

The New Desert Dispatch

Timetable

ARHS

Tempe Museum

Work Sessions

Monday & Wednesday

9:00am to 3:00pm

Tempe Museum

2530 S. Rural Rd.

Tempe, AZ

2026 Events

The Hobbyist
Model Train Show

1st Sat. of the Month, 7am

1764 W. Broadway Rd.

Mesa, AZ

ARHS East Side Swap
Meet (NEW)

Saturday July 11, 9am

Tempe Nazarene Church

3929 Rural Rd.

Phoenix, AZ

Beat the Heat
Train Show

Saturday July 25, 9am

Embry Riddle University

3700 Willow Crk. Rd.

Prescott, AZ

ARHS Swap Meet

November 14, 9am

Tempe Nazarene Church

3929 Rural Rd.

Phoenix, AZ

From the Business Car

Hello again ARHS!

Craig Faris, President ARHS

As we prepare to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the independence of the United States, I wanted to ponder just some of the freedoms that come with being an American.

- We are free to worship as we wish..
- We are free to travel anywhere in the country, without seeking approval.
- We are free to pursue any career we wish.
- We are free to speak our minds, truthfully.
- We are free to vote for the candidate of our choice without fear of retribution.
- We are free to bear arms..
- We are free to assemble...with the finest group of model railroaders I know.
- We are free to have hobbies...just remember that the hobbies are not free!!



Happy 250th Birthday America!!



Correction: In the June issue, the PSR AZ Div. meet was listed for Oct. 27. The Correct date is Saturday October 17.

NMRA Events

2026 National Convention

Chattanooga, TN
July 27- August 2,
 Chattanooga
 Convention Center
 One Carter Plaza,
 Chattanooga, TN
 37402

2026 PSR Regional Convention

San Diego
Sept. 9 - 13,
 Doubletree Hilton
 Mission Valley
 7450 Hazard Center Dr
 San Diego, CA 92108

PSR AZ-Division Meet

Scottsdale
Sat. Oct. 17, 8 am - 5 pm
 Scottsdale
 Congregational United
 Church of Christ
 4425 N Granite Reef Rd.
 Scottsdale, AZ 85251

Who Do You Call?

By Ray Rumble

Perhaps you have seen the ads on TV, referring to vehicle service companies like Endurance, represented by Danica Patrick or Car Shield, endorsed by Ice-T. Who do you call when your vehicle breaks down?

Well, for the Union Pacific Railroad it's RJ Corman Rail Services Company.



That was the case when on December 2, 2025 a Union Pacific train, traveling between Maricopa and Gila Bend, AZ. suffered an electrical motor failure, on one of its locomotives. Engine number 7936, a General Electric model C45A CCTE had to be removed from service as soon as practical. A failed motor can be a hazard to the rest of the train, for example; locking up, or even sparking a fire. As one railroader stated, It's equivalent to dragging a 16,000 pound paperweight.

I was on a rail fan / photo trip that day, when I came upon the scene. A small army of men and equipment were already on site. The locomotive had been shoved onto a siding next to the main line, in this remote area of the Sonoran desert. the RJ Corman crew were in the process of stabilizing the locomotive prior to lifting this 500,000 pound beast and removing the offending motor.

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*ARHS Officers**2023-2025**President - Craig Faris**Vice President - Ken Nelson**Secretary - Dave Brown**Treasurer - Dan Kubarych**Director - Dennis Ranke**Director - Dewayne Koltin**Past Presidents - Don**Stewart, Jesse Poole*

The New Desert Dispatch is a publication of the Arizona Railroad Historical Society.

Views expressed by guest authors are their own and do not reflect the opinions or positions of the ARHS.

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Mission Statement

The Arizona Railroad Historical Society strives to create a world class railroad experience which includes history, education and railroad operations centered around the state of Arizona.

Arizona Railroad Historical Society

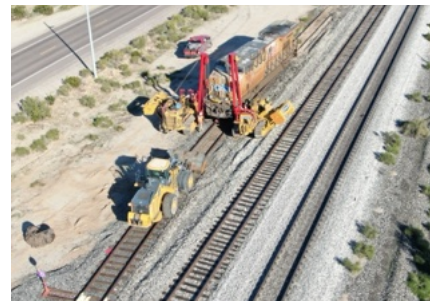


(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

After the Loco was secure, two Caterpillar side-booms and a front loader were used to carefully lift it off the front truck unit. This was all done slowly and carefully. These workmen follow the motto "Safety first, is job number one!"

After the lift, the bad motor was disconnected, removed and set aside for transport.

A new motor had arrived on a large flatbed semi-truck. The motor was lifted off by a front loader, and slid into position, under the locomotive. The process, was done very slowly and carefully. The new motor



was then connected to the locomotive, mechanically and electrically, as it was lowered into position on the engine's truck. The unit was then tested and made available for service again. the bad motor was loaded on the waiting semi truck as the men and equipment were preparing for their return trip to the Tucson yard. It was quite interesting to observe such an efficient process. Now if only Endurance, or Car Shield, could remove and replace a motor in the middle of the desert in less than four hours.

Rail fan Chases Big Boy Across Western New York

By Dennis Ranke



BUFFALO, N.Y. — The excitement began Monday afternoon, June 8, as I arrived in Western New York to join thousands of rail fans awaiting the arrival of Union Pacific's legendary Big Boy No. 4014. The world's largest operating steam locomotive was making its historic first visit to New York as part of Union Pacific's coast-to-coast tour celebrating America's 250th anniversary.

Over the next several days, rail fans lined tracks, bridges, and grade crossings across the region, cameras in hand and scanners at the ready. Every whistle echoing across the countryside drew crowds eager to witness a piece of railroad history. Built in 1941, Big Boy No. 4014 weighs more than 1.2 million pounds and remains the largest operating steam locomotive in the world.

The chase began in earnest as the locomotive worked eastward across Western New York. Spectators gathered in communities large and small, while photographers staked out favorite locations hours before the train's arrival. Among the most memorable scenes was the crossing of the Genesee River Arch Bridge in Letchworth State Park, where Big Boy thundered across one of the Northeast's most dramatic railroad vistas, framed by the park's deep gorge.

Every stop along the route became an event. Families, longtime railroad employees, and first-time rail fans stood shoulder to shoulder, united by the unmistakable sound of the giant locomotive's whistle and the sight of its massive driving wheels slowly rolling past. Many had traveled hundreds of miles for the opportunity to witness history.

For me, the trip was far more than simply photographing a famous steam locomotive. It was about sharing the experience with fellow rail fans who understand the excitement of hearing a distant whistle, tracking the train's progress on scanners and social media, and racing ahead to the next location in hopes of finding the perfect angle. (Continue on page 5)

(Continued from page 4) Patience often proved just as important as speed. Hours of waiting in fields, along roadsides, and beside grade crossings were rewarded with only a few fleeting moments as the massive locomotive appeared, filled the air with exhaust and steam, and disappeared toward the next town. Yet those brief moments made every mile of travel worthwhile.

Perhaps the most remarkable part of the journey was the camaraderie. Complete strangers exchanged train reports, suggested photography locations, and welcomed newcomers into conversations as though they were longtime friends. The shared pursuit of Big Boy created an instant community stretching across New York.

As the locomotive continued its historic journey, it left behind more than unforgettable photographs. It rekindled memories for older generations who remembered the age of steam, introduced younger audiences to the power and beauty of historic railroading, and reminded everyone that America's railroad heritage still has the ability to inspire.

When Big Boy No. 4014 disappeared around the final curve, the chase came to an end. But the memories of Western New York—the echo of the whistle across the countryside, the spectacular crossing at Letchworth, and the friendships formed along the tracks—will last long after the steam has drifted away.

For thousands who witnessed the giant locomotive's first visit to New York, it was more than a train passing through. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience and a celebration of living railroad history that will be remembered for years to come.



Build a Better, Looking, More Bodacious, Box Car

By Dennis Ranke

Making a freight car look realistic is usually less about buying expensive models and more about improving the details. Here are some of the most effective upgrades for a model railroad boxcar.

- Apply a thin wash to bring out panel lines.
- Fade the body color with light oversprays or weathering powders.
- Add rust streaks below roof seams, door tracks, and grab irons.
- Use airbrushed road grime along the lower sides and ends.
- Dust the roof with soot and dirt.
- Seal everything with a flat clear finish.



Start with the basics

- Replace plastic wheel sets with metal wheels for smoother operation and less track dirt.
- Install quality knuckle couplers and check the coupler height with a gauge.
- Verify the car meets NMRA weight recommendations for reliable tracking.
- Check that the trucks swivel freely and the wheel gauge is correct.



Improve the appearance

- Remove mold lines and flash before painting.
- Touch up shiny plastic parts with flat paint.
- Paint the roof a faded, oxidized color instead of leaving it glossy.
- Paint the wheel faces, truck side frames, and underframe grimy brown or dark gray.



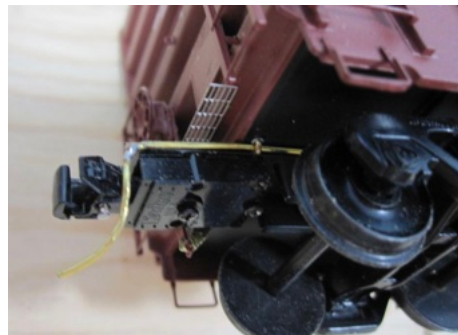
Add realistic weathering

Less is often more.

Upgrade the details

Many ready-to-run cars benefit from finer parts.

- Replace molded grab irons with wire grab irons.
- Add uncoupling levers.
- Install scale air hoses.
- Replace thick running boards (for older-era cars) with etched metal versions if appropriate.
- Add brake piping and brake rods underneath if the model will be viewed closely.



Lettering improvements

- Add reweigh, lubrication, and inspection decals.
- Include chalk marks with colored pencils or weathering pencils.
- Add era-appropriate graffiti if modeling the 1990s or later.
- Keep reporting marks and data consistent with your chosen railroad and era.

Interior details

If the doors are open:

- Paint the interior a weathered wood or faded steel color.
- Add a realistic floor.
- Include loads, pallets, crates, or dunnage.

Make every car unique

Real freight cars rarely looked identical.

- Vary the weathering from car to car.
- Mix roof colors and degrees of fading.
- Give some cars fresh repairs or replacement doors.
- Add small rust patches, paint touch-ups, and subtle imperfections.

Match your era

A boxcar should reflect the time period you're modeling.

- **1950s–1960s:** Cleaner paint, roof walks, fewer graffiti markings.
- **1970s–1980s:** More fading, rust, and patched paint.
- **1990s–present:** Heavy weathering, graffiti, reflective safety stripes, and many patch-outs.

Don't overlook the roof

The roof is often the most visible part of a boxcar on a layout.

- Fade the paint.
- Add rust around seams and roof panels.
- Apply soot near exhaust-heavy areas.
- Create subtle variations with powders or oil paints.

Final touches

- Check that the car rolls freely.
- Confirm coupler trip pins clear the rails.
- Add a little graphite to moving parts if needed.
- Photograph the finished car under natural-looking lighting—photos often reveal details you may want to refine.

For contest-quality models, the biggest improvements usually come from **wire grab irons, accurate weathering, additional brake details underneath, and careful prototype research.**

Those four areas can transform an ordinary ready-to-run boxcar into a model that stands out on any layout or in an NMRA contest.



Prototype Accuracy

A visitor asked, "Is your railroad prototype accurate?"

A member said, "Absolutely... until the operating session starts. Then it's whatever keeps the trains moving."



Arizona Division Holds Summer Meet in Prescott Valley

By Dennis Ranke

The Pacific Southwest Region (PSR) Arizona Division held its summer meeting on Saturday, June 27, at Quad City Christian Church in Prescott Valley. Thirty-five members including 6 representatives from ARHS, attended the lackluster event.

The business meeting began at 10 a.m. with Director Chris Thompson presiding in place of Superintendent Paul Burke, who was unable to attend.

During the meeting, Thompson reminded members that volunteers are still needed for the 2027 Pacific Southwest Region Convention, which will be hosted in Mesa from September 29 through October 3, 2027. Members interested in helping with the convention are encouraged to volunteer.

Terry Fearn received his Master Model Railroader Award. #816. Congratulations Terry!

Treasurer John Mick presented the financial report, reporting that the division recorded a net loss of \$500.24 for the Tucson meeting held last April. More members need to attend and a less expensive venue would help.

Following a short break, Bruce Petrarca presented a clinic on the NMRA Achievement Program, explaining its requirements and the opportunities it offers members to develop their modeling skills while working toward Master Model Railroader recognition.

Lunch followed, with members enjoying Subway sandwiches, chips, and refreshments while visiting with fellow model railroaders.

Clinic sessions resumed at 1 p.m. with an engaging presentation by Terry Fearn on his model railroad based on the citrus industry around Edison, California, where he grew up. Rather than focusing on the layout itself, Fearn centered his presentation on the history and operation of the citrus rail industry that inspired his modeling.

Hank Morris followed with a brief clinic, "Model Railroad Layouts on the Road," sharing ideas and experiences of portable layouts and taking model railroads to train shows and public displays.

The formal meeting concluded early, allowing members to spend about 40 minutes visiting while judging was completed in the contest room. Raffle prizes were then distributed, with everyone who remained receiving a prize.

One disappointment noted by members was the absence of an awards ceremony following the contest judging, leaving contest winners and attendees without the customary recognition of the day's winning entries. ARHS came home with 5 ribbons. A First place for Levity. Three First places for photography and one Second place for color photography.

The next Arizona Division meeting will be held in Scottsdale on October 17, 2026.



Bill Ryan enjoys the ups and downs of modeling on the Arizona Central Railroad



Ray Rumble laying track for Ash Fork



“Missed it by that much!”

Agent Maxwell Smart



Hornell, NY June 11th 2026. #4014 stops for a grease break before heading to Scranton PA. Once there, The Big Boy will spend 2 week at Steamtown USA for a complete wheel overhaul.