



RAILROAD REPORT

Dennis Andreas

N-Scale Table Build

It's been many months since the N-scale layout was started, and we're just about to the end of the build. It has taken some time but more importantly, at least in my opinion, are the various manufacturers' products that were required to put the layout into operation. Let's roll back to the beginning; with a rough size in mind, our first trip was to the local home supply store for a sheet of plywood and some boards to frame up the table.

Constructing the table provided a starting point and a blank canvas. With plenty of ideas in mind, it was time to lay down some E-Z track from Bachmann to get a general idea of what the rails would look like. A theme for the layout was also created at this time. This included not only the track routing, but setting the elevations as well. With the basic shape of the layout on the board the next step was to place the various structures and buildings that were going to be used. Even though nothing was permanent at this point, having the layout and building placement helped tremendously in staying focused on the theme. It also allowed for a lot of adjustment to the theme before everything was made permanent.

Next up was the placement of Woodland's foam landscape boards and sheet foam products as well as Woodland's full range of plaster products. Working with Woodland's plaster products was a joy compared to some of the other materials I've used in the past. The plaster dries quickly while also allowing the user to stay in the groove as he makes any necessary adjustments to the terrain. As an example, and again referring back several months, I mentioned a trolley running the length of Main Street was desired, but to add realism the tops of the rails needed to be at street height. It was a sim-

You never finish a layout, but we're almost there.



Like most railroad layouts to maintain interest the build incorporated three distinct areas. The rural farm, an urban downtown section and the industrial area. Each of these areas required a number of different products to complete.

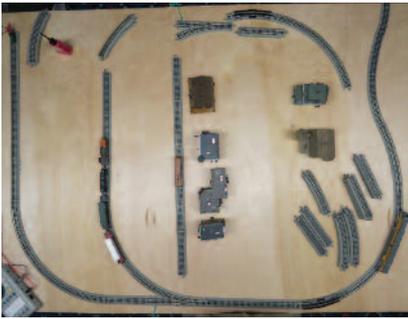
ple process; the track for the streetcar was secured to the layout's base and the appropriate thickness of Woodland's foam sheet was used between the rails and to make Main Street level with the track's height. After everything was where it was wanted (or needed) a couple coats of the company's self-leveling road surface were brushed on.

Woodland's Shaper Sheet made making the landscape really easy. I've tried to describe it differently, but the fact is this moldable aluminum sheet is covered with a fuzzy material, and the combination of these two materials has to be one of the best new products to be released in years. Not only does Shaper Sheet make constructing terrain quick and easy, but if the modeler stands back and sees the results aren't what he had in his vision, it also makes changing the terrain quick and easy.

After the elevations were set and the terrain was smoothed out with plaster sheets and other plaster products it was time to move back to Main Street and begin adding painted detail. On a lot of projects that need an undercoat (to cover the bright white plaster), I'll pay visit the local home store and check the reject rack for samples. Many times these rejects can

be purchased in pint jars for 50 cents. I know we all hate to send customers out of the store for products, but if he can save a few pennies on non-essentials, that provides him with more cash in his pocket for the nicer hobby products, plus it encourages the feelings of a dealer not rapping the customer for every dime he has.

With the street properly undercoated it was time for the surface. For this Woodland's Blacktop Topcoat was used, and to add center lines and parking spaces its Road Stripping Pens were used for an even more authentic look. There's no denying that modeling takes



The table base was assembled using standard home improvement store items such as 1X 6 boards for the frame and plywood for the surface. After the base was complete the track was ordered and placed in the basic pattern desired.



With the rails in place it was time to begin forming the theme of the layout. A streetcar was needed to add movement to the downtown area and once in place it provided the main focal point for this section of the layout.



Products from a variety of vendors were needed to complete the N-scale layout, but all of the scenery was created using many of the different products Woodland offers specifically for this purpose.

time, and for the short section of Main Street this was as true as ever. Not only did the street surface need to be raised to keep the streetcar's rail level with the surface, but structures needed to be placed, sidewalks created by using concrete topcoat and the various lines and spaces had to be added. Yet the Woodlands landscaping products made it an easy task, not the all too frequent exercise in frustration rail modelers often face. Plus, the satisfaction in being creative makes it all worth the effort involved.

With Main Street completed and the overall surface set and prepped, it's time to add the various turfs, rocks, foliage and ballast for the rails. It has been mentioned and shown several times in past installments, but the coloring of turf is rarely one shade. A customer may look at the scenic supplies and wonder why there are so many shades of green grass, let alone all of the other different colors, but it's nothing to use four or more shades to get the effects wanted.

Like the multiple shades of color there are multiple manufacturers of locomotives, rolling stock, passenger cars and buildings, which are used to populate a railroad layout and bring it to life. For this N-Scale layout there are products from Bachmann, Marklin, Kibri, Piko and MRC all represented.

As time went on I disliked the way the track and trains were hidden in the mountainous area at the back of the layout. Not at all happy with the way the rails are placed, sometime in a future installment the track will be rerouted from the back of the table and looped forward into green areas. Like in any railroad layout there are always new products being released, so there will be additional vehicles and people added in various locations engaged in various activities. This is good news for dealers as I suspect I'm like most customers and will be coming back to your store for endless supplies.

Stay well stocked; the holidays are almost here. **HM**



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