

## KEEPING IT MOVING ON THE NEW JERSEY DIVISION

Following established prototype rules and employing a dispatcher to call the shots keeps everything moving on a busy model railroad like the New Jersey Division. Railroad operations are all about who has authority to occupy a track at a given time.

Unlike timetable and train order operations, modern railroading is more reliant on dispatchers to make case-by-case decisions affecting authority and operations. The New Jersey Division takes this approach.

The dispatcher makes decisions on movements based on several factors including the type of train, congestion on the lines or in yards, and how long a train's work will take. A mainline intermodal would have priority over a local freight, for example, but that doesn't mean the local will must sit idle until the intermodal is down the line.

Modern dispatching systems divide the railroad into blocks. The dispatcher can control the signals and main track switches using computers or CTC panels to allow trains to enter and exit each block. A signal indication will tell the train crew what to do.

My New Jersey Division employs "CTC Light." Since mainline runs are short, the Dispatcher controls the main track switches – crossovers and switches from single to double track – and signals for each line. Signal control using turnout position, combined with track occupancy detection provides trains with lineside signal indications. ■

*Sidebar continues on the next page ...*



37, 38. Five CTC Panels wrap around the dispatcher's office, controlling movements on each rail line.

39. These base radios at the Dispatcher's desk provide contact with trains, yards, and support personnel, such as track foremen or the car department. This allows the dispatcher to control movements directly, allowing trains to pass each other without waiting for priority trains to arrive at a specific destination.