



IN THIS ISSUE:

CURRENT EVENTS

Urban Commuter / Light Rail / Modern Streetcar News!

OTHER TRACTION ITEMS

Building Two Pacific Electric Locomotives, *by Nick Dukellis*

Rudi Volti's Layout!

CURRENT EVENTS.....

Urban Commuter / Light Rail / Modern Streetcar News!

LOS ANGELES, CA - Progressive Railroading reported that Los Angeles Mayor and [Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority](#) Chair Eric Garcetti announced in early February that LA Metro Chief Executive Officer Phillip Washington will step down in May.

Washington recently informed LA Metro's board that he does not plan to seek a new contract or extend his current contract, which expires in May, according to an LA Metro press release.



As LA Metro's CEO, Washington manages a balanced annual budget of \$7 billion, is responsible for overseeing \$18 billion to \$20 billion in capital construction projects and provides oversight of the nation's third busiest transit agency that transports 1.2 million passengers (pre-COVID) daily on a fleet of 2,200 clean-air buses and six rail lines. Washington is also engaged in all facets of transportation and infrastructure in L.A. County including aviation, goods movement, freight/railroads, water, public works, housing and transit-oriented communities. Washington, who has been with LA Metro since May 2015, spearheaded a number of notable successes including the passage of Measure M, the largest transportation investment ballot measure in North America. LA County voters overwhelmingly approved Measure M by more than 71 percent, launching the nation's largest public works program that will create an estimated 700,000 jobs in the region.

He was also instrumental in securing \$9 billion in grant funding over the past five years by working with Metro's federal and state partners and building their trust in Metro's leadership and track record of success. In November 2020, it was announced that Washington was tapped to lead then-President-elect Joe Biden's transportation transition team.

WILLIAMS, AZ - Although not related to electric traction, Grand Canyon Railway is planning the return of the steam engine this year.



The railway announced **eight** dates from April 2021 through October 2021 when one of the railway's two steam engines will pull the 9:30 A.M. passenger train from Williams, Arizona, to the Historic Village inside Grand Canyon National Park.



Grand Canyon Railway No. 4960, shown above, is a class "O-1a" 2-8-2 "Mikado" type steam locomotive originally built by the Baldwin Locomotive Works in Philadelphia, PA in 1923 for the Chicago Burlington and Quincy (CB &Q) Railroad. It was mostly used for hauling freight trains until 1957. It was spared from scrap by the Burlington Route for use on their steam excursion program until the program was shut down in 1966. It was sold to the Circus World Museum before being operated again by the Bristol and Northwestern Railroad for only three years. Today, it runs for the Grand Canyon Railway, pulling tourist trips between Williams, AZ and the Grand Canyon National Park alongside former Lake Superior and Ishpeming 2-8-0 "Consolidation" type No. 29, shown in the first photo.

Grand Canyon Railway No. 29, shown in the first photo, is the sole survivor of the class "SC-3" 2-8-0 "Consolidation" type steam locomotives. It was built by the American Locomotive Company (ALCO) in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in May 1906 for use in hauling carloads of iron ore on branch lines of the Lake Superior and Ishpeming Railroad as engine No. 14, and was renumbered 29 in 1923. It was retired from revenue service in 1956. In 1963, it was sold to the Marquette and Huron Mountain Railroad, but never run there. Today, it resides at the Grand Canyon Railway as a running mate to 2-8-2 No. 4960

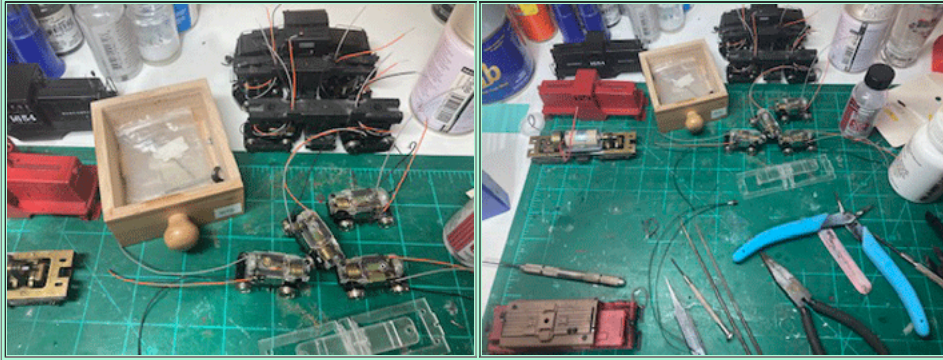
Engine No. 4960 now runs on recycled vegetable oil and snow melt. Built in 1923 and weighing 310 tons, the "green steam machine" and the railway carries hundreds of thousands of people a year and keeps about 70,000 automobiles off the roads leading into the national park, according to a news release.

Ticket prices are the same as the everyday trains powered by diesel engines. Steam-pulled trains are scheduled for the first Saturday of each month from April through September and on Earth Day (April 24) and Sept. 18 (the 210th anniversary of Grand Canyon Railway).

Building Two Pacific Electric Locomotives!

Nick
Dukellis

The project I am sharing is neither complex nor difficult; the components are easily attainable and probably one of the least expensive traction exercises you will attempt, provided you can source the donor(s) Bachmann 44 Tonner Diesel loco at a reasonable cost on Ebay or other 2nd hand vendor. Patience pays off here, as many vendors are especially proud of their offerings and reflect this pride in the asking price. I usually aim for a \$25.00 target, road name is of no consequence as you will paint it anyway. Make sure the handrails and side frames are intact. As you can see in photos 1 & 2 I have a little assembly line.



I will cover the creation of two distinctly different HO scale Pacific Electric locomotives; the first is a 44 Ton diesel (known as "Cooties") that carried a trolley pole only to activate signals. You want the Bachmann Spectrum Series model in the gold and black box, which has two separate drive motors (see photos 3 & 4), two views of the same motor).

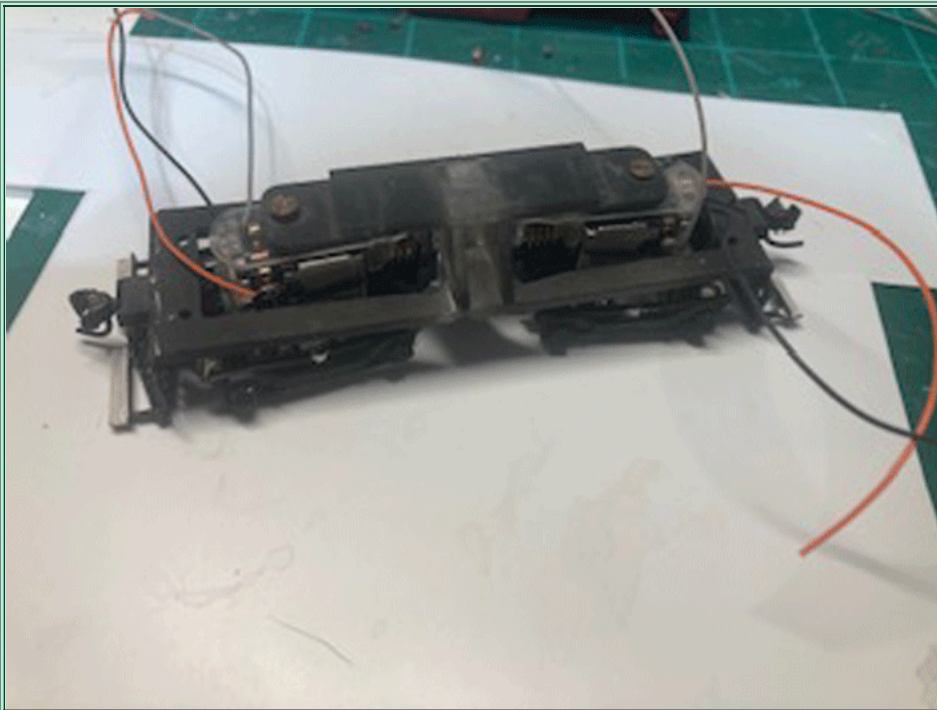


The later models, I understand, have only one motor (*although I have never personally seen this version*). This one is simple; you convert the loco to DCC and paint it to reflect either the red or black version; tack on a few detail parts, add a trolley pole and decals. Although the actual locomotive was diesel and did not rely on the pole for power mine off of the overhead full time. The source material for the 44 Tonner conversion to Pacific Electric is in the August 1990 issue of Railroad Model Craftsman and authored by Robert Smaus. No drastic body cutting; a small amount of scratch building for the roof platform and pole hold downs is required. The conversion to DCC, in particular the isolation of the two motors, is covered in the January 2001 issue of Model Railroader and is authored by Tony Capato. I have a couple of methods I use that simplify Mr Capato's instructions that you may find useful; the first is that it is unnecessary to use a moto tool to cut the tabs when isolating the motor; these tabs are as thin as a sheet of paper and can be cut with scissors. Also, the wheels pop right off the power unit (see photo 5) (Photo 5 shows the Bachmann gearbox with one axle pulled to show the electrical pickup beneath the sideframe) making the cutting/soldering much easier.



If DCC conversion is not desired, you need only make the truck motor conversion to run from overhead power. If you decide that in addition to DCC you want a working trolley pole, I have this information from an email I received from a fellow named Karl Peery in February 2012. Later attempts to contact him at the email address I had went unanswered, so I was pleased to find the instructions still in my trolley file eight years later. Copies of the actual email are available on request, just let me know.

The second project, a high quality generic electric Steeple Cab kit, was produced by the former Cannonball Car Shops and appears on Ebay regularly, at least until the stock inventory is exhausted. The former owner has since retired due to health issues but the kits are still available as of this writing. I painted mine black in an attempt to match the PE version, but my decals are incorrect but close enough, I say. This project is more involved; still simple, but more components and therefore more cash outlay. It uses the same drive mechanism as the aforementioned 44 Tonner, but since the Steeple Cab rides low, another kit is required to lower the height of the trucks. This lowering kit (see photo #6 below) is produced by American Model Builders, Inc (affiliated with Laser Kit), part number 9201, and it allows you to flip the Bachmann motors on their sides to lower them.



This lowering kit is made of clear plastic and construction is pretty straight forward. If you opt to skip the lowering, the loco looks totally ridiculous. AMB also offers the additional goodies you will want to complete the model, such as correct side frames #9200, a rooftop trolley pole platform #9204, a jig to drill out your handrails, the handrail jig itself and pilots with foot boards #9205. These components will set you back around

\$60, on top of the cost of your donor 44 Tonner motors. Of course the trolley pole is additional, unless you are like me and have several lying around that you can scavenge.

Once the Steeple Cab kit is complete, you need only to convert your donor 44 Tonner motors to DCC and wire them to run on overhead power if desired. I enjoy these particular models because they handle tight curves easily due to their compact size and have a utilitarian "attitude". As I stated earlier you will probably decide to scratch build your roof platforms unless you go with the style available in the kit, which are very nice but not appropriate for the roads I model.

Note: Nick is currently a member of the Southern California Traction Club

Rudi Volti's Layout!

Just before press time, we received this photo of Rudi's layout. We included it because the car is operating under live overhead wire and since we are proponents of live overhead operation, we especially like to show those layouts. Rudi lives in Claremont, California and is a retired professor of Sociology. We may have more photos coming in future issues. The layout may be available in the future due to a move.



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