

## The Big Train Project Status Report (Part 137)

This month's report provides an update on new additions and improvements to the EnterTRAINment Junction (EJ) layout. As usual, the items in this report are in the order a visitor would encounter them while progressing along the EJ layout's aisle.

The first item is an introduction to a long-awaited improvement: the addition of a canal lock in the Early Period near the appropriately named "Canal Town." Figure 1 shows the lock gates and sidewalls installed, with the surrounding scenery still in work. There will be more on this in a future report after the work has been completed.



Figure 1. Canal Lock Installation Under Construction

A significant improvement in the drive-in theater in the Middle Period is the addition of interior lighting and details to the theater's refreshment stand. It now has a popcorn machine, a hot-dog heater with very generously sized hot dogs with huge buns, and the vendor happily providing large tubs of popcorn to eager customers (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Lighting and Details in Drive-In Theater Refreshment Stand

In celebration of EJ's Tenth Anniversary, a number of posters have been mounted on the maintenance-shop wall below the mezzanine, showing dated historical photographs of how EJ has evolved over time (Figure 3). It's an interesting chronicle, well worth a few minutes of study the next time you visit. (But then, I'm just a bit biased -- having seen, participated in, photographed, and reported on many of the items shown.)



Figure 3. EJ Photographic History

In the Modern City, in the park adjacent to the parking lot for the central subway station, a large group has taken over the area to celebrate a birthday, complete with balloons, gifts, food, and, appropriately, a train-themed birthday cake (Figure 5). There's even a character with the name "Ray" on the back of his shirt (that brings back memories for many of us volunteers).



Figure 4. Big Birthday Party

Figure 5 shows the new aisle-side paved road (seen also in the foreground of Figure 4) which runs from the edge of the layout by the birthday-scene to the series of seasonally decorated houses, the church, and the cemetery near the lift bridge. The implication is that there may be more to the modeled housing area than is actually included on the layout, justifying such a nicely paved road.



Figure 5. New Modern City Road

Finally, the balloon, in flight over the Amish farm, has gotten a fabulous new color scheme, in contrast to the plainness of the farm scene below it (Figure 6).



Figure 6. New Multicolored Balloon

Improvements like these continue to be made to the layout, based on inputs from both the volunteers themselves and from visitors' comments. Your ideas are welcome as well. Let the volunteers or the EJ staff know what you think.

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