

RICHMOND CONTROLS NEWSLETTER - FOURTH QUARTER 2003

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discussed with potential customers. This project will move forward when a firm demand appears.

Intermountain N Scale Tunnel Motors and SD45-2s -

The first of these long-awaited locomotive models is expected to be shipped soon. The major *initial* purchasers of the prototype tunnel motors were the Southern Pacific, Denver & Rio Grande Western, and the Cotton Belt. It was normal for these locomotives to be equipped with dual headlights and dual Gyalights. The Rio Grande placed the Gyalights in the nose, with the headlights above the windshield. The SP and SSW reversed these positions, putting the Gyalights above the windshield. We expect to develop modules to provide these and other combinations of lights for tunnel motors. Since prototype units were more recently equipped with ditch lights or rotary beacons in some cases, we expect to also provide these lights if requested.

We also expect to make lighting packages appropriate for the SD45-2 as used by various railroads. It is expected that Intermountain will furnish a Golden White LED headlight. Some users may desire also ditch lights, signal lights, or rotary beacons.

Atlas N Scale C628 - Some of what was said about the Intermountain Tunnel Motors is also true for the Century Series Alcos. In particular, the Southern Pacific equipped their C628s with a typical SP light package: dual headlights, dual Gyalights, and a red emergency light. Normally it would not be appropriate to illuminate that red emergency light nor would it be easy to control it in prototypical fashion (coming on automatically when executing an emergency stop). However, it will be desirable for some modelers to illuminate the Gyalights as well as the headlights. It remains to be seen whether lamps or Golden White LEDs are the better choice for this application. Most likely, it will be possible to give customers the choice.

FEATURE SUMMARY

Installation Services - Quite a few customers want us to install the lighting modules they purchase. All Richmond Controls modules were designed to be as easy as possible to install. We do our best to avoid supplying anything that will require soldering by the customer. Most HO Scale and larger scale *locomotive* installations are quite easy, as are installations in some N Scale locomotives. Strangely, most N Scale *passenger car* installations are quite easy (essentially “drop-in” for Kato cars), but significantly more difficult for HO Scale cars. I believe this is true because the N Scale cars *appear* to have been designed with an objective of making them ready for

lighting. Some HO Scale cars are ready for simple interior lighting, but adding marker lights or tail lights is generally a problem.

Similarly, adding lights like FREDs or marker lights to N Scale freight cars is easier than adding the same to HO Scale or larger cars when axle wipers are required. This is the case because there is very wide commonality among N Scale manufacturers in their methods and hardware for attaching the trucks to the cars. There is wide variation here in larger scales, and a “one size fits all” design approach to adding axle wipers to pick up power from the track is often not successful.

Some scenery items readily accept add-on lighting. A noteworthy example is the wonderful Walthers HO Scale lighthouse. On the other hand, adding simple or complex lights to vehicles or the beautiful Showcase Miniatures Radio Towers is generally difficult. When we sell lighting kits for these difficult applications, the customer often has us do the installation.

I find the installations to be enjoyable but time-consuming. Some applications are so unusual that I don't know how any modeler could be successful without good soldering skills and equipment, plus a large and varied assortment of strange screws and other hardware. Generally the cost for this work must be quoted individually. At times, these jobs come in faster than we can complete them and a backlog builds up. I am never willing to estimate a completion date because too many imponderables influence these tasks.

We don't do painting and avoid working on custom painted models. If something slips and the paint job is damaged, I have no way of repairing the damage.

There are shops that do painting and installation of lights. Two that are familiar with Richmond Controls products and are well equipped are Trains Emporium in Reno (train@source.net) and The Riptrack (BrionBoyles@comcast.net), in Woodbridge VA.

TRAIN SHOWS

Train Show plans for Richmond Controls for the next two quarters include the Oklahoma City Train Show (early December), the Plano TX Train Show (mid-January), the San Antonio Train Show (early February), and the Chicago O Scale Show (Mid March)

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INTRODUCTION

The following discusses what's new at Richmond Controls since the Third Quarter 2003 Newsletter. Feel free to call if you need additional information - Jim

CHANGE IN NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

Previous editions of this newsletter have been sent to customers and publications via U. S. Mail. The newsletters have also been published in the *Newsletters* section of the web site. Many recipients have suggested that we begin sending the newsletter via email rather than by mail. It seems like this is worth a try. Thus this is the last newsletter that will be mailed to the normal distribution list.

Starting with the next newsletter, distribution will be via email. This will be the last edition sent to the broad distribution list via U. S. Mail. Any recipient who prefers to receive a hard copy by mail can request that and it will happen.

This edition of the newsletter will be sent via email to every previous recipient whose email address is in our database. Any recipient who does not wish to receive this email from Richmond Controls in the future is requested to send us a simple reply to that effect, and we will remove that name from the distribution list. I apologize for any inconvenience this causes.

NEW PRODUCTS

Atlas N Scale Trainmasters - Some prototype Trainmasters came equipped with Mars Lights. For example, the Southern Pacific had them in their Trainmasters. We expect to be able to supply modules with Mars Lights using Golden White LEDs. Atlas is equipping these locomotives with Golden White LED headlights that look very nice and are very bright. Mars Lights using the same LEDs will be the same color and equally bright, which should be an eye-catching combination. The appropriate module is an EZ04-001 mounted inside the body shell at the rear.

Athearn HO Locomotives (all varieties) - Now that LEDs without the blue tint are available, we have seen increasing interest in using these Golden White LEDs for the lights on various classic Athearn locomotives. It appears that *lamps* are a more comfortable fit for some of the Genesis line. However, many locomotives in the original series can readily be fitted with the LEDs.

For example, a recent application was in an Athearn U33C. It was given dual headlights and dual Gyalights using Golden White LEDs that had been modified to fit the existing headlight holes. In that particular locomotive, the four headlight holes are 1.5 mm inside diameter. The tips of LEDs were turned down to this diameter so they could simply be inserted into the headlight holes. It was also necessary to remove material from one side of each LED and from their flanges to allow two LEDs to be installed side-by-side in the closely spaced dual holes in the nose and above the windshield.

Another application is for a headlight and Mars Light in an Athearn classic F7. Cab type locomotives had relatively large headlight housings with lamps mounting in front of reflectors in the days before they were modified with sealed beam headlights. One approach to lighting the early style is to install bezels in the headlight openings, and then use Golden White LEDs with reduced diameter tips inserted into the bezel's center holes. The appropriate module for this approach is the EZ05-102, which is supplied with the appropriate bezels and two Golden White LEDs with modified tips.

The same module will be appropriate for other HO Scale cab units, such as the Intermountain and Stewart F units, the Athearn and Proto 2000 PA1s, and various E Units. The module using lamps (EZ05-120) will continue to be available for those preferring that option.

PLANNED NEW PRODUCTS

USA Trains G Scale Alco PA1 - I personally think a PA1 for a western railroad doesn't look its best unless it has a Mars Light. Now that this locomotive is available in G Scale, potential customers have been asking about lighting kits using Golden White LEDs to do a headlight and a Mars Light. We will do this module as soon as we can get up close and personal with one of these beautiful models. My best guess is that the preferred choice will be an EZ08 or EZ09 driving a Golden White LED headlight and a Golden White LED Mars Light.

Large Scale (G, O, S) Passenger Car Interior Lighting - Previous attempts to do passenger car interior lighting in these large scales yielded indifferent results. Some customers want evenly distributed, constant intensity, flicker-resistant subdued lighting. This can be done using a pair of EZ61 modules (HO Scale lighting modules), but the cost is quite high.

It appears that several Golden White LEDs distributed along the ceiling would be a good approach for large scale passenger cars. Several low cost options have been