

# Meet Me in St. Louie!

Showing the OS2R Flag at the NMRA 2022 National Convention  
Article by David Vaughn

Tony Koester, a well-known modeler and “Trains of Thought” (*Model Railroader*) columnist, has had a long-time fascination with O Scale 2 Rail (“OS2R”). In the January through April 2020 issues of *Model Railroader*, Tony presented an OS2R project layout as a sectional, single-town design element. He modeled Wingate, Indiana, along the route of his own Nickel Plate home layout.

Tony brought his historical research techniques to reconstruct and selectively compress the town, design and construct the buildings, and capture its track plan and railroad operations. He built the layout in OS2R — actually in P:48 (Proto 48) — and hand-laid the track. The benchwork used foam insulation and aluminum framing, over which Tony installed basic scenery. Rolling stock was a mix of O-scale cars he had acquired over the years and some borrowed P:48 equipment.

Like all project layouts, there is always a question of what happens after publication is complete. In this case, Wingate resided under a tarp on Tony’s porch until a family reunion loomed. O Scale Central was look-



Above: Big Bend Railroad Club. — Joe Barker photo

ing for a portable layout to display at NMRA Conventions and meets, train shows, and Railroad Prototype Modeler (RPM) meets. When Wingate became available, we purchased the layout for that purpose.

We determined reconstruction and reconfiguration of Tony’s project would

be necessary. We also found the benchwork could be made stronger and thinner, so it was built new. We used prefabricated track (Atlas) to make building the layout easier. And since we wanted to facilitate through train operations, we added a second mainline track and a runaround track at each end of the layout with hand-operated turntables to create “a day at Wingate.”



Below: John Garavaglia’s Missouri Pacific. — Joe Barker photo



Above: From left to right: David Vaughn, Joe Barker, and Greg Gonzales. — Michelle Kempema photo

Passenger Trains 9 and 10, Frankfort–St. Louis through freights, and a local provide operational switching interest. The changes increased the length of the layout to 36 feet. A diagram for the revised track plan appears below.

The changes also meant the “new” Wingate (Wingate II) was no longer the same classic small Indiana town Tony had researched and constructed. What to do? We decided to rename the new (hopefully improved) Wingate after Tony in honor of his long service to the hobby and, particularly, to the Nickel Plate Road. So, the town name going forward will be Koester, Indiana. We will add additional detail to the layout and create an optional configuration by adding sections to form a complete loop, including a staging yard, allowing continuous operation. Construction plans and lists of track components to build the layout will be available through [oscalecentral.com](http://oscalecentral.com).

Before committing to rebuilding Wingate, O Scale Central was offered the opportunity to display an OS2R layout at Gateway 2022, the NMRA National Convention in St. Louis. They provided a place in the NMRA’s Special Interest Group (SIG) room (O Scale Central is the NMRA’s SIG for OS2R). The SIG room also served

Right: Eric Peterson works to put the finishing touches on the layout. — David Vaughn photo

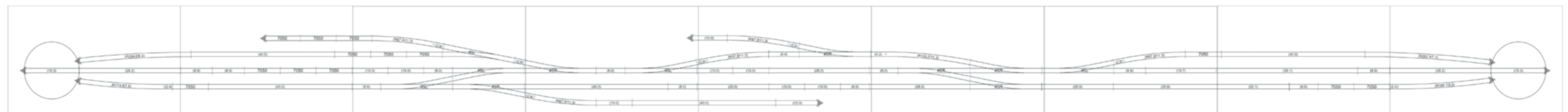
Below: Revised trackplan. — Nick Bulgarino drawing



as the departure lounge for all Convention bus tours. We committed to displaying the layout with the optimism we all have had getting ready for a show or open house.

The project turned out to be more challenging than we had planned, and the layout was not operational until the very night before we were to leave, driving the layout to St. Louis from Maryland. The layout, structures, rolling stock, and O Scale Central signs and literature just barely fit in the SUV, but we made it. We set up the layout on Sunday morning, installed structures and details, placed the engines and cars on the track, and started operating.

Below: Literature on display in the SIG room at the 2022 NMRA National Convention. — Michelle Kempema photo





Above: John Russell's Rock Island. — Joe Barker photo  
Below: Richard Rands' On20 Mineral & Southfork. — Joe Barker photo

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New scenery was still drying, and electrical repairs were still being made when the SIG room opened.

The layout was a success. We showed OS2R to 200–250 attendees, had substantive discussions about OS2R with approximately 100 modelers, distributed 250 reprints of the “O Positive” article from the *NMRA Magazine*'s May 2022 issue, and 150 copies of OSC's “Who We Are/What We Do” brochure. O Scalers also put on three clinics at the Convention, two (“Fresh Look at O Scale” and “The Model Railroad Life and Contributions of John Armstrong”) with sizable OS2R content. To show our confidence in the attraction of OS2R, we gave away eight OS2R freight car kits at the “Fresh Look at O Scale” clinic. At the related but separate National Train Show, we also procured space for and dis-

played an OS2R switching layout, which Joe Norman constructed on short notice.

We encouraged and helped coordinate the inclusion of three OS2R layouts on convention tours, exposing an additional 50 or more visitors to OS2R. The Big Bend Railroad Club is the oldest model railroad club in St. Louis. It is housed in the former Frisco station at Webster Groves, Missouri. BNSF runs the former Frisco line through here. John Garavaglia's Missouri Pacific Eastern Division is based on the MoPac main line west from downtown St. Louis. It is DCC controlled and features a model of the Kirkwood station, scratchbuilt by John Peluso. Berkshire Valley Models owner Richard Rands' On30 Mineral & Southfork Railway represents the fictitious railroad in southern Alaska in the early 1900s. The majority of the layout has large mountains and rugged canyons. John

Russell's Rock Island Eldon Division depicts Rock Island's main line from St. Louis to Eldon. It is highly detailed with many scratchbuilt buildings.

Our presence at the NMRA National Convention — and the sectional OS2R layout in particular — was supported by a team of OSC members. Eric Peterson coordinated the overall effort. Nick Bulgarino and Brian Anshen participated in layout and components design and worked on the layout along with Jim Vaughn and me. Jim and I drove the layout to and from St. Louis. At the Convention, Eric Peterson, George Wallace, Joe Norman, Dick Donaway, Joe Barker, Jim Canter, David Thornton, and Michelle Kempema operated the layout and interacted with modelers. Thanks to all for your contributions to raise the profile of OS2R!

For all the attention paid to the

hardware, the greatest satisfaction was working as a team to show off the layout and bring OS2R to the National Convention's participants. We had fun, which is what it is all about. The layout's (now Koester, Indiana) next display stop was at the Mid-Atlantic Railroad Prototype Modelers Meet in October.

For questions about O Scale Central, contact [secretary@oscalekings.org](mailto:secretary@oscalekings.org). For questions about the layout, contact David Vaughn at [nkpos2r@gmail.com](mailto:nkpos2r@gmail.com).

O Scale Central and NMRA are independent, non-profit organizations that have chosen to affiliate for the mutual benefit of our membership. Each is not responsible for the publications, actions, or omissions of the other. 🙏



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## O SCALE CENTRAL®

### WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE DO

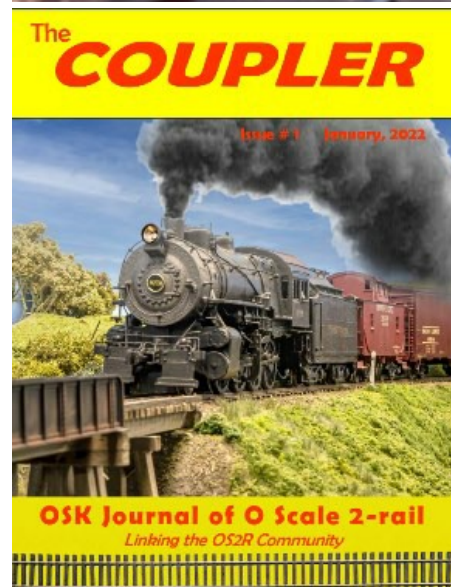
O Scale Central® promotes and supports model railroading in O Scale 2-Rail (OS2R). O Scale is the same size as O Gauge (think Lionel). However, OS2R models are full 1:48 scale, operate on 2 rail track (which lends a more prototypical look to the models), and run on DC or DCC power. O Scale Central's internet home is [OScaleCentral.com](http://OScaleCentral.com). Find us on Facebook at [Facebook.com/OScaleCentralSIG](https://www.facebook.com/OScaleCentralSIG).



O Scale Central is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) corporation. We are the National Model Railroad Association ([www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org)) Special Interest Group (SIG) for OS2R.

O Scale Central's website ([OScaleCentral.com](http://OScaleCentral.com)) has articles on how to get started in O Scale. Our Scale-Wide Product and Service Guide® is a free listing of manufacturers and vendors who make products and provide services for OS2R, including track, cars, locomotives, and more! O Scale Central has a calendar of upcoming events. It also has a list of clubs that model in OS2R. There are so many

ways to enjoy the hobby. Visit our website to learn how you can get more out of O Scale 2-Rail!



OSC also publishes a quarterly Journal, *The Coupler* and a monthly Newsletter *The Drawbar*, all of which are member-exclusive.

OSC produces a monthly online program with OS2R-specific news, interviews and updates. We maintain a Membership Directory that is voluntary and password protected to connect our members and greater OS2R community. In addition, OSC also provides members with liaison for OS2R manufacturers, show sponsors, and O Scale 2-Rail clubs.

If you are interested in O Scale 2-Rail, want to join O Scale Central®, or have any questions, visit our website ([OScaleCentral.com](http://OScaleCentral.com)) or contact Ken Nesper at [secretary@oscalecentral.com](mailto:secretary@oscalecentral.com).