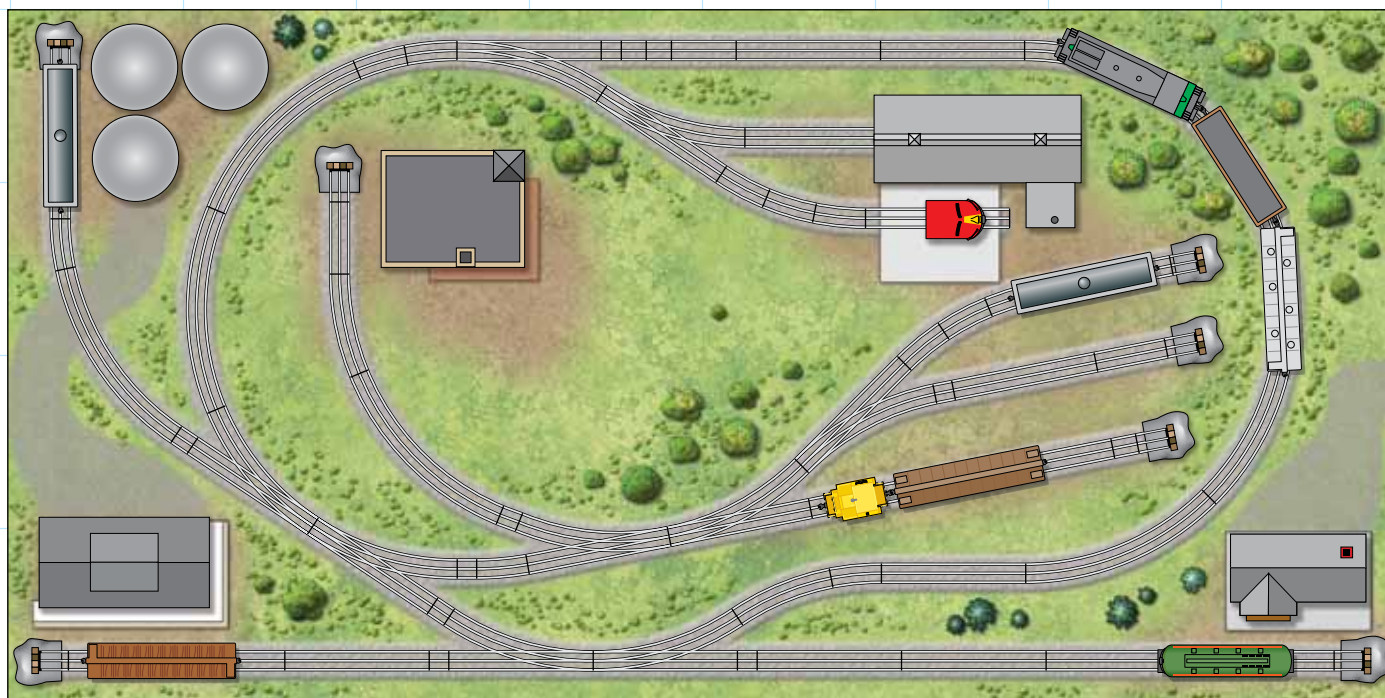


TRACK PLAN OF THE MONTH



Industrial mite

SMALL MOTIVE POWER HAS PLENTY OF ROOM TO ROAM
ON THIS 4 X 8-FOOT O GAUGE TRACK PLAN

By Kent Johnson • Illustrations by Kellie Jaeger

An Allegheny, a Big Boy, a Centipede, and a DD40X. They make up just a sampling of the gargantuan O gauge locomotive offerings that have inspired toy train operators to plan and sometimes build layouts of equally epic proportions. But how many of us are motivated to “think small” when we’re enamored of a diminutive diesel or slight steamer?

Although I initially had doubts about this approach, the process of building CTT’s recent Readers’ Choice Railroad (see February through September 2011 issues of *Classic Toy Trains*) helped convince me otherwise. After operating Ready Made Trains by Aristo-Craft (RMT) “Beep” locomotives on the 4 x 8-foot O gauge layout, I began to see how a compact layout might complement a tiny train. Then, with the

arrival of the Lionel no. 28450 CP Rail Trackmobile (see Bob Keller’s review in the July 2011 issue), I was ready and rarin’ to start planning a small, yet fully functional, O gauge layout specifically intended for this “Industrial Mite!”

Down to size

I started sketching this track plan with the thought that a basic point-to-point scheme might be the most appropriate environment for my new favorite



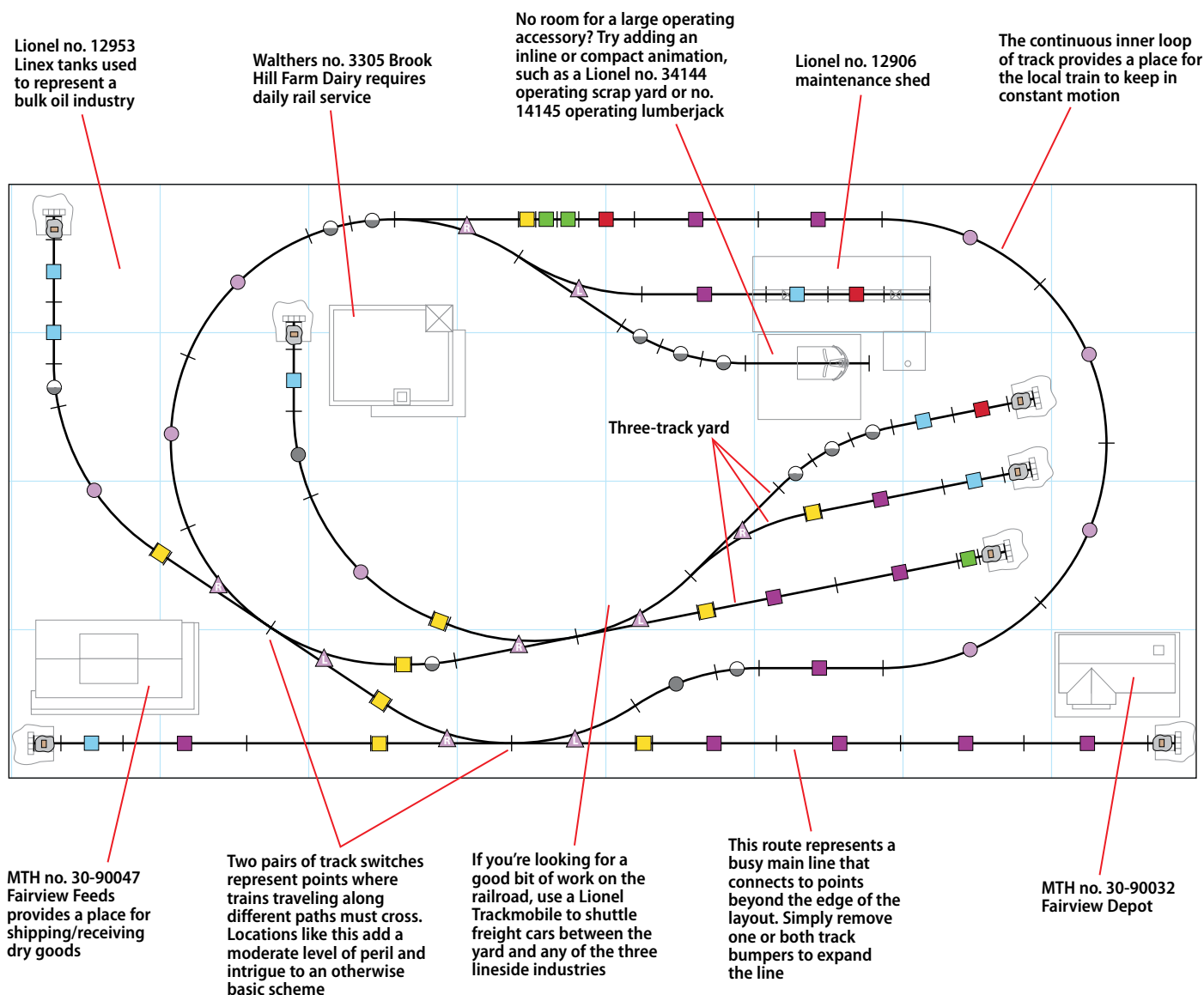
motorized unit. But even though I enjoyed operating the Trackmobile along the K-Line SuperStreets on our Readers’ Choice layout extension (see the September 2011 issue), I wondered if most operators would soon long for a continuous route. That’s when I challenged myself to design a small layout featuring both types of operation.

Working within the borders of a single 4 x 8-foot sheet of plywood, I included several rail-served industries, a locomotive/car maintenance facility, a yard, and a loop of track that permits unimpeded operation. Though it would have been easy to employ tight-radius O-27 track and switches, I instead chose to work with our readers’ favorite Lionel FasTrack system. A loop of broader O-36 curves and track switches will extend to the outer edges of the

ON THE WEB



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tabletop, but the ability to run more standard-sized trains made the decision easier to endure.

'Round & round to & fro

The Trackmobile is best suited for shunting one or two cars from the compact, three-track yard to any of the three distinct industries. By design, it can access two of the three industrial sidings without traversing the mainline loop. An operator can make a job out of swapping empty cars with loaded ones and then return the unit to the maintenance facility at the end of the day.

Next, it's time for the local job, perhaps led by a small diesel switcher, to drop off and pick up freight cars spotted in the yard. That's where the continuous operation over the loop of track comes into play.

Of course, the ultimate challenge is to perform both jobs at the same time, which is possible if you've wired the layout for control using two separate electrical blocks and a transformer with twin throttles, or you've installed a command-control system.

Despite the industrial slant to this O gauge layout, there's still plenty of opportunity to incorporate passenger service. Perhaps the simplest option is to add a trolley equipped with a bumper reverse mechanism. Set it on the main line at the front edge of the layout, and you've effectively added a third train to the action! If you prefer a more versatile mainline people mover, a Budd Rail Diesel Car (RDC) from Lionel, MTH, or RMT will be ideal for getting laborers closer to the industries along this not-so-big yet bustling scheme. **CTT**

LIONEL FASTTRACK COMPONENTS

Quantity	Description/Number
9	1.375-inch fitter (12000X)
3	1.75-inch straight (12026)
3	4.5-inch straight (12025)
7	5-inch straight (12024)
12	10-inch straight (12014)
8	0-36 curve, 45-degree (12015)
2	0-36 curve, 22.5-degree (12022)
11	0-36 curve, 11.25-degree (12023)
4	0-36 left-hand manual switch (12017)
5	0-36 right-hand manual switch (12018)
8	bumper (12059)