

The March 2023 issue of the Trolleyville Times will be del

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CURRENT EVENTS.....

Urban Commuter/Light Rail/Modern Streetcar News!

OMAHA, NE - A 3.5-mile streetcar line planned for Omaha, Neb., helped convince insurance giant Mutual of Omaha to pursue development of a new headquarters tower in the city's downtown and will also provide service to a new science museum.



The Omaha Streetcar Authority, which held its first meeting on May 16, will oversee design, construction and operation of the line that will run from Cass Street to Farnam Street on South 10th Street, Farnam west to 42nd Street, and back to 10th Street on Harney Street.

Initial design work on the \$306-million streetcar line by Omaha-based transportation engineer HDR is underway and is focused on utility coordination, vehicle specifications and the streetcar maintenance facility.

Mutual of Omaha's decision to move forward with a \$600-million downtown headquarters is credited in part to the streetcar line.

"A modern urban transportation system in the form of the planned streetcar line makes this project possible by providing convenient access to our planned headquarters tower and by allowing us to think creatively about many aspects of the project," Mutual of Omaha chairman and CEO James Blackledge said in a news release.

Construction of the streetcar line is expected to start in 2024 and the first streetcar to begin operation in 2026.

Bob Stubbe, public works director for the City of Omaha, said the line will connect the [Riverfront Parks](#) project, a \$300 million public-private partnership to revitalize three underutilized downtown parks, and the [Kiewit Luminarium](#), a \$100-million science museum, both on the east end of the line. The west end of the line will go to the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

Construction of the streetcar line will present some hurdles, said Matt Tondl, senior vice president at [HDR](#), which is preliminary design work on the project.

“Streetcars are essentially a street project with all the of the associated design challenges,” he said. “Utilities are always a key challenge in a downtown environment congested with utilities and often lacking in good as-built records.”

While Nebraska may have a reputation for being flat, Tondl said that doesn’t apply to Omaha.

“Despite what people think about the cities in the plains, Omaha is a hilly city,” Tondl said. “This presents challenges in vehicle design. Construction sequencing is another critical challenge in the congested downtown corridors. Minimizing disruption is a major goal of this project.”

The downtown area where the line would be located has stagnated, according to a strategic plan developed for the area by the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce.



The streetcar line will have 13 stops, ten-minute peak frequency and rides will be free. Funding for the line will come from a tax increment financing district, which will allow the city to receive funding as property values within the district increase, and from new projects.

OTHER TRACTION ITEMS:

A Fine Model from a Resin Kit! They are still out there

Richard Allman, EPTC

Car 772 of Wilkes Barre Railway has entered operation on Richard Allman's Main Line Transit. The prototype was one of two cars built by J.G. Brill Company in Philadelphia for the Boston Elevated Railway as part of their Type 5 series in 1923. Boston eventually acquired 471 Type 5 cars between 1922 and 1927 in several different orders from several builders, besides Brill including Laconia, Wason, and Osgood Bradley. Of the Type 5 fleet, 275 were built by Brill. They rode on Standard C-35-P trucks. The cars were Boston's first lightweight cars, were fast and efficient and served many of the lines that did not run in the Central Subway, except occasionally on some short turn operations and when ridership was light since they were not MU capable.

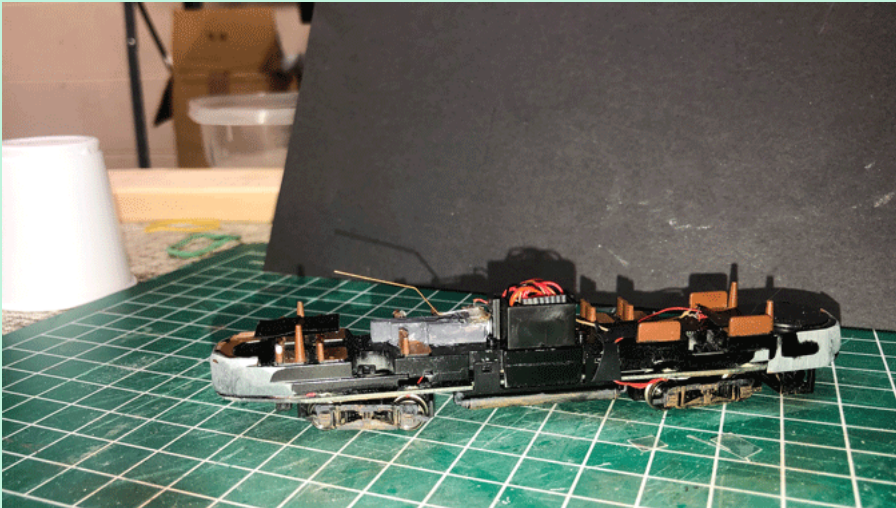
Two cars were added to the second order from Brill and sent to East Penn Railway in Pottsville in 1923, had Brill 77-E1 trucks and did not have the typical Boston roof headlights or tow bars or couplers, but had typical Boston hex ends and body style. Unlike the Boston cars, which had wooden seats, the Pottsville cars had rattan seats. Trolley operations in Pottsville ceased in 1933 and the two Type 5 cars, along with 16 other cars were purchased by Wilkes Barre, where they became cars 772 and 774 (all WBRwy passenger cars had even numbers) and operated until the end of trolley service in October 1950, when they were scrapped. Boston Type 5 cars have been preserved at Seashore Trolley Museum in Maine, at Warehouse Point in Connecticut and one is under restoration at the Shoreline Museum at Branford, Connecticut.



A photo of the WBRys 772 at an unidentified location.

THE MODEL:

The body shell was resin cast and given to Richard by Miniatures by Eric when he purchased several other car shells from him 20 years ago and for many years sat on a shelf, since he already had a Boston Type 5, like he had ridden as a kid while visiting his grandparents. Richard had long schemed of building a Wilkes Barre car but was deterred by the significant amount of one inch striping entailed and indecision about what drive to use. He has with practice and forbearance become somewhat more skilled in applying one inch striping. Several years ago, Richard obtained an extra Bachmann Peter Witt car and figured out how to wire it and grind the ends to make it fit into the Type 5 shell. He had no other active car building projects so was out of excuses not to proceed.



After some grinding at the ends, the Bachmann chassis, shown above, fit snugly into the shell. He had two surplus Bachmann headlights that were perfect size for the Wilkes Barre car, and he also had some surplus pole retrievers. Once the grinding was complete, getting the car operational was relatively straightforward, using the Custom Traxx/Bowser #12508 pole bushings. The chassis has sufficient weight that no additional weight was needed. Holes needed to be carefully drilled for the pole bushings at well-demarcated sites, and also for the headlights, and the retrievers, where he was on his own about precise locations. After priming with Rustoleum primer, the shell was sprayed with Pollyscale Cat Whisker Yellow, then masked and the red/orange was applied. He selected Pollyscale SP Daylight Scarlet. The roof was sprayed with Reefer Gray, and the doors and end window sashes painted with Pollyscale Mineral Red, which in reality is a brown. As always, selecting color is an arbitrary exercise due to variations in films, photo exposures, ambient lighting, and time out of the paint shop. Ed Skuchas assured me that the light color indeed was a yellow and not cream, and the cat's whisker seems close enough and too brilliant a yellow. The underbody was painted with grimy black, as were the anti-climbers. The one-inch striping was MicroScale, and the silver numerals were from a spare set of Custom Traxx Red Arrow 80 car decals. Applying the decals was where he made an enormous "screw-up" that delayed the completion by at least a week. Instead of car 772, He mis-numbered the car 724. Removing decals was a challenge, even using MicroSet as directed, and the paint was damaged and needed to be reapplied and gloss Clear Coat reapplied. Once the decals were corrected; the car was dull coated and received a light over spray with very thin grimy black to provide prototypical Wilkes Barre weathering. He made the destination signs and the route designation plaques that hung on the ends under the right-side windows, He wanted to add a Gibbons Beer sign that was on many of the cars on the ends under the left end windows, but using Microsoft technology, when attempting to reduce the size of the signs, the clarity disappeared. But he hasn't totally given

up on this. The body braces behind the doors were fabricated from styrene strips and cemented in place with Canopy Glue. The fenders were fabricated from stainless steel HO fencing in Bob Dietrich's stash of goodies.

The shell needed to have the horizontal sashes applied to the outer windows on the ends. The Boston Type 5's also had a horizontal sash on the center end windows which was not present on the Wilkes Barre car. Roof ladders needed to be added above the right front doors at each end. Fortunately, he had several in his stash. Previously he had made them with fine styrene strips-doable but clearly a pain to fabricate. Trolley hooks were brass strips.



The shell is not perfect. There were very prominent ribs on the sides where some of the vertical rivet lines are placed. The side car numbers should be centered between the sixth and seventh windows on the sides. This was not possible due to the presence of the ribs and the only way to successfully apply the numbers was slightly off-center from the midpoint, for which I plead forbearance. The ribs also impeded precise horizontal placement of the one scale inch silver stripe placement, again with a plea for understanding. The resin casting process had some warping which was unavoidable. However, bottom line, using a drive and chassis that he had and a shell that he had been given, as long with some accessories and decals that he had, he was able to produce a nice model that he will enjoy, to try some previously untried methods, and to do it for minimal cost. The teaching point is to scour one's shelves for car bodies and drives and decal and perhaps something interesting can be done. One of these times, he will look around some more and see what he might dig out!



Wilkes Barre Railways 772 in the midst of other Boston streetcars!

Miniatures by Eric. Eric gave the shell for which he was appreciative and for which he has eventually found a use.

Bachmann for the Peter Witt drive and chassis. Out of the box, the drive has some complex wiring for lights and DCC adaptation and two-rail operation. Simply identifying the positive and negative terminals makes wiring super easy.

Custom Traxx/Bowser (George Huckaby) for the pole bushings which accept all his collection of poles and are easily cemented into the trolley boards in the well-demarcate spots. Together with the Rich Eaton poles, trouble -free overhead tracking. And enough of the numeral decals to get the right number on all 4 sides!

Rich Eaton, whose 14 scale foot pole tracks nicely for this car.

His late wonderful friend **Ed Miller** of Pittston, PA, who was the authority on all things Wilkes Barre Railway related. If anyone wanted to witness a deviation from Ed's always affable and gentle demeanor, just say Wilkes Barre Railways instead of Railway! He would have appreciated this model.

Ed Skuchas, who provided important advice on color selection.

His friend **Bob Dietrich**, who assisted with some of the painting and whose good company supports (or aids and abets) his car building obsession.

Time to think about the next project; two or three possibilities are out there, and later this year, Volkmar Meier's Baby Bullets of Fonda, Johnstown and Gloversville, and later Bamberger beckon. There also is a San Francisco Iron Monster and a Brisbane Phoenix on the shelf and in the queue-hmmm...

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