

## **The Big Train Project Status Report (Part 5)**

The Big Train Project is moving forward. The architects have been very busy putting together the final drawings for their construction of the interior “buildings” and the “tables” for the basic layout. Much of their work has been aimed at meeting fire safety regulations, which govern a wide variety of design features that must be incorporated.

The planning group has identified the track, turnouts, locomotives, and rolling stock needed. So far, it appears that the distribution of purchased items from each of the current manufacturers is fairly evenly distributed among them in terms of cost, and those costs run on the order of tens of thousands of dollars per manufacturer. Don Oeters, the Project’s business leader, is working hard to get contributions from them in exchange for advertisement of their products and of their participation; and, so far, he’s gotten a pretty warm reception for his proposals.

The planning team is exploring the possibility of having an “open house” for the volunteers, possibly as early as the first weekend in January 07, to show what progress has been made, and to energize the volunteers to start working on the various section gangs. Items to be displayed include a scale three-dimensional model of the entire layout, currently being constructed by one of the Cincinnati club members. Also being considered is marking the floor of the EnterTRAINment Junction building with the locations of the layout walkways and key structural features, to show off the size and scope of planned construction.

Meanwhile, efforts are continuing on identifying materials and methods to be used for construction of on-layout buildings and scenery features. The emerging concept is that many of these would be less expensive if made by the volunteers than if purchased from commercial sources. This includes casting common parts like windows, doors, and similar decorative details in quantity in polyester using molds produced from a single original pattern for each item. (One of the planning group’s volunteers has a business which does work using polyester matrix fiberglass composites and is willing to make molds and produce the parts.) So, keep in mind the concepts that Gary Sines has shown us about making simple parts from inexpensive and sometimes unusual source materials. And, think about what kinds of items get repeated use on our modeled buildings that could be produced in quantity. Then, let us know what you’ve come up with. Those ideas will prove valuable as the volunteer work on buildings begins in earnest.

So, stay tuned, more to come! Remember to sign up to the Big Train Project Yahoo group at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bigtp>

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