

# COWTOWN MODEL RAILROAD CLUB

## FORT WORTH TEXAS

CMRRC



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Volume 13

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Number 5

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### General Meeting

The May meeting of the CMRRC will be on Monday night May 18th at 7:00 pm. The program is still being decided. I hope to see you there.

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### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

by Joe Pritchett



The North Texas Council of Railroad Clubs 2026/2027 show season will hold the Fall show on September 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026 and the January show will be January 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup>, 2027. The table and admission prices are staying the same as last year. The design work for refreshing the Council's website is underway with a go live date of July. Dealer contracts are available on the Councils website [www.dfwtrainshows.com](http://www.dfwtrainshows.com). Doug has reserved a club table for the Fall show to help us dispose of unneeded items.

The exterior door lock is very finicky, so for now we will leave the door unlocked when we're in the

building. The room temperature has been comfortable so come out and enjoy the room before it gets too hot.

The layout seems to be running pretty well. Tom has redone the Post Oak Panel. George continues to make progress on Midway. Be sure to check your phone for the next work/operating session.

Get with Dale or I if you would like to do program for one of the meetings, we are always looking for new topics.

Now that cars have been spotted on the layout make sure that if you need to move a car to work on something that you put it back where it was. When you are out working on the layout, please make sure that nothing is left on the rails and remove any leftover materials that could interfere with the testing. If you know someone that might be interested in joining the club, be sure to invite them out since we are open to having new members. I want to thank Dale for all the work it takes to put together the newsletter each month.

The normal schedule of Thursday evening sessions is from 6:30pm – 9:00pm, 1st & 3rd Saturdays but watch your phone for changes. Saturday sessions will start at 9:00am and run until 12:00pm.

Joe Pritchett  
President - Cowtown Model RR  
Club



## TREASURER'S REPORT

by Dale Schmidtleicher

Membership stands at 7 active members.

As always, the full treasurer's report will be made at the Club's monthly meeting.

The next due date is for 3rd quarter dues is July 1<sup>st</sup>. Please give Dale your dues or mail your dues to the following address:

CMRRC  
4504 Quail Hollow Ct.  
Fort Worth, TX 76133

Make payable to: "Cowtown Model Railroad Club".

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## Operations

Trains are running!

A total car check was run a few sessions ago. A few areas where cars turned up out of location involve cars on the wrong yard track due to miss counting the yard tracks when disassembling a train and missing a car pickup or drop off while enroute on a local train. Be sure to count tracks and look at all towns enroute on your engineer orders.

Operating sessions will be announced to all members by text or e-mail. We hope to see more members attending in the future.



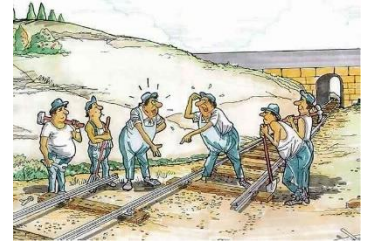
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## Update on Construction

by Dale Schmidtleicher

*What's new in the area of layout construction?*

As Joe's article pointed out, there are a few track and switch repairs that are scheduled to be attacked in the near future.



Tom has reworked the Post Oak Gap town switch panel and will create additional panels to cover the old panel area gaps. The new LEDs are very bright compared to other panels and a resistor may need to be added to lower the brightness a little.

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As always, track cleaning is always needed to be addressed. Keep those track cleaning cars rolling!

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Cleanup under the layout is still a major eyesore.

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## MONTHLY SCHEDULE

### General Meeting:

The Club's monthly Railroad Club Meeting is held at 7:00 PM on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month.

The meeting is held at the Handley Community Center in the first-floor room just inside the building side door.

### Normal Work/Operate Schedule:

The normal work/operate schedule is as follows:  
Thursday Nights 6:30 PM-9:00 PM.

1st & 3rd Saturday 9:00 AM-12 Noon.

**Operating sessions will be announced by text and e-mail prior to the scheduled event.**





[www.cmrrc.net](http://www.cmrrc.net)

We are on occasion getting some requests/feedback from our **cmrrc.net** website. We can thank the website for giving us a hand in getting donations.

Many of those donations have contributed to the club's financial position as well as adding to the scenery or structures on the layout.

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## 10 Facts: Railroads in the United States

Railroads played a crucial role in America's development and in its wars. Here is a list of ten interesting and important details about the role railroads played in American history.

**Fact #1: The first American railroads relied on horsepower, literally.**

The first American railroads relied on horses to drag cars down the rails. Using rails reduced the amount of friction between the wheel and the ground, making it easier for horses to pull larger loads. These horse-drawn railroads were used before the development of small steam engines let companies phase out the horses.

**Fact #2: America's first railroads were small and usually connected rivers or canals to nearby manufactories.**

Railroads were initially built to help improve existing methods of transport rather than acting as their own. Companies constructed small branch railroads, often animal or gravity-powered, to bring their goods to waiting boats that would bring them to markets at America's major ports. In 1826, the Mohawk and Hudson Railroad was built to connect the Erie Canal at Schenectady, New York, to the Hudson River at Albany, reducing the time it took to transport goods between them by water. This was America's first chartered railroad to reach completion.

**Fact #3: America's first major railroad was the Baltimore and Ohio.**

In 1827, the state of Maryland chartered the [Baltimore and Ohio Railroad](#) to connect the port of Baltimore with the Ohio River. The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal already connected the two, but a steam-powered railroad offered a potential much faster route for these goods. Upon the completion of the first 13 miles of track in 1830, the B&O became the first American railroad to offer regularly scheduled passenger services and would continue to rapidly expand. The B&O's success inspired a railroad boom in the 1830s with many other companies springing up to take advantage of the lucrative market.

**Fact #4: Railroad gauges varied wildly across the country.**

With so many companies building railroad lines across the country, no railroad gauge (distance between the rails) was ever settled upon between them. In 1860, railroads across the country used more than half a dozen different gauges, preventing locomotives and cars from one line being used on another. This posed a major problem for both sides during the Civil War, making railroad logistics a headache for planners on both sides. [The Pacific Railway Act of 1862](#), which funded the construction

of the transcontinental railroad, also stipulated what gauge it would be. This gauge, 4'8", became known as the "Standard Gauge," and in the years following the Civil War, almost all railroads in the United States adopted it.

**Fact #5: Railroads caused the Panic of 1893.**

During the Reconstruction Era, investors—both private and public—funded a rapid expansion of the railroad network in the United States. This created a speculation bubble which burst in 1893, causing the worst financial panic the United States would see until the Great Depression 35 years later. This panic increased government scrutiny of railroad business practices, leading the Interstate Commerce Commission, founded in 1887, to exert greater regulatory control over railroads.

**Fact #6: The peak of American railroad construction was in 1916.**

Despite the Panic of 1893, railroad construction continued as railroad demand grew until in 1916. On the eve of America's entry into World War I, the United States had 230,468 miles of railroads.



A map of railroads in the United States in 1918

**Fact #7: In World War I, the government took control of the railroads.**

When the United States declared war on Germany in April 1917, President Woodrow Wilson lobbied

Congress to pass a bill giving the U.S. government powers to control the operations of the railroads during wartime. The private companies continued to operate the railroad lines, but under the direction of government agents and at government-mandated prices. Government control of railroads helped the U.S. to rapidly mobilize and deploy millions of troops to France, but would ultimately hurt the businesses, making them less profitable. The government did not relinquish this control of railroads fully until 1920, two years after the Armistice.

**Fact #8: Passenger rail use declined between the world wars as people bought cars.**

Just as railroads were beginning to recover from wartime oversight, the auto industry boomed. Americans bought millions of cars and family car ownership skyrocketed. Alongside this boom in auto sales, the government funded the construction of many miles of new roads and other pieces of infrastructure designed for cars. Passenger volume declined precipitously as a result, as people preferred to use cars for shorter journeys instead of the railroads.

**Fact #9: American railroads saw their greatest use in World War II.**

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December 1941, the United States reactivated many of the same controls over railroads as it had during World War I. Railroads played a major role in the US war effort, transporting a record amount of people and goods across the country. In addition to carrying 97% of all military personnel traffic in the US mainland, railroads saw a major increase in passenger volume. This was due to gasoline rationing, which prevented people from using their cars for all except required trips. As a result, railroads saw their peak usage during the war years.

**Fact # 10: Interstate highways and passenger air travel doomed passenger service.**

When President Dwight D. Eisenhower took office in 1953, he worked for the passage of what became the Interstate Highway Act. Eisenhower, in his army days, participated in a cross-country car journey in order to test how long such a trip would take. Sixty-two days after setting out from Washington D.C., the team arrived in San Francisco. That was in 1919. Even thirty years later, traveling across the country rapidly by car was

difficult. Eisenhower, inspired by the German autobahn, envisioned a similar system of major roads across the United States, the idea maturing into the interstates we know today. At the same time, the invention of passenger jet aircraft, in particular the Boeing 737, saw the rapid boom of domestic air travel. These two coinciding events practically killed the passenger rail market, with air travel being more practical for long distances and cars for shorter journeys.