

University Medical Center Children's Hospital Gift Shop Elevated Train Layout

In March 2009, Jim Cook, Willis Fagg and Norm Ulmer met with Kent Rollins, President of the UMC Foundation, to offer our services in constructing a model railroad in the to-be-built Children's wing at University Medical Center. Our proposal was met with enthusiasm, and eventually we met with the Construction Manager of the new Children's wing.

Over the next several months, Nick Buchholz and Norm Ulmer met many times with the project Architect, Contractor and Construction Manager to work out the details of the layout and its integration into the structure of the new building's gift Shop. In late Spring of 2010, the Gift shop was nearing completion, and we could proceed with the final preparation for the installation of the track and suspension system.

The suspension system was provided by Eaglewings Ironcraft of Phoenix, whose owner, Dan Hoag, is an active garden railroader. Once his system was in hand, we took the material to Jim Cook's house. Jim and his wife Madelyn had graciously volunteered their RV garage floor for our use in bending track to fit the suspension system. At the completion of this step, we were ready to proceed with installation of the layout, to be hung from the ceiling of the Gift Shop.

At the end of July, we began the installation, assisted by Nick Buchholz, Gary Martin, Richard Creamer, Jack Forgeus, Kirk Lander, John Madden, Chuck Taylor, and Norm Ulmer. Glenn Mitchell built and installed the electrical controls for the layout. By the end of August, the installation was complete, in plenty of time for the Grand Opening in mid-September.

The train's engine contains a small TV camera which transmits what the engineer would be seeing as the train runs along its path, to a television set located in a mountain in the Lobby. A large button mounted just below the TV set, when pushed, activates the train. The train consists of a diesel engine and a string of circus cars followed by a colorful caboose.

Everyone who passes thru the Lobby is invited to activate the train, and many do, to their great pleasure. Many have stated how much they enjoy this gift to the Children's Hospital, and we certainly enjoyed being able to do this for the children.