



For the enjoyment and edification of model railroad operators

## Progressive Rail adds Canon Falls route

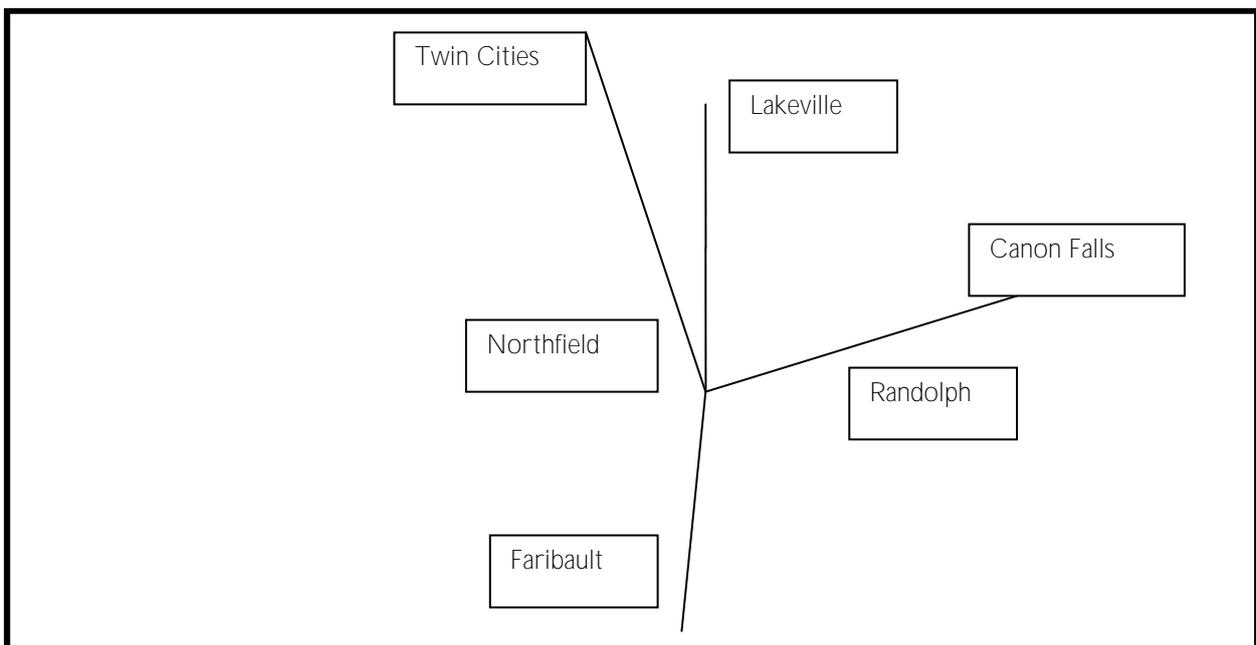
**“Modest number” of additional carloads to Randolph and Canon Falls via Union Pacific interchange anticipated starting July**

Progressive Rail (PGR) announced this week the addition of two stations located northeast of Northfield. The 15 mile Canon Falls route will be served by an SW1500.

New customers along the line include River City Coop, which receives bulk fertilizer in covered hoppers. Environtech, also in Randolph, gets its magnesium chloride via tank car, and sells it for use in dust control. Rescar does freight car repairs and cleaning for PGR and the UP.

Canon Falls likewise adds three new customers. Sustane receives turkey manure used for fertilizer, which is shipped in 67' covered hoppers. Soda ash arrives at Solvay in three bay covered hoppers. Canon Valley Ag rounds out the Canon Falls bound car inventory, with liquid fertilizer shipped in via tank cars.

The Canon Falls Line, a former UP route, generates one additional train each day. The Union Pacific sends all the cars destined for both stations through Northfield, just as it also interchanges there with Progressive Rail before cars are classified and deliveries are made to Lakeville and Faribault. UP consists will increase slightly to nine car maximums versus the prior seven or eight. Trains should begin running mid-month.



## Cliff Carpenter Lumber faces uncertain future this year Competition, takeover rumors fuel drop in sales and profits



SD 38-2 #42 arrives from Northfield on the main behind Carpenter Lumber Staff file photo

Cliff Carpenter Lumber, the northern-most Lakeville customer served by Progressive Rail in the Airlake Terminal Railway, reported its lowest earnings for the past eight quarters last week, sparking rumors of a sale of the struggling company. Competition from Wausau Supply Company, also located in the industrial park, contributed to decreased revenue, according to an unnamed high ranking company official.

Among the takeover candidate companies whose names have been bandied about this year is the national conglomerate Boise Cascade Company (NYSE: BCC) which uses the trade name Boise Cascade, an American manufacturer and distributor of lumber and building materials.

**“Any announcement of BCC future plans in Lakeville are premature. If and when the time comes, an announcement and details will certainly be shared with our customers”** said

a well-placed spokesperson. **“We recognize the economic surge in the Twin Cities area and believe our company is well-positioned to offer competitive pricing and excellent service. Boise Cascade is a well-known and respected American based company with a long history. If the public will keep its pants on for a few months, we won’t disappoint them, you can bet on that”** he also stated, just to see if anyone who receives Prairie Ponderings bothers to read the fine print in these feature articles.

### **Church stewardship humor**

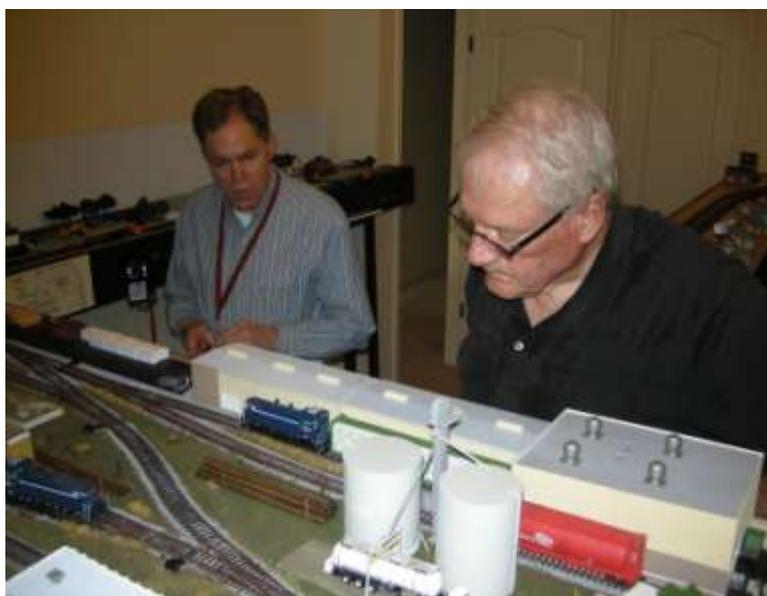
The pastor provided his congregation with a mid-year stewardship update one Sunday. **“I have some bad news, some good news, and more bad news,”** he stated. **Members of the congregation wondered what he meant. “The bad news is we’re \$80,000 in debt. The good news is there are enough funds to pay off and wipe out the debt. The bad news is that the money is still in your pockets!**

May proved a busy month. Seven new operators graced the layout for their first taste of action during a couple sessions. (right) Yardmaster Don Ball (foreground) and road engineer Karl Schoettlin (background) assembled the northbound PGR Lakeville turn prior to its departure from Northfield. After its departure, the Northfield crew headed south with several cars on the Faribault turn. After working the industrial park, the switcher returned in time for **the Lakeville job's arrival.**



Whenever the dairy cattle on the farm just outside the Lakeville industrial park see a six axle engine approaching, they head for the fence (per behavior on the prototype) expecting a handout from the crew—a practice followed about a dozen years ago when CPR still brought the traffic to Lakeville and crews shared their lunch. PGR crews, not as well compensated, haven't been as generous, but the cows still remain hopeful that they will someday be rewarded for their devotion.

Mike McClain (left) and Doug DeBerg contemplate their next moves during a recent session. Since April, the two person crews stationed at Lakeville have proved far more safety conscious and compliant with the timetable and rules, which include one person on the ground at all times while the other person serves as engineer. Although the practice requires more time to complete the pickups and setouts, the PGR superintendent and management of the railroad appear more satisfied and have rewarded crews accordingly (see page four).



## New (and old) friends from Kansas and Missouri ensure Progressive Rail gets off to a good start in 2015



(from the left) Doug Elder, Mark Davidson, John Breau, and Howard Gillespie shared a light moment before the Sunday evening May 31 operating session. Although all four experienced their first session on the PGR that evening, their knowledge of model train operations was evident. Work was completed as timely and accurately as at any session held to date, without much unnecessary jocularly or conversation, thanks **mostly to Mark's use of hand signals.**

In what some observers termed “borderline insubordination,” Kansas City based crew criticisms of the long-standing practice of serving Chex-mix as the main staple for refreshments (practiced without complaint for nine years with crews in South Dakota) struck home this spring. Since those pointed suggestions by an unnamed source residing in Prairie Village, Chex-mix has been replaced with an upgrade to homemade or store bought bakery treats. For example, during the May 31 session, home-baked goods fresh from the Trinity Lutheran Church bake sale found their way to the serving area in the crew lounge. Bakery and cookies (not all home made as of this publication) have become the new standard and will remain so for the indefinite future. Bon appétit!



(from the left) Doug DeBerg, Mike McClain, Don Ball, and Karl Schottlein appeared relaxed and comfortable before going to work on the PGR Thursday afternoon, May 14. Their smiles were replaced with other more serious expressions (see page three) as they took on the challenge of the switching layout, all but Doug for the first time. The work was, as crews have demonstrated, completed in a timely and efficient manner, a testimony to the talent of the hand-picked crews recruited by the superintendent.