



Trolley service is now offered in Savannah, Ga.'s, downtown tourist area. However, the car doesn't use an overhead wire. Brian Cudahy

Run a trolley with an invisible wire

It's often been said that model railroaders can find a prototype for just about anything. Well, here's the perfect prototype for anyone interested in adding a trolley line to their layout, especially those feeling daunted by the complexities of building an operating overhead trolley wire system.

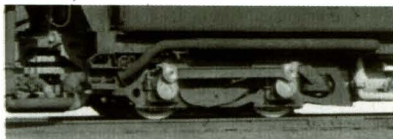
The city of Savannah, Ga., recently inaugurated passenger trolley service over a former Norfolk Southern freight track that runs down the middle of River Street along the historic waterfront. It's a tourist-oriented operation, and passengers are treated to a ride on an authentic streetcar that formerly operated in Melbourne, Australia.

As the streetcar rumbles along, its gong clangs away and you can hear the impressive grinding of gears and hum of electric motors. But, if you listen closely, you'll also hear the muffled sound of two small diesel engines.

While the car is electrically operated, and its original trolley poles are still in place, the current is produced by a pair of compact diesel generators concealed on board. Thus, this electric trolley is self-contained and now operates without an overhead wire.

It's the perfect scenario for operating a trolley car up and down a street on your layout. — Brian Cudahy, Bluffton, S. C.

Tender siderods?



A booster engine adds traction to handle heavy loads. *Trains* collection

I have an unusual 0-8-0 switcher that has siderods on the tender's front truck. Can you explain the purpose of the siderods and what jobs these locomotives did?

Earl Brendorfer, Solon, Ohio

Siderods on the front tender truck indicate the locomotive has a booster engine. These auxiliary devices used steam from the locomotive to operate a small engine that was built into the lead tender truck. Thus, the booster engine used some of the tender's weight to enhance the locomotive's slow-speed tractive effort.

Booster engines were commonly found on heavy-duty yard switchers that moved heavy loads at slow speeds in hump yards, on cross-town transfer jobs, or on ore docks. — Jim Hediger, senior editor



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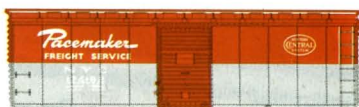
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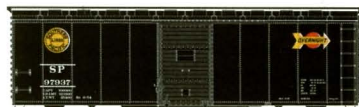
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