

THE BRASS POUNDER



Newsletter of the Carolina Southern Division 12, Mid-Eastern Region,
National Model Railroad Association

Volume 22 Number 4

April 2022

Division Coming Events

(See [CSD Website](#) for
further details)

DIVISION MEETING

**The Division's
Monthly Meeting
for April will be a
ROAD TRIP to visit
Tichy Train Group
on Saturday,
April 9th at
10:00am
3260 Nova Lane
Alamance, NC,
27201
To get on the
attendance list,
[email the Clerk](#)**

Superintendent's Corner

By Andrew Stitt

As I write this, I have recently returned from volunteering a Saturday to help staff the Train Town exhibit at the Southeastern Narrow Gauge & Shortline Museum in Newton, NC. Although it was a cold, chilly day which kept visitor attendance down, I found plenty of things going on. I helped division members Gil Brauch and Bob Halsey man the display for the visitors we had. Also in the room were Fred Brooks and BOD member Larry Paffrath who were working on rewiring a N scale layout donated for display.

What I want to pass along to you are a few things I learned, and a few things I observed. First, I learned a few new things. The passenger train on the display had an occasional uncoupling issue while running around. Adjusting the couplers, and turning around the leading car (typical things I would try), did not completely resolve the issue. Examination of the track revealed that there was a hump and dip in that particular area. It turned out that this was a meeting point between two sections of the layout. While the correct course of action would be to correct this, such action would not necessarily be the most prudent course of action during the open house. So, Gil suggested and applied Scenic Accents glue to both couplers, and let the glue dry. As it does when placing figures on a layout, upon coupling the cars together on the track, the adhesive "attached" the couplers together and that problem disappeared for the remainder of the day. What's neat about this is that the cars are not permanently attached, so future couplings with other cars would be possible.

Another neat thing I learned, this time from a volunteer at the Newton's model train exhibit next door, is the introduction to Posi-Taps for use in layout wiring. These are used in place of soldering wires, and IMO are easier to use than suit case connectors. Fred used these on the N scale layout to connect track feeders to the bus wires. Afterwards they ran some motive power on the layout without incident. So, check [Posi-Taps](#) out.

I observed here, as well as other places since I was elected Superintendent, the amount of time some members are devoting to division activities. It is impressive. We all devote time to our own interests within this hobby. Yet some members find time to help get things done for the benefit of the division. Folks, they are devoting some of their time to volunteer to do this. Think about that for a moment. The benefit I see in this is that the volunteers are helping to educate other members, and non-model railroaders about our hobby. That is a strong statement.

So, I close with this. Give some thought to volunteering in the future. Train Town is becoming an attraction at the museum. Some of their visitors are coming to our display first, before going into the model railroad exhibit or the depot because of word of mouth about it. (While you might question travel time, I challenge anyone to check their mileage and see how far they have to travel more than the 95 miles [one way] that I have to). There is a continuous need to help the local division committee man the display. Additionally, the convention coming up in October is the biggest thing we have done in a very long time. The need for helping hands at this event is going to be enormous. Donating a few hours here or there, either at the convention or before in planning, will be very valuable and appreciated. Give it a thought. We need your help!



GET SIGNED UP NOW

For our upcoming Division Meeting on Saturday, April 9th, we'll be making a road trip to Tichy Train Group for a tour and open house. As an added bonus, Andrew Stitt has arranged for a layout tour nearby to Phil DeCheine's On30 St. Croix Valley RR, an On30 layout (more details on the next page). To be sure you are granted entry, make sure you're on the list of attendees email the clerk. Cutoff for registration is Sunday, April 3rd.

clerk@carolinasouthern.org

If you're not on the roster, you might not be granted admission!

We'll meet at 10:00am at Tichy's facility; 3260 Nova Lane, Alamance, NC, 27201

More about touring Tichy Train Group:

We received an invitation from the Carolina Piedmont Division for a tour of the facilities at Tichy Train Group in Alamance (Burlington), NC on Saturday April 9th at 10:00am. Don Tichy leads the tour group through the factory explaining and demonstrating the research, design, engineering and production of his great kits and detail parts. The tour now includes his new product line of decals. The visit will require an early morning start to get there in time. Three years ago we made a tour and it was great fun. You'll also have a chance to save some money on great Tichy kits.

Please make sure you're on the roster to attend.



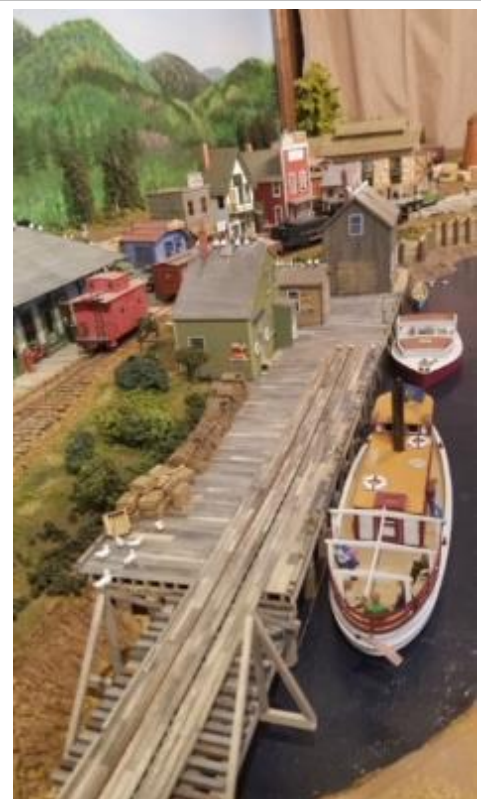
Tichy Train Group
3260 Nova Lane,
Alamance, NC, 27201

More about the layout tour:

Our Superintendent, Andrew Stitt, has arranged a bonus layout tour. After the tour and open house at Tichy Train Group, you'll have an opportunity to tour the nearby On30 St Croix Valley Railroad layout of Phil DeCheine. Andrew Stitt will provide address and other details to those in attendance at Tichy. To whet your appetite, here's a couple of photos of Phil's layout.



Pulpwood operations



Waterfront scene

UPCOMING AREA TRAIN EVENTS

20th Annual North Carolina Railroad Expo

**April 1-2, 2022
Fri 12:00-7:00pm
Sat 9:00am-4:00pm
Hickory Expo Center
1960 13th Ave Dr SE
Hickory, NC 28602**

**Fort Mill SC
Model Train Show
April 9th
9:00am – 3:00pm
Clarion Hotel
3695 Foothills Way
Fort Mill, SC 29708**

Historic Spencer Shops Train Show

**May 14th – 15th
Saturday 9:00am –
5:00pm
Sunday 12:00 – 4:00pm
NC Transportation
Museum
1 Samuel Spencer Dr.
Spencer, NC 28159**

Editor's Notes

By Ed Gumphrey

Another month has quickly passed. It's hard to believe that spring is already here.

Our meeting for March was an interesting field trip to the train Depot in Cherryville. I think those who attended all feel it was worth the trip. My thanks to the Cherryville Model Railroad Club for hosting our meeting. I especially appreciate your efforts to have everything set up for us in advance. I hadn't been there in a couple of years and thought everything looked great. There's more info in the news section starting on the next page.

During the past year, Scott Perry moved from Fort Mill, SC to Utah. I still follow Scott's activities on Facebook. He's still modeling the Fulton County Railway, which didn't surprise me. However, I was a bit surprised to see that he has shifted to N scale for his model railroad adventures. When he first moved, I feared that I was losing a regular contributor to our newsletter. So, you can imagine my joy when I got an email from Scott a couple of weeks ago to send me an article. He's writing for the Utah Northern Division, but was generous enough to include his friends in CSD. My thanks to Scott for this submission.

Instead of meeting the third Saturday of the month, in April our meeting will be another field trip on Saturday the 9th. Like we did back in 2019, we'll be visiting Tichy Train Group for a factory tour. Thanks to Andrew Stitt for also arranging a layout tour after the visit to Tichy.

I'll close my comments this month on a familiar note. Please let me know what projects you're working on. I'd like to expand my roster of regular contributors, not to mention my almost empty backlog of articles.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

I target the 1st of each month for publication. Please submit articles for publication by the 27th of each month.

The preferred format is MS Word, but I can convert most other formats.

For questions and help, email me at editor@carolinasouthern.org

DIVISION AND REGIONAL NEWS

By Ed Gumphrey

Train Town Box Score

March 2022

Open Houses 4

Attendance 105

Hosts: Gil Brauch (1.5), Fred Brooks, Bob Halsey, Alan Hardee, Keith Iritsky (1.5), Ed Smith, Bob Halsey, Tim Rust, John Yarbrough, and Larry Paffrath

To volunteer, go to:

<http://carolinasouthern.org/ttvolunteerrequest.html>

(#)=frequency (r)=first time host

Please, don't forget that volunteers are still needed for upcoming weekends. Follow the link to volunteer to help and get your name added to the list. Like Gil has said, C'mon folks.

MEETING

Next up in the news is a report on the March Meeting. It was held at the Cherryville Depot, home of the Cherryville Model Railroad Club. Twelve members were able to attend in person, and two others joined in on Zoom.

A little personal history....I was previously an active member of the Cherryville Club, having joined in 2015 after I retired and moved to Shelby. As I have remarked in previous editions of this newsletter, Cleveland County was one of the "limbo" areas, being part of MER, but not part of CSD. When Alan Hardee got Cleveland County (and five other counties) added in late 2017, I started participating in CSD events, and my activity at Cherryville tapered off. So, it had been about a year and a half since I had been to the Depot in Cherryville. So, when I arrived ahead of the meeting, I was instantly pleased to see that the Cherryville Club members had obviously spent quite a bit of time cleaning and preparing for our visit. They had chairs available along with a table and podium. In both the museum and layout areas of the Depot, things were neat, clean, and well organized. Our sincere thanks for their efforts and hospitality in hosting our meeting.

Cherryville Club member Bill Robinson opened our meeting by welcoming us to the Depot and provided a bit of history about the Depot and the club. The building was in poor condition in 1998 when the city obtained it from CSX. The club was formed, and renovations started. A neighboring construction company provided a new roof, the town received a grant, and other donations enabled the building's restoration. The club opened the museum section

in 2001 and has evolved since. It now houses a nice selection of railroad artifacts in the museum end of the building and has HO scale, Lionel, Standard gauge and G scale displays. After the meeting, members took in the museum and layouts and enjoyed meeting with club members. The Depot was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2016. For you history buffs, there's a great deal of additional information on the [registry application](#). Discussion of the club's origin begins on page 11, with club history starting on page 15.

But I digress. Back to the meeting....

After Bill's introduction, Andrew Stitt discussed a few areas, summarized with these bullets:

- Beginning with our May meeting, Andrew is planning a hands-on project for members to build a diorama as either a stand-alone project or to fit into an existing layout
 - May will be first month and Division will provide foam for basic construction.
 - June will focus on basic construction (structures, track, etc)
 - July will focus on scenery and other details.
- Andrew is working to get name tags for Division members. He'll pursue this further when haberdasher Nancy Campbell's Real Estate job slacks off a bit.
- We still need recommendations for a regular place for monthly meetings.
- There will be a need for help in planning and conducting the MER Convention which our Division is hosting in October. Be ready to volunteer to help make it a success.

Andrew then turned the meeting over to Neal Anderson, MMR and Convention Chair to discuss planning status for the Convention. Key points from Neal's discussion are:

- Planning activity will accelerate beginning in April
- Need to finalize contract provisions.
- Need to complete negotiations regarding lunch for attendees. The Hotel will provide for reduced lunch costs, but the lunches will not count toward our required food sales goal.
- There is a need to provide publicity in neighboring Divisions, especially the SER.
- Registration will open soon
- Website updates are forthcoming

Doug Algire discussed planning for clinics.

- The clinic schedule is about 2/3 full.
- Helpers will be need to staff clinic rooms.
- Full clinic schedule will be posted in the near future.

Alan Hardee stated that he had identified several layouts for tours and/or operating sessions. A full list will soon be finalized.

The bottom line on Convention planning is that things are about to get busy, and your help will be needed to make it a success. Enjoy a few snapshots from the meeting on the next 2 pages.



Cherryville Club member Bill Robinson welcomed CSD members and provided a bit of history about the Depot and Club.



After the meeting, CSD members gabbed among themselves before starting to roam around the museum and layout sections of the Depot



Assistant Superintendent Alan Hardee chats with a couple of Cherryville Club members.



CSD member Doug Algire looks over the Cherryville section of the HO layout.



Superintendent Andrew Stitt looks over the Shelby section of the HO layout.



The Shelby section of the layout includes the Cleveland County fairgrounds and courthouse.



The Lionel layout featured lots of action with four trains running.



The Benefit of Building Mockups

Text and Photos By Scott Perry

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I've been scratchbuilding structures for about 30 years now and one lesson that I've learned I'd like to share with you. This lesson is the benefit of investing some time to build a mockup of the structure before you build. A mockup is a scale three-dimensional sketch of a structure constructed of cardboard, foamboard, or card stock (properly called chipboard) to give you the feel of the size and shape as it will appear on the layout. It will help you validate your drawings and assembly techniques. Essentially it assures you that what you are going to build is really going to look like what you want to model.

Currently I'm working on my new layout based on the modern day prototype Fulton County Railway in N-scale. This scale is very short of modern industrial structures, so I've decided to scratchbuild all the buildings on the layout. I haven't built in n-scale in 20 years so the change from On30 to N is huge for me and this building will get me back into the swing of things.

I've decided my first structure will be the Fulton County Railway office and workshop. This is the prominent structure in the FCR yard area. It is a modern metal sided structure, very small at 100 feet long and only 13 feet high. The prototype is in good shape today except for the faded paint on the metal siding. The building is mostly a rectangle with two small entryways on either side. The building is all metal siding and roofing. Actually, the only difficult part of the project is that all the doors and windows are very modern and may have to be custom made.

Without trespassing I was able to see the structure with my own eyes, but I didn't take any photos. I did get photos off Google Earth (Fig 01) which allowed me to measure the building and get all the dimensions that I needed. Using [3rd PlanIt](#) CAD software I drew all the sides of the structure. The building was copied and placed on my layout drawing in scale, and it looks like a very good fit without any selective compression needed. The next step is to make a mockup before I start the construction.

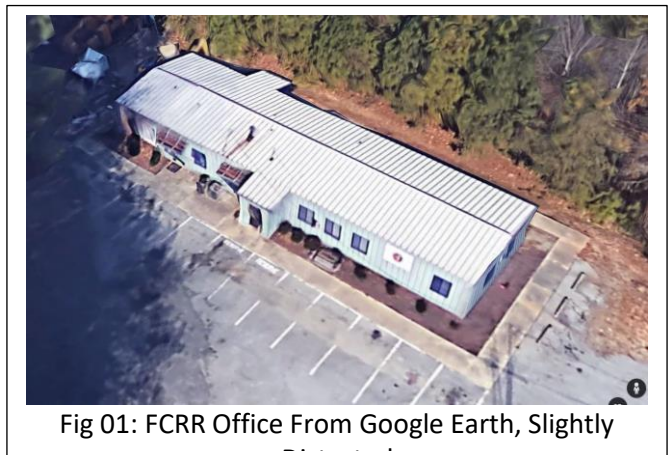


Fig 01: FCRR Office From Google Earth, Slightly

I printed scale 1:160 prints of the drawings with the text and measurement layers. The first thing you need to do is to take a scale rule and make sure the prints are the size you expected them to be (Fig 02). If the measurements check with the drawings, I then turn off the CAD text and measurement layers and just print the structure lines (Fig 03). I cut these out of the paper a bit larger than the drawings (Fig 04). Using chipboard from a pita chips snack box (Fig 05), each panel of the box was cut out and laid flat on the workbench. Cereal boxes are also great for this! I glued the cut outs to the board using full strength Elmer's Glue (Fig 06). A wallpaper seam roller (Fig 07) works great to push the drawings into the glue and get a very flat surface. These pieces were left to dry overnight.



Fig 02: Print and Check the Drawing Dimensions

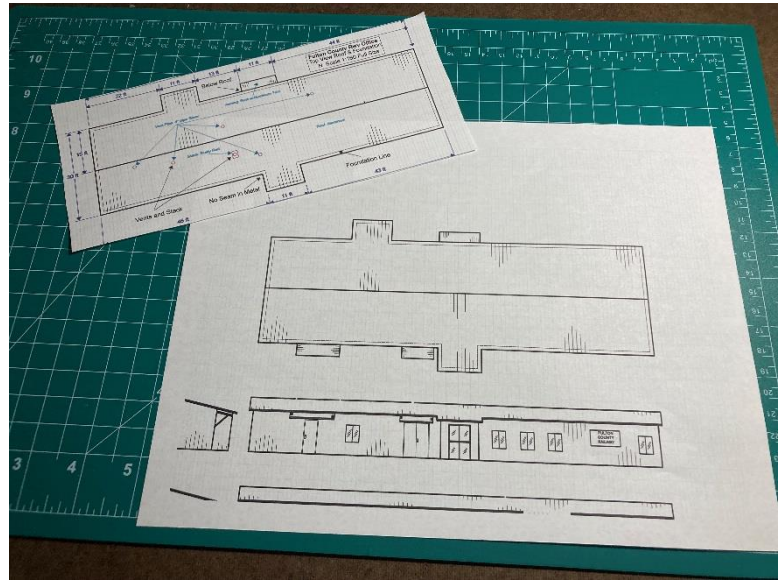


Fig 03: Print a Structure Only Drawing

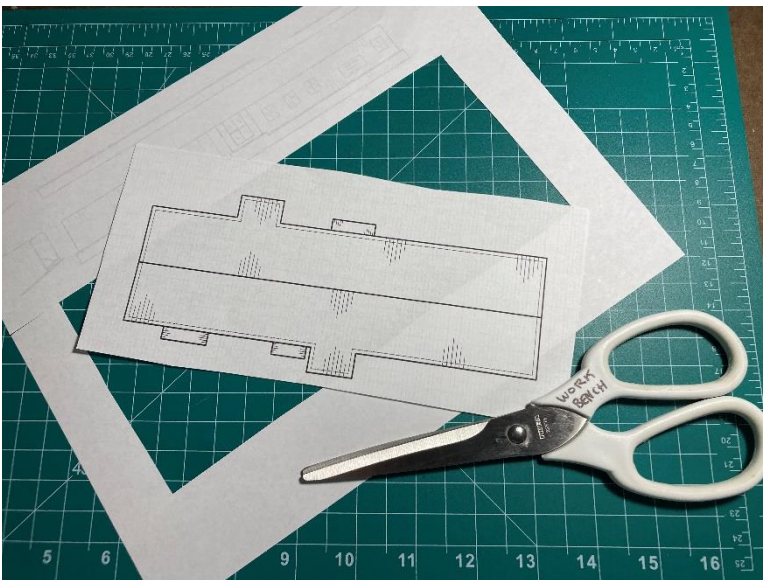


Fig 04: Cut Out Drawing Slightly Wider Than The Structure



Fig 05: Get Chipboard from a Snack or Cereal Box



Fig 06: Glue the Drawing to the chipboard with Glue

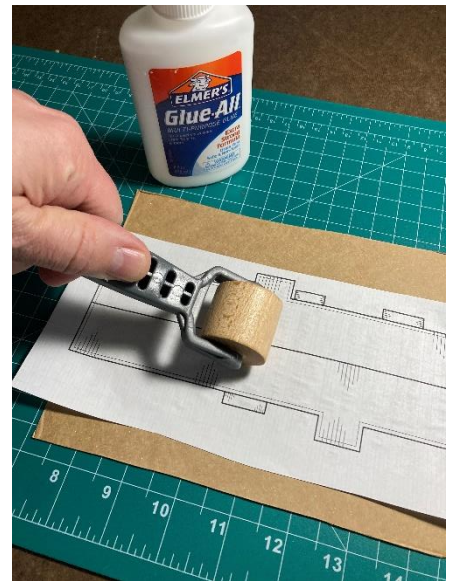


Fig 07: Use Wallpaper Seam Roller to Smooth and Push Down the Drawing Into the Glue

The next day I installed a new blade into the hobby knife and carefully cut out the drawing/chipboard sandwich (Fig 08). I use a steel straight edge and take my time to make sure the cuts are very precise. To get a feel for how the color of the building will look I stole my daughter's colored pencils and colored the components using the color instructions I put on the drawings. The pieces curled a bit, probably from the glue so I laid them under my cutting mat and put heavy objects on it to flatten it out (Fig 09). Normally I would use Scotch Spray Adhesive which doesn't cause warping.

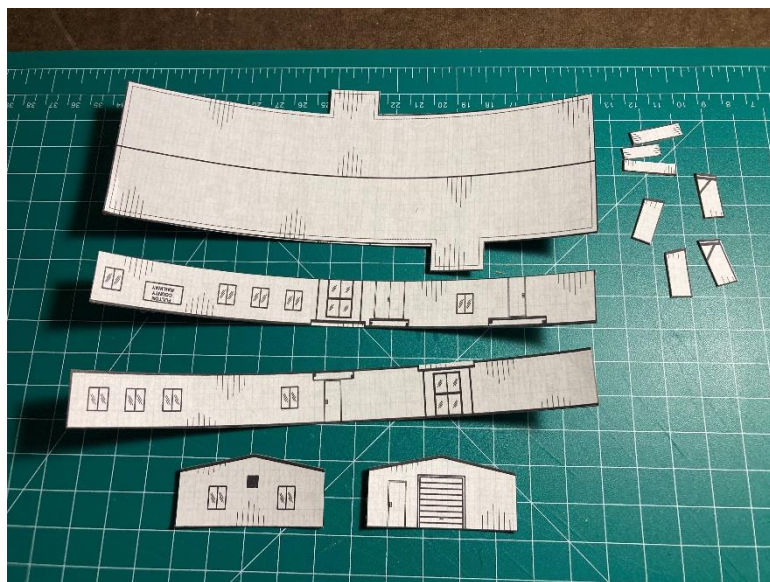


Fig 08: Cut Out Pieces with a Sharp Hobby Knife and Steel Straight Edge



Fig 09: If pieces curl put them under a mat or glass and add weight to flatten

The pieces are turned face down and placed in order of assembly. Using masking tape I put tape across the pieces to put them together (Fig 10). All the walls are assembled into a rectangle, then I added the roof on top. The small entryways were assembled next and taped to the building (Fig 11). Take your time when assembling and make notes because you can build something incorrectly and you need to remember not to do it again on the finished model. Here in the photo (Fig 12) you can see where I put the "wings" of the entryway on backwards! No wonder it didn't fit the building (Fig 13). In the total span of about an hour's time I have a scale mockup of the office building (Fig 14)!



Fig 10: Tape the pieces together to assemble

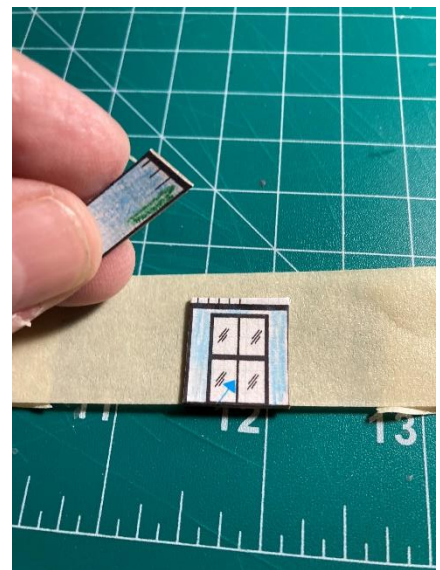


Fig 11: Take time to make sure you assemble it the right way!



Fig 12: Place pieces on masking tape then fold into shape



Fig 13: See my mistake

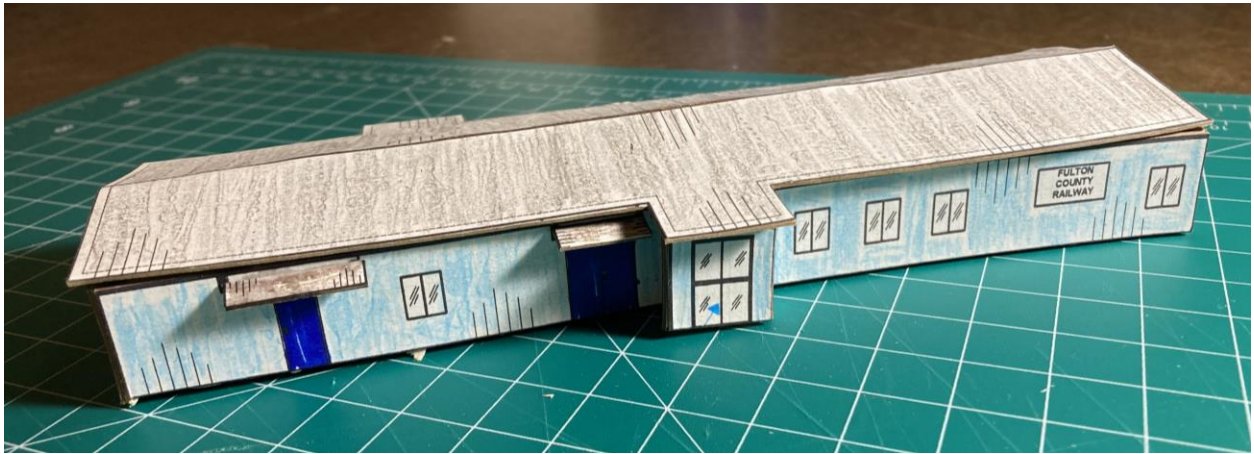


Fig 14: Fully Assembled mockup

The 100-foot-long building is about 7.5 inches long (Fig 15), a bit longer than I thought, and a bit more narrow than I thought as well. Details like the small awnings will need a better way to be placed precisely (Fig 16) so I made a note of that on the drawing. Either way I don't see the need to make changes to the structure and think it will look good on the layout.

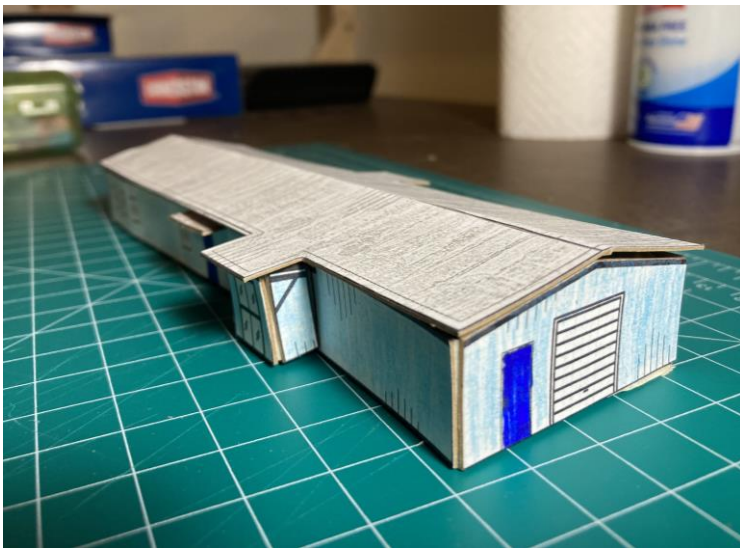


Fig 15: Not perfect and not supposed to be



Fig 16: Test fit details and overall look

Here is what I learned from the project:

- The structure looks good in full size and doesn't require selective compression.
- I built the entry way incorrectly and need to pay more attention when building the final structure.
- The assembly of the entry ways will be the most difficult part of construction and I need to do detail drawing of the parts for precision assembly.
- The roof is going to need under-roof supports, so I need to draw them.
- The sides may tend to bow in, so I need to draw a base for the building to be constructed on.

- The one-foot overhang on the roof may be hard to keep in place during assembly and I may want to make it slightly longer.
- I forgot to draw in any building lighting that is on the prototype.
- The building will cost very little and I'm able to estimate what I need to purchase in sheet styrene from what chipboard I used.
- Awnings need a better way to be installed to keep them at the right angle of slope.

While it took a little over an hour to make the mockup (Fig 17), the lessons that I learned from the activity will save me a lot of time and material cost when building the final model. I'm sure I would have screwed up the entryways and would have had to build them all over again! If you build it well enough, you may want to put it on the layout as a temporary placeholder until you get around to building it. The total cost of the project was probably a buck or two. Give it a try on your next project!



Fig 17: Place the completed mockup on the layout

CLOSING PAGE BONUS



April marks the season's re-opening at Tweetsie Railroad in Blowing Rock, NC. Their 3' narrow gauge locomotive #12 was originally built by Baldwin in 1917 for the East Tennessee and Western North Carolina Railroad (ET&WNC).

Division Brass

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