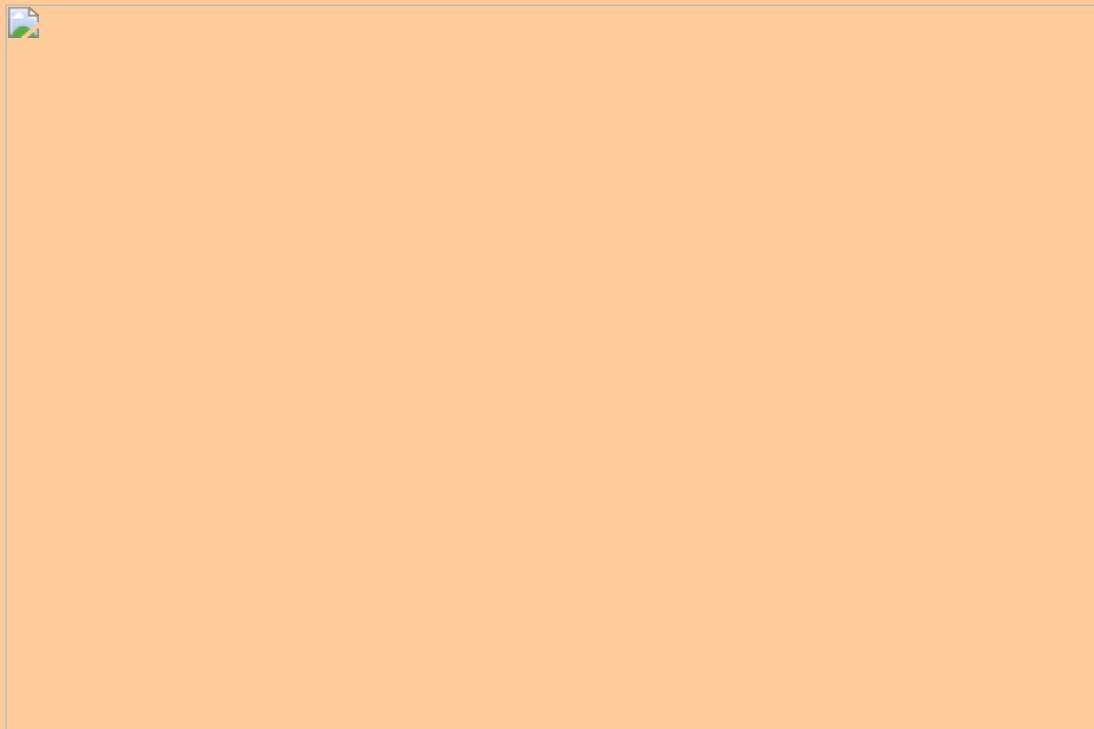
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CURRENT EVENTS.....

Urban Commuter/Light Rail/Modern Streetcar News!

CLEVELAND, OH - The Greater Cleveland Regional Transportation Authority (GCRTA) has suspended light-rail service on the Waterfront Line *indefinitely* due to safety concerns related to the Waterfront Line Bridge. During a routine inspection conducted in 2018, stress fractures were identified. As a result, the bridge has been monitored and traffic was restricted, with one train crossing at a time, GCRTA officials said in a news release. It's expected to take *two years to complete the work*, although that does not necessarily mean the service will be suspended the entire time.



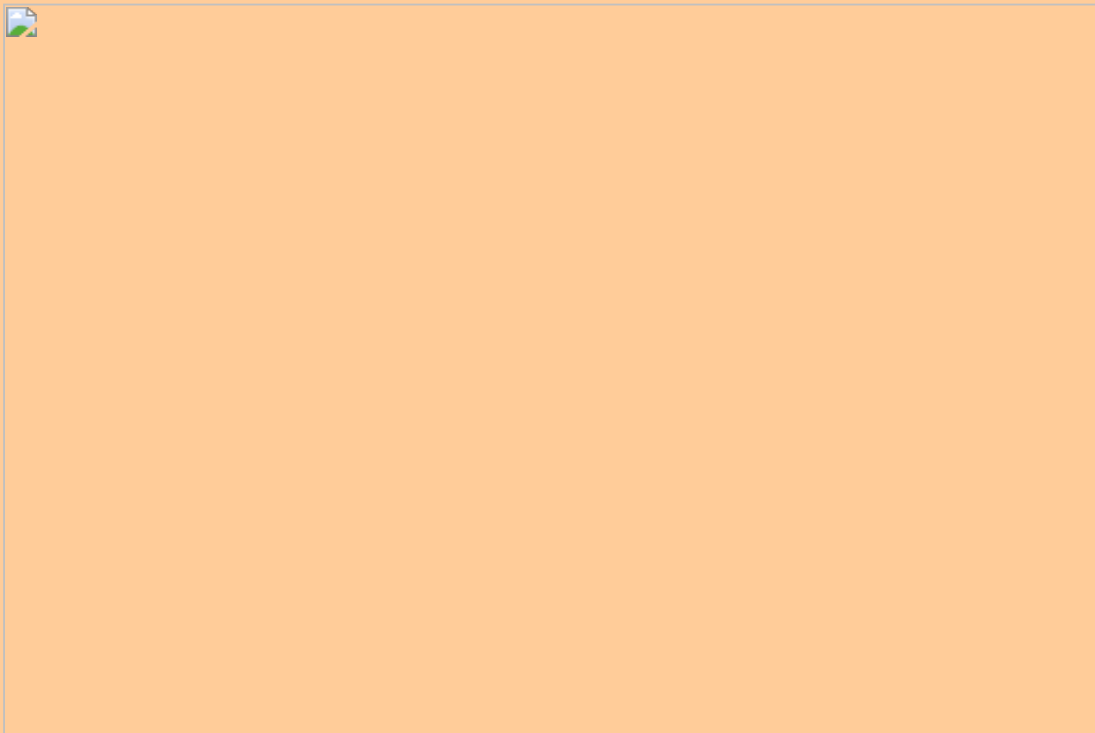
The bridge is located on the East Bank of the Flats and extends over Front Street and Norfolk Southern Railway tracks. In October 2020, service along the Waterfront Line was suspended due to a track rehabilitation project at Tower City. Then this past summer — before service was set to resume — the bridge underwent an extensive inspection that revealed four interim support towers need to be built to stabilize the structure, GCRTA officials said. The agency's consultant advised that service not be resumed until a permanent solution was implemented. The Waterford Line was opened on July 10, 1966 and links the city's Red, Green And Blue lines from tower City to attractions along the East Flats and North Coast Harbor including First Energy Stadium, the Cleveland Browns home field.

LOS ANGELES, CA - On September 8th, Metrolink reinstated two Ventura County Line trains as vehicle traffic in the San Fernando Valley and Ventura County, California, begins to return to pre-pandemic levels.

Ventura County Line trains 101 and 110 have been restored to serve stations connecting Los Angeles to Glendale, Burbank, Northridge, Van Nuys, Chatsworth, Simi Valley and Moorpark. The eastbound service provides the first morning connection from Los Angeles to Ventura County since the pandemic forced temporary service reductions in March, Metrolink officials said in a press release.

“Our service and schedules are all centered around the needs and safety of our customers,” said Metrolink Chief Executive Officer Stephanie Wiggins. “We are heartened to see our ridership beginning to rebound and will continue to restore service in a measured and strategic fashion based on need, our ability to socially distance and available funding.”

Meanwhile, the California Air Resources Board last week issued a Tier 4 Verification Certificate for Metrolink’s 37 new diesel locomotives after emissions verification testing. The certification confirms Metrolink’s locomotives continue to meet the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Tier 4 standard for diesel engines — the most stringent emission-reduction designation for engines, Metrolink officials said in a press release. The Tier 4 certificate is a requirement to receive previously awarded grant funding from South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) for Metrolink’s 40 new locomotives, Series 903-942, which cost \$280 million. The final three locomotives will be placed into service this fall.



The EMD F125 "**Spirit**" is a four-axle passenger diesel locomotive manufactured by Electro-Motive Division (END)(GM) for the North American market. It is powered by a Caterpillar C175-20 V20 diesel engine rated at 4,700 hp (3,500 kW). The locomotive is capable of traveling at a maximum in-service speed of 125 mph (201 km/h) pulling consists of up to 10 cars. It was EMD's first new passenger locomotive for the North American market in 15 years, with the previous passenger locomotive being the EMD DE30AC and DM30AC built for the Long Island Rail Road.

Features of the F125 include EPA Tier 4 emissions compliance (with exhaust after-treatment), AC traction systems, extended-range blend and dynamic brakes with HEP regeneration capabilities, advanced crash energy management (CEM) technology, and a streamlined body design, designed by Vossloh AG of Spain.

SAN DIEGO, CA - During the week of 6-10 September, the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) reached a construction milestone for the Mid-Coast Extension of the University of California (UC) San Diego Blue Line Trolley, as crews installed the final steel structure for the project.



The Blue Line, originally nicknamed the "*Tijuana Trolley*" due to its southern terminal in San Ysidro just north of the Mexican border will be extended from the Santa Fe Depot to UTC (upper left corner).

SANDAG installed the steel structure at the UC San Diego Central Campus Trolley Station, completing a pedestrian stairway that will provide UC San Diego students, staff, and visitors with access to the trolley.

Steel is critical to the trolley structure as well as the stairways and elevators at the station platforms. Since construction for the trolley began in fall 2016, crews have installed approximately 2.5 million pounds of steel.

Each of the 14 elevator towers along the project includes between 20,000-35,000 pounds of steel, SANDAG officials said in a press release.

The trolley extension is one of the largest transportation infrastructure projects in the San Diego region's history.



Meanwhile, SANDAG construction crews earlier this month reached a milestone in repairing the Del Mar Bluffs, part of a multi-phased project to ensure the integrity and safety of the nearby Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) rail corridor.

Crews graded the bluffs; constructed a keyway, or foundation, that strengthened the bluffs; and rebuilt the slope from the ground up.

WASHINGTON, D.C. - In early September AMTRAK announced plans to furlough 1,950 workers and cut 100 management positions due to contracted operations and pinched finances. Over the past few weeks, the railroad thoroughly reviewed its fiscal-year 2021 operating plan and planned service levels, which confirmed reduced staffing needs for the next fiscal year, Amtrak officials said in a prepared statement.

“While we have implemented initiatives to minimize the number of furloughs and involuntary separations, significant reductions remain necessary due to the slow recovery of ridership and revenue,” they said.

Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen (BLET) leaders are urging members to ask their U.S. senators to adequately fund Amtrak, provided the railroad maintains full daily services to prevent the nearly 2,000 job cuts. The furloughs will impact about 400 BLET members.

“Earlier this summer, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Moving Forward Act, which would have tripled Amtrak funding to nearly \$29 billion,” BLET officials said in a press release. “It conditioned the extra funding on Amtrak maintaining service levels no lower than in 2019, and bars furloughs.”

The layoffs are unacceptable and avoidable, said Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO officials in a statement.

“Congress must immediately provide this carrier with the funding it needs to preserve its operations and keep its employees on payroll. If lawmakers fail to do so, Amtrak won’t stop at 2,000 jobs,” they said. “The carrier could ultimately lay off nearly 50 percent of its staff, leaving communities in both urban and rural areas without a vital transportation lifeline, and sending 10,000 workers to the unemployment line.”

Meanwhile, Amtrak last week also announced a new partnership with Lysol producer Reckitt Benckiser Group (RB) that will help strengthen disinfection protocols for trains, stations and lounges. The protocols first will launch in Northeast Corridor stations and Pacific Surfliner trains before expanding across Amtrak’s network.

RB will supply Amtrak with disinfection solutions, including those proven to be effective against the SARS-CoV2 virus that causes COVID-19. The products will be used in high-touch and high-traffic areas where germs are most prevalent.

OTHER TRACTION ITEMS:

Another fine 3D Printed Streetcar Model!

by Richard L. Allman

Johnstown Traction Company car 356 has entered operation on Richard Allman's Main Line Transit. The prototype was one of 20 cars built in 1925 by St. Louis Car Company, 10 of which originally were single-ended but subsequently used as double-ended cars. Another 10 similar cars 360-369 were built in 1926 and also were single-ended though capable of easy conversion to double-ended use. Collectively these cars were the backbone of the JTCo. fleet until the arrival of the PCC's in 1947. Several operated until the end of trolley service in Johnstown in 1960. The cars featured low-floor boarding which was a significant innovation. They were relatively short for double-truck cars: 41 ft.-5 in. overall length. Several have been preserved and two are currently operational: one at Shore Line Trolley Museum in Branford, CT. and one at Railways to Yesterday at Rock Hill Furnace, PA. Car 356 is current preserved as a static exhibit at the Pennsylvania Trolley Museum at Arden, PA. Distinctive features of the cars were the iconic Pepsi Cola bottle cap advertisements on the ends under the windows and the Eclipse fenders which were constantly being removed and replaced by shop crews and railfans during the last years of operation, when fan trips were frequent.



Johnstown Traction Company 356 meeting Philadelphia Suburban (Red Arrow) 356 at Seaver Street Loop.

The model was produced by A.J. Chier of West Coast Traction Supply, who is an active member of the Southern California Traction Club. It is 3-D printed by Shapeways. A.J. has made the model available at a very attractive price and with extremely lucid directions. The kit also contains the Pepsi bottle caps and correct side frames. Additionally, he is very customer friendly and answered even my dumbest questions with great patience and clarity. For very nominal additional cost, A.J. has produced excellent decals, with amply extras in case of screw-ups and the eclipse fenders. The floor is also a 3-D print and is fitted to take the Bowser 4'10"

drive with 26-inch wheels. The kit is washed in Simple Green, rinsed, and air-dried and then is ready for assembly and priming. The assembly goes quickly after tapping the holes in the floor for the front bolster, the rear truck, and the connection of the floor to the shell. Once any weight is applied to the floor and the drive, handling should be minimized because the floor is 3-D printed and fragile. In assembly I broke one floor which I promptly replaced from Shapeways. Best is to delay adding weight until the floor is screwed into the shell. More like an O-scale car, the roof is removable for any needed work on the drive. The paint is cream and orange-A.J. has his favorite paints, though I used Reefer Orange and Aged White with gray for the roof, grimy black for the pole catcher, underbody and anti-climbers and steps and rail brown for the wheels, side frames and Eclipse fenders. The roof is a gray which also was heavily weathered. To attach the side frames to the trucks, it is necessary to first drill into the openings carefully on the trucks with a 53 drill then lightly glue the side frames into place. Painting the ends is challenging; AJ provides a template for cutting masking tape and then applying to the ends. He recommends first painting the orange then masking for where the decorative decal patterns are applied on the end, and then masking all the orange and then spraying the cream. The is at variance with the usual practice of first doing the lighter colors, then the darker. To make the model prototypical, it was heavily weathered. No matter how it is done, it will try the modeler's patience! For pole connection, I cemented a piece of one-sided PC board to the top of the Bowser motor and a piece of fine brass wire soldered to and extended to contact the pole bushing with another wire from the PC board to the positive terminal of the motor. The is ample room under the roof and on top of the gear tower for sufficient weight to navigate 6-1/8-inch radius Orr switches and climb my 4% grades.



Johnstown Traction Company (JTCo) car 356 approaching Keystone Junction.

The car superficially reminded me of the Indiana Service Corporation (ISC) Fort Wayne cars, some of which were sold to Cornwall, Ontario after Fort Wayne ceased operation. Six were sold to Atlantic City, where they ran occasionally in summer service on the Atlantic Avenue line between the Inlet and Longport. I was tempted to do one of these kits as an Atlantic City car, however the length of the JTCo. cars was not correct (too long) and ends were noticeably different.



JTCo 356 descending the grade above Keystone Junction with Philadelphia Suburban (Red Arrow) car 23 heading toward Bay State Junction!

A couple of minor issues with the car, none of which should be a deal-breaker for aspiring modelers: first, as mentioned, the floor is fragile-to-flimsy so extreme caution with handling is needed. Hopefully in the future, 3-D print manufacturers will provide some hardier choices of materials with floors, especially when handling is necessary. The end decals could have been simplified if the white had been on the decal instead of the challenging masking and painting needed. And finally, the Bowser drive-at least the one that I used is noisy, though I have not given up on tweaking it. Overall, this is a satisfying model from a relatively new manufacturer who is attentive to details, accuracy, and his customers. I look forward to working on more of his offerings in the future!



Our last shot of this fine layout shows Bowser PCC JTCo 417 approaching Keystone Junction with JTCo car 356 descending grade.

Credits:

A.J. Chier of West Coast Traction Supply for producing this model and necessary detail parts;
Bowser Manufacturing for the user-friendly drive which is wherever possible my “go-to” choice;
George Huckaby of Custom Traxx for prompt service on needed parts;
Rich Eaton, whose poles always seem to work;
Bob Dietrich, my longtime great friend who provides needed assistance with technical questions, painting and encouragement when a project begins to overwhelm me;
Dave's Railpix for so many needed photos for paint matching and details; and
Matt Nawn of Railways to Yesterday (RTY). Matt oversaw the restoration of the sister car, 355 at RTY and knows pretty much all there is to know about the cars.

A Sneak Peek at Bowser's New Trolley Pole!

Bowser Manufacturing is in the process of completing the third redesign of its HO scale working trolley pole. The first version, sold as part #1250 and shown below, was designed for the pewter bodied cars that Bowser obtained from Pennsylvania Scale Models in the 1960s. The base of the pole assembly had a 13 mm shaft with a 2 mm diameter that protruded through the roof for connection to the motor for overhead wire power. To insulate the pole from the metal roof a large 7.0 mm insulator, part #1251, also shown below, was used. This insulator required a 4.5mm hole in the roof. For many years, it had a contactor at the top that loosely resembled a 'taco' shell. But the last production runs used a contactor compliant with NMRA specifications. Note that a nut and spring was used to hold the pole in place with a connector used above the nut for the wire to the motor.



When Bowser decided to make a RTR PCC car, they received support from Eric Courtney of Miniatures by Eric and ended up with the first #12600 which leaned heavily on his HT-P2 pole design. They reduced the shaft at the bottom to which was consistent with poles being imported by MTS Imports, Inc, a major importer of traction models. Along with this was a pole pivot, part 12508, to be inserted in the roof of the injection molded car body. This #12508 had a 1.5mm main body diameter with 3.0 mm collar at the top and was 9.5 mm long to handle even the thickest of wood roofs used in some of the earlier traction models. Both the pole and the pivot are shown in the next photo.



These poles and the model trolley cars themselves were produced in China beginning in 2009 by a firm called AFFA Technology. In the summer of 2018, the owner of that company, K.K. Ku, was reported to have become very ill and was forced to close the plant. All the workers were laid off and got their last paychecks in August 2018. This left Bowser in the position of trying to retrieve their molds and drawings. They were successful in some areas and not in others. One of the unsuccessful efforts was in the case of the HO scale trolley pole. They would have to start from scratch. Lee English drew up a design based on his former #12600 and sent it to the new supplier, Dong Guan Xiong Tong Models Manufacturing Factory, and the first samples arrived at Custom Traxx for evaluation in mid-September. They appeared in testing to operate equal to the older #12600 if not better. The final photo below shows two of the new Bowser 12600 poles. The one on the left has been painted black. Also shown is the roof pivot, part 12508, which will also be included with the 12600 pole.



