

Moving the Colorado and Santa Fe Railroad

By
Joe Baldwin



(In response to several requests, Joe has agreed to condense his October clinic on lessons learned down into this article. —Ed.)

Lessons Learned Moving my Big Layout

You know you're going to move. You don't know when but you sure want your layout to go

with you. Here are some of the many lessons I learned in moving my 17' x 44' layout.

Time to thin down – Knowing I'd eventually move, almost 2 years ago I went through my train stash with a critical eye and made some tough decisions. I separated everything I knew in my heart of hearts I'd never really use. I put all the stuff on shelves and priced it. I then held two open houses and moved 50-60% of the excess in that venue and eBay got the big ticket items. I sold 80% of what I'd considered excess. I also had a "Free" table only to be surprised some of my stuff couldn't even be given away!

Trash is trash – As soon as you suspect you are moving, call your refuse (trash) company and order a second container if possible. If you currently have a small one, trade up to the largest one and get a second one. Roll offs are very expensive. Most things can be chopped up. The house will bleed trash until you have completely vacated the premises.

Time – It took me three long days to put the stuff sitting on the layout into plastic tubs.

Inventory – I keep an inventory of what is in train room storage tubs, boxes and parts boxes. It is in Excel, it is sortable and filterable. (Working with Excel is a whole different Clinic—which I am offering to give.) Each container has a unique number. Each container has at least one line entry in the inventory list. I don't search through containers, I sort through the list. The list is about 10 years old now and pretty much up to date.

Help, I need somebody, HELP! You ain't 50 anymore, **Joe**, and your back is already barking at you. You are going to need help. Let your friends and club(s) know you are moving and make a list of the guys who said they'd be glad to help. I was personally humbled by the response. Stuff to remember:

1. Have some fresh, cold bottles of water for everyone.
2. Make sure you have a list of things you want done.
3. Take pictures of them while they are working. **Very Critical**
4. Don't schedule 4 guys when you only have enough work for one or two.
5. If the team says it won't fit, **listen** to them.

Self Storage Unit – Get one- you'll need it. If you are moving within easy driving distance, (under 40 miles) get a storage unit close to your new digs. You can stage a lot of your heat-immune stuff because your new layout room is going to fill up way faster than you think it will. I found the PODs to be very expensive. You could rent a U Haul trailer for 10 days for about half of what getting a POD to your house would cost.

Movers – I had great luck using college kids in a rental truck.

- **Insurance** - if you have a good homeowner's policy with good liability coverage you are good to go; at least that is what my outgoing and my incoming insurance dudes told me.
- **COST** - We moved the layout 40 miles in one phase using a 26 foot van truck for \$750. They did the rest of the house in three other loads, totaling about \$2500— the same as the estimate I got from a friend-recommended, big-name company and they wouldn't touch the layout!
- **Break it down** - Your modular / sectional layout will come apart like you planned but if it has been in place for a few years, it will do it ugly.

Chaos & trash - Be prepared to live in total chaos for at least two months after the move-in. Your train room will spawn crap and trash like a mud-hole spawns mosquitoes.

Brain Fade - Everything you own is going to pass by your eyes at least 3 – 5 times over the move timeline. You will find stuff you forgot you had long ago. Don't celebrate though, because about mid-point in the move timeline you won't be able to find anything. (Unless you are updating your inventory sheet like I did. And yet . . .)

Pictures - Take five or six hundred pictures of your layout, because it is fixing to disappear.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

Salvaging Track – Some of your old layout track will not work in the new location; you'll just know. I've reused some pieces of flex track on 4 layouts. If you used silicone caulk to secure your track, you're not likely to recover much of it.

Salvaging building materials - The disassembly will create 3 or 4 monster piles you may not be ready for; I wasn't. All of these materials are being recycled,. The materials consisted of:

- Lumber – 2X2, 1X2 and 1X4
- Masonite from fascia and backdrops
- Fasteners – about a gallon and a half, mostly drywall screws and carriage bolts
- Wire and cables

Tools - Organize two sets of tools, one at the old house, the other at the new one, and keep them organized. I think I walked five miles during our move event looking for a tape measure, screw driver or a pry bar.

Think Diorama – Seems I already had a bunch of them. They are so easy to move and reinstall at the other end. Most of my mountains are “plug and play”.

Finish the room first!

Where is the backdrop? – BEFORE you install or build bench work, put up the backdrops, whether it be simply painting the walls blue or hanging Masonite or other materials. You will save yourself a lot of grief if you do.

You want those lights there? - My new room had some nifty lighting that I left in place and when I finally decided to take it down, what a P.I.T.A! Yep, the benchwork was in the way. The ugly truth is I knew before I started that the lights were goners. so why wait and make the job harder than it needs to be. SLOW DOWN Joe, one step at a time. While I am at it, do you have a plan for your train room lighting? Things like isle lights separated from the over the layout lights, and dimmers where you want them? Some of these tasks become unbearably difficult if you procrastinate.

LED T8 Bulbs - If you are a fan of fluorescent tube lighting or have some in the train room, now is a good time to retrofit to LED's. They are about \$8 apiece and the price is falling. But beware, I spent a confusing couple of days to learn these facts:

There are at least 3 different types of replacement LED T8 bulbs and they are NOT interchangeable. The three kinds are: magnetic ballast, electronic ballast and direct wire. If you get the right bulb for your ballast, it's easy peasy, if you don't, it ain't going to work. And forget HD & Lowes, they don't know. I found that HD only had the magnetic ballast type while Lowes had the electronic ballast type and direct wire. They will undoubtedly catch up, but until they do you are on your own.

This is heavy! I built every piece of my layout almost exclusively by myself, but I did it one board at a time. My modules, even without legs and plaster mountains, were heavy and bulky. I got them moved and in the room, but now I had to move them around about four times. Then you have to get them off the floor and up on legs. Hard to do without help!

Call the drywall guy! OK, you buggered some walls, maybe even took a wall out, but you left some drywall scabs. Call the drywall guy and have him come fix it NOW before it gets harder and more expensive. 🚧



FIG.1—Sawmill in Erie
 FIG.2—Sawmill in Loveland
 FIG.3—Big City in Erie
 FIG.4—Big city in Loveland