

## The Big Train Project Status Report (Part 116)

This month's article covers new things on the EnterTRAINment Junction (EJ) layout. As is usual in these articles, the order of the items described is in the order in which you would see them as you progressed along the EJ layout's aisle.

The first new item that's been in work for some time is the addition of passenger figures and lighting to the interiors of passenger cars. A notable example, best seen when the train is stopped at the Middle City's Union Station, is the Crescent Limited Dining Car (Figure 1). It includes the figures of diners, overall lighting, as well as table-top lights in the dining section and figures of the cooks and overall lighting in the kitchen section. In this car the lighting is constant intensity; it does not vary with how much power is supplied to the track. That means the lights stay on and are steady, whether the train is moving or not.



Figure 1. Upgraded Passenger Car

To call EJ visitors' attention to the interior detailing which has been installed in some of the Middle City's buildings, photographs of the buildings and their associated interior details are provided along the layout aisle. The pictures are provided for the Fox Theater Building (Figure 2), the Grand Hotel (Figure 3), and the Elwood Grill (Figure 4).





Figure 4. Elwood Grill Detail Views

To reduce the repetitive effort and the wear and tear on the Modern City’s residential buildings which have been repeatedly decorated and undecorated for both the Halloween and the Christmas holidays, two sets of new buildings are being produced, one set decorated for Halloween and the other set for Christmas. They’ll stay decorated and will temporarily replace the undecorated houses during the appropriate seasons. The first of these “permanently decorated” houses is one decorated for Christmas, shown in Figure 5 already installed on the layout.



Figure 5. Christmas House

A lot of volunteer time, talent, and effort is being applied to making the grade crossings in the Middle and Modern cities not only realistic in appearance but also realistic in function. The latest crossing to get gates and flashers is in the Modern City across the aisle from the in-layout restrooms. Figure 6 shows the inbound set already installed; but, since the outbound set is still in the shop, the crossing has been temporarily modeled as closed with barricades and signs while the CSX truck and crew are modeled working on the signal that has already been installed.



Figure 6. Crossing Gate Repair

Figure 7 shows the outbound gate-and-flasher-set mounted to a work bench in the EJ modeling shop. There's almost as much mechanical and electrical equipment below street level as there is in what shows above street level. Animations include the gate, which swings up and down and its three lights which flash whenever the gate is not in the open position. There are also four pairs of alternating flashers, two for each street direction below the cross-buck and two on the overhead platform. All of these animations are controlled by a computer module (not shown), which uses sensors in the tracks to tell when a train is coming and when it has passed on either of the two tracks in the crossing, enabling its software to activate the appropriate response from the gates and flashers.

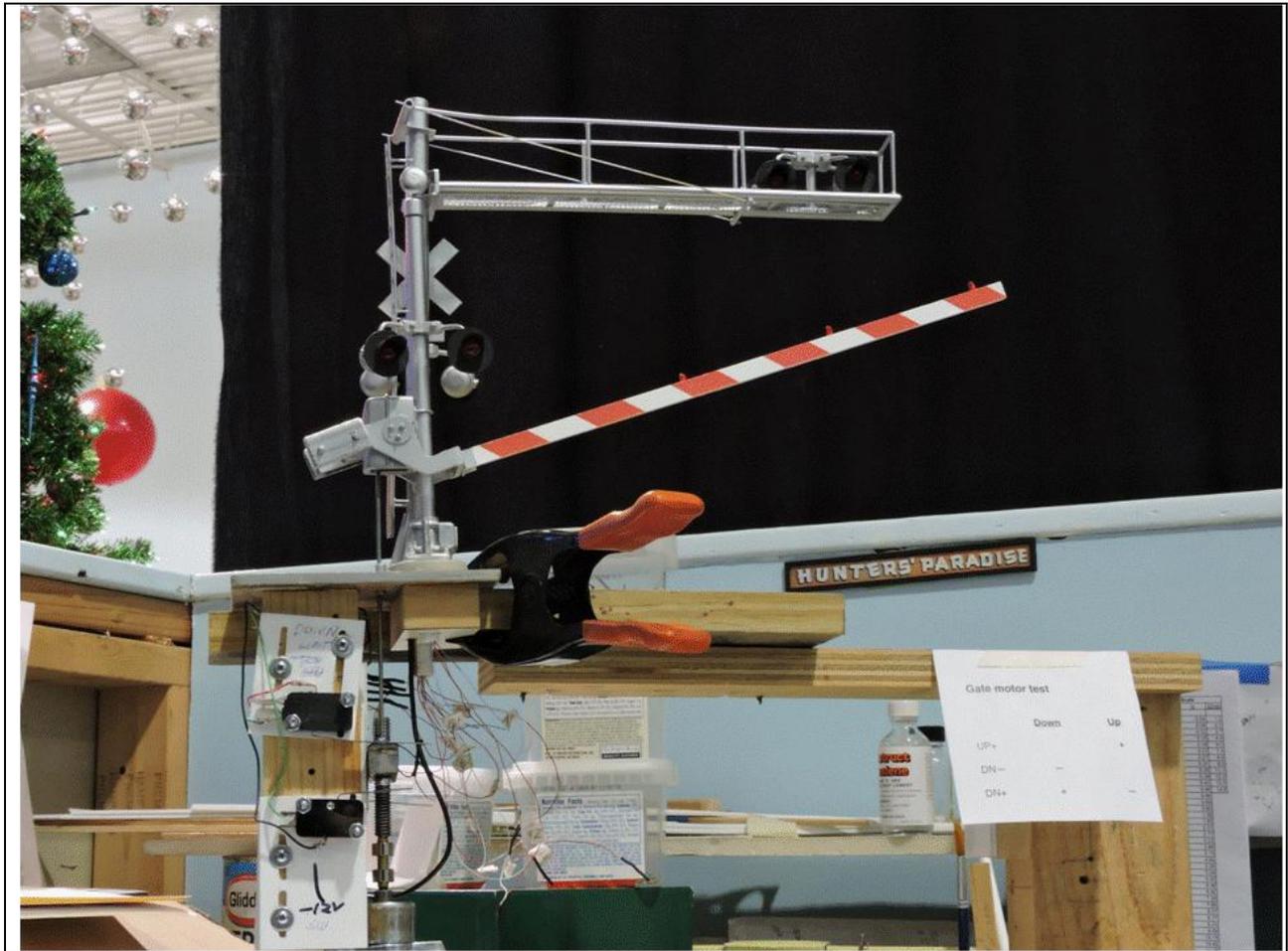


Figure 7. Upgrade Side Street View

More goodness for visitors to appreciate, these items are just some additional things to look for the next time you come.

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