

The Big Train Project Status Report (Part 16)

October has seen a continuation of the layout construction by the volunteers. In the Early Era portion of the layout, poultry wire with fiberglass backing is being applied to the upper portions of the mountains. Some of this has already been sprayed with the insulating foam which will be the base for the mountainside scenery. The plan is to cover, spray, and “decorate” the upper areas first before proceeding to do the next lower level. That in turn will be completed before the next lower level is done, and so on, if appropriate. This is the plan because the upper areas will be too difficult to access to carve and decorate after the scenery base is applied to the lower areas. The Basic Scenery Section Gang can use help from any volunteers making up the poultry wire and fiberglass covering and then applying that to the mountain framework. The spraying will be done by only a few trained volunteers. Expect to get a request for volunteers to participate in a scenery carving workshop in the near future.

In the meantime, the Roadbed and Track Section Gang has completed laying the track in the Early Era portion of the layout. They are currently continuing to build support structure for track, most recently the 6.5-foot high interurban line which will be on the mountainside behind the Middle Era engine servicing facility. They are also in the process of assembling the structure to support the tracks that run on and in the mountain that is the room for loading the Middle and Modern Era main lines.

Our MVGRS team has been busy marking the track locations on the layout tables in the Middle Era engine servicing facility, the Modern Era city, the modern industrial area, and the balloon and vineyard areas. We still have to mark the modern yard and the amusement areas. Our next challenge will be elevating the central areas of the modern city, which rises one foot from track level to the central monument, fountain, and capitol building.

The Scenic Details Section Gang has held a clinic for making, modifying, and painting figures of people to provide a variety of poses and clothing colors for the population of all the layout areas. There are a lot to do, so if you are interested in painting or modifying some figures, please, let me know. I will bring some to the next MVGRS meeting for volunteers to work on at home. There are also opportunities to trade some unique figures that you have for some of the duplicates that the Big Train Project currently has.

The Bridges Section Gang has made major progress with some significant bridge structures already completed. The spindly “temporary replacement” bridge that will be the centerpiece of the Civil War Camp scene is finished. Bob Mott’s beautiful steel arch main span has also been completed. It will be the first aisle-spanning bridge that customers will see when they enter the layout, and they will be impressed!

A lot of kit buildings have already been constructed, but the more significant challenge will be the large multi-story structures needed for the Middle Era and Modern Era cities. These will have to be scratch built to match the requirements of the city design. In addition, they will have to be built so that portions can be moved or removed so that workers can access the surrounding city streets to place detail items like cars and people and to maintain some of the action features that will be located there, like the trolley line in the Middle Era City and the people mover in the Modern Era city.

As the work continues, calls for section gang and work session meetings will increase, and your opportunities to participate in a more pleasant environment at the facility will also increase. Bathrooms and air conditioning are now functional, so the area presents a much more comfortable working environment. Join us. It'll be GREAT!

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