

Supporting Documentation for Dave Ackmann's Application for the NMRA Electrical Engineering Achievement Program Certificate

It is December of 2021, and this document is intended to display my qualifications for the Electrical Engineering Certificate in the NMRA Achievement Program. It is organized along the lines of the "Statement Of Qualifications" form for Electrical Engineering. As it is difficult during the COVID19 pandemic to get evaluators to my layout, the Baden, Vogt & DeSmet, I have created links to movies I recorded which demonstrate my accomplishments. Just click on the links below to view each movie.

1. Layout Construction:

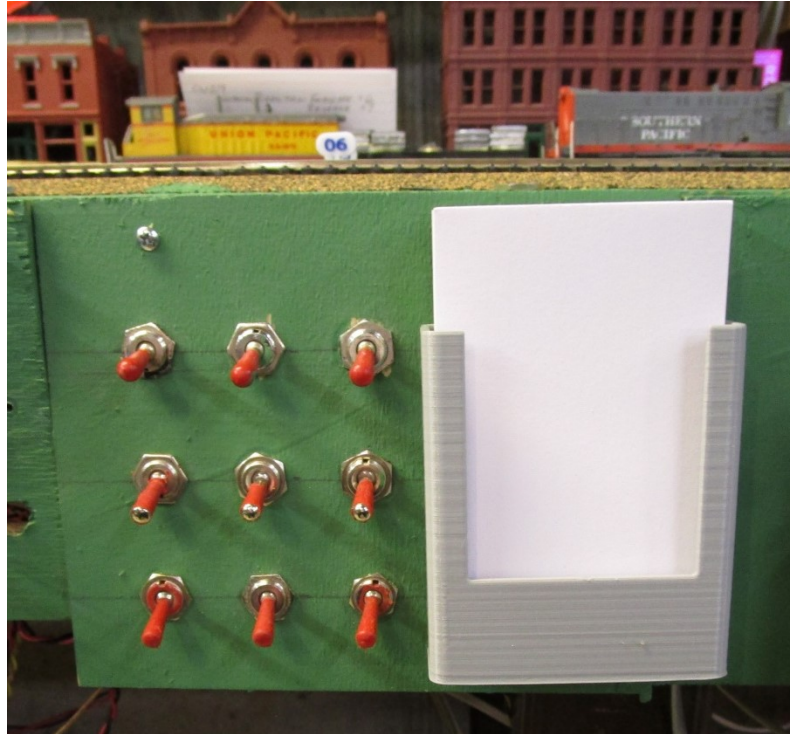
- a. **General Description:** My layout utilizes Digital Command Control from Digitrax. Here you see the Digitrax PS2012E Power Supply, a Booster (DB200+) and the combined Command Station and Booster (DCS 100). As you can see from [this illustration](#), my layout is designed for continuous running of trains in three electrically isolated concentric loops. The booster in the center drives the inner and outer loops (which I often refer to as Loop 1 and Loop 3 respectively), and the Command Station and Booster on the right drives the middle loop (Loop 2) and most of the switch machines; it is connected to its own voltmeter and ammeter.



The Booster in the middle has its own voltmeter, and is connected to a Digitrax PM42 power distribution circuit. The PM42 distributes power into 4 different blocks, each with its own ammeter. All power is properly phased and allows complete interoperability between loops. For more general information, [click here](#).

- b. **Reversing Loop:** Loop 2 of the BVD has a reversing loop. The reversing loop is electrically isolated from the rest of the layout. The reversing loop is entered when turnout #2 is closed, allowing the locomotive to enter. When the complete consist is in the loop, turnout #1 is flipped to allow the train to exit the loop. When the train has cleared the loop, switch #2 is returned to the “thrown” position to allow continuous running in Loop 2. To see the reversing loop in operation, [click here](#).
- c. **Passing Siding:** The town of DeSmet has one of several passing sidings on the BVD. Entry and exit are controlled by turnouts #64 and #65. To see the passing siding in operation, [click here](#).

- d. **Locomotive Storage:** The East Yard is connected to Loop 3, and allows for locomotive storage. Both the North and South ends of the East yard have 3 spurs which are electrically isolated from the rest of the yard and the mainline of loop 3. Here you can see a switch matrix which control the spurs at the North end (left column), the switches that control the South end (right column), and the switches that control the sidings (center column). If you [click here](#), you can see the operation of these spurs for locomotive storage.



- e. **Yard and Switching Lead:** The South End of the East Yard is shown here. The yard lead is actually a siding independent of the mainline of Loop 3. To view switching of some freight cars in this end of the yard, [click here](#).

- f. **Power Supply and Circuit Protection:** The DCS 100 Command station provides automatic protection from short circuits by shutting down when one occurs. To see this protection in action, [click here](#).

2. Turnout Operation:

- a. **Simple Turnout:** There are about 70 turnouts on the BVD, and in the section 1.c above we demonstrated turnout #65 in operation controlling a siding in the town of DeSmet. By far, most of my switch machines are stall motors from Hanksraft, which are frequently used commercially to provide motion in marketing displays. They run continuously on 12 Volts DC, draw about 20 milliamps, and are controlled by Digitrax DS44 circuits, as shown here; the DS44 can individually control up to 4 distinctly addressable turnouts, and can power up to 2 turnouts on each address. To view one of these switch machines from under the layout, [click here](#).

Occasionally I use Atlas “snap switches” when space is limited, and these are controlled by Digitrax DS52 circuits. Power for both DS44 and DS52 circuits is obtained directly from the rails

- b. **Single Crossover:** The BVD has several crossovers between loops. Here is one in the town of Vogt, where trains can cross between loops 2 and 3. It is controlled by a pair of Hanksraft switch machines and DS52 circuits as explained above. To view this crossover in operation, [click here](#).
- c. **Double Crossover:** I have 4 sets of Double Crossovers on the BVD. A Double Crossover is really nothing more than 2 pairs of Single Crossovers with a crossing in the middle. As is the case with most of my turnouts, they are powered by Hanksraft motors and in this case DS52 circuitry; each address on the DS52 is powering a pair of turnouts. To see one of the Double Crossovers between Loops1 and 2 in the town of Baden, [click here](#).

3. Electrical Features:

- a. **Grade Crossing:** Moving north from the town of Baden there is a grade crossing protected by a pair of crossbucks with flashing lights. The signal is actuated when a train passes over a pair of light depended resistors embedded between the ties at either end of the protected track. Block occupancy is sensed by a Circuitron BD1 block detector and is independent of the DCC system. When a train enters the block, 12V power is applied to the circuitry which controls the flashers, a Busch HO5934. Power is provided to the BD1 from a 12 Volt "Wall Wart" through a regulated power supply which I constructed based on the design of similar power supplies from Circuitron. To view the grade crossing in operation, [click here](#).
- b. **Sound in Locomotive:** UP locomotive 289 is a Walthers GP9M, part number 931-102. If you visit Walthers web site, by [clicking here](#), you will see that nowhere in the description is sound mentioned; it's not even DCC ready. But I had an unused Soundtraxx sound decoder for a diesel locomotive in my parts box, so I popped the shell and added sound to this locomotive. This was accomplished by cutting the wires between the power pickups and the motor, and then splicing the decoder in the middle, as described in the decoder instructions. The tricky part is finding space for the speaker, but I found space in the cab. Speakers always sound louder and better if a baffle is placed behind the speaker, and I created one with my 3D printer. To hear the final result, [click here](#).
- c. **Other (Speedometer):** Perhaps my favorite pieces of Electrical Engineering on the BVD are the speedometers which are installed on each of the three loops of track. These are based on an Arduino microprocessor and the software I wrote myself. A photocell is imbedded in each loop of track, and when a train passes over, a timer is started. Lines within the code define the length of the loop and the scale of the layout. When the train again passes over the photocell, the program calculates the scale speed and displays the information on a small alphanumeric panel, and the whole operation repeats itself. Speedometers have proven useful in determining the effectiveness of maintenance and in speed matching for MU operation. To view the operation of a speedometer, [click here](#).

4. Schematic of Propulsion Circuitry

5. **Schematics for Turnouts and Features**