

The Big Train Project Status Report (Part 14)

There is now a target for the opening date of the layout to the public – it's June 2008. That means having the layout presentable by Friday 30 May 2008. That's nine months from now, which is a truly short time given the work that still needs to be done.

Larry Koehl reports the following status at the EnterTRAINment Junction facility:

“The contractors have begun fading away but they won't be completely gone until about the end of September or mid October would be my guess. However, we the layout builders should be in good position to widen out on the throttle in two to three weeks. There is water in the building, most of the power is on, finishing work is going on all over the place, however we still don't have functioning restrooms and don't know when one might be made operational.

As for the layout and the volunteer effort, Ray Hughes and his helpers - Steve Carr, George Etesse, Tim Watson, Joe Gerstemeier and others have been working away. The first Early Period section, the Mining/Logging area, has most of its mountains framed awaiting poultry wire and foam. In the meantime it is also getting track. Three loops have been laid with a fourth nearing completion. There are still a couple more to go after that.

The second Early Period section with the stream, canal and lake, has for the most part been laid out and streambed, canal bed and roadbed construction have begun. The roadbed for one loop is about 3/4 complete but the fire retardant 2x6 supply has run out. There will be two other loops plus a highline that crosses this area. The third Early Period area, the one with the coke ovens, has roadbed in place and mountains framed. It is awaiting track.

The first Middle Period area with the coal mine, has also gotten practically all its roadbed and mountain framing. Some track has been laid but most has yet to be put down.

All of the remainder of the Middle Period has gotten plywood. Application of plywood has begun in the Modern Period areas. Mountain ridge walls are going up but much of this activity has slowed considerably since the two carpenter foremen and a good part of their crews have been moved to other jobs.

The Middle Period city area has been mapped creating an accurate drawing on which the track configuration can be laid out.”

So, the progress is definitely noteworthy. But, there is a significant near term need for people to help with framing the mountains and the supports for the high-level tracks. There is a lot of that to be done yet, both in the Middle and the Modern Period areas. Also, we need people who can scratch build both simple and complex structures and bridges. Bridges range all the way from simple one-foot long plate girder bridges to high arch-supported truss bridges like the old “Hells Gate” bridge in New York. Buildings range from something as simple as a speeder shed to a large modern open-frame chemical plant, similar to the Cargil plant near Needmore Road in Dayton. In the longer term, we'll need people to help with scenic details like trees, people, automobiles, street lights, etc., etc., etc. Lots to do in little time.

If you have an interest in any of these activities, please, join us. If you need training, stay tuned for future announcements from the section gang leaders. There will be training session to get people up to speed on the techniques that will be used to do a whole host of things.