



# TRAIN COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION WESTERN DIVISION NEWSLETTER



VOL 64, NO.4

OCTOBER 2018

2018

## REMAINING MEETS

- Oct-27 Orange and Black
- Nov Dark, Cal-Stewart
- Dec-15 Holliday trains and toys

2019

## MEET SCHEDULE

### MARK YOUR CALENDERS

- Jan 26
- Feb 23
- Mar 23
- April 20 (3rd Saturday)
- May 18 (3rd Saturday)
- June dark
- July 27
- Aug 24
- Sept 28
- Oct 26
- Nov dark
- Dec 14 (2nd Saturday)



## NEXT MEET OCTOBER 27, 10AM ARCADIA SENIOR CENTER

### SHOW AND TELL THEME IS "ORANGE AND BLACK"

TCA Western Division's train meets take place at the Arcadia Senior Center, located at 405 S. Santa Anita Avenue in Arcadia, California.

To get to the meet, exit the 210 Freeway at Santa Anita Avenue. Drive south about half a mile and turn right into the Arcadia Park Parking lot. The hall is located next to the lawn bowling area. Look for the sign. The doors open at 10AM for setup and trading. Show and Tell starts at noon.

Please visit the Western Division website, at <http://www.tcawestern.org> for more information and a map.

**FREE DONUTS AND COFFEE GENEROUSLY PROVIDED BY BOB CAPLAN**

## DECEMBER HOLIDAY MEET & POTLUCK IMPORTANT NOTICE

The Senior Center at Arcadia Park will be going through additional construction and renovation to bring the air conditioning they just installed up to code. The exact schedule has not been determined.

I know, don't get me started...

**TCA Western has made arrangements to meet in December at the  
United Methodist Church (Church of Good Shepherd)  
400 W Duarte Rd, Arcadia, CA 91007**

The church is about a mile away from our usual location and about a block West from the Masonic Hall used by TTOS-SW.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Arcadia Park head South on Santa Anita and turn Right on Duarte Road. The Church is on the corner of Duarte Rd & Holly Ave. Go just past Holly and enter the parking lot behind the Church.

**If you are planning on selling in December, consider bringing your own folding table, the church has a limited number of tables.**

## [From the President's Desk, October 2018](#)

Here come the Holidays, our favorite time of year, and we have lots going on at TCA-Western!

On Saturday, October 27th, we will have our haunted Halloween Meet! There will be a scary train layout and plenty of treats to eat! The display table theme is spooky Orange & Black trains. The Frankenstein monster will be lurking about for gruesome growls and free photo opportunities!

In November, we will be dark, so everyone can attend the magnificent T.T.O.S. Southwestern Cal-Stewart show at the Glendale Civic Auditorium on November 17 & 18. It's "the largest train meet west of the Rocky Mountains," so you won't want to miss it! See Larry Pearson for more information.

BTW, please bring some trains to TCA for Larry to fix. He brought his repair kit last month, but no broken trains arrived at the station!

TCA and TTOS members are collaborating on the fabulous holiday train exhibit at the Muzeo in Anaheim. It's now under construction and opens mid-November, running through January. Contact TCA members Wayne Sheriff or Steve Eastman for more info.

Our December Holiday Party promises to be the best TCA-Western Division meet of the year! We've moved the date and venue to serve you better. We will gather on Saturday, December 8, 2018. Plus, we are returning to the beautiful Arcadia Methodist Church at 400 W. Duarte Road, Arcadia, CA (at Holly Avenue). It's less than a mile west of the regular T.T.O.S. Southwestern meet (same side of the street), so it's easy to find.

The club will provide sandwiches and punch at the Holiday meet. The rest is potluck, so if your last name begins with A through M, please bring salads or side dishes. If your last name starts with N through Z, please bring desserts.

The new year 2019 has lots of railroading fun and excitement in store. Keep attending our meets (and bring a friend)! Watch this space for further announcements regarding dates and venues....

**Steve Waller**  
**President, TCA-Western Division**

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### **WEAR YOUR TCA WESTERN DIVISION BADGE TO EVERY MEET!**

Honestly, isn't there someone you see and greet at almost every meet and you don't know what their name is? It's gracious to introduce yourself to people you haven't seen before, but it's kinda embarrassing after a couple of years have passed. **That's what your badge is for.**

To encourage members to wear their badges, starting in the near future **you will only be eligible for the free door prize raffle if you are wearing your badge.** Temporary badges will be available at the sign in desk (and don't forget to sign in).

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### **FRIENDS**



It's with sadness that we note the loss of Phyllis Smith, wife of train collector and TCA member Calvin Smith. Our thoughts and prayers are with him. Phyllis was instrumental in preparing the TTOS Southwestern Limited newsletter for many years. Please be sure to sign the sympathy card for Calvin at our October TCA meet.

## HOME LAYOUT PHOTOS WANTED

Your editor would like to publish photos of TCA member's home layouts and special holiday layouts in upcoming issues. If you have some nice digital photos from previous years, email them to: [TheReverendBob@Verizon.net](mailto:TheReverendBob@Verizon.net)

### **2018 GRAND PRIZE RAFFLE** **THE TCA 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY GOLDEN EXPRESS FREIGHT SET**



**THE WINNER OF THE SET WILL BE DRAWN AT THE DECEMBER HOLIDAY PARTY.**

**THERE IS A \$50 CONSOLATION PRIZE DRAWING AT EVERY MEET!**

**A limited number of tickets are available at \$20 each. See Treasurer Wayne Sherriff at our monthly meet for tickets.**

### Email Addresses Available

If you would like your very own TCA Western Division email address, something like:

[ogaugegeek@TCASWestern.org](mailto:ogaugegeek@TCASWestern.org), then contact Harold Shapiro at [hshapi@hotmail.com](mailto:hshapi@hotmail.com). 25 addresses are available free from our web site provider.

### TCASWestern.org is online 24/7

If you haven't gone to our website lately it will be worth your while to check it out. We have a first-class web site with tons of toy train information and fascinating club history.

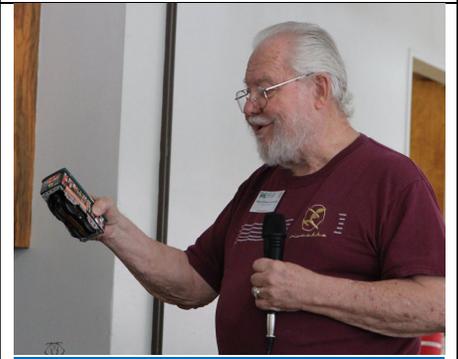


TCA Western Division Board of Directors (l-r)  
Front: Bob Caplan, Steve Waller, Bob Nord  
Middle: Rudy Felix, Jon Lang, Harvey Taffel  
Rear: Jim Kenney, Wayne Sheriff, Harold Shapiro, Steve Eastman, Not present: Ken Chan

## Photos from the August Meet



## More from August



## Photos from the September Meet



All photos by Roger Hill

# From the archives of TCASWestern.Org Arnold Trains



## History

Founded in 1906 by Karl Arnold in Nürnberg Germany, K. Arnold & Co. began its life producing tin toys and related items. They produced an extensive line of model ships, doll house items and other toys. In 1935, K. Arnold & Co. hired Max Ernst as their managing director. Ernst, not to be confused with the German realist artist of the same name, was a significant factor in the future of Arnold.



Arnold N gauge DR 4-6-2 Steam loco & 9 wheel tender



Arnold N gauge German 2-6-2 Steam Locomotive

Nürnberg was number one on the hit parade for allied bombers during World War II, and, at the end of the war, all of the Arnold facilities were in ruins. Postwar production continued at a facility in the Upper Palatinate (Oberpfalz), with the company beginning its slow recovery with the manufacture of window hardware. The postwar operation of the company was under the direction of Max Ernst and Ernst Arnold, son of Karl Arnold. The factory buildings in Nürnberg were rebuilt and the Arnold Company continued to grow.

In the postwar period, smaller model train sizes became the order of the day. In earlier times, model trains had been largely the plaything of the well to do who had enough money to live in houses large enough to support the display of the larger scales of model trains. The growth toward smaller scales had begun in the early 1900s, with 'O' scale being the first "small" scale. In the 1930's, HO/'OO' scale became the "small" scale. In the late 1940's and 1950's, TT scale was the "small" scale, allowing for realistic model railroad displays being situated in relatively small areas. Three companies led the TT revolution, H.P. Products of Indiana, USA, [Tri-ang](#) of the United Kingdom and Rokal of West Germany.



Arnold N gauge SBB Krokodil CE 6-8 II HN2017



Arnold N gauge Prussian Old-Style Passenger coach

But TT-Scale was not to be the smallest scale in model railroading. Led initially by Lone Star Toys of Great Britain and [Trix](#) of Nürnberg, there was a movement toward an even smaller scale. Both companies experimented earlier with "floor toys", unpowered model trains designed to be moved about by child power. Lone Star dropped by the wayside after a period of time, but Trix continued experimentation and development of what would be their electric powered Minitrix product line. Arnold was to come up with a workable solution, also.

The introduction of Arnold Rapido was from scratch because nothing like this had been done before. Arnold was literally establishing what would become 'N' scale. This is not to say that it was the sole developer of 'N', but Arnold Rapido was there first.



Arnold N gauge German 2-8-2 Steam loco & tender

Although Karl Arnold's son, Ernst, was involved with the company, several sources cite the presence of Max Ernst, who was Managing Director from 1935 until 1976, as being the prime mover behind this new product line. Ernst has been described as a dynamic businessman, the person most responsible for the introduction of the Arnold Rapido product line. Karl Arnold passed on in October, 1946, leaving his

son and Herr Ernst as principals in the Company. Much later, an Arnold Sales Manager, Ferdinand Graef, would marry Max Ernst's daughter, Sonja, keeping the Arnold company as a family operation. It would continue to be so until 1995.



Arnold N 2272 Arn-U Class 78 142 German DB 4-6-4T Epoch III



Arnold N gauge 0254-LN Class 18 4-6-2 German DB #18408



Arnold N gauge WWII camouflage passenger coach

There are several distinct phases of Arnold's model train production. In the period of 1960 - 1962, Arnold marketed the Arnold Rapido 200 product line; this line was very crude yet it also was a sensation because of its much smaller size than TT.

The next phase is the period of 1963 - 1967, when the rapido product line begins to swing toward scale representations of the trains. It is during this period that the "Rapido Coupler" comes into production, beginning its widespread use by all model train manufacturers in 'N'-Scale. It also is during 1964 that the term "N-Scale" comes into use.



Arnold N gauge HN3501-LN06-LN Class 5BEL Pullman Brighton Belle 1967 Coach in BR blue and grey Pullman livery

The next phase is 1968 - 1970, when the Arnold Rapido line of trains reaches maturity. It is during this period that Arnold introduces its turntable and roundhouse. It is also during this period that Arnold enters into a business relationship with Revell, beginning the marketing of Revell Rapido model trains. This marks the beginning of wide production of North American prototype models by Arnold.



Arnold N gauge HN2168-LN Class 156 Railion Electric Loco

After that, the Arnold Rapido line expanded, with continuing development of new models until the early 1990's.



Arnold N gauge Marshalling Loco

As mentioned earlier, Max Ernst retired from Arnold in 1976. At that point, Arnold employed perhaps 200 to 250 people, using three facilities in the Nürnberg area. The Company continued under family control until 1995, when Arnold went into bankruptcy and was sold to the [Rivarossi](#) Group of Italy.

Rivarossi, in turn, would also go bankrupt, leading to the sale of all assets to [Hornby](#), of the United Kingdom. Under Hornby, Arnold train products are once again being manufactured and sold.

*With thanks to Riley O'Connor, Terminus Chapter*



Arnold N gauge RENFE diesel locomotive class 353



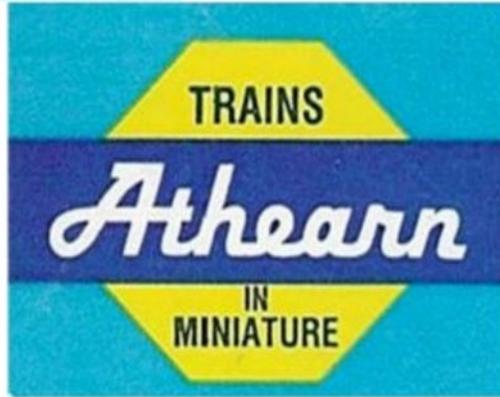
Arnold N gauge HN2108 Electric Loco series E03-DB



Arnold DB Diesel Railcar class 702 in N gauge

**[The TCA Western Division Index of Toy Train Manufacturers is maintained at TCASWestern.org by Harold Shapiro](#)**

# Athearn Trains



## History

Athearn is a United States manufacturer of model railroad equipment, produced and distributed by American hobby manufacturer Horizon Hobby, Inc. of Champaign, Illinois, USA.

### Athearn 'O' scale 40' Steel Box Car Kits



Athearn 'O' Kit-built 2-rail ATSF Scout 40' Box Car



Athearn 'O' scale Kit-built 2-rail AT&SF 40' Box Car



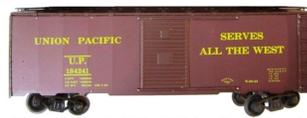
Athearn 'O' Canadian National 40' Box Car



Athearn 'O' Kit-Built Nickel Plate Road 40' Box Car



Athearn 'O' Kit-built Canadian National RR Box Car



Athearn 'O' scale Kit-built Union Pacific Box Car



Athearn 'O' 2-rail Kit-built Rock Island 40' Box Car



Athearn 'O' Kit-Built Nickel Plate Road 40' Box Car



Athearn 'O' Kit-built Canadian National RR Box Car



Athearn 'O' Kit-built Great Northern 40' Box Car



Athearn 'O' Kit-built Great Northern 40' Box Car



Athearn 'O' 1940's Timken Roller Freight Kit-built Box Car



Athearn 'O' Kit- built Timken Roller Freight 1940's



Athearn 'O' Chicago Great Western 40' Steel Box Car



Athearn 'O' 2-rail Southern RR Single Door Box Car



Athearn 'O' 2-rail Kit-built Southern Pacific Lines



Athearn 'O' 2-rail Kit-built Southern Pacific Express



Athearn 'O' 2-rail Kit-built B&O Sentinel Box Car



Athearn 'O' scale Kit-built GAEX DF 2-rail Box Car

The company's history began in 1938, when its founder-to-be, Irvin R. Athearn (1904 - 1991), started an elaborate 'O' scale layout in his mother's house that he was constantly modifying. A few years later, Irv valued his 'O' collection at \$10,000 and placed an ad in Model Railroader magazine to sell it. After receiving much response to it, Irv decided that selling model railroads would be a good living. He sold 'O' scale motive power and box car kits and other train products out of his mother's house through most of the 1940's via mail order. The first products sold by Athearn were metal 'O'

scale kits. Some parts for early 'O' scale kits were machined by Bill J. Lenoir. 1940's ads by Athearn in Model Railroader magazine state 'O' gauge only! After becoming a full-time retailer in 1946, Irv opened a separate facility in Hawthorne, California in 1948. That same year he branched out into HO kits for the first time. The early HO kits were stamped steel box cars and refrigerator cars sold through the Overnight Distributing Service.

Athearn 'O' scale 40' Steel Reefer Kits



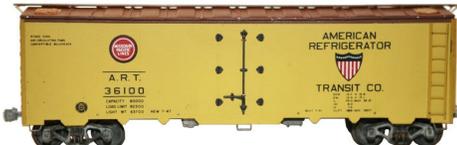
Athearn 'O' 2-rail Kit-built Burlington Route Reefer



Athearn 'O' scale Kit-built 2-rail Armour Reefer



Athearn 'O' scale 2-rail Kit-built Swift 40' Reefer



Athearn 'O' Kit-built Missouri Pacific ART Reefer



Athearn 'O' scale Pacific Fruit Express P.F.E. 40' Reefer



Athearn 'O' Kit-built 2-rail Illinois Central Reefer



Athearn 'O' 2-rail Fruit Growers Express Reefer



Athearn 'O' Kit-built New York Central MDT Reefer



Athearn 'O' Great Northern WFEX 40' Steel Reefer

Because raw materials were in shortage after WW2, Athearn resorted to acquiring sheet metal wherever it could obtain it. Some Athearn kit-built freight cars have turned up with sides made from surplus Coke bottle cap material. The Coca-Cola bottle cap printing is visible on the interior sides of the cars. Athearn AAR type 40' 'O' scale box car kits used metal sides with the door openings punched out. The Athearn designs used thin, stamped metal doors, sliding in U-channels. Roofs and car ends were also made of metal. The Athearn steel reefer kit model was based on a PFE R40-14 aluminum prototype with a wood floor. The kit used aluminum parts too and was the only 'O' scale model ever made that was true to a PFE aluminum prototype. Early metal Athearn kits built up into pretty much the best looking models of their day; details included free standing ladders and grabs, separate roof walks, teeny working door tracks, and stamped metal doors, just like the real railroads. These early kits were issued in red, then yellow boxes.



Athearn 'O' Great Northern Wood Side Box Car



Athearn 'O' Kit-built Santa Fe The Super Chief 2-door 50' Box Car



Athearn 'O' Kit-built ATSF Grand Canyon Line 2-door 50' Box Car

Athearn 'O' scale 50' Steel Double Door Box Car Kits



Athearn 'O' Kit-built AT&SF Express 2-door Box Car



Athearn 'O' Kit-built Ship Santa Fe All The Way 2-door 50' Box Car

In the early 1950's Irv Athearn sold the 'O' scale line to George Menzies. It was sold to Robert V. Reynolds of Reynolds Railroad Products, Indianapolis, Indiana around twenty years later. The 'O' scale line then passed through various hands including Pacific HO, Jan Lorenzen of Locomotive Workshop in New Jersey, Old Pullman Model Railroads in Florida, and Jim Watson (BoxCar Jim).



**Athearn HO scale 200 Ton Wrecking Crane**

In 1950, Athearn introduced an HO tank car kit and in 1951 the diecast HO metal wrecking crane was released. Athearn acquired Milwaukee based Globe Models product line of wood and brass kits in July of 1951. Globe Models started producing their line of metal sided HO freight cars in 1949. The boxcars and refrigerator cars were similar to Athearn cars, but had die-cast roof walks and brass car ends. The stock cars had plastic sides which deformed over time. They also made tank cars and their own trucks. Much of Globe's

original tool and die work was performed by Milwaukee master modeler Carl Traub. Much like [Varney](#), Globe kits were very similar to Athearn metal kits in general "tab in slot" construction. Athearn improved upon the line, introducing a comprehensive array of locomotive, passenger and freight car models over time. Globe had developed a plastic F7 A and B unit in HO scale during the very early 1950's. Athearn started producing them under the Globe name in 1954. These plastic engines originally came as unpowered dummy units painted in gold and sold for less than \$1 each. Because they were inexpensive, a flurry of interest developed amongst modelers and hobbyists to also acquire powered chassis, decals and paint to customize and finish them. Initially Irv Athearn used the Globe name to test the market for these plastic kits. After seeing the success, Irv moved the Globe Models to the Athearn name in 1956. It is believed that the sudden demand for decals allowed the [Wm. K. Walther's Co.](#) to turn around their business, which was not doing well during this time.

Early on, Irv Athearn recognized the importance of time and value to his customers. He introduced "an entirely new principle in HO car construction," a reefer kit with a



**Athearn HO scale Pennsylvania RR F7-A Unit & F7-B Dummy Locomotive**

preassembled body and spot-welded underframe—a precursor to the popular Ready-to-Roll line. Athearn continued to shake up the model train industry through the years, consistently marketing their products as innovations in quality, workmanship and excellent value. Irv Athearn's ability to recognize new trends and change with the times allowed the company to strike with a flaming iron. For instance, in 1956, Athearn released the EMD F7 diesel utilizing a revolutionary 'Hi-F' drive mechanism, employing small rubber bands to transfer motion from the motor spindle to the axles. The GP9 followed in 1957 as the first detailed model 100% tooled by Athearn (the F7 was partially done by Globe, an Athearn buyout), and received the same level of success, becoming a classic and widely-used locomotive in many model railroaders' collections. The GP9 was also fitted with the Hi-F can motor system with rubber band drive. This system worked well for the early Globe F7's, but it was a tight fit inside the narrower body of the GP9, and the rubber bands dried out over time. To meet the needs of advancing model train design, a new system consisting of a narrower electric can motor and a geared drive was constructed. [Pittman](#), a large manufacturer of DC motors, was chosen to produce the motor to power the new 'Blue Box' drive. The Pittman based system featured a gear drive consisting of a series of sprockets which interconnect inside the locomotive's trucks and drive each axle. A major improvement in this system was the ability to have all the locomotive's wheels pick up electricity from the track, where as the early Athearn models only used one truck and required insulation on the other to draw track power. Another innovation that came later was the double-ended ring magnet motor, which permitted easy connection to all-wheel-drive assemblies. then in 1973 Athearn introduced the F45 and FP45, which were among the first model locomotives to include flywheels on the motor shaft. The gears were connected to the flywheels on the motor via a diagonal worm gear and male/female universals. Later Athearn drives featured a single dog bone universal instead of male/female parts to reduce friction points, but many of the old drives continue to function with proper maintenance and attention.



**Athearn HO scale Union Pacific EMD GP9 Diesel**

Starting in the mid-1950's, Athearn produced shortened versions of streamlined and heavyweight passenger cars based on Southern Pacific and Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe prototypes. The company also offered a variety of freight cars with sprung and equalized trucks. The cars could be obtained in simple kit form, or ready-to-run. A model of the Budd Rail Diesel Car was introduced in 1953 with a metal body, and reintroduced in 1958 in plastic. The comprehensive scope of the product line contributed to the popularity of HO as a model railroad scale, due to the ready availability of items and their low cost.



**Athearn HO scale NYC USPO American Railway Express Car**



**Bowser/Menzies/Athearn HO scale 50' Round Roof Box Car**

Over time, Athearn discontinued 'O' scale manufacturing and concentrated solely on HO scale. Kits became simplified and were issued in blue boxes where the modeler only had to screw on the trucks and add a few parts here and there. Athearn metal and wood kits were revived for a time in the 1960's by G. F. Menzies, who had acquired them from Athearn. Menzies also offered the former Athearn line of metal kits as separate parts. Since these metal parts were much thinner than the plastic ones that were commonly found on manufactured car kits during this period, modelers replaced the clunky plastic pieces with these to obtain a more prototypical look. Menzies became D. J. Baker Co. in the 1980's, and was still selling the 40' and 50' double-door round roof box car kits and the 40' AAR box and 40' steel reefer kits. In 1990 the Menzies line of freight car kits was purchased from the D.J. Baker Co. by [Bowser Manufacturing](#) of Montoursville, PA.

Beginning in 1958 through the early 1960's, Athearn licensed HO gauge trains that it made for resale by [Lionel](#), which resold them as their own. Custom manufactured items included a Rectifier Electric and auto loader. All other Athearn made Lionel pieces appeared to be exactly like Athearn's own trains except for the inclusion of a circled "L" logo being the differentiator. The other locomotives provided were F7-A's as powered or dummy units, dummy F7-B's, GP-9's, and the 4 wheeled Hustler industrial switcher. Lightweight Athearn passenger cars and a large assortment of freight cars were offered to round out the rolling stock assortment. The Rectifier was a unique offering in the Athearn line and was the only electric locomotive ever sold by Athearn as the company focus was primarily diesel with some steam. Lionel reportedly retained the molds to the rectifier, which is the only Athearn-tooled HO piece that did not remain in Athearn possession. Lionel would produce a drive on its own for powering its Rectifiers. The Athearn models rode on the GP9 underframe and had EMD Blomberg trucks, a spotting feature for examples found without a box. Athearn is known only to have cataloged and sold the blue and yellow Virginian Rectifier, while Lionel produced other road names, including New Haven and Pennsylvania. Interestingly, in 1993 Athearn mistakenly issued an Erie 50' gondola kit in HO that had a rubber stamped Lionel circle L logo on it. This error was caused by use of original 1958 drawings for production of the car's new rubber stamps. While this was an inexpensive car, the error makes it quite collectable.



**Athearn Made Lionel HO Rectifier Circa 1958**



**Athearn HO gauge Atlantic Coast Line GP35**

In 1958 Athearn introduced the plastic-bodied RDC-1 and RDC-3, powered by the Hi-F Drive, and a plastic version of the 200-Ton Crane. 1959 saw release of the 4-6-2 steam locomotive with the Hi-F Drive, as well as the 50' Double Door Box Car, Quad Hopper and Pickle Cars. Athearn Heavyweight Passenger Cars were new in the fall of 1960. The first road names were B&O and Santa Fe, plus they were available as undecorated, in both kit and R-T-R form. Athearn sold some of its GP7 shells to [Penn Line](#) that were paired with their

own power chassis to create the Penn Line GP9's. By 1961 Athearn had introduced a gear-drive version of its 4-6-2 and a gear-driven 0-4-2T 'Little Monster' and 0-6-0. The 4-6-2 was a model of the Boston & Maine P4 class Pacific steam locomotive. It incorporated a cast zinc alloy base and thermoplastic resin superstructure. It had a worm drive and all power pickup was through the bipolar trucks that carried the tender. The 4-6-2 Pacific was planned to be part of the Lionel HO line, but difficulties in production kept it from joining that catalog. This item was discontinued after the Wilson motor was no longer available, and was not redesigned for a more technologically advanced motor. After a short run, the 0-6-0 and 0-4-2T were also discontinued and no steam locomotives were produced by Athearn for almost 4 decades. In 1962 Athearn introduced their GP30 diesel. A ring magnet motor for diesels came out in 1964. This led to the release of the GP35, SD45, SDP40, DD40 and SW1500 Cow & Calf in 1966.



**Athearn HO gauge Santa Fe EMD SW1500**

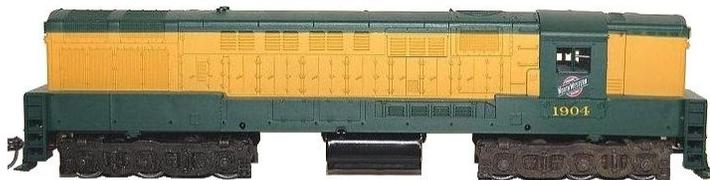


**Athearn HO gauge Union Pacific EMD SW1500**

Alco PA1 and PB1 models were introduced in 1970, and a year later U28B, U28C, U30B, U30C, U33B and U33C diesels were released. In the 1970's Cox trains complete line of HO products consisted almost entirely of Athearn produced items, including F-7A and B diesels, GP-35 diesels, SW-1500 diesels, U28-C diesels, PA-1 and Hustler locomotives. Rolling stock produced by Athearn for Cox included the 40' box car, 50' plug door Box car, 40' reefer, 40' hopper, 40' cattle car 3-dome tank car, 62' tank car, single-dome tank car, 50' gondolas, cupola and bay window cabooses, 50' auto box car and Athearn's streamline passenger cars. Cox also marketed several Athearn accessories as their own. Athearn also supplied freight cars for [Atlas](#) to sell with its [Roco](#)-made diesel locomotives in train sets starting in 1975. These sets consisted of EMD diesels made in Austria by Roco that were trend-setters in the marketplace, and Atlas packaged fully assembled Athearn rolling stock that was standard pieces from the Athearn line.



**Athearn HO gauge Santa Fe GE U30-B circa 1970's**



**Athearn Chicago & Northwestern FM Trainmaster circa 1980**

In 1980 Athearn released its version of the Fairbanks-Morse Trainmaster. The Athearn H24-66 Trainmaster was an early example of prototype-specific tooling being offered on ready-to-run plastic models. In 1984 Athearn improved their locomotive line with a new drive that had new narrower motors and new handrail stanchions. New plastic EMD Blomberg truck side frames were applied to the F7, GP9 and GP35. Athearn introduced the SD40-2 and SD40T-2

Tunnel Motor. With the new narrow motors, they are Athearn's first hood units to feature scale-width hoods. A GP38-2 and GP50 were late 1980's releases.

Irv Athearn passed away in 1991 in Hawthorne, CA. The company passed on to Bob Macias, one of the head employees at Athearn and the manufacturing genius behind the majority of products in the vast Athearn line who became president. New owner Mike Geddes took control as Chairman in 1994, but continued to follow Athearn's commitment to high-quality products at reasonable prices. Additions to the line included the Genesis line of premium models, the licensing of John Deere kits and tractors, the acquisition of Rail Power Products, Inc., the entry into the N-scale market and the development of the Ready-to-Roll line. The 1990's also saw the introduction of the 50' Modern Double-Door Box Car, the MAXI-III and Husky-Stack Well Cars, the GP60, GP50 Phase II, the AC4400CW, AMD-103, Bombardier Bi-Level Commuter Cars and C44-9W. In July of 1998 Athearn purchased the F-Unit molds and tooling by Paul Lubliner from Highliners to be used to produce decorated F2A&B, F3A&B, F7A&B, and F9A&B diesel locomotives as part of the Genesis line. Highliners retained the exclusive rights to sell the F-Units in undecorated kit form. The announcement was made by then President Bob Macias and Vice-president Tim Geddes.



**Athearn HO gauge Southern Pacific EMD SD45**



**Athearn HO gauge Pennsylvania GE U30-C**

The line continued to evolve and constant improvements were being made. To increase detail, a narrower Pittman motor was designed to fit narrower and correct-width locomotive hoods. Notches in locomotive pilots for couplers were enclosed to match the prototypes. In the final blue box decade, the radiator fans and grilles were given a 'see-through' appearance with improved molding techniques.

Many characteristics of the blue box line including re-worked mold tooling even survives today as part of Athearn's line of Ready-to-Run trains. In 1999 Athearn entered the steam locomotive market with the Genesis Series USRA 2-8-2 Mikado and 4-6-2 Pacific. The models were manufactured overseas by Samhongsang. At the time, this was the first new steam locomotive offering in almost 40 years. The other companies offering steam locomotives at this time were [Rivarossi](#), Model Die Casting/Roundhouse, [Tyco/Mantua](#), and

[Bowser](#). However, those models were still being produced using decades old technology. The Athearn Genesis models included can motors, flywheels, improved (non-tender) electrical pickup, very quiet operation, DCC-ready wiring and moderate detail.

Athearn HO Scale 40' Steel AAR Box Cars



Athearn HO Atlantic Coast Line 40' AAR Box Car Athearn HO NYC Pacemaker 40' Box Car



Athearn HO Union Pacific 40' AAR Box Car Athearn HO Maine Central 40' AAR Box Car



Athearn HO MKT 'KATY' 40' AAR Box Car Athearn HO Southern Pacific 40' Steel Box Car



Athearn HO Illinois Central 40' AAR Box Car Athearn HO gauge Custom Sears 40' Box Car



Athearn HO Minneapolis & St. Louis 40' Box Car Athearn HO West Point Textiles Cotton 40' Box Car



Athearn HO gauge Norfolk & Western 40' Steel Box Car Athearn HO ATSF Shock Control 40' Box Car

In 2002 Athearn acquired the molds, dies and inventory of Rail Power Products of Park City, UT. The purchase was announced by then Athearn President Tim Geddes. Rail Power had been in business for 15 years and was initially formed to use Athearn's mechanicals while providing highly detailed locomotive bodies and models that others, including Athearn, were not making. There were 15 locomotive body styles available from Rail Power for Athearn to further update and enhance its Ready-to-Roll brand of HO locomotives. Athearn would also produce the former Rail Power Products models of Intermodal equipment in 1/87 scale. This included the Rail Power Products developed over-the-road trailers, containers and a 56-foot intermodal well car. The same year Athearn purchased the rights and the



Athearn HO scale Genesis Series 2-8-2 Mikado

tooling for four 50' Box Cars from Details West of Chino, CA. The boxcars were a 50-foot single plug door, 50-foot smooth side single plug door, 50-foot plug door/sliding door, and 52-foot double plug door. These cars were later released in the Athearn Ready-to-Roll line. The deal with Details West included its inventory, plus tooling and molds. Details West, however, would retain the rights and continue to sell the floor and underframe for these models.



Athearn HO Michigan Alkali 40' 1 Dome Tank Car Athearn HO gauge American Chemicals 62' Tank Car GATX #8510



Athearn HO ga. Shell Oil 42' 3-Dome Tank Car



Athearn HO Detroit & Toledo 50' Automobile Car ca. 1971



Athearn HO Union Pacific RR 50' Automobile Car



Athearn HO gauge ATSF 50' Double-Door Auto Box Car



Athearn HO gauge PRR Steam Era 50' Automobile Car



Athearn HO Burlington Northern 50' ACF Box Car



Athearn HO gauge ART DF 50' Plug Door Box Car

Athearn introduced their N scale line in 2002. Irv Athearn was inducted into the 'O' Scale Hall of Fame in 2002 in Chicago. In 2003 Athearn released their first locomotive equipped with sounds. Athearn was bought in 2004 by Horizon Hobby Inc. who became the exclusive distributor of the Athearn products. Athearn was then moved from its 58,000 foot manufacturing facility in Compton to a new facility in Carson, California. Around this time, Athearn had 50 employees and was making more than 2,000 model railroad products. Under Horizon, Athearn then purchased Model Die Casting of Carson City, NV and their line of Roundhouse brand trains, launched 1:50-scale precision die-cast products, and created the 4-6-6-4 Challenger with sound as well as other exciting new models, including a Union Pacific Big Boy 4-8-8-4 (released 2006), a Union Pacific class FEF 4-8-4 (released 2007), and a Southern Pacific class MT-4 4-8-2 Mountain with



Athearn HO scale CSX Tampa Division GP38-2

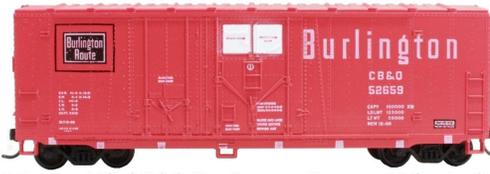
Vanderbilt type tender (released 2010). In 2006, Horizon purchased McHenry Couplers. Michael Stephens was named as the new president of Athearn Trains in January 2007. His father was Rick Stephens, who served as Chairman of Horizon Hobby when the Athearn acquisition was made in 2004. The announcement was made by Joe Ambrose, Vice-president of Horizon Hobby, Inc., Distribution Division. Before joining Athearn, Stephens was vice president of marketing for Kalmbach Publishing Co. While at Kalmbach, he was co-chair of the World's Greatest Hobby campaign. It was announced that former Athearn president Tim Geddes would continue to work with the firm as a consultant. Tim had served as president since 1995. In 2008, Athearn acquired the tooling for the short-lived "Tower 55" series of HO scale diesels from Overland Models. Much of this tooling made its way into the Athearn Genesis line.



**Athearn HO Northern Pacific 40' Steel Reefer**



**Athearn HO 40' Hoods Grade A Milk Reefer**



**Athearn HO CB&Q Burlington Route 40' Grain Car**



**Athearn HO Union Pacific 40' Hi Cube Box Car 1966**



**Athearn HO scale Santa Fe Streamline Passenger Car**

The firm of Model Die Casting, acquired by Athearn in June of 2004, has its roots in model train production dating back to 1938, when musicians Jerry Joice and Perry Bodkin established a hobby store called Roundhouse at 1301 North Catalina Street in Hollywood, California. The first train kits produced were HO scale and were made of die cast metal parts. In

1939 the business was purchased by part-time employees Clarence H. Menteer and C.A. Voelckel. Shortly after assuming leadership, they were hired to build models for Cecil B. DeMille's film Union Pacific. In 1939 Roundhouse Products introduced an HO scale 0-6-0 steam locomotive as a brass and lead alloy kit. Like most other manufacturers, World War II forced Roundhouse to suspend operations. By 1946 Menteer & Voelckel's company was now called Model Die Casting, Inc. and production of the Roundhouse Products line was resumed. In 1948 Model Die Casting relocated to Los Angeles, California. In 1950, they released the first four cars in their cast metal car kit line. These were steel sheathed box cars with pre-painted and lettered sides using 410-M paints. In 1955 the company relocated to Hawthorne, CA. In 1956 C.H. Menteer became the sole owner of Model Die Casting, Inc. and served as its president for the next 50 years. MDC/Roundhouse made various freight cars and steam engines in Zamac prior to 1960. Their first plastic models were the ore car kits of 1960. In 1979 the company introduced their N Scale product line. In 1984 Model Die Casting introduced their 2-truck Shay steam locomotive kit. And in 1985 they released their Alco RS3 diesel locomotive kit, which hobbyists believed to be the most accurate RS3 ever made. In 1993 Model Die Casting relocated operations to 5070 Sigstrom Drive in Carson City, Nevada. In 1996 new can motors were introduced. The Roundhouse 30' Wood Caboose kits became very popular with modelers. Finally in 2004 the acquisition by Athearn was made. Roundhouse was known for putting out kits with themes, such as the 'Old West', 'Old Timer Mining', 'Mountain Logging' and 'Snow Battling'. After the acquisition, the Roundhouse name was to be used only for a line of HO scale Pre-WW2 products, with the rest of the Roundhouse line moving under the Athearn name.



Athearn HO scale Genesis Union Pacific SD70ace Diesel Loco Athearn Genesis Boston & Maine F2A Unit



Athearn HO scale AT&SF Santa Fe PA-1 Diesel Locomotive



Athearn Hustler Switcher in HO

In mid-2009, all remaining U.S. production was moved to China and warehousing moved to parent Horizon Hobby. Sales and product development was moved to a smaller facility in Long Beach, California. The company also announced on October 16, 2009 that Athearn would stop making its famous 'blue-box kits' because of increased manufacturing and labor costs. The company decided to concentrate on making fully assembled products. The company established three lines of products. The Genesis line is the highest-cost, highest-quality, with DCC sound and fine details. Two lower-priced, less-detailed lines are the Ready-to-Roll introduced in 2001, representing trains from the steam-to-diesel transition period to today, and the Roundhouse line, representing trains from the days of steam era railroading. 2009 was also the year that Athearn established its relationship with SoundTraxx to begin offering locomotives equipped with Tsunami sound. In 2010 Michael Stephens left the company and took a position at [Walthers](http://www.walthers.com) as Vice-President of Proprietary Products.



Athearn HO gauge Lehigh Valley 40' Quad Hopper



Athearn HO Western Maryland 40' Quad Hopper

In 2014 Athearn released an Electro-Motive Division GP39X diesel unique to the Southern Ry. for the first time in plastic. It was available in HO scale equipped with a SoundTraxx Tsunami Digital Command Control (DCC) sound decoder and a motor with two brass flywheels. This model was an accurate depiction of the 2,600-hp prototype locomotives first introduced in 1980. In 2017 Athearn introduced its 4-6-6-4 Challenger articulated locomotive in HO scale modelled for the first time in plastic. A large portion of the current Athearn RTR line traces all the way back to the original plastic kits first produced in the 1950's and 60's. The 40' petroleum tank cars, 40' stock car, bay window and "western" style cabooses, 40' and 50' flat cars with trailers, boats, planes, 40' steel reefer, the streamlined and heavyweight passenger cars, 200 ton crane (originally all metal), crane tender caboose, derrick car, pulpwood car, 40' quad hopper, pickle car, rotary snow plow, and the 50' double door box car, all date back and have only seen the most minor changes and upgrades since their introductions.



Athearn HO scale Norfolk Southern GP39X



Athearn HO New Haven Cupola Caboose



Athearn HO Rock Island 40' 2-Deck Stock Car



Athearn HO gauge Grand Trunk RR GTW 50' Gondola



Athearn HO H.J. Heinz 57 Varieties Pickle Car

Because of the quantity produced and number of years made, nearly all Athearn HO blue box kits and ready to run plastic injection molded trains and N scale pieces are easy and inexpensive to obtain. Complete 'O' scale and HO scale yellow box wood and metal kits from the 1940's and 50's are more difficult to find however. The challenge, entertainment and value to collecting Athearn trains may lie in locating unbuilt, original mint kit examples with all the parts and paperwork. This would include the Athearn, Model Die Casting and Global lines.



**Athearn Genesis HO scale Union Pacific 4-6-6-4 Challenger with 14-wheel Coal Tender**

[Link to](#) Athearn web site.