



The evening passenger train has no orders waiting as it arrives at Niwot, Colo., on Jim Ferenc's HO scale Colorado & Southern Northern Division layout. He scratchbuilt the operating rotary train order board based on prototype photos.

# Build a working **ROTARY** **ORDER BOARD**

A servo motor and controller bring this depot detail to life

By **Jim Ferenc** • Photos by the author

**W**hile researching the depot in Niwot, Colo., for my HO scale Colorado & Southern Ry., I came across early 20th century photographs showing a rotary train order signal above the station operator's window. When the operator had a train order for an oncoming train, he would rotate the signal, or order board, to show a stop aspect. Similar rotary boards were common on Colorado narrow gauge railroads. An internet search revealed their widespread use on standard gauge railroads until semaphore signals replaced them in the 1920s.

Though I model 1958, I've bent reality by modeling coal mines and passenger trains decades after their prototypes disappeared, all in the name of operating interest. The challenge of building a working rotary board for my monthly operating sessions appealed to me, so I decided this was another worthy offense against reality.

*Jim Ferenc of Boulder, Colo., models the Colorado & Southern Northern Division in HO scale. His article "Animate a coal mine" appeared in the June 2023 issue.*