
INTRODUCTION

The following discusses what's new at Richmond Controls since the Fourth Quarter 1999 Newsletter. Feel free to call if you need additional information - Jim

NEW LOCOMOTIVES AND CARS

Note: I generally don't devote any space to discussing installations in HO Scale and larger locomotives, since installations in these locomotives are so simple and straight forward (at least, when compared to N and Z Scale). It is generally safe to assume that there is a Richmond Controls lighting module for any HO Scale locomotive or car, as well as S Scale, O Scale, G Scale, 1" Scale, etc.

Kato N Scale SD40-2: Richmond Controls modules can be installed in this locomotive with only an intermediate level of difficulty. So far, customers have primarily ordered three different varieties, namely

- EZ13-040, dual H/L, steady D/L - \$28.00
- EZ01-021, dual H/L + beacon - \$34.00
- EZ01-040S, dual H/L + alternating D/L - \$36.00

("H/L" = headlights, "D/L" = ditch lights.)

In all cases, the module mounts in the rear ceiling of the body shell and remains with the shell when it is removed from the chassis. This makes servicing the mechanism more hassle-free. No soldering is required for installation, but the installer needs a #55 drill for the lights, a #46 drill for the beacon, and superglue.

Nn3 LOCOMOTIVES: A customer (Ted Brandon) has discovered that the EZ21 module can be cut down to about 9 x 15 mm to fit the tenders of many Nn3 steam locomotives. It can then supply a locomotive headlight and a tender backup light. For now, I'm calling the kit with the cut-down board the "Ted Brandon Special" or "EZ21-020TB". It comes with a tiny two-wire connector assembly for connecting the locomotive headlight to the tender electrically. It can be supplied with bezels or a Sunrise Enterprises tender light casting if necessary. The EZ21-020TB with connector is \$33.00, and bezels or Sunrise parts are additional.

NEW PRODUCTS

DUAL HEADLIGHT BEZELS: I get a great deal of assistance from Dan Crews at Sunrise Enterprises. A customer in HO Scale wanted bezels capable of supporting two headlight or Mars Light bulbs. I made some patterns and sent them to Dan, and I have received the first samples. They are sized to fit the more popular HO Scale cab locomotives, to provide an easy way to

have two individual lamps in the headlight or Mars Light openings. I believe Dan will be listing these on his web site (<http://www.psln.com/sunrise/>) as they become available. I intend to keep some handy for those who need them. The first one, roughly 0.195" diameter, is presently available for Stewart and Intermountain F7 headlights, and it can be filed down a bit to fit Athearn F7s. Others are in the works and we may do O Scale.

CURRENT COLLECTORS: In response to customer requests, I have designed and produced replacement or supplementary current collectors for three different types of N Scale locomotives:

- Con-Cor Challenger & Big Boy Tender - \$20.00
- Bachmann Northern Tender - \$20.00
- Samhonga Diesels with 6-wheel trucks - \$15.00

The tender-mounted kits are more complex because a jumper with tiny wires and connector must be connected between the tender and locomotive. (These parts are included). The Samhonga Diesel kit provides wipers that wipe on the back of EVERY wheel. It is for the metal 6-wheel truck with the lengthwise step on the bottom and the words "SAM" and "Korea" on the bottom. This kit is appropriate for the W&R diesels and some Hallmark diesels.

If anyone has any requests for other locomotive wipers, please let me know. I have heard two suggestions: Bachmann "J" tender and Overland diesels with 2-axle trucks.

OVERVOLTAGE PROTECTION CIRCUIT: All Richmond Controls modules are rated at 16 volts PEAK input voltage. We have learned the hard way that some common power packs put out much greater PEAK voltages. For one customer, I occasionally supply a small overvoltage protection board, the EZ-OVP. It connects between the track and the EZ-LITE™ module and safely prevents voltages above 16 volts from getting through to the EZ-LITE™ board. If anyone cares, I can also set it up to rectify the input voltage as well as limiting it, so that the EZ-LITE™ board would become non-directional.

INTERMOUNTAIN N SCALE WHEELS: I will soon have a supply of the new metal N Scale wheels sold by Intermountain. These work well in MicroTrains trucks, and can be used with EZ-LITE™ FRED or lighting modules installed in freight cars or passenger cars. Intermountain has agreed to allow me to repackage the wheels four sets per package for those customers who only need enough for one car.

PRICE CHANGES

N SCALE RADIO TOWER: My initial prices on the various versions of the radio tower proved to be too optimistic, and therefore I am forced to either increase prices or stop selling the product. I will continue selling the tower by itself at the Showcase recommended price of \$15.00. The standard Bag-of-Parts Kit with strobes, winking and steady red lights and photocell control is now \$80.00 with antenna or \$70.00 without the antenna. The Ready-to-Run version, painted and fully functional, is now \$180.00. The best I can do for dealers is to offer half of the normal discount, so we can both make a little money on a sale.

SPECIAL PRODUCTS

There were several requests for special products during the past quarter. These included the following:

COMMUTER CAR LIGHTS: A customer requested headlights, a red tail light, and a rotary beacon on the end of a Con-Cor gallery-style commuter car that had been highly detailed by Jirousek Custom Passenger Cars. The beacon was to be non-directional but the other lights were to be directional. All lights were to be track powered and flicker-free. The trick was to remember the last direction of travel when the car ran over a dirty spot or otherwise temporarily lost contact with the rails. We found a way to make it happen.

33" RADIO ANTENNA: A customer wanted to build an extra-tall Showcase Miniatures radio antenna with the light package. Conceptually, this is straight-forward, but it will still require a good deal of effort and care. If the customer is successful, I will see if I can post a picture on the web site. He is also doing a 22" tall antenna.

1:24 SCALE F15 WITH LIGHTS: A model airplane enthusiast requested a lighting package of warning lights, direction lights, and landing lights on a large model of an F15 jet. A few of the lights need to flash. This is a simple application for the EZ08, and we decided to use lamps for the landing lights and red or green LEDs for the other lights.

PRIME STRATOLITE: A customer wanted a beacon to simulate the Prime Stratolite. The standard Richmond Controls beacon is meant to be a simulation of the Western-Cullen amber rotary beacon that uses a mirror rotating around a single light bulb to produce strobe-like flashes. The Prime Stratolite actually has four stationary lamps that flash in sequence. The customer made me aware of a wonderful videotape, "Extreme SP" by Charles Smiley, that includes many shots of the Prime Stratolite in action. I was able to step through the video frames and determine the timing sequence. I confirmed what the customer had told me, that there is a brief OFF

period between when one light goes off and the next comes on. I was able to simulate that using the normal dome-shaped amber LED that we use, and thus the Prime Stratolite simulation is available as a no-extra-charge special option. By the way, in HO Scale, Details West makes a very nice replica of the Stratolite (RB-106) and the Western-Cullen beacon (RB-126). The amber lens on the RB-106 can be hollowed out to accept the Richmond Controls LED, and the amber lens of the RB-126 can be replaced by the Richmond Controls amber LED.

WESTERN PACIFIC BARREL-TYPE LIGHTS: A customer wanted the single-lamp barrel-type headlights on his Western Pacific GP7s and GP35s. This is easy if you start with the Sunrise Enterprises N-600 (GP7) or N-601 (GP35) detail parts. The appropriate EZ-LITE™ modules can be supplied with a single headlamp rather than the normal dual headlamp.

WEB SITES YOU SHOULD VISIT

I'm sure that those of you with Internet access have already discovered the "Big Name" web sites maintained by Atlas, MicroTrains, Athearn, Intermountain, deLuxe Innovations, etc. Although I personally feel that Sunrise Enterprises deserves to be included in this "Big Name" group, I wanted to make a special point of recommending a visit to Dan's web site. As mentioned above, it is (<http://www.psln.com/sunrise/>). Note that Dan has included photos showing detail parts installed on prototype locomotives.

A customer pointed out Steve King's outstanding web site that provides a wealth of information on gyrating warning lights: (<http://www.trainweb.com/gyra/>). This is a very complete and detailed reference packed with information about Gyralights, Mars Lights, beacons, ditch lights, etc. You should have a look if you can.

TRAIN SHOWS

Train Show plans for the remainder of 2000 include Houston (April 8), Denver NTRAK (May 6), N Scale Collectors (Reno, June 28), Santa Fe Modelers (Chicago, July 6), NMRA (San Jose, August 2), CB&Q/SLSF/RI Modelers (Ft. Worth, September 21), SP H&TS (Portland, Sep. 27), Ft. Worth Train Show (Nov.) and Oklahoma City Train Show (Dec.).