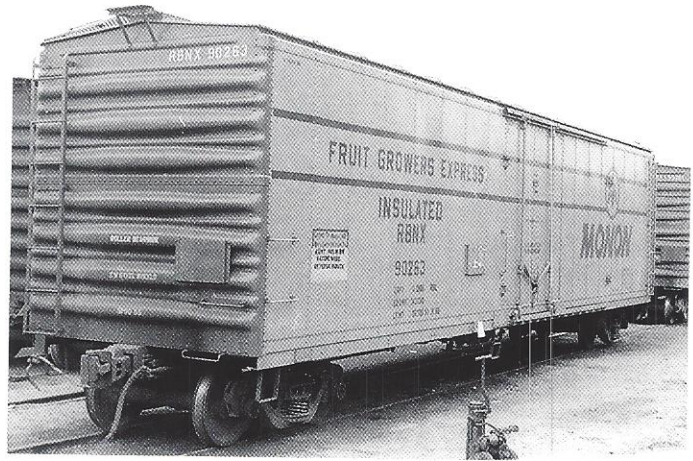
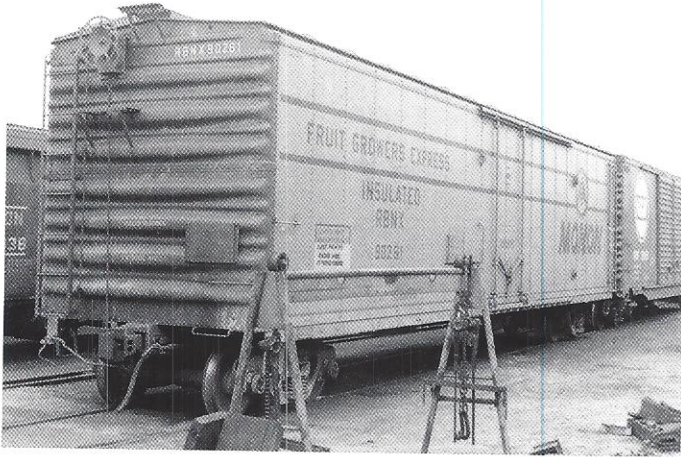


FGE Insulated Box Car

by Mont Switzer



RBNX 90263 is shown on the Lafayette (Indiana) Shops RIP track on March 29, 1967. Note that the Monon herald is located so that the upper door-stop is inside the circle. Painting data in the upper left corner indicates the car was painted at the FGEX shop at Alexandria, VA, in September 1966 at which time it was also reweighed. It is reasonable to believe that the entire series was repainted and reweighed at the same time and location. Mont Switzer photo.

RBNX 90261 is shown on the Lafayette (Indiana) Shops RIP track on March 29, 1967 apparently having its routing data re-stenciled. Note that the Monon herald is located so that the upper door-stop is outside the circle. The horizontal stripes did not continue under the ladders of all cars. It is reasonable to believe that this car as well as the entire series was built at the FGEX shops in Alexandria, VA in August 1961. Mont Switzer photo.

The insulated box car first appeared on the Monon in 1963 as 13 railroad-owned, welded side, cushion-underframe cars with ten-foot plug doors. These fifty-foot cars were numbered 1900 through 1912. Numbers 1913 through 1925 were blocked for future use, but were never used. When additional cars did arrive in 1966 they were ten insulated box cars leased from Fruit Growers Express (FGEX). They're the subject of this article.

The Fruit Growers Express cars retained their "RBNX" reporting marks, while on the Monon signifying their Association of American Railroads RBL insulated box car classification. They were numbered 90261 through 90270. The cars leased from FGEX were fifty-foot riveted-side cars with eight-

foot plug doors and 3-4 improved Dreadnaught ends. The cars were painted FGEX yellow with the typical black lettering and striping. The car ends were painted boxcar red and the roofs aluminum, FGEX practice at the time. These cars were unique in that the Monon's 36-inch diameter circle "M" herald and 24-inch high "MONON" were neatly incorporated into the FGEX lettering scheme. This was a classic paint scheme made exceptional by the Monon additions.

The ten cars stayed on lease to the Monon (L&N after August 1971) at least through the mid-1970s, all assigned to off-line customers for loading. As of July 1, 1969 the assignments were as follows:

90261 S.C. Johnson, Racine, WI via Milwaukee Road

90262 Libby Foods, Chicago, IL via Indiana Harbor Belt
 90263 S.C. Johnson, Racine, WI via Milwaukee Road
 90264 Libby Foods, Chicago, IL via Indiana Harbor Belt
 90265 Libby Foods, Chicago, IL via Indiana Harbor Belt
 90266 S.C. Johnson, Racine, WI via Milwaukee Road
 90267 Libby Foods, Chicago, IL via Indiana Harbor Belt
 90268 Libby Foods, Chicago, IL via Indiana Harbor Belt
 90269 Libby Foods, Chicago, IL via Indiana Harbor Belt
 90270 Libby Foods, Chicago, IL via Indiana Harbor Belt

Being assigned to "national account" customers, these cars could reasonably turn up on any railroad that served a warehouse that handled the Johnson Wax line of household cleaning products or the Libby line of canned foods.

I originally built models of these cars back in 1988 by extensively modifying a Walthers/Pacific HO insulated boxcar. An article describing this project was presented in the February 1988 MAINLINE MODELER. We modelers now have the benefit of the Branchline Trains 1700 series straight side sill plug door box car, which is almost a dead ringer for the cars leased by the Monon. I first attempted to modify a Branchline factory painted FGEX car as was done with the prototype. Failing to do this satisfactorily I removed the factory paint from the car sides with a media blaster. It was not necessary to remove the paint from the ends and roof since they were correctly painted and, with the exception of the car number, were properly lettered.

The remainder of this article is devoted to the minor modifications I made to this excellent Branchline model to make it better represent the cars leased to the Monon.

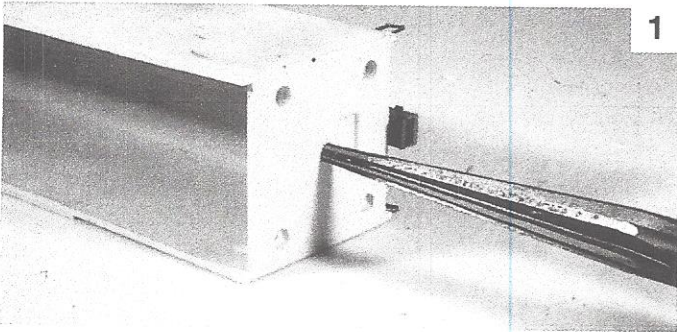
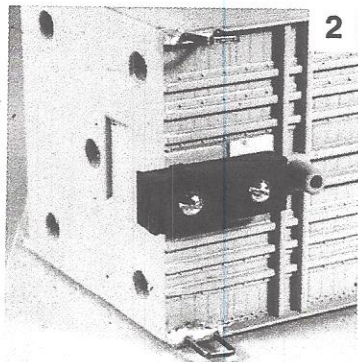


Photo 1: A good joint between the car sides and ends is essential. Prepare the model for this by enlarging the end guide holes to more easily accept the end mounting lugs. A small reamer available from Micro-Mark works well here. This allows the ends to be pressed firmly against the car sides for a gap free joint. Do not install the ends until the side and end detailing are complete.

Photo 2: With the ends installed temporarily, mount the Accurail scale coupler pockets per the manufacturer's instructions. Note that the pocket must be applied with the car ends in place to assure proper spacing. A .010-styrene shim under the bolster end of the coupler pocket makes the mounting surface level.



via Indiana Harbor Belt
 via Milwaukee Road
 via Indiana Harbor Belt
 via Indiana Harbor Belt
 via Milwaukee Road
 via Indiana Harbor Belt
 via Indiana Harbor Belt
 via Indiana Harbor Belt
 via Indiana Harbor Belt

The side sills lack sufficient thickness for mounting the A-Line sill steps. Cement styrene behind the sills where the sill steps are to be installed to add thickness for drilling. Mount the sill steps in Number 75 holes and secure them with a drop of ACC.

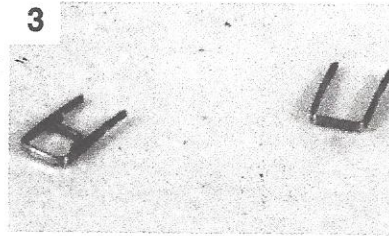
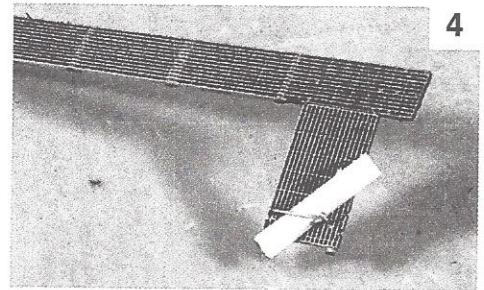


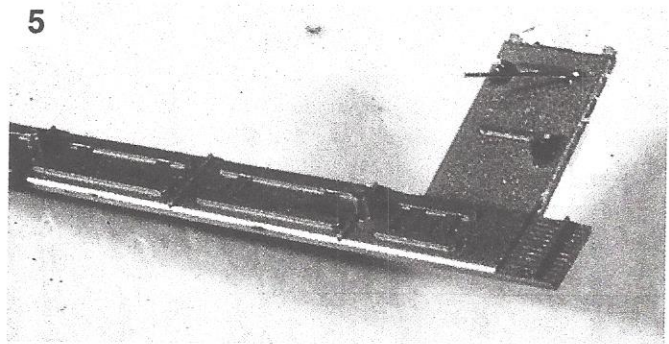
Photo 3: The sill steps under the plug doors have a second rung. Make the two additional step rungs from a third A-line "stirrup step." Solder or

ACC the additional steps in place as shown. There are plastic steps available with the additional rung, but they don't offer the durability I think is needed for operating models.

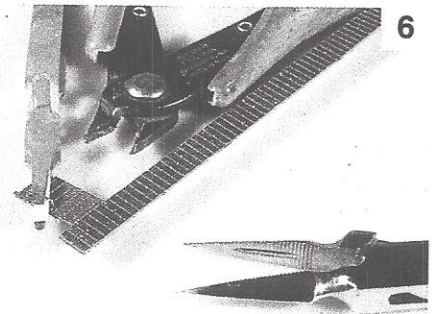
Photo 4: Replace the cast styrene roof walk corner grabirons with grabirons made from .012" brass wire. Drill out the existing mounting locations with a



Number 80 drill. Bend the wire to fit and insert it in the holes. Secure the grabirons from the bottom with a drop of ACC using .040" styrene spacers to maintain a constant distance between the grabirons and the platforms.



Photos 5 and 6: The corner braces are also made from .012" brass wire. Using surgeon's splinter forceps available from Micro-Mark, form a small hook on the end



of .012" wire and insert in the pre-drilled corner support hole. Pull the corner of the grabiron down on the .040" spacer with the hook and kink the wire on the underside of the platform to hold it in place while you add a drop of ACC. When the ACC is dry trim off the excess material even with the bottom of the platform. Repeat this process on the other corner platform.

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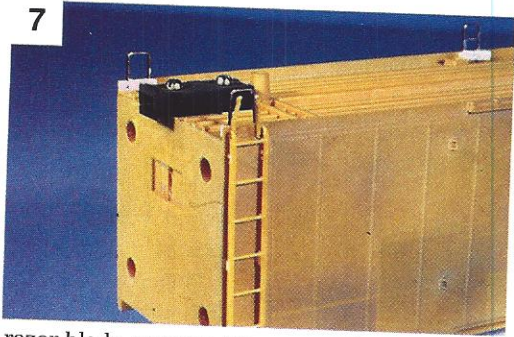
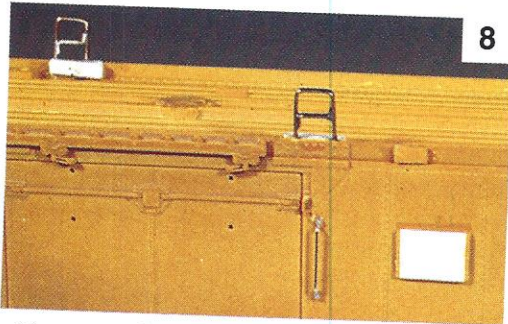


Photo 7: With the A-Line sill steps already in place, install the sill steps provided with the kit. Then using a sharp single edge

razor blade or sprue nippers cut the styrene stirrups off even with the bottom of the side sill. This leaves the sill detail of the original sill steps with the durability of the underbody mounted A-Line "stirrups."

Photo 8:

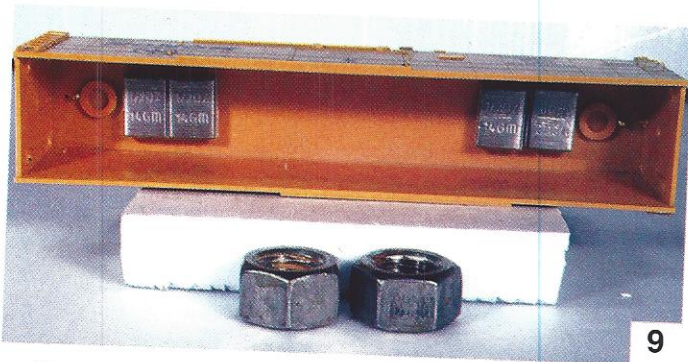
Side details include the horizontal grabirons, vertical grabirons, tack boards and car defect tack boards.



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The horizontal grabirons are .012" wire bent to match the plastic grabirons they're replacing. Bend the vertical grabirons from .012" wire approximately 24-scale inches long. Insert the vertical grabirons in #80 holes drilled as shown. Apply Detail Associates N-B-W castings next to all of the grabirons after they have been installed.

The prototype side and end tack boards seem to have been made using a single piece of plywood rather than three boards like those provided with the kit. Simply sheath over the kit tack boards with .005" sheet styrene as shown and mount the tack boards in the usual manner. The smaller car defect card tack boards provided with the kit are almost twice the size of those on the cars being modeled. Simply slice them in half horizontally and apply them to the side sills under the large tack boards as shown. Use solvent cement for all of the styrene-to-styrene tack board mounting.



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Photo 9: I don't like the huge nuts provided with the kit for additional weight. Each nut weighs about one ounce. It is much easier to add the same amount of weight using A-Line self-adhesive weights as shown. Their placement can be adjusted to avoid coupler and truck mounting screws that may project through the top of the car floor.

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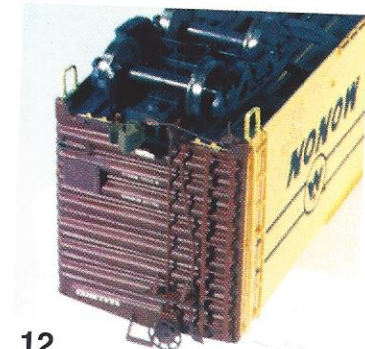
Photo 10: My ends were factory painted as I explained earlier in the article. The end number was correct for the car I was modeling except for the last two digits. I was able to scrape these numbers off and add new ones from the Micro Scale decal set. The "SPRING D-2" also came from this decal set. This is also a good time to add the wire grabirons and coupler cut lever eyebolts to the ends as shown.

Photo 11: Use side cutters to remove any of the wire grabiron and eyebolt wires that protrude through the back of the car ends. Then grind the remainder of the protrusions down even with or slightly below the surface. This will keep them from interfering with the tight



11

fit.



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Photo 12: After the ends have been detailed and added to the car body, install the Detail Associates coupler cut levers. They are supported on the outboard ends by Detail Associates eyebolts. The coupler ends are mounted in number 78 holes drilled in the lower ends of the Accurail scale coupler pockets. Secure everything with ACC and brush paint the coupler cut levers to match the car ends. The wire cut levers are more durable than the plastic ones furnished with the kit.

Photo 13: My roof came already painted silver so all I had to do was tone it down a little by applying Testors Dullcote – or so I thought. Unfortunately on my model the Dullcote crazed the paint, possibly because I applied it too heavily and too wet. Using a hobby size media blaster I successfully removed the crazed paint and was quite pleased with the end result. No need to repaint the roof. All that was left to do was dry brush the tops of the running board and running board platforms and paint the wire grab irons with Scalecoat silver as shown. Leave the recessed portion of the running boards the natural black thus accenting the depth of this detail.

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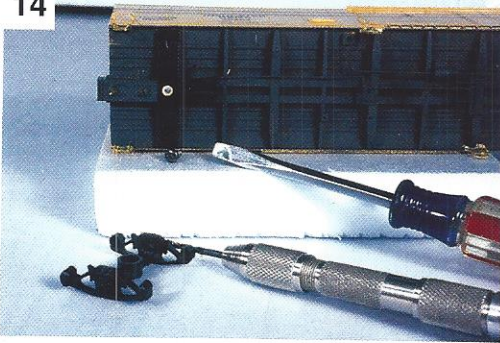


Photo 14: The truck mounting system was modified to accept 2-56 self-tapping screws. A spare set of truck side-frames was mounted to

the bolsters during construction to help protect the delicate brake rigging. This was my first chance to use the new semi-scale Athearn roller bearing trucks with axle ends that actually turn. These were painted Grimy Black and installed on the finished model.

PAINTING

If you are painting an undecorated car, the painting should be done after detailing but before assembly into the completed model. Floquil Boxcar Red is correct for the ends while Scalecoat II Silver is correct for the roof. Scalecoat II Reefer Yellow gets pretty close to the color used by FGEX on the car sides. Looking at this color in the bottle I felt it was a little too pale and added several drops of Scalecoat II Caboose Red to give warmth. Regardless of your preference for the yellow it must be applied over gray primer such as Floquil to assure even coverage.

Before decal application and installation of the ends, but after the underbody details have been added, apply Floquil Grimy Black. Mask off the sides tightly and airbrush the Grimy Black. This is easily accomplished thanks to the manner in which the kit is built.

Give the model a light coating of Testors Dullcote after the decals have been applied and assembly is complete. You may then weather your car to suit the era that you



RBNX 90266, Louisville, KY, (no date). This illustrates one minor variation in the car paint scheme. Note that the Monon herald was applied with the upper door-stop inside the circle. Another noticeable feature is the routing data contained within the box to the left of the reporting marks. Although the picture has no date it was last reweighed in July of 1970. The brown ends and silver roof are evident in the photo by Eric Hirsimaki.

BILL OF MATERIALS

A-Line	29000	style "A" sill steps
Accumate	1020	couplers
Atlas	180000	freight trucks, roller bearing
Athearn	4598	freight trucks, working roller bearings
Branchline Trains	1700	insulated box car, undecorated
Detail Associates	2202	drop grabirons
	2203	NBW castings
	2504	.012" brass wire
	6215	cut levers
	6602	grabirons, 24" straight
Evergreen Scale	133	.030"x.060" strip styrene
		.005" sheet styrene
Floquil	10009	Gray Primer
	110013	Grimy Black
	110074	Boxcar Red
InterMountain	40052	wheel sets, semi scale
Kadee	2033	Universal brake wheel
Micro Scale	87-02	dimensional data set
	87-110-2	stripes, black
	87-238	FGEX decal set
MR Supply	302	black freight car decals set
	31B	black routing data set
Scalecoat	2015	Reefer Yellow
	2023	Silver

are modeling. The cars I saw in 1969 were pretty clean and had a slight gloss to their finish. The paint seemed to hold up well into the 1970s, but they became pretty dirty.

All of the lettering for the car sides came from Microscale except the stripes and Monon specific lettering. The stripes were a separate Microscale item. The routing data to the left of the reporting marks was a blend of the Microscale FGEX data and similar data in the Model Railroad Supply Monon routing data set. With a little work you can add this very distinctive model to your operation.