

# *The* **Breeze**

Serving the Delavan Lakes area



**March  
8 & 9  
2025**





# Historical timeline of model trains

*Hobby has seen continued growth throughout the years*

**1860s:** Wooden and metal floor toys that resemble trains are first made.

**1891:** Pioneering toy company Marklin of Germany establishes a series of standard track gauges for its clockwork (wind-up) and later electric-powered trains.

**1896:** Carlisle and Finch in the United States develops electric- powered trains that run on metal track.

**1901:** Lionel produces its first electric train, built initially only as a store-window display. Shoppers are more interested in the display itself than the store's products.

**1920s:** Toy electric trains blossom in popularity in what today is known as the "Golden Age." However, most are big, expensive, and associated with rich kids.

**1930s:** Accurate model trains in O scale and later HO scale, more realistic in

proportion and detail than "toy" trains, come into existence. They are primarily kits built by adult craftsmen.

**1934:** First issue of Model Railroader magazine.

**1942-45:** World War II halts toy production, including production of electric train sets.

**Early 1950s:** Toy trains are the No. 1 toys for boys, as pervasive in American culture as video games are today. Lionel for a time is the biggest toy maker in the United States. There is not a single boy who doesn't have trains or have a friend with a train set.

**Mid-1950s:** There is a clear split between scale model railroading for adults and toy trains sold to children. Plastic takes over as the primary material used to produce model trains.

**1965:** Ever improving electric motor technology and manufacturing techniques lead to the introduction of N scale trains, about half the size of HO trains.

**1968:** On the opposite end of the spectrum, LGB of Germany introduces large scale or "G" scale trains, which today predominate in the hobby of garden railroading.

**1970s:** Z scale, half again as small as N scale, is introduced by Marklin. Developments in the field of electronics begin to influence how electric trains designed and are controlled on the track.

**1980s:** Digital control systems and realistic sound-producing systems are developed.

**Today:** Model trains are more popular than ever.

There are an estimated 500,000 model railroaders and toy train hobbyists in the United States and Canada. Model trains are especially popular in England, Germany, Australia and Japan. The World's Greatest Hobby campaign is launched to promote all aspects of model railroading.

*Source: The World's Greatest Hobby (www.greatesthobby.com).*

## If you go...

**WHAT:** Delavan Train Show

**WHEN:** March 8-9

**WHERE:** Delavan American Legion Hall, 111 S. Second St. This is where the show begins with more train layouts at Delavan City Hall, a vendor fair at Baymont Inn & Suites and a special treat in nearby Tower Park.

**COST:** Free

**HOURS:** Saturday, March 8, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sunday, March 9, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**For more information:** visit [delavantrainshow.com](http://delavantrainshow.com), call 262-749-1073 or email [53115.trainshow@gmail.com](mailto:53115.trainshow@gmail.com).

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# Delavan Train Show rolls in March 8-9

*Annual free event features several locations, a vendor fair and more*

All aboard! The 15th Annual Delavan Train Show will arrive in downtown Delavan March 8 and 9. The locomotive-themed event runs from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday.

"This event is open to the public with free admission, making it the perfect weekend activity for families looking to share in the excitement of the miniature railway world," organizers said.

Featuring layouts and exhibits displayed throughout downtown Delavan in several locations, train show organizers look forward to welcoming model train enthusiasts of all ages.

"The Delavan Train Show will showcase a spectacular array of model train layouts in the main and lower levels of the Delavan American Legion Post and Delavan's City Hall," they said.

This year will also feature a vendor fair. "We are thrilled to welcome a model train vendor fair in the lower level of the Baymont Inn & Suites hosted by MD Trains of Woodstock, Illinois," organizers said.

A total of 10 vendors are expected at the vendor fair and will be selling a variety of model train related items.



The Women's Auxiliary will be serving up a delicious variety food to satisfy any appetite during the show.

Additionally, there are several downtown restaurant options visitors can stop by for a meal or snack.

The train show is a beloved community event dedicated to celebrating the enchanting world of model trains. It captivates audience of all ages with its intricate displays that bring the miniature world to life.

"Join us for a weekend of locomotive excitement and create lasting memories with your loved ones," organizers of the show said.

The trackless train, which was at past shows but did not make an appearance last year due to lack of funding, is returning

for the 2025 show. It will be at Tower Park downtown, and is a sight to see in person, according to organizers.

A partnership with the Friends of Aram Public Library will again bring that group to the lower level of the American Legion where they'll host a mini book sale during the show on Saturday, March 8, beginning at 9 a.m.

As a special treat, the library friends will also be selling a limited-edition pewter train ornament for \$15 each that day.

The family-friendly event offers a small-town festival feel, according to organizers.

"Kiddos of all ages can operate accessories, complete scavenger hunts to find characters and details on layouts, and even run the trains on some of the layouts," they said.

Start exploring the train exhibits – many featuring active operating layouts – at the American Legion Hall, 111 S. Second St. or at City Hall, both of which are in downtown Delavan.

Guests will also have a chance to win raffle prizes.

Visitors can easily to stroll the event on foot, which is held within a two-block radius in downtown Delavan. For those unable to walk, there is a fair amount of parking in the area.

Each exhibitor aims to entertain visitors of all ages. They are dedicated to creating fun and family friendly layouts. While some layouts have seek-and-find activities, others have buttons that operate

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

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## The Breeze

1102 Ann Street, Delavan, WI 53115

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Editor in Chief: Heather Ruenz

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*Serving the Delavan Lake area  
A publication of Southern  
Lakes Newspapers LLC*

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**Advertising Director:**

Vicki Vanderwerff

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**on the cover:** This layout was featured during a past train show. The 2025 Delavan Train Show will be March 8-9 with multiple locations throughout downtown as well as a vendor fair. Photos in this special event preview are courtesy of the Delavan Train Show.



accessories.

A few of the exhibitors usually even give visitors an opportunity to be the train engineer. Inspiration to join the model train layout hobby abounds throughout the two-day event in Delavan.

### RAVE REVIEWS

The event has garnered many positive reviews from past attendees, including the following comments on Facebook:

“What a wonderful, outstanding, wholesome, family event. A parade of happy people walking the brick streets of Delavan, enjoying train layouts and visiting with downtown businesses. (There is) no better joy than a child’s beaming, glowing face and smile.”

“A family day for sure! Meet your local business friends and enjoy a beautiful town.”

“The Delavan Train Show is always so much fun and you can tell it begins as a labor of love that has continued to grow...

fun for all ages and is totally free to see everything. Every year is a great time with even more to do and see and experience and is a great break from the doldrums of a Wisconsin winter to have a fun time with your entire family.”

“Lots of fun. So many different set ups, (it was) hard to pick a favorite. Enjoyed walking around Delavan. Lots to see and some exercise to boot.”

Organizers agree on the many positives. “Join us as our exhibitors bring this miniature world to life and create lasting memories in a family-friendly atmosphere with your loved ones. All aboard!” they said.

“Don’t miss this exciting event that promises joy, discovery, and quality family time!”

For more information about the event, like and follow the Delavan Train Show Facebook page, visit [delavantrainshow.com](http://delavantrainshow.com), email [info@delavantrainshow.com](mailto:info@delavantrainshow.com) or call 262-749-1073.



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# Common model railroad scales

The history of model trains stretches back more than 150 years, almost as old as the railroad industry itself.

The first models were not constructed to any one scale or standard, as were more like toys without any way to have different trains working together.

As standards were set for toy trains, manufacturers chose to build to common scales, some of which are outlined below.

## G SCALE (1:25)

G scale trains were introduced by Lehmann Grosse Bahn (which translates into “Lehmann Big Trains”) in the 1960s. Because of its size and durability, these rugged toy trains are often used in outdoor garden railways, where hobbyists combine their love of trains with beautiful gardens and real scenic elements such as ponds and waterfalls.

While the trains are fun to play with, even the smallest set-up will take up a lot of room. Options for different types of trains and accessories are limited as well.

Depending on the manufacturer, G scale model trains range in scale from 1:20.3 to 1:32, but generally run together on the same gauge track.

## O SCALE (1:48)

At the turn of the last century, Lionel was the first to produce electric toy trains in America in what they called “Standard Gauge,” where the rails were 2.125” apart. After the first World War, the smaller O scale (1:48) became the popular size for toy train manufacturers in America.

Many toy train sets run on three-rail track, which allows for complex track layouts to be built without complicated electrical wiring. Lionel continues to make O scale trains and accessories, along with a number of other manufacturers like Atlas, MTH, and Williams.

## S SCALE (1:64)

The period between the first and second World Wars saw the rise of smaller model trains, starting with S scale (1:64) in the 1930s, popularized by American Flyer Trains (made by A.C. Gilbert Co.). These trains became popular because they ran on more realistic-looking two-rail track



instead of the three-rail system used by competitor Lionel.

While many collect vintage American Flyer trains, there are many manufacturers making modern S scale products today. Selection of trains and accessories can be limited, but some hobbyists enjoy the challenge of building their own models from scratch and improvising from parts.

## HO SCALE (1:87)

HO scale (1:87) made its first appearance in Europe before becoming popular in the United States in the mid-1930s. The abbreviation “HO” stands for “half-O.” The smaller trains were less expensive and took up less space than their larger O scale cousins, which became popular with people who were moving into small homes and apartments in the 1940s.

As manufacturing methods improved after the second World War, HO scale trains became popular for their finer detail and wide range of available accessories. The widest variety of trains are available in HO scale from hundreds of manufacturers in all price ranges.

## N SCALE (1:160)

The first N scale (1:160) model trains were produced in Germany in 1962 but would not make their debut in America until 1967 when Aurora introduced their line of “Postage Stamp Trains.”

The designation “N” is short for “nine,” referring to the 9mm gauge between the rails of N scale track. While these early efforts were crude by modern standards, many hobbyists were captivated by the small scale models.

Anyone looking to create long main line railroad runs and sweeping scenic

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## • RAILROAD SCALES CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

vistas without sacrificing space quickly adopted the smaller scale. Today, N scale is only second in popularity to HO scale, with a wide variety of trains and accessories available.

### Z SCALE (1:220)

The smallest practical model railroading scale was also developed in Germany. Toy manufacturer Marklin released the first Z scale (1:220) model trains in 1972, assigned the last letter of the alphabet since it was assumed no smaller trains could be made!

When these trains were later imported to America, they were first dismissed as a novelty. However, as manufacturing processes improved and the tiny mechanisms became more reliable, they gained their own niche following.

While the selection of trains and accessories can be limited, a number of manufacturers are dedicated to producing modern American-style Z scale trains.

With the continued popularity of model railroading in America, hundreds of manufacturers large and small have contributed thousands of different trains and accessories in a variety of scales and price ranges.

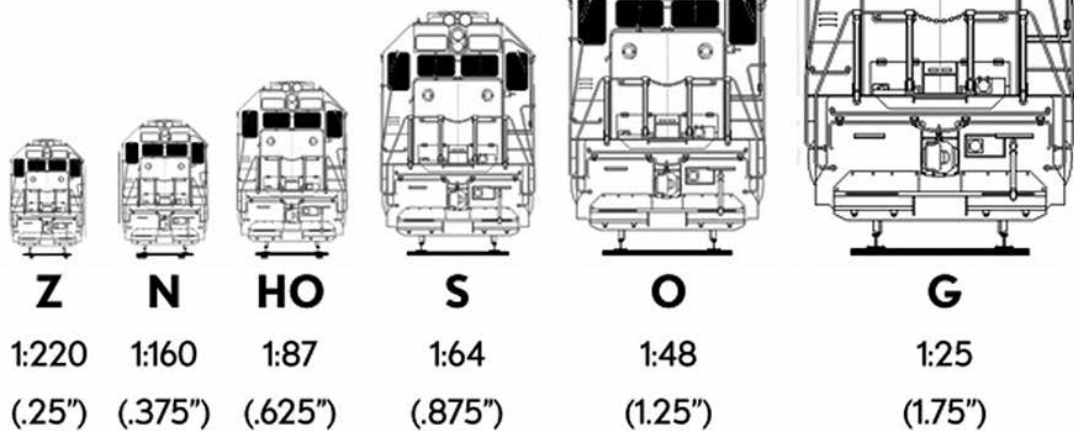
As the manufacturing process became more sophisticated, modelers began to demand trains that more accurately resembled the real thing.

No matter what scale you choose, today's model railroader can enjoy a finely detailed model that is "ready to run" right out of the box, accurate down to the last rivet. Less expensive models allow the modeler to add more detail as desired.

You might be surprised at how good looking the most affordable models are today. You don't need to spend a lot of money to get maximum enjoyment from the hobby of model railroading!

*Information source:*  
*Railroad Model Craftsman*  
*(rrmodelcraftsman.com)*

 = 1 inch



### COMMON MODEL RAILROAD SCALES (AND GAUGES)

This image shows the different scales and gauges in common model train scales. Over the years, according to Railroad Model Craftsman, model trains have become more accurate in resembling real trains.







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