

ADD MORE INDUSTRIES WITHOUT ADDING TRACK

Outdoor customers expand a modern industrial park on this portable HO scale switching line

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PHOTOS BY MATT SAATKAMP



FIG. 1 WEST END. The open industries on Alan Saatkamp's HO scale layout are mostly located on existing spurs near the west end of the industrial park. Here you can see the relationship between new customers and those with buildings.

ONCE ALL THE TRACK is laid and the scenery and structures are in place, you may think your layout is nearly done. But there's still plenty of opportunity to increase traffic, add variety, and enhance industrial switching. Here's how I did it on my portable HO scale switching railroad.

My inspiration was Jim Hediger's railroad-you-can-model article on the prototype Progressive Rail's Airlake Industrial Park, published in the June 2002 *Model Railroader*. Lakeville, Minn., is the home of this busy development, which is made up of light industries that provide some excellent examples of how to add car spots without adding track.

Jim's article inspired me to build a 2'-6" x 13'-4" HO scale portable layout on two hollow core doors with a layer of 1" foam board laminated on top. The

railroad has two sections that I connect end-to-end for operation. **Figure 1** shows only the western half of the railroad, but it just takes a few minutes to add the similarly constructed east end and get trains running. The complete layout is shown on the track plan.

SELECTIVE COMPRESSION

My HO scale version is selectively compressed, but its west end is still anchored by a large warehouse and office building that's surrounded by many industries. My condensed HO model of Progressive Rail's Freight House No. 1 has two tracks leading into its east end, with two spurs south of the building and one on the north side. The latter is a switchback leading to Wausau Supply, a distributor of building products.

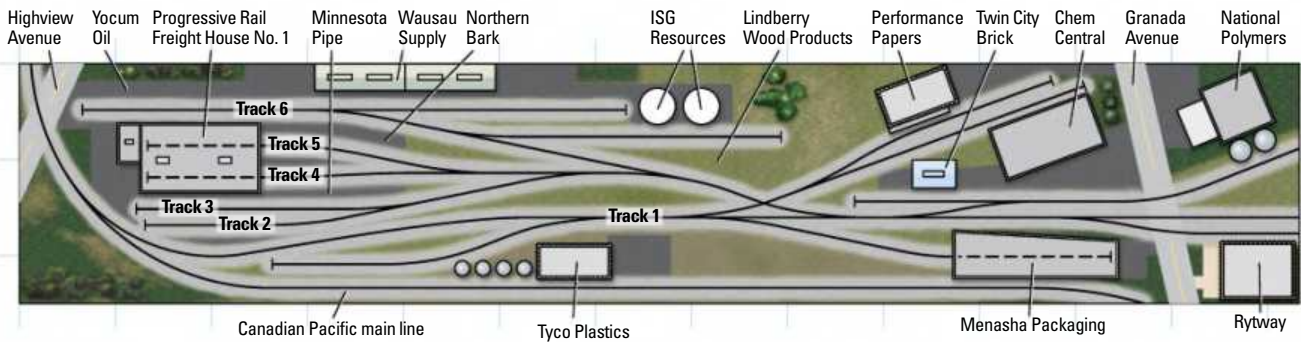
At first it might appear that the switchback and the two spurs leading into the warehouse all serve single purposes. But, like the prototype, I've been able to work in four new customers in about 4 square feet of layout space using existing tracks.

Figure 2 shows the west end of the prototype industrial park, which fills an area of about 2 square miles near an interstate highway.

OPEN INDUSTRIES

My industrial park's west end features numerous car spots that don't require their own spur or building. Most of them are close to Freight House No. 1 near the entrance to the park. Each of these spots adds switching possibilities.

Most of these new businesses are what I call "open industries" because



Progressive Rail Airlake Industrial Park

HO scale (1:87.1)
Layout size: 2'-6" x 13'-4"
Scale of plan: 1/2" = 1'-0", 12" grid
Illustration by Rick Johnson

they have offices nearby but deal in products that are unaffected by the weather. The trick here is to figure out ways to model them in a minimal space. Here's what I did:

1. Yocum Oil. This firm receives bulk petroleum products directly from tank cars and makes local deliveries with its tank trucks. These transfers occur on a spur track, so a paved parking spot is all that's required. Since many operators ignore track diagrams, I park a tank truck next to the spur as a visual cue.

2. Minnesota Pipe. A load of banded steel pipe next to the spur leading into freight house door no. 1 provides another visual cue to easily identify where to spot inbound loads of pipe. Minnesota Pipe doesn't need indoor storage space for its rugged product, so it leases space in the lot and uses a rented crane to transfer the pipe to flatbed trucks.

3. Northern Bark. This business sells shredded bark that arrives in hi-cube wood-chip gondolas. Since the bark is used for decorative landscaping, I modeled it as a pile on the pavement near Freight House No. 1 with a small end loader and some delivery trucks nearby.

4. Lindberry Wood Products. Just east of the two warehouse tracks, Lindberry Wood Products receives and stores utility poles. My poles are wood dowels that I sanded to the proper tapered shape, and stained dark brown. I laid a small pile of poles on the layout as a cue for spotting the loaded flatcars so the poles can be unloaded with a rented crane.

Although my layout was designed with specific industries in mind, this practice could easily be applied to any location where freight car access is available for a truck or a crane. As you can see in **fig. 3**, it can keep a two-man operating crew busy. **HTMR**

THE LAYOUT AT A GLANCE

Name: Airlake Industrial Park
Scale: HO (1:87.1)
Size: 2'-6" x 13'-4"
Prototype: Progressive Rail
Locale: Lakeville, Minn.
Era: present day
Style: portable walkaround
Mainline run: 13 feet
Minimum radius: 26"
Minimum turnout: no. 5

Benchwork: portable sections built on two hollow core doors
Height: 50"
Roadbed: Woodland Scenics Track-Bed
Track: Atlas code 83 flextrack
Scenery: foam insulation board textured with ground foam
Control: Digitrax Digital Command Control



FIG. 2 PROTOTYPE PARK. Progressive Rail's Airlake Industrial Park is a compact complex of tracks and transfer points that serve a wide variety of industries. Jim Hediger photo



FIG. 3 OPERATING. Alan and his son, Matt, switch industries on their portable HO switching layout built on a pair of hollow-core doors. This is the western half, which includes most of Alan's new "open industries" near Freight House No. 1.