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Frog-Eye Tail Light for SP N Scale Cabooses: After receiving many requests for this tail light, I was able to make a fixture to allow me to have the frog-eye subassemblies made in a consistent and repetitive manner. The EZ41 already had the ability to provide constant intensity, flicker-free power to the red LED, and for this application, it comes equipped with a tiny connector that the frog-eye subassembly can simply be plugged into. Installation is very easy for plastic cabooses, but more difficult for brass cabooses. For a brass model, picking up track power requires special provisions for insulating one of the trucks from the body, and the tripod for the frog-eye LED must be insulated where it comes through holes in the roof.

The EZ41-R0W-FROG with the frog-eye option and wipers for picking up power from the track is $40.00. This includes the constant intensity and antiflicker circuitry. Metal wheels are available for $4.00 additional.

FUTURE PRODUCTS

Items discussed below have been proposed by several potential customers. They will be developed if demand justifies that effort.

Lights for Alkem Scale Models Yard Light Tower: The Alkem Yard Light Tower product is a beautiful etched brass lattice-type yard tower topped by a crow's nest. Light Stands are provided for light sources, in case the customer wants working lights. I have been evaluating several options for installing white LEDs in the light stands, and providing the wiring, resistors, and instructions that would allow the owner of a tower to fully light it. The light module will likely include some provision for easily plugging the entire tower into a socket, so it can be quickly removed from a layout module for safe transport.

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

Cashing Checks: In the past, I have delayed cashing checks sent as payment for orders until the order was actually in progress on the workbench. In times where we had a large backlog (like the present, for example), this means that the check might not be cashed for many months. My thinking was that I didn't want to take the money until the customer was very close to receiving the order.

Several customers have told me that this practice has caused them problems in trying to balance their checkbooks. Having a check not come thorough right away was causing customers to question whether the order had been received, or to forget that the check was still circulating but not cashed yet.

Thus, in the future, I will send all checks thorough the bank right away, even when there will be a substantial delay before the order can be shipped. My perception is that the majority of customers who pay by check will prefer that checks be cashed right away.

Newsletter Format: Past newsletters have always been made available at www.richmondcontrols.com as Microsoft WORD documents. I noticed that sometimes the appearance of the newsletter may be different for different readers, depending of whether or not they have WORD or how their copy of WORD is configured.

My friend Bill Kronenberger gave me a link to software that quickly converts files of this type to PDF documents. Once converted, everyone accessing the files using Adobe Acrobat will see exactly the same thing. Since the Acrobat Reader is widely available at no cost, this change is expected to be acceptable to all potential readers.

Thus, beginning with this newsletter, all Newsletters on the website will be PDF documents. If this is a problem for anyone, please let me know and I'll find a way to work around it.

TRAIN SHOWS

Upcoming Train Show plans for Richmond Controls include the San Antonio Train Show (October 7-8), the Ft. Worth Train Show (November 11-12), the Oklahoma City Train Show and Southern Plains N Scale Convention (November 30 - December 3), and the Plano (Dallas area) Train Show (mid-January).

RICHMOND CONTROLS NEWSLETTER - THIRD QUARTER 2006

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INTRODUCTION

The following discusses what's new at Richmond Controls since the Second Quarter 2006 Newsletter. Feel free to call if you need additional information - Jim

NEW PRODUCTS

Low Cost Lighting Kit for O Scale and G Scale Passenger Cars: The first order for several of these kits has been shipped. Each kit is essentially a bag of parts, including a suitable length of circuit board material, several 3 mm Golden White LEDs with resistors, and a driving circuit. The circuit board material is double sided with copper on both sides but no etched patterns or holes. To keep costs low, the customer will install the LEDs and resistors on the circuit board material at appropriate intervals for the car being fitted, and connect the driver circuit. Several different driver circuits are available, ranging from nothing (for users desiring battery power) to a regulated power source with antiflicker provisions for track powered installations. These kits will need to be configured on a case-by-case basis, to fit the intended power source and car length.

It is likely that special features can be added to these kits. This would include such things as tail sign lights, colored or white LEDs for marker lamps, and special or simple red tail lights.

EZ26 For Minitrix N Scale H-16-44 Switcher: A special version of the EZ26 circuit has been configured to give this locomotive bright, constant-intensity headlights on both ends of the locomotive. Since the locomotive is a switch engine, it is assumed that most customers for the circuit will want both headlights on regardless of the direction of operation. Single-ended operation can be done by simply omitting one of the LEDs.

The module price is $24.00. Installation is very close to true "drop-in", requiring no drilling, chassis modifications, or soldering.

Custom Circuit Modification for N Scale E-R RF-16 Shark: This locomotive can be given a bright, constant intensity headlight without chopping any metal out of the chassis. The easiest way appears to be to add a few components to the circuit board that is supplied with the locomotive. That is something I am expecting to do when customers send in that circuit board for the modification. A do-it-yourself version is possible if a sufficient level of interest materializes.

The headlight itself is a 3 mm Sunny White LED modified to fit into the locomotive's headlight hole. The modification and modified LED are available for $35.00. The customer can send just the circuit board, or the entire locomotive, to have the circuit board modified. Installation of the modified circuit and LED in the locomotive is an extra-cost option.

Custom Circuit for Atlas N Scale Shay: This locomotive can be given bright, constant intensity headlights on both ends, using Golden White surface mount LEDs. In order for the lights to be directional, one special module is required for each end. The module price is $30.00 each, or two for $50.00.

The electronics module simply plugs into the pins on the chassis floor, after removing the resistor and LED that are mounted there in the as-built version of the locomotive. No chassis modification, drilling, or soldering is required for installation. Inserting the LED into the headlight holes, after removing the existing lens, is the main difficulty.

NEW APPLICATIONS FOR MODULES

We have worked with various customers to develop new applications for existing lighting modules. Some of these are:

Con-Cor Budd Passenger Car and Rivarosi/Atlas Heavyweight Passenger Car Lighting: The EZ51 has been adapted to provide constant-intensity, flicker-resistant interior lighting for N Scale passenger cars that use a threaded metal post inside for attaching the trucks.

The EZ51's flicker-resistant, constant intensity circuitry is also capable of supporting extra-cost options, including a Mars Light, Gyralight, or steady tail light, illuminated markers using surface mount LEDs, and tail sign illumination using a white LED.