

The Big Train Project Status Report (Part 141)

This month's report is a bit different from the usual. We'll be looking at some of the interesting vehicles that liven up the scenery on the EnterTRAINment Junction layout. As is usual the order of most of the pictures is as a visitor would encounter the scenes while following the layout aisle.

Located in front of the Woolworth store in the Middle City, a cool couple is riding in their convertible Cadillac, pulling an Airstream® Bambi trailer (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Cool Couple

At the Middle Period Diesel Engine House, a heavy-lift utility crane is moving a pair of wheels to their intended destination (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Heavy Lifter

In the car show display area near the Modern City's lift bridge, one contestant is applying some last minute elbow grease to shine up her hopped-up dragster(?) (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Car Show Gal

At the car show parking lot, a load of drinks is being unloaded from a pickup truck for the show attendees (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Getting Ready to Party

On the road to the Space Needle parking lot in the Modern City, there's an accident scene, complete with damaged cars, police, tow trucks, and push-the-button flashing lights. (Figure 5).



Figure 5. The Wreck

At the next railroad crossing beyond the traffic accident, the road is closed, while workers are trying to repair the crossing's lights (Figure 6). (They've been working on this for month's now and are expected to continue, so you won't miss this well-modeled example of a real-world annoyance.)



Figure 6. Repairs

In the layout's "Balloon Area," there's a nicely detailed Amish farm, which results in the otherwise unlikely grouping of a modern Ford pickup truck and trailer for the waiting hot-air balloon chase-crew with an old-fashioned Amish enclosed horse-drawn buggy on its way up to the farm (Figure 7).



Figure 7. The New and the Old

That's all for the sampling of vehicles currently on the layout, but the subject of modeled vehicles did bring back memories of a personal favorite, which still exists, just not at EJ. There are two very different modeling methods that can be used to deal with layout edges. One is an abrupt cutoff; the other is a more gentle "blending," using natural features like rivers or canyons. The updated Modern City has a literally "in-your-face" application of the former: the road bridge which ends abruptly at almost face height at the clear-plastic aisle barrier (Figure 8). A consequence of using this modeling method could result when a modeled road reaches such an edge -- there is a chance that a vehicle crossing that boundary will be cut off as well. And so it was, for a short period in 2011, when such an instance was portrayed (Figure 8) with models at the bridge and near the grade crossing shown in Figure 6. However, the spoof was not appreciated, and the two halves of the vehicle were soon removed, leaving only the photographic evidence as a reminder of their past presence.



Figure 8. Consequences of the Layout Edge Cutoff

Quite rightly, the emphasis and attention on the EJ layout is focused on the operating trains. Nevertheless, the use of a wide variety of vehicles enhances the realism of the scenes through which the trains pass and also adds a further area of interest for visitors to appreciate and enjoy should they be so inclined.

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