

The Big Train Project Status Report (Part 125)

This month's article is about changes being made at EnterTRAINment Junction (EJ) in the features of the Halloween celebration, called Jack-O-Lantern Junction.

The first and most obvious change is the addition of a Halloween train layout, visible from both the entrance and the exit of the Jack-O-Lantern Junction indoor maze in the EJ display area (Figures 1 and 2).



Figure 1. New Jack-O-Lantern Junction Train Layout



Figure 2. More Jack-O-Lantern Junction Layout

Prominent at the Jack-O-Lantern Junction station and befitting its name is the pumpkin head water tank (Figure 3).



Figure 3. The Jack-O-Lantern Junction Railroad Water Tower

In prior years, the three houses in the Modern City on the EJ layout, across the aisle from the entrance to the EJ display area, were decorated for Halloween during late September through October 31st, the period during which Jack-O-Lantern Junction was operating. When that ended and the Christmas Journey took its place, the Halloween decorations were removed from the houses and replaced with Christmas decorations. This created a lot of work that had to be completed in a short period of time during the change-over, and the removal of glued-on décor didn't do much for the general appearance of the houses. To simplify the change-over and avoid the wear and tear on the houses, three new houses were assembled and decorated specifically for Halloween (Figures 4, 5, and 6). These, along with their bases and with their decorations intact, would be removed replaced with houses decorated for Christmas. The latter were built on bases with the same footprint as those of the removed Halloween houses. In turn, after the holidays, the Christmas houses would be replaced with non-holiday decorated houses, again with the same footprint. The house replacement cycle would repeat the following year with the Halloween houses again taking their place, and so on.



Figure 4. Halloween House Number 1

Halloween House Number 2 is just a single-story dwelling compared to its predecessor (Figure 5). The game of horseshoes out in front is unaffected by the change.



Figure 5. Halloween House Number 2

Halloween House Number 3 has a well manicured hedge around its border and a separate garage. A noteworthy new feature of the entire area is that the former gravel road that served this housing area has been replaced with a proper paved road and has a formal paved railroad crossing leading to it. The crossing, however, still needs some appropriate warning signs.



Figure 6. Halloween House Number 3

The production of replaceable permanently-decorated holiday houses simplifies the change-overs and allows each of them to be more uniquely decorated for their particular season. It also allows for more durable décor and more features than the add-and-remove process would allow. The Christmas houses are still in work. They'll be covered in a future article, so stay tuned.

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