

A nice change running the electrics of the Milw Rd is in store for anyone using this template. There is a fair amount of swithing for those inclined to the operation side. This part of Montana is cattle country and so to be expected, a far amount of cattle car pickups and setouts. Lots of AI traffic in either WB or EB. There is a twenty mile section of the NP RR that has activities run in both directions. Those runs are primarily for exploring that part of the route. If you run EB from Lombard, you must start with a built train as there is no yard from which to draw a train from. WB from Logan has some yard facilities but start with a few cars in train and build from there. There is, however, two AI trains in either direction. mostly so they can be seen from the Milw track and vica versa and to keep the run from getting boring. As in the prototype, there is the odd time you will have to wait for oncoming traffic. If you do not like waiting, just turn off that part in the program when you are building an activity and run without AI traffic. All AI trains are geared around a 10 am starting time for the player trains. This gives an activity five AI trains if you run from one end to the other and you are more apt to see an AI train across the river on the other line. Both lines run parallel to the river for quite a few miles so seeing one is is good odds.

I had no trouble with the AI traffic except one time when I saved the operation and later ran the saved portion. I am not 100% sure, but it looks to me if you run normally, AI trains behave properly but if you happen to save an activity when the AI train is in the next block, the dispatcher loses track of where it is and you might have a cornfield meet..That happened once to me, the dispatch told me to "stop and" — which tells me he does not know and sure enough, we had a meet on the same track. I think it comes down to the fact that dispatch looks ahead one or two blocks and if you save when an AI train is in the middle of that happening, he forgets where that AI train was when reloading the save.

The default consists for the template are Milw. engines so if you run a NP activity, be sure to change the consist to NP locos and don't forget the caboose.

This template runs the same as my Canadian templates, that is, there are no out and backs. I have it on good authority that this railroad in this part of the Country runs the same as Canadian practices. The run will start at the end of the division and run the whole way and the crew will layover and return the next day to their home base picking up what they could not the day prior. If you do not want to run the full division each time, there is a halfway point at which you can start. That is at the town of Ringling or when building your activity, just go out part way. There is nothing to make you go the distance each time out.

When you print out an activity sheet, the first listing is the source track or town and then the next one will be the next siding or town visited by the train. There is no siding or town listed if there is no work for the crew and you do not have to scan all over the listing for the next town, it is the next one printed. Just be sure if you want to pickup and setout in the same region, the the source track has a smaller number than the next stop you want to make or you will be looking all over the work order list for that town or siding.

The electrics take a bit of getting used to but all in all, a nice change from those smelly diesels and be forwarned that since the remake of this route, your frame rates may take a hit if you have a low end machine. I had to back mine right off and then I had from 15 - 30 FPS in the denser areas with an Athlon 64 3500 cpu and an ATI x700 pro video card. The graphics were still quite acceptable.