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Pole-setting and cable deployment and stringing rail car consist for overhead catenary systems

Abstract

A catenary installation consist for construction of an overhead catenary system. The consist includes gondola-style cars with rails mounted along sidewalls thereof to enable wheeled apparatus to move therealong. The cars are configured for fabrication, storage, and installation of catenary arms as well as cable terminations. Wheeled lifting apparatus are disposed on several of the segments and can travel between cars to obtain materials and to reach desired installation locations. Movability longitudinally of the apparatus provides great latitude to crews for completing installation activities without need to move or precisely position the consist as a whole. Fabrication facilities enable construction of catenary arms on the consist as needed to meet design characteristics of particular installations. A crew-segment is also included and provides restrooms, shelter, and other needs for crew members to increase crew member comfort and time on site.

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Background/Summary

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS (1) This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 63/478,798, entitled POLE-SETTING AND CATENARY ARM FABRICATION AND INSTALLATION CONSISTS FOR OVERHEAD CATENARY SYSTEMS, filed Jan. 6, 2023, the disclosure of which is incorporated herein in its entirety by reference.

BACKGROUND
(1) Overhead cable or catenary systems are common in electrical traction rail systems for providing electrical power to traction engines. The overhead cable systems typically include a series of poles or masts disposed spaced apart alongside a railway or tracks. The poles each carry an arm, which may also be referred to as a catenary arm or simply a catenary, that extends toward and/or over the tracks and supports a variety of cables including a contact cable and a messenger cable. Negative return and ground or earth cables are also often installed on the pole. Each of the cables extends from one pole or catenary to the next longitudinally along the length of the tracks.
(2) The contact cable is suspended from the arm so as to be contacted by a pantograph of a traction engine traveling thereunder to transfer electrical power to the engine. The messenger cable is suspended above or away from the contact cable so as not to be contacted by the pantograph. The messenger cable is electrically coupled to the contact cable by jumpers provided at one or more of the arms to supply electrical power to the contact cable. The cables are pulled in tension during installation and the tension is maintained by weighted tension assemblies and/or fixed terminations at one or both of their terminating ends. The negative return and ground cables are typically installed on insulators coupled to the poles near a top end thereof.
(3) Current installation practices for installing poles and negative return and ground cables of overhead catenary systems use a plurality of road-based vehicles which may be fitted with hi-rail systems that enable travel along the tracks of a rail system. For example, a typical installation team may include one or more delivery vehicles or semi-tractor trailers that transport the poles to their intended installation locations or as near as possible to such locations. In many instances the terrain or other obstacles prevent the delivery vehicles from reaching the installation locations, and thus the poles must be transported from a drop-off or staging location to the final installation location by another smaller or rail-bound vehicle.
(4) One or more crews of installers employ pole-setting vehicles such as flat-bed trucks with integrated crane arms or other lifting apparatus to transport the poles from the drop-off location to the final installation locations and to lift the poles into position for installation on a previously installed base or foundation. The crew may install travelers or blocks for the negative return and ground cables on the poles as well as the catenary arm among other components on the poles prior to or following installation of the pole on the base. Additional vehicles may be required to lift one or more crew members for installation of components on the poles. The pole-setting vehicles and

any additional vehicles must be provided access to the installation locations via travel alongside the tracks or be configured for travel along the tracks. These vehicles are typically equipped with outriggers which must be deployed and retracted at every installation location for use of their associated crane arm or bucket lift.

(5) Another crew follows the pole-setting vehicles to string the negative return and ground cables on the poles. This crew may include a first vehicle that carries and feeds out the cables and a second vehicle that follows behind to lift crew members to the top of the poles for installation of travelers, blocks, or the like for linking the cables with the poles. The travelers or blocks generally comprise a pulley through which the cable is threaded to allow the cable to be pulled into tension at a later time.

(6) One or more additional finishing crews may follow to complete remaining installation steps such as installing terminations and balance weight assemblies that provide tension in the cables, replacing the travelers or blocks with insulators to affix the cables to the poles, and making electrical couplings of the cables.

(7) Such installation teams may require greater than twenty vehicles to accommodate the crews and their activities just for installation of the poles and the negative return and ground cables. Each of the vehicles must be driven to and from the installation locations daily and stored overnight at another location which may be miles from the installation location. One or more vehicles may travel down a section of rail from an access or staging point to complete one of a plurality of steps in the process and then return to the access point or staging location before one or more vehicles used to complete a subsequent step in the process may travel down the section of rail to complete the subsequent step in the process. For example, a first set of one or more vehicles may first travel down a section of rail from an access point or staging location to deliver poles to their intended installation locations and then return to the drop-off location so that a second set of one or more vehicles for a pole setting crew may travel down the section of rail to install the poles on previously poured foundations. Once the poles are installed on the section of rail, the second set of vehicles of the pole setting crew then returns to the staging location or access point and a third set of one or more vehicles for a cable setting crew travels down the section of rail unspooling negative return and ground cables and attaching them to the installed poles. When the negative return and ground cables are installed, the third set of one or more vehicles may then return to the staging location or access point.

(8) Travel to the installation location may require additional travel due to accessibility issues surrounding the installation locations and roadway access thereto. Additionally, crew members must be provided with restroom and break facilities during the workday which may require additional travel to and from the installation site. These aspects, among others, lead to a great deal of inefficiency, logistical problems, and large overhead and equipment costs.

(9) Rail-bound vehicles have been developed to reduce some of the accessibility issues associated with such installations, however issues associated with the number of required vehicles, daily travel requirements, and crew requirements, among others, persist. One such exemplary rail-bound configuration is depicted in PCT Patent Application Publication No. WO2011141089 ('089) to Theurer and Fletzer. The '089 publication depicts a plurality of separate rail-bound vehicles each configured to carry out a particular step in installation of an overhead catenary system. Most of the vehicles include flat-bed cars that carry the components to be installed and articulated lifting arms affixed to one of the cars. Additional, separate vehicles are provided to carry and pay out the cables as well as to raise crew members to the erected masts for installation of the cables thereon. Each of these vehicles must be independently driven along the tracks to the various installation locations in sequence to carry out their designated tasks and each carries crew and supplies needed for such installations. Additionally, separate rail- and/or non-rail-bound vehicles are likely required to provide transportation and accommodation for crew members before, during, and after working hours.

(10) Completion of the build out of the catenary system requires installation of catenary arms on the poles as well as stringing of the contact and messenger cables thereon. Additional crews of installers with equipment configured similarly to that described previously transport the catenary arms to the install locations and raise and mount the catenary arms on the poles. The contact, messenger, and any other desired cables must also be played out, raised up to and coupled with the catenary arms, and tensioned which may include installation of static anchors, or weighted tensioning assemblies, among others.

(11) Available equipment and systems used for installation of the catenary arms and cables suffer similar drawbacks and shortcomings as those used for the pole-setting tasks described above. These drawbacks include the great number of crew members and equipment required to complete the tasks, transport and storage of the equipment and materials to and from the installation location, and the need for accommodations for the crew members, among others.

SUMMARY

(12) A high-level overview of various aspects of exemplary embodiments is provided here to introduce a selection of concepts that are further described in the Detailed-Description section below. This summary is not intended to identify key features or essential features of embodiments, nor is it intended to be used in isolation to determine the scope of the described subject matter. In brief, this disclosure describes a pole-setting consist for installing poles or masts and negative return and ground cables of overhead catenary systems and a catenary arm fabrication and installation consist that can follow the pole-setting consist to complete the build out of the overhead catenary system.

(13) The pole-setting consist comprises a series of rail-bound cars coupled together to form a consist that can be coupled to or include a motive means, such as a locomotive or other powered rail-bound vehicle. The consist includes a pole-setting segment, a crew-segment, a cable-deployment segment, and a cable-stringing segment.

(14) The pole-setting segment includes a plurality of gondola-cars in which a supply of poles may be disposed and carried to the installation locations. Top edges of the gondola-car's longitudinally extending walls or sidewalls are provided with a rail upon which wheels of a pole-handling apparatus may traverse and bridge members are provided between the sidewalls of adjacent ones of the gondola-cars to allow travel of the pole-lifting apparatus therebetween. The pole-handling apparatus includes an articulated arm with an end-arm tool configured to lift and position the poles from within a cargo area of the gondola-car to a base or foundation alongside the consist for installation thereof.

(15) The crew-segment comprises one or more cars and includes one or more portable restroom facilities and an enclosed breakroom or office, among other facilities for use by the crew.

(16) The cable-deployment segment comprises a plurality of gondola-cars configured to carry a plurality of coils of cables for installation as the negative return and ground cables of the overhead catenary system. The gondola-cars of the cable-deployment segment are configured like those of the pole-setting segment to include rails on which a cable-lifting apparatus may travel. The cable-lifting apparatus includes an articulated arm with an end-arm tool configured to position and feed out the negative return and the ground cables for coupling with the poles as the consist travels along the tracks. The cable-lifting apparatus may also be configured to move coils of the cables from within the gondola-cars to a cable reel or stand when a previous coil is exhausted.

(17) The cable-stringing segment follows the cable-deployment segment and comprises one or more similarly configured gondola-cars on which a man-lift apparatus is disposed. The man-lift is fitted with wheels and is moveable along the rails of the gondola-car sidewalls to move longitudinally along the cable-stringing segment. Crew members can thus be lifted to the poles to install travelers, insulators, and/or other components on the poles and/or to install the cables in the travelers and/or insulators.

(18) A method for installing poles and cables for a catenary system comprises the steps of

providing a pole-setting consist comprising a plurality of railcars coupled together into a single unit that includes a pole-setting segment, a cable-deployment segment and a cable-stringing segment. The pole-setting segment comprises one or more of the plurality of railcars having a cargo area in which a plurality of catenary poles may be disposed. A pole handling apparatus is moveably mounted relative to the railcars of the pole-setting segment and includes an articulated arm configured to selectively retrieve one of the plurality of catenary poles from the cargo area of the one or more railcars and to position selected ones of the catenary poles alongside the consist for installation on successively positioned foundations.

(19) The cable-deployment segment comprises one or more of the plurality of railcars on which at least a first spool of a first cable and preferably also a second spool of a second cable are rotatably supported. The cable-deployment segment further includes a cable-lifting apparatus having an extendable arm with an end arm tool configured to raise the first cable unspooled from at least the first spool and in an embodiment a second cable unspooled from at least the second spool to a desired height and location for installation on the catenary poles.

(20) The cable-stringing segment comprises one or more of the plurality of rail cars having a man-lift disposed thereon. The man-lift is configured to raise one or more crew members to a desired height and location alongside the pole-setting consist for installation of at least the first cable and in an embodiment, the first and second cables on the catenary poles.

(21) The method includes moving the pole-setting consist along a section of rail and relative to the successively positioned foundations to successively position the pole-setting segment adjacent to selected ones of the foundations; operating the pole handling apparatus to retrieve successive ones of the catenary poles from the cargo area of the pole-setting segment; positioning and operating the pole handling apparatus to successively position the catenary poles retrieved from the cargo area alongside the consist for installation on successively selected ones of the foundations; installing the catenary poles retrieved from the cargo area on the corresponding selected ones of the foundations; moving the pole-setting consist along the section of rail to advance the cable-deployment segment relative to successive ones of the catenary poles installed on the selected foundation; positioning and operating the cable-lifting apparatus to successively raise at least the first cable and preferably the first and second cable relative to a successively selected catenary poles; positioning at least the first cable and preferably the first and second cable proximate the successively selected catenary pole; moving the pole-setting consist along the section of rail to position the cable-stringing segment relative to successively selected catenary poles and at least the first cable and preferably the first and second cables; positioning and operating the man-lift to raise one or more crew members to a desired height and location alongside the pole-setting consist and proximate successive ones of the catenary poles for installation of the first cable and preferably the first and second cable thereon; and installing the first cable and preferably the first and second cables on successively selected ones of the catenary poles.

(22) The method for installing poles and cables for a catenary system may include providing a crew-segment for the pole-setting consist including one or more restrooms and a crew quarters structure disposed thereon, the crew quarters structure providing an enclosure in which crew members may inhabit.

(23) The one or more railcars provided in the pole-setting segment, the cable-deployment segment and the cable-setting segment may include rails mounted along longitudinal sidewalls thereof configured to enable a wheeled apparatus to move longitudinally therealong. The pole-handling apparatus provided may include a platform operationally associated with the rails of the railcars of the pole-setting segment with the platform configured to move the pole-handling apparatus longitudinally along the rails of the railcars of the pole-setting segment. The cable-lifting apparatus provided may include a platform operationally associated with the rails of the railcars of the cable-deployment segment with the platform configured to move the cable-lifting apparatus longitudinally along the rails of the railcars of the cable-deployment segment. The manlift provided

may include a platform operationally associated with the rails of the railcars of the cable-stringing segment with the platform configured to move the man-lift longitudinally along the rails of the railcars of the cable-stringing segment.
(24) Exemplary embodiments may also include a catenary arm fabrication and installation consist, hereinafter referred to as the catenary consist, that can follow the pole-setting consist to complete the build out of the overhead catenary system. The catenary consist may be coupled to or be integrated with the pole-setting consist or may follow along separately. The cars forming the catenary consist comprise gondola and/or flat-bed cars configured similarly to those of the pole-setting consist and are arranged to include one or more crew-segments, a termination-installation segment, a catenary arm-installation segment, an inventory-staging segment, a secondary-assembly segment, and a primary-fabrication segment. The crew-segments may be configured similarly to that described above with respect to the pole-setting segment.
(25) The termination-installation segment includes an articulated boom or other lifting means configured to raise and aid installation and/or distribution of weighted termination assemblies at desired locations. Components and/or preassembled termination assemblies may be stored within a bay of the gondola car proximate to the boom. Both the termination-installation segment and the catenary arm-installation segment include one or more cars in which pre-fabricated catenary arms are stored and that are provided with one or more mobile man-lift devices configured to travel longitudinally along the sidewalls of the cars and between the cars. The man-lift devices are configured to raise one or more operators and a catenary arm from a storage location within the respective car to a mounting location on a previously installed pole alongside the tracks. The catenary arm-installation segment may also include a mobile gantry crane that is operable to transfer pre-fabricated catenary arms longitudinally along the consist for access by operators using the man-lift devices on the termination-installation segment and the catenary arm-installation segment.
(26) The inventory-staging segment provides additional storage for pre-fabricated catenary arms and a stationary gantry crane that is operable to move the catenary arms toward the termination-installation and the catenary arm-installation segments. The inventory-staging segment may also provide storage for coils of cable for guy wires that can be distributed as the catenary consist moves along a route among other materials that need storage or distribution.
(27) The secondary-assembly segment and the primary-fabrication segment each provide enclosures and facilities useable by crew members for fabrication of catenary arms and components needing assembly and installation on the catenary arms as well as storage for supplies and raw materials used in such fabrication. These segments enable fabrication of the catenary arms on the catenary consist and to specific specifications required by particular characteristics of the overhead catenary system.

Description

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS
(1) Illustrative embodiments are described in detail below with reference to the attached drawing figures, and wherein:
(2) FIG. **1** is an elevational view of a pole-setting consist depicted in accordance with an exemplary embodiment;
(3) FIG. **2** is partial elevational view of a pole-setting segment of the pole-setting consist of FIG. **1**;
(4) FIG. **3** is an illustrative perspective view of a pole-setting segment of a pole-setting consist depicted in accordance with an exemplary embodiment;
(5) FIG. **4** is a partial elevational view of another pole-setting segment that includes an elevated lifting apparatus configured for use with containerized cargo depicted in accordance with another

exemplary embodiment;
(6) FIG. **5** is a partial elevational view of a crew-segment of the pole-setting consist of FIG. **1**;
(7) FIG. **6** is a partial elevational view of a cable-deployment segment of the pole-setting consist of FIG. **1**;
(8) FIG. **7** is an elevational view of a cable-stringing segment of the pole-setting consist of FIG. **1**;
(9) FIGS. **8**A-C are a side elevational, top plan, and schematic top plan views, respectively, of a crew-segment of a catenary arm fabrication and installation consist depicted in accordance with an exemplary embodiment;
(10) FIGS. **9**A-B are side elevational and top plan views, respectively, of a termination-installation segment of a catenary arm fabrication and installation consist depicted in accordance with an exemplary embodiment;
(11) FIGS. **10**A-B are side elevational and top plan views, respectively, of a catenary-installation segment of a catenary arm fabrication and installation consist depicted in accordance with an exemplary embodiment;
(12) FIGS. **11**A-B are side elevational and top plan views, respectively, of an inventory-staging segment of a catenary arm fabrication and installation consist depicted in accordance with an exemplary embodiment;
(13) FIGS. **12**A-C are side elevational, top plan, and schematic top plan views, respectively, of a secondary-assembly segment of a catenary arm fabrication and installation consist depicted in accordance with an exemplary embodiment;
(14) FIG. **13**A-B are side elevational and top plan views, respectively, of a primary-fabrication segment of a catenary arm fabrication and installation consist depicted in accordance with an exemplary embodiment;
(15) FIG. **13**C is an end elevational view of a pipe storage rack disposed on the primary-fabrication segment of FIGS. **13**A-B depicted in accordance with an exemplary embodiment; and
(16) FIGS. **14**A-C are side elevational, top plan, and schematic top plan views, respectively, of another crew-segment of a catenary arm fabrication and installation consist depicted in accordance with an exemplary embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

(17) The subject matter of select exemplary embodiments is described with specificity herein to meet statutory requirements. But the description itself is not intended to necessarily limit the scope of embodiments. Rather, the subject matter might be embodied in other ways to include different components, steps, or combinations thereof similar to the ones described in this document, in conjunction with other present or future technologies. Terms should not be interpreted as implying any particular order among or between various steps herein disclosed unless and except when the order of individual steps is explicitly described. The terms “about” or “approximately” as used herein denote deviations from the exact value by +/−10%, preferably by +/−5% and/or deviations in the form of changes that are insignificant to the function.
(18) With reference to FIGS. **1-7**, a pole-setting consist **100** is described in accordance with an exemplary embodiment. The pole-setting consist **100**, or simply the consist **100** comprises a plurality of rail-bound rail-cars **102** coupled together into a single unit or consist. As depicted in FIGS. **1-7**, the rail-cars **102** are preferably comprised of a gondola-style car configuration but other styled cars, such as flat-cars might be employed. A gondola-style configuration includes a recessed cargo area extending along the length of the car **102** between a truck **104** or wheel-set disposed at and supporting each end thereof. The cars **102** of the consist **100** are also preferably configured with a shared-truck configuration in which ends of adjacent ones of the cars **102** are supported on a single truck **104**. Such a configuration decreases the overall weight of the consist **100**, reduces or eliminates coupler slack between the cars **102**, and may reduce a distance between the cars **102** and/or the overall length of the consist **100**.
(19) The cargo area of each car **102** is bounded on its longitudinal sides by a pair of vertical

sidewalls **106**. As known in the art, the sidewalls **106** are of a vertical height sufficient to form the cargo area but less than that of a common box-car or hopper car. The cargo area may be low slung to shift the cargo area and/or sidewalls vertically downward toward the tracks.

(20) As depicted in FIGS. **1**-**7**, the sidewalls **106** of exemplary embodiments are provided with a rail **108** disposed along the top vertical edge thereof. The rail **108** is configured to support and enable a wheeled apparatus to travel longitudinally along the sidewalls **106** as described more fully below. The rail **108** may take any desired form including that of a common railroad rail among a variety of other configurations. Bridging elements **110** may also be provided to extend the rails **108** between adjacent ones of the cars **102** of the consist and to allow wheeled apparatus to travel between the cars **102**. The bridging elements **110** may be removeable and/or extensible to allow pivoting of the cars **102** relative to one another during transit of the consist **100** along the tracks.

(21) The consist **100** comprises a plurality of segments that are each formed from one or more of the cars **102**. Although discussed herein with respect to segments, the consist **100** is a continuous, single unit; segmentation of the consist **100** is merely used herein for clarity and ease of description and is based on the functions performed at different locations along the consist **100**. The segments include a pole-setting segment **112**, a crew-segment **114**, a cable-deployment segment **116**, and a cable-stringing segment **118**. It is understood that although the segments and the functions performed thereby are described as being provided in a particular order, such is not intended to be limiting on the scope of exemplary embodiments. For example, the crew-segment **114** might be provided at a leading or trailing end of the consist **100**, among other configurations.

(22) The pole-setting segment **112** comprises a plurality of cars **102** configured as gondola-style cars as described previously above with a cargo area **120** and rails **108** provided along top edges of the sidewalls **106** thereof. Although four cars **102** are shown in the pole-setting segment **112** in FIG. **1**, it is understood that the pole-setting segment **112** may include fewer or more cars **102** including at least one car **102** and more typically between two and ten cars **102**. The cargo areas **120** of the cars **102** are of sufficient dimensions to receive and carry a plurality of poles **122** to be installed by the consist **100** (for example, like the poles **122** depicted in FIG. **3**). The cargo areas **120** may include one or more features, such as tabs, flanges, shelves, slots, or the like configured to aid storage of the poles **122**.

(23) Atop the cars **102** of the pole-setting segment **112** is disposed a pole-handling apparatus **124**. The pole-handling apparatus **124** comprises a wheeled vehicle configured to travel longitudinally along the consist **100** along the rails **108** on the sidewalls **106** of the cars **102**. Wheels **126** of the pole-handling apparatus **124** may be flanged like those of common rail-bound vehicles or may take another configuration. For example, the pole-handling apparatus **124** may be configured with on-highway wheels and/or tires and include a hi-rail apparatus to adapt the pole-handling apparatus **124** for travel along the rails **108**.

(24) As depicted in the drawings, the pole-handling apparatus **124** includes a body **128** disposed on a platform **130** and rotatable relative thereto about a vertical axis. The body **128** includes an operator's cab **132** and an elongate arm **134** pivotably coupled thereto. The body **128** may house an engine, generator, and hydraulic pump among other components for powering the pole-handling apparatus **124**, moving the apparatus **124** along the rails **108** of the cars **102**, and manipulating the arm **134**, among other functions. In one embodiment, the apparatus **124** may be remotely operated from elsewhere on or near the consist **100** by, for example an operator in a remote control-cab or using a wireless or wired control station. In another embodiment, the apparatus **124** may be at least partially electrically powered by a generator disposed at another location along the consist **100**. In one embodiment, the apparatus **124** is configured similarly to an excavator disposed on the platform **130** which is specially adapted for travel on the cars **102**.

(25) The arm **134** includes an end-arm tool **136** that is adapted to grasp the poles **122** disposed in the cargo areas **120** of the cars **102** of the pole-setting segment **112** and to lift the poles **122** into position on foundations **138** installed alongside the railway as depicted in FIG. **3**. The arm **134** and

the end-arm tool **136** may be configured in a variety of ways using various grasping mechanisms based on the type and characteristics of the pole **122** to be installed as well as to provide movement about multiple axes for proper placement of the pole **122** on the foundation **138**.

(26) As depicted in FIG. **4**, in some embodiments the poles **122** may be received from a manufacturer in an open-topped container **140**. It may be beneficial and more time efficient to place such containers **140** into the cargo areas **120** of the cars **102** rather than unloading the poles **122** from the containers **140** and placing them into the cargo areas **120**. Accordingly, a pole-handling apparatus **124′** may be configured with an elevated platform **130′** which includes elongate legs **142**. The legs **142** have length to raise the platform **130′** to a height sufficient to allow the pole-handling apparatus **124′** to pass over the containers **140** and to remove poles **122** from within the containers **140**.

(27) With reference now to FIG. **5**, the crew-segment **114** includes a variety of accommodations which crew members may inhabit or occupy such as, for example and not limitation, restroom facilities **144** and an enclosed crew quarters **146**. The crew quarters **146** may provide a variety of amenities including office and/or work space, sleeping/rest spaces, lockers and/or locker rooms, bathing facilities, kitchen and meal facilities and eating spaces, and communication or computing facilities, among others. Although only a single crew quarters structure **146** is depicted in the drawings, it is understood that additional structures **146** may be provided and the segment **114** may include additional cars **102** as needed to accommodate such structures **146**.

(28) As depicted in FIG. **5**, the car **102** of the crew-segment **114** comprises a gondola-style car like those of the remainder of the consist **100** however the crew-segment **114** may utilize flatbed or other styled cars **102** as needed. The crew quarters structure **146** may be constructed from a cargo container or similar structure that can be placed into the cargo area of the gondola car **102** for ease of construction, however such is not required. In some embodiments, such a configuration enables travel of the pole-handling apparatus **124′** over the crew quarters structure **146** and thus to either end of the crew-segment **114**.

(29) Also as depicted in FIG. **5**, a generator **148** and associated equipment may be provided in the crew-segment **114** on the same or different car **102** as the crew-quarters structure **146**. The generator **148** may be employed to provide power to the crew-segment **114** and/or to other operations on the consist **100**.

(30) With reference to FIG. **6**, the cable-deployment segment **116** is configured to play out cables **150**, such as the negative return and ground cables, and to carry a supply of spools **152** around which the cables **150** are wound. The gondola-cars of the cable-deployment segment **116** are coupled to the crew-segment **114** and configured like those of the pole-setting segment **112** to include rails on which a cable-lifting apparatus **154** may travel. Cargo areas **120** of the cars **102** in the cable-deployment segment **116** may include structures or features to aid holding or maintaining spools **152** disposed therein in secure positions during transit of the consist **100**.

(31) The cable-lifting apparatus **154** may have a substantially similar configuration to that of the pole-handling apparatus **124** or may take another configuration as needed based on the lifting and range-of-motion requirements thereof. As depicted in FIG. **6**, the cable-lifting apparatus **154** includes an elevated platform **156** configured to enable travel of the cable-lifting apparatus **154** over the spools **152** disposed in the cars **102** of the cable-lifting segment **116**. The elevated platform **156** may be the same as the elevated platform **130′** of the pole-handling apparatus **124′** described previously or may be modified based on the dimensions and handling characteristics of the spools **152** and cables **150**.

(32) At least one car **102** of the cable-deployment segment **116** includes a spool station **158**. The spool station **158** provides a support structure **160** configured to hold one or more of the spools **152** and allow rotation thereof about a horizontal axis as the cable **150** is played out. The spool station **158** may include apparatus for controlling a rate at which the cable **150** is played out and/or to rotate the spool **152** to play out or retract the cable **150** as needed.

(33) The cable-lifting apparatus **154** includes an end-arm tool **162** designed for raising the cables **150** to a desired height to aid coupling with the installed poles **122** and to aid playing out the cables **150** from the spools **152**. The end-arm tool **162** may comprise free-wheeling pulleys or blocks around which the cables **150** are fed and directed toward desired installation locations. In one embodiment the end-arm tool **162** may engage the cables **150** separately or together and may be powered to aid drawing of the cables **150** from the spools **152** and playing out of the cables **150** toward the poles **122**. The end-arm tool **162** may also be adapted to engage the spools **152** to lift the spools **152** from the cargo area **120** to the spool station **158** vice versa. Alternatively, the end-arm tool **162** may be disengaged from an arm **164** of the cable-lifting apparatus **154** and a second end-arm tool (not shown) engaged for moving the spools **152**.
(34) FIG. **7** depicts the cable-stringing segment **118** which may be comprised of one or more of the cars **102** like those described above with rails **108** disposed along the sidewalls **106** thereof. The cars **102** of the cable-stringing segment **118** are preferably also gondola-style cars but other types of cars, including flat-bed cars may be employed. In some embodiments, the cargo areas **120** of the gondola-style cars **102** may be employed to store tools, materials, parts, and the like that may be needed for installation of the poles **122** and cables **150** as well as maintenance of the consist, among other operations.
(35) The cable-stringing segment **118** includes a man-lift **166** disposed thereon and configured to travel along the rails **108** longitudinally along the segment **118**. The man-lift **166** comprises body **168** mounted on a platform **170**. The platform **170** may be configured similarly to the platforms **130**, **130′**, and **156** to provide longitudinal movement of the man-lift **166** along the car **102**, rotational motion of the body **168** relative to the platform **170** about a vertical axis, and to raise or elevate the body **168** to provide additional clearance for items placed in the cargo areas **120** of the cars **102**. The body **168** houses engines, pumps, and other mechanical and electrical apparatus used for operation of the man-lift **166**. In one embodiment, the man-lift **166** may be coupled to another source of electrical and/or hydraulic power disposed elsewhere on the consist **100**, such as the generator **148**.
(36) An extensible and/or articulated arm **172** extends from the body **168** and includes a crew basket **174** disposed at a distal end thereof. The crew basket **174** is configured to hold one or more crew members and to lift the crew members to a desired height and location alongside the consist **100** for performance of their installation duties. The crew basket **174** may include a control station from which the crew members can operate the man-lift's longitudinal movement along the cars **102**, rotation of the body **168** relative to the platform **170**, and articulation and/or extension of the arm **172**, among other functions. In one embodiment, a remote control may be provided to control operation of the man-lift from locations other than the crew basket **174**.
(37) With continued reference to FIGS. **1-7**, operation of the consist **100** for installation of poles **122** and negative return and ground cables **150** for an electrical traction rail system is described in accordance with an exemplary embodiment. The consist **100** can be loaded with materials and supplies offsite or away from an installation location. Poles **122** may be laid down or stacked within the cargo areas **120** of the pole-setting segment **112**, and spools **152** of the cables **150** may be placed in the cargo areas **120** of the cable-deployment segment **116**. Alternatively, where the poles **122** are provided in open-top cargo containers **140**, the cargo containers **140** may be disposed directly into the cargo areas **120** of the pole-setting segment **112**, as depicted in FIG. **4**.
(38) Crew members may also load onto the consist **100**, such as on the crew-segment **114** where they may be provided with room to change clothes, eat, rest, meet, or the like and/or ride to their destination. Alternatively, crew members may travel to the installation location at a later date or time via other means.
(39) The consist **100** may be coupled to a motive means, such as a power unit or a locomotive, among others and moved to a desired installation location. The consist **100** is positioned with the pole-setting segment **112** located alongside an area in which a plurality of foundations **138** for the

poles **122** have been previously installed. In some operations, the foundations **138** may also be installed by operators on the consist **100** or another form of installation may be employed for properly securing the poles **122** in or to the ground. The pole-handling apparatus **124** is used to retrieve a desired pole **122** from within one of the cargo areas **120** of pole-setting segment **112** and to position the pole **122** on the desired foundation **138** or other mounting location. The pole-handling apparatus **124** may be moved longitudinally along the length of the pole-setting segment **112** and/or the consist **100** as needed to achieve the desired position of the pole **122** without need to move the consist **100** as a whole.

(40) Following installation of a number of poles **122** and/or poles **122** that can be reached by the pole-handling apparatus **124**, the consist **100** may be moved along the tracks to again position the pole-setting segment **112** alongside a next group of foundations waiting to receive poles **122**. Such movement of the consist **100** also positions the cable-deployment segment **116** and the cable-stringing segment **118** alongside the newly installed poles **122** to allow crew members to install the cables **150** onto the newly installed poles **122**.

(41) The cable-lifting apparatus **154** is employed to position spools **152** onto the spool station **158** as needed. The cables **150** are strung through the end-arm tool **162** and coupled to an anchor point, which may be one of the poles **122** or another location as is commonly practiced in the art. Meanwhile, crew members utilize the man-lift **166** to install blocks or pulleys on the poles **122** and/or to anchor the cable end as indicated above.

(42) The longitudinal range of motion available to both the cable-lifting apparatus **154** and the man-lift **166** allow the crew members to perform these tasks without requiring movement of the consist **100** or precise positioning thereof. Further, these ranges of motion in combination with the range of motion available to the pole-handling apparatus **124** further increase the accessibility to the desired work areas for functions being performed simultaneously along the consist **100**. As such, crew members are able to move their equipment to desired working locations and continue operations without needing to wait until the consist **100** can be moved. In some embodiments, a second vehicle such as an on-highway vehicle fitted with a hi-rail system is provided to follow the consist **100** at a later time or date to finalize any installation operations, such as installing terminations and/or tensioning systems on the cables **150** and replacing the pulleys or blocks on the poles **122** with insulators and landing the cables **150** thereon, among other activities.

(43) During installation operations, the crew members are provided with any necessary facilities, such as restrooms, break or rest spaces, first aid, or the like in the crew-segment **114**. Accordingly, crew members can remain on site and do not need to travel to other locations for such services. A crew van (not shown) such as a common automobile fitted with a hi-rail system may be towed behind the consist **100** for transportation of crew members to and from the installation location in case of emergency and at the beginning and end of the work day. As such, the consist **100** may be left at the installation location during non-working hours while the crew is off. The number of vehicles that must travel to and from the installation site daily and stored elsewhere overnight is greatly reduced and may comprise only a single vehicle. Such greatly reduces the likelihood of mishaps, reduces costs for equipment and storage, and streamlines crew activities.

(44) With reference now to FIGS. **8-14**, a catenary fabrication and installation consist **200** (hereinafter referred to as the catenary consist **200**) is described in accordance with an exemplary embodiment. The catenary consist **200** is generally configured in much the same manner as the pole-setting consist **100** to include a plurality of rail-bound rail-cars **202** coupled together into a single unit or consist. FIGS. **8-14** depict individual segments of the catenary consist **200** which are preferably coupled together in order corresponding to the figure numbers to form the catenary consist **200**, but other arrangements may be employed.

(45) Like the pole-setting consist **100**, rail-cars **202** of the catenary consist **200** preferably comprise a gondola-style configuration but other styled cars, such as flat-cars might be employed. Some or all of the cars **202** of the catenary consist **200** also preferably employ the shared-truck

configuration and include rails **208** configured to support and enable a wheeled apparatus to travel longitudinally along the sidewalls **206** as well as bridging elements **210** to extend the rails **208** between adjacent ones of the cars **202**.

(46) In some embodiments, the catenary consist **200** may be coupled to the trailing end of the pole-setting consist **100**. Alternatively, the catenary consist **200** may be operated physically and/or temporally separate from the pole-setting consist **100** and moved along the railway by another propulsion means.

(47) The consist **200** comprises a plurality of segments that are each comprised one or more of the cars **202**. Although discussed herein with respect to segments, the consist **200** is a continuous, single unit; segmentation of the consist **200** is merely used herein for clarity and ease of description and is based on the functions performed at different locations along the consist **200**. The segments include crew-segments **212** and **214**, a termination-installation segment **216**, a catenary arm-installation segment **218**, an inventory-staging segment **220**, a secondary-assembly segment **222**, and a primary-fabrication segment **224**. It is understood that although the segments and the functions performed thereby are described as being provided in a particular order, such is not intended to be limiting on the scope of exemplary embodiments.

(48) With reference to FIGS. **8**A-**8**C, the crew-segment **212** comprises one or more cars **202** with a variety of accommodations which crew members may inhabit or occupy such as, for example and not limitation, restroom facilities **226** and an enclosed crew quarters **228** which may be configured like the crew quarters **146** described previously. Although only a single crew quarters structure **228** is depicted in the drawings of the crew-segment **212**, it is understood that additional structures **228** may be provided and the segment **212** may include additional cars **202** as needed to accommodate such structures **146**. With reference to FIGS. **14**A-**14**C, additional crew-segments **214** may be provided along the length or at an opposite end of the catenary consist **200**, such as at the trailing end thereof. The crew-segment **214**, depicted in FIG. **8** is configured like the crew-segment **212** with restroom facilities **226** and crew quarters **228** and may also include a drawbar **230** for coupling with and towing a highway vehicle **232** adapted for travel on the tracks. The highway vehicle **232** may be used to transport crew members to/from the consist **200** at the start and end of shifts or for emergency situations, among other uses.

(49) Also as depicted in FIGS. **8**A, **8**B, **14**A and **14**B, a generator **234** and associated equipment may be provided in the crew-segments **212**, **214**. The generator **234** and associated components may be employed to provide electrical, hydraulic, pneumatic, and/or mechanical power to the crew-segments **212**, **214** and/or to other operations on the consist **200**.

(50) Referring to FIG. **9**A and **9**B, the termination-installation segment **216** comprises a plurality of cars **202** with an articulated lifting boom **236** or similar lifting means disposed at a leading end thereof and at least one mobile man-lift **238** adapted for travel longitudinally along the top rails **208** of the sidewalls **206** of the cars **202**. The boom **236** is preferably a rigidly mounted knuckle boom that includes a plurality of pivotably coupled segments and a rotatable base mounted to the car **202**. In another embodiment, the boom **236** may include a wheeled base and be configured for travel along the rails **208** of the car **202** like the pole-handling apparatus **124** or the cable-lifting apparatus **154** described previously.

(51) The boom **236** is configured to retrieve and lift components **242** from within a bay **240** of the car **202** and either dispose the components **242** alongside the tracks, near a pole **122**, or to raise the components to a desired mounting location on a previously installed pole **122**. Such components **242** may typically comprise balance weight assemblies employed for providing tension on cables of the overhead catenary system and/or termination components for those cables, among a variety of other components that may be stored in and/or unloaded from the termination-installation segment **216**. The components **242** are preferably stored in the bay **240** within operational reach of the boom **236**.

(52) Beyond the reach of the boom **236**, prefabricated catenary arms **244** are stored within the bay

240 as well as in the bays **240** of additional cars **202** within the segment **216**, as depicted in FIGS. **10**A and **10**B. The prefabricated catenary arms **244** may be disposed on palates, bins, or other handling/storage structures (not shown) with one or more other catenary arms **244** to provide secure storage and to aid movement of the catenary arms **244** along the consist **200**.

(53) The man-lift **238** is configured similarly to the man-lift **166** described previously. The man-lift **238** provides lifting of one or more crew members to allow installation activities for mounting the catenary arms **244** on the poles to be carried out. The man-lift **238** may also provide lifting of the catenary arms **244** from the bay **240** and may include one or more adaptations to aid securely lifting and handling of the catenary arms **244** during installation. Additionally, the man-lift **238** may be employed to move the catenary arms **244** and other components within the bay **240** or between cars **202** to aid storage organization. The longitudinal range of motion along the length of the consist **200** available to the man-lift **238** allows the crew members to perform their installation tasks without requiring movement of the consist **200** or precise positioning thereof.

(54) The catenary arm-installation segment **218** also includes a plurality of cars **202** storing pre-fabricated catenary arms **244** in the bays **240** thereof and at least one man-lift **238** moveably supported on the rails **208** of the sidewalls **206** for use by crew members for installation of the catenary arms **244** and/or organization of the catenary arms **244** in the bays **240**. The segment **218** may also include a mobile gantry crane **246** that is moveable longitudinally along the consist **200** along the rails **208** of the sidewalls **206**. Longitudinal movement of the mobile gantry crane **246** may be powered or may be manually conducted. The mobile gantry crane **246** includes a longitudinally extending beam **248** with a trolley and hoist **250** disposed thereon. The trolley and hoist **250** may be powered or manually operated to lift and move the catenary arms **244** along the consist **200** as needed, but typically such movements are toward the catenary arm-installation segment **218** and the termination-installation segment **216**, e.g. toward the crews engaged in installing the catenary arms **244**. In another embodiment, the mobile gantry crane **246** is replaced or aided by provision of another man-lift **238** or another lifting apparatus configured for travel along the rails **208** of the sidewalls **206**, e.g. a forklift or an apparatus similar to the pole-handling apparatus **124**.

(55) With reference now to FIGS. **11**A-B, the inventory-staging segment **220** comprises one or more cars **202** configured for storage and staging of the catenary arms **244** following fabrication thereof and until installation or until storage space is made available on the catenary-installation segment **218** or the termination-installation segment **216**. The cars **202** of the inventory-staging segment **220**, as depicted in FIGS. **11**A-B comprise flat-bed cars that employ standard couplings therebetween however they may also be configured as discussed previously to comprise gondola cars with standard couplings or shared trucks, among other car configurations.

(56) A stationary gantry system **252** is provided on the inventory-staging segment **220** which includes a longitudinally extending beam **254** on which a trolly and hoist **256** are disposed and can travel therealong and which is suspended above a deck of the car **202** above a material staging area **258**. In embodiments in which the inventory-staging segment **220** comprises more than one car **202**, the stationary gantry system **252** may include a bridging component (not shown) to allow travel of the trolly and hoist **256** between the beams **254** of adjacent cars **202** or another apparatus may be provided to move materials between the cars **202**. Similarly, in some embodiments, the beam **248** of the mobile gantry crane **246** on the catenary arm-installation segment **218** is configured to allow transfer of materials between it and the stationary gantry system **252**. In some embodiments, the trolly and hoist **250** may move onto the stationary gantry system **252** or the trolly and hoist **256** may move onto the mobile gantry crane **246**, or vice versa. Alternatively, the available working area of the mobile gantry crane **246** may overlap with that of the stationary gantry system **252** such that materials can be transferred from the stationary gantry system **252** to the mobile gantry crane **246** and further transferred forward along the consist **200**.

(57) The trolly and hoist **256** of the stationary gantry system **252** may be manually operated or may

be configured for powered operation, e.g. electrical operation. The material staging area **258** provides space in which the prefabricated catenary arms **244** may be stored individually or in groups which may be disposed on pallets or other storage bases or bins to aid movement thereof.
(58) The inventory-staging segment **220** may also provide storage locations and/or structures **260** for storage of one or more coils **262** of cable. The structures **260** may comprise stands configured to hold the coils **262** and may enable and/or aid rotation thereof to play out the cables for distribution thereof. The cables may comprise any desired cables used in the installation process of the overhead catenary system, but typically include cable used for guy wires to be installed on the poles **122**.
(59) Referring now to FIGS. **12**A-**12**C and **13**A-**13**C, the catenary arms **244** may be constructed on the catenary consist **200** on the primary-fabrication segment **224** (FIGS. **13**A-**13**C) and the secondary-assembly segment **222** (FIGS. **12**A-**12**C). Both the primary-fabrication segment **224** and the secondary-assembly segment **222** may include one or more cars **202** that employ a flat-bed configuration, as depicted in FIGS. **12**A-**12**C and **13**A-**13**C, or another configuration like the cars **102** and **202** described previously.
(60) The segments **224** and **222** both include material-storage facilities **264** which may comprise shelving, racks, or the like and a fabrication cabin **266***p*, **266***s*. The segments **224** and **222** are arranged to aid material and fabrication flow from a trailing end of the consist **200** forward along the consist **200** such that the raw materials generally enter from the trailing end of the consist **200**; the completed catenary arms **244** leave toward the forward end of the secondary-assembly segment **222** and move to the inventory-staging segment **220**. As such, the material-storage facilities **264** of the primary-fabrication segment **224** may comprise racks **268** configured to store lengths of structural pipe which will be cut to length and assembled into the catenary arms **244**. As depicted in FIG. **13**C the racks **268** may be configured with removeable support bars or similar components to ease loading of the pipe onto the racks **268** via fork-lift or similar loading devices. Similarly, the material-storage facilities **264** of the secondary-assembly segment **222** provide storage of supplies and components to be used to assembly the pipe into the catenary arms **244** as well as components to be mounted thereon.
(61) The fabrication cabins **266***p*, **266***s* comprise enclosures disposed on or mounted to the respective cars **202** that house facilities and equipment useable by crew members for fabricating and assembling the catenaries **202** on the consist **200**. The fabrication cabins **266***p*, **266***s* may be formed from shipping containers used in the shipping industry that are modified and disposed on the cars **202** or they can be custom built as needed. As depicted in FIGS. **13**A-B, the fabrication cabin **266***p* of the primary-fabrication segment **224** may include a roller table **270**, a saw **272**, and a drill **274**, among other equipment that are adapted to aid crew members in cutting and drilling the pipe as needed for fabrication of the catenary arms **244**. The fabrication cabin **266***s* of the secondary-assembly segment **222** may include a variety of storage shelving **276**, racks, or the like and one or more workstations **278** at which crew members can assemble the catenary arms **244**. Each of the fabrication cabins **266***p*, **266***s* include doorways and/or passages in longitudinal endwalls thereof (not shown) to allow crew and materials to be transported into the fabrication cabins **266***p*, **266***s* as well as longitudinally along the length of the consist **200**. Similarly, the material-storage facilities **264** are also positioned to aid and enable the flow of materials longitudinally along the consist **200**.
(62) With continued reference to FIGS. **8**-**14**, operation of the catenary consist **200** is described in accordance with an exemplary embodiment. Raw materials and components can be loaded onto the consist **200** prior to and/or along the route of transport or operation of the consist **200**. Structural pipe can be loaded onto the racks **268** via, for example, a forklift and in sufficient quantities to complete a desired build out or portion thereof of an overhead catenary system. Similarly, any needed components and supplies used to assemble the catenary arms **244** can be loaded onto the storage shelves **276** of the secondary-assembly segment **222**. If additional storage is needed or

desired, either or both of the secondary-assembly segment **222** and the primary-fabrication segment **224** may include additional cars **202** outfitted with additional material-storage facilities **264** such as racks **268**, storage shelves **276** or the like. In some embodiments, the termination-installation segment **216** might also be loaded with the components **242**, including weighted tension assemblies and cable terminations.

(63) The catenary arms **244** are typically of different dimensions and configurations depending on the characteristics of the location of the pole **122** on which the arms are to be installed. The termination-installation segment **216**, the catenary-installation segment **218**, and the inventory-staging segment **220** can be loaded with pre-assembled catenary arms **244** marked or labeled for installation on poles **122** at specified locations. The catenary arms **244** may be stored, labeled, or otherwise staged and tracked on the consist **200** to aid the flow of materials during installation and the proper installation of the particular catenary arm **244** in the intended location. For example, the catenary arms **244** may be stored in order of intended installation location.

(64) In some embodiments, a standardized catenary configuration may be employed on poles at some locations of an overhead catenary system and only non-standard catenary arms **244** are fabricated on the consist **200** for the remaining poles **122** based on particular characteristics of particular installation locations. In another embodiment, all the catenary arms **244** to be installed using the consist **200** are fabricated on the consist **200**. In yet another embodiment, the consist **200** may be loaded with a number of catenary arms **244** that are either standardized or specially configured for particular locations along the installation and a number of additional catenary arms **244**, standardized and/or specially configured, may be fabricated on the consist **200** to replenish inventory and/or to increase the range of the consist's installation activities before needing to be reloaded.

(65) Production of the catenary arms **244** begins on the primary-fabrication segment **224**. Tubing is retrieved from the racks **268** and loaded onto the roller table **270** in the fabrication cabin **266***p* where it can be cut to into desired lengths and drilled as needed using the saw **272** and drill **274**. The cut and drilled tubing may be transferred to the fabrication cabin **266***s* of the secondary-assembly segment **222** where crew members assemble the tubing to form the catenary arms **244**. Materials needed for assembly of the catenary arms **244** (e.g. bolts, couplers, or the like) as well as additional components to be mounted thereon (e.g. insulators, hangers, mounting hardware, or the like) may be retrieved from the storage shelves **276**. Crew members may employ the workstations **278** for the assembly.

(66) The completed catenary arms **244** may be carried forward along the consist **200** to the inventory-staging segment **220** where they may be loaded on pallets or similar storage bases, bins, or the like which are positioned within the operational reach of the stationary gantry system **252**.

(67) The hoist **256** of the stationary gantry system **252** lifts and moves the catenary arms **244** forward along the length of the inventory-staging segment **220** toward the catenary-installation segment **218**. The stationary gantry system **252** may have sufficient vertical range to enable the catenary arms **244** to be moved vertically over one another to enable reordering thereof or the system **252** may be employed to simply move the catenary arms **244** forward in stepwise fashion.

(68) The mobile gantry crane **246** is moved rearward along the consist **200** to pick up a forward-most catenary arm **244** or group of catenary arms **244** on the inventory-staging segment **220**. The mobile gantry crane **246** is moveable forward along and between cars **202** of the catenary-installation segment **218** to dispose the catenary arms **244** in a desired location within the bay **240** of a selected one of the cars **202**. The mobile gantry crane **246** and the stationary gantry system **252** proceed to move the catenary arms **244** forward along the consist **200** to provide an available supply of catenary arms **244** to crews working to install the catenary arms **244** from the catenary-installation segment **218** and the termination-installation segment **216**.

(69) The installation crews of both the catenary-installation segment **218** and the termination-installation segment **216** retrieve the catenary arms **244** from the bays **240** of their respective cars

202 and, using the manlifts **238**, raise the catenary arms **244** to the desired locations on the pre-installed poles alongside the consist **200**. Mobility of the manlifts **238** relative to the consist **200** aids such installation because the crews can easily obtain a desired position irrespective of other crews operating on the consist. For example, where spacing between the poles is inconsistent the crews can easily adapt their positions along the consist to accommodate such spacing. Similarly, the crews may be able to complete multiple installations or installation tasks without need to move the consist **200**.

(70) When a termination point is reached, i.e. when a location at which a balance weight assembly or other termination is to be installed is reached, crews may use the boom **236** to retrieve the components **242** of the termination assembly from the bay **240** and to dispose or install the components **242**. Meanwhile, other crews may continue installation of additional catenary arms **244** and/or the additional time that may be needed for installation of the termination may be used to complete other tasks on the consist **200**. For example, crews may collect and return empty pallets or bins from the bays **240** of the termination-installation segment **216** and catenary-installation segment **218** to the inventory-staging segment **220** for reloading with additional catenary arms **244**. Upon achieving a desired state of completion of the termination installation, the consist **200** may be moved further along the railway to enable further catenary **244** installation.

(71) At any point in time as desired or required, the crew members may access the crew-segments **212**, **214**. As discussed previously, the crew-segments **212**, **214** can provide any desired or necessary facilities, such as restrooms, break or rest spaces, first aid, or the like. Accordingly, crew members can remain on site and do not need to travel to other locations for such services. The highway vehicle **232**, such as a common automobile fitted with a hi-rail system may be towed behind the consist **200** for transportation of crew members to and from the installation location in case of emergency, at the beginning and end of the workday, or for any other reason. As such, the consist **200** may be left at the installation location during non-working hours while the crew is off. The number of vehicles that must travel to and from the installation site daily and stored elsewhere overnight is greatly reduced and may comprise only a single vehicle. Such greatly reduces the likelihood of mishaps, reduces costs for equipment and storage, and streamlines crew activities.

(72) Many different arrangements of the various components depicted, as well as components not shown, are possible without departing from the scope of the description provided herein. Exemplary embodiments have been described with the intent to be illustrative rather than restrictive. Alternative embodiments will become apparent to readers of this disclosure after and because of reading it. Alternative means of implementing the aforementioned can be completed without departing from the scope of exemplary embodiments described herein. Identification of structures as being configured to perform a particular function in this disclosure is intended to be inclusive of structures and arrangements or designs thereof that are within the scope of this disclosure and readily identifiable by one of skill in the art and that can perform the particular function in a similar way. Certain features and sub-combinations are of utility and may be employed without reference to other features and sub-combinations and are contemplated within the scope of exemplary embodiments described herein.

Claims

1. A pole-setting consist comprising a plurality of rail-bound rail-cars coupled together into a single unit, the pole-setting consist including: a pole-setting segment comprising one or more pole setting cars configured with a cargo area formed between longitudinal sidewalls of each of the one or more pole setting cars and a pole handling apparatus having an articulated arm configured to successively retrieve one of a plurality of poles from the cargo area of the one or more pole setting cars and to successively position the one of the plurality of poles retrieved from the cargo area of the pole setting cars alongside the consist for installation on a foundation, the pole handling

apparatus configured to travel along the longitudinal sidewalls of the one or more pole setting cars of the pole-setting segment; a cable-deployment segment comprising one or more cable deployment cars in which one or more spools of cable are disposed in a cargo area formed between longitudinal sidewalls of at least one of the one or more cable-deployment cars, and a cable-lifting apparatus having an extendable arm with an end arm tool configured to raise a cable unspooled from one of the one or more spools to a desired height and location for installation on the poles, the cable-lifting apparatus configured to travel along the longitudinal sidewalls of the one or more cable-deployment cars of the cable-deployment segment; and a cable-stringing segment comprising one or more of the plurality of rail-bound rail-cars and having a man-lift disposed thereon and configured to raise one or more crew members to a desired height and location alongside the consist for installation of the cables on the poles, the man-lift configured to travel along the one or more rail-bound rail-cars of the cable-stringing segment.

2. The pole-setting consist of claim 1 further comprising: a crew-segment including one or more restrooms and a crew quarters structure disposed thereon, the crew quarters structure providing an enclosure in which crew members may inhabit.

3. The pole-setting consist of claim 1 further comprising: a rail mounted along each of the longitudinal sidewalls of each of the one or more pole setting cars and configured to enable a wheeled apparatus to move longitudinally therealong.

4. The pole-setting consist of claim 3 further comprising: a platform operationally associated with the rails of the pole setting cars of the pole-setting segment and configured to move the pole-handling apparatus longitudinally along the rails of the pole setting cars of the pole-setting segment.

5. The pole-setting consist of claim 3 further comprising: a platform operationally associated with the rails of the rail-bound cars of the cable-stringing segment and configured to move the man-lift longitudinally along the rails of the rail-bound cars of the cable-stringing segment.

6. The pole-setting consist of claim 3 further comprising: a platform operationally associated with the rails of the cable-deployment cars of the cable-deployment segment and configured to move the cable-lifting apparatus longitudinally along rails of the cable-deployment cars of the cable-deployment segment.

7. The pole-setting consist of claim 1 further comprising; a spool station operationally associated with the cable-deployment segment and configured to hold one or more of the spools of cable during playing out of the cable wound thereon.

8. The pole-setting consist of claim 1, wherein the pole-setting segment is arranged ahead of the cable-deployment segment and wherein the cable-deployment segment is arranged ahead of the cable-stringing segment.

9. The cable-deployment segment of claim 1, wherein the cable-lifting apparatus is configured to retrieve the spools of cable from the storage area and place them onto an elevated spool station for deployment.

10. A consist for installing poles and cables of an electrical traction rail system, the consist comprising a plurality of rail-bound gondola cars coupled together to form a single unit, one or more of the cars including rails mounted along longitudinal sidewalls thereof and configured to enable a wheeled apparatus to move longitudinally therealong, the cars of the consist grouped to provide: a pole-setting segment comprising a plurality of the cars in which poles to be installed are disposed in cargo areas formed between the longitudinal sidewalls thereof and a pole-handling apparatus having a platform configured to travel along the rails of the cars, the pole-handling apparatus having an articulated arm configured to selectively retrieve one of the poles from the cargo area of the cars and to position the pole alongside the consist for installation on a foundation; a cable-deployment segment comprising one or more of the plurality of cars in which spools of cable are disposed in cargo areas formed between longitudinal sidewalls thereof, and including a spool station configured to hold one or more of the spools of cable during playing out of a cable

wound thereon and a cable-lifting apparatus having an extendable arm with an end arm tool configured to raise the cable to a desired height and location for installation on the poles, the cable-lifting apparatus including a platform that is moveable longitudinally along the rails of the cars of the cable-deployment segment; and a cable-stringing segment comprising one or more of the plurality of cars and having a man-lift disposed thereon and configured to raise one or more crew members to a desired height and location alongside the consist for installation of the cables on the poles, the man-lift including a platform configured to move longitudinally along the rails of the cars of the cable-stringing segment.

11. The consist for installing poles and cables of an electrical traction rail system as in claim 10 further comprising: a crew-segment comprising at least one of the plurality of cars and including one or more restrooms and a crew quarters structure disposed thereon, the crew quarters structure providing an enclosure in which crew members may inhabit.

12. The cable-deployment segment of claim 10, wherein the cable-lifting apparatus is configured to retrieve the spools of cable from the storage area and place them onto an elevated spool station for deployment.

13. A method for installing poles and cables for a catenary system comprising the steps of: a) providing a pole-setting consist comprising a plurality of railcars coupled together into a single unit, the pole-setting consist including: a pole-setting segment comprising one or more of the plurality of railcars having a cargo area formed between longitudinal sidewalls of the railcars in which a plurality of catenary poles may be disposed and a pole handling apparatus having an articulated arm configured to selectively retrieve one of the plurality of catenary poles from the cargo area of the one or more rail cars of the pole setting segment and to position selected ones of the catenary poles alongside the consist for installation on successively positioned foundations, wherein the pole handling apparatus is movable longitudinally along the longitudinal sidewalls of the one or more railcars of the pole-setting segment; a cable-deployment segment comprising one or more of the plurality of railcars on which at least a first spool of a first cable is rotatably supported, and a cable-lifting apparatus having an extendable arm with an end arm tool configured to raise the first cable unspooled from at least the first spool to a desired height and location for installation on the catenary poles, wherein the cable-lifting apparatus is movable longitudinally along the one or more railcars of the cable-deployment segment; and a cable-stringing segment comprising one or more of the plurality of rail cars and having a man-lift disposed thereon and configured to raise one or more crew members to a desired height and location alongside the pole-setting consist for installation of at least the first cable on the catenary poles, wherein the man-lift is movable longitudinally along the cable-stringing segment; b) moving the pole-setting consist along a section of rail and relative to the successively positioned foundations to successively position the pole-setting segment adjacent to selected ones of the foundations; c) operating the pole handling apparatus to retrieve successive ones of the catenary poles from the cargo area of the pole-setting segment; d) positioning and operating the pole handling apparatus to successively position the catenary poles retrieved from the cargo area alongside the consist for installation on successively selected ones of the foundations; e) installing the catenary poles retrieved from the cargo area on the corresponding selected ones of the foundations; f) moving the pole-setting consist along the section of rail to advance the cable-deployment segment relative to successive ones of the catenary poles installed on the selected foundations; g) positioning and operating the cable-lifting apparatus to successively raise at least the first cable relative to a successively selected catenary poles; h) positioning at least the first cable proximate the successively selected catenary pole; i) moving the pole-setting consist along the section of rail to position the cable-stringing segment relative to successively selected catenary poles and at least the first cable; j) positioning and operating the man-lift to raise one or more crew members to a desired height and location alongside the pole-setting consist and proximate successive ones of the catenary poles for installation of the first cable thereon; k) installing the first cable on successively selected ones of the catenary poles.

14. The method for installing poles and cables for a catenary system of claim 10 wherein the pole-setting consist provided further includes a crew-segment including one or more restrooms and a crew quarters structure disposed thereon, the crew quarters structure providing an enclosure in which crew members may inhabit.
15. The method for installing poles and cables for a catenary system of claim 13 wherein the one or more railcars of the pole-setting segment provided include rails mounted along the longitudinal sidewalls thereof configured to enable a wheeled apparatus to move longitudinally therealong.
16. The method for installing poles and cables for a catenary system of claim 12 wherein the pole-handling apparatus provided includes a platform operationally associated with the rails of the railcars of the pole-setting segment and the platform is configured to move the pole-handling apparatus longitudinally along the rails of the railcars of the pole-setting segment.
17. The method for installing poles and cables for a catenary system of claim 15 wherein the cable-lifting apparatus provided includes a platform operationally associated with rails extending along longitudinal sidewalls of the railcars of the cable-deployment segment and the platform is configured to move the cable-lifting apparatus longitudinally along the rails of the railcars of the cable-deployment segment.
18. The method for installing poles and cables for a catenary system of claim 15 wherein the manlift provided includes a platform operationally associated with rails extending along longitudinal sidewalls of the railcars of the cable-stringing segment and the platform is configured to move the man-lift longitudinally along the rails of the railcars of the cable-stringing segment.
19. The method for installing poles and cables for a catenary system of claim 13 wherein: the step of providing the pole-setting consist includes providing at least a second spool of a second cable which is rotatably supported on the cable-deployment segment, the end arm tool of the extendable arm of the cable-lifting apparatus configured to raise the second cable unspooled from the second spool to a desired height and location for installation on the catenary poles; and the step of operating the cable-lifting apparatus includes operating the cable-lifting apparatus to raise at least the first cable and the second cable relative to the successively selected ones of the catenary poles; the step of positioning at least the first cable proximate the successively selected catenary poles comprises positioning at least the first and second cables proximate successively selected catenary poles; the step of moving the pole-setting consist along the rails to position the cable-stringing segment relative to successively selected catenary poles and at least the first cable comprises moving the pole-setting consist along the rails to position the cable- stringing segment adjacent to successively selected catenary pole and at least the first and second cable; the step of operating the man-lift to raise one or more crew members to a desired height and location alongside the consist and proximate successively selected ones of the catenary poles for installation of the first cable thereon includes operating the man-lift to raise one or more crew members to a desired height and location alongside the consist and proximate successively selected ones of the catenary poles for installation of the first and second cables thereon; the step of installing the first cable on successively selected ones of the catenary poles includes installing the first and second cables on successively selected ones of the catenary poles.