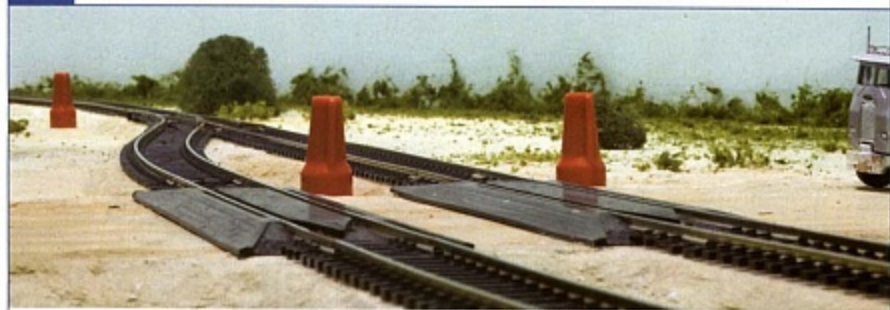# Walkaround dispatching

Here's the Traffic Control System interlocking – the "OS" section – at the east end of the Burris passing siding, with wire nuts serving as signals in David's "Wireless Dispatcher-Interactive Signaling" (WDIS) system.

Version 7 of my Cat Mountain & Santa Fe, published in the September 1999 *Model Railroader,* was completely signaled and dispatched by signal indication using an exact replica of a Union Switch & Signal Co. Centralized Traffic Control machine, or Traffic Control System (TCS) cabinet in Santa Fe parlance. The wiring to make all that work in those days was very extensive, and it had required a lot of work, including much help from friends.

So far I've built my Lubbock-to-Slaton layout by myself. Today the system components, wiring, and software to build a signal system are somewhat simpler than they were in the past. I may again enlist some help to install one, using the new 5-foot TCS cabinet I've built. For now the dispatcher uses its desk and track model as described in the main story.

Before reaching this point, however, I used another approach to provide the effect of an operating signal system on my current layout. It had no cost to speak of and no wiring at all. I called it "Wireless Dispatcher-Interactive Signaling" (WDIS).

My first version was the simplest, using red, yellow, and green wire nuts. A wire nut was simply placed beside the track at the location of each dispatcher-controlled signal.

Normally the wire nuts were all red, but the dispatcher could walk around the layout and replace the red ones with green or yellow to clear ahead of trains. Then he could replace the red wire nuts to protect the rear of a train that had passed, and also use the yellow nuts to warn approaching trains of a red signal ahead.

The only cost was that of a few wire nuts, with no wiring or software. I didn't use double-headed wire-nut signals, but you could glue one nut on top of another if you wish.
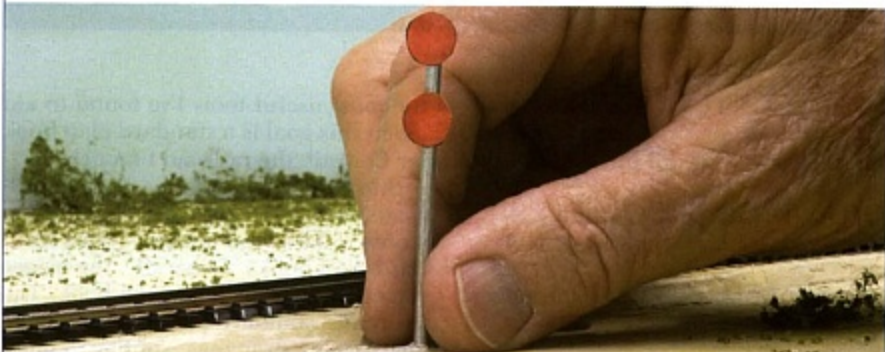
In the later version of WDIS, David used colored disks glued to sticks. They looked more like signals, but were more delicate than the wire nuts.

A better-looking version used colored paper disks glued to silver sticks. The dispatcher could insert these in holes drilled in the plywood at the signal locations to "set" the signals as he wished. These look more like signals and allow two-head indications, but are more delicate to handle. Either version authorizes train movement by signal indication as on the prototype. – *D.B.*