

Denver & Rio Grande Western Railway

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The 7mm ('0') Scale layout portrays the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railway's Three Foot Gauge service from Denver to Durango and onto Silverton, as well as the Durango to Farmington Branch run as a Colorado & Southern operation for variety. The time period is 1900 to 1905 at the peak of goods transportation. The model scene is primarily set at Durango and its precious metals (chiefly silver) smelter. The layout has around a scale '0' gauge mile (125 feet) of 16.5mm narrow gauge track plus 29 switches and a manually operated turntable. Electrically the layout is run under dual cab control which enables two locomotives to be operational at any given moment. The Durango daily schedule of train arrivals and departures is set out overleaf.

Trains featured are the Durango/Denver Mails (including a Denver Federal Mint bullion car to carry silver to Denver), the Durango/Silverton Accommodations and the Durango/Farmington Flyers. In between are way freights to and from Alamosa and Chama, ores from Silverton, coal for the smelter and locomotives from the Durango City Coal Mine at Carbon Junction, lumber from the Posta forests for the Durango Sawmills with timber exports in all directions, livestock movements (sheep from Silverton, beef from Farmington, plus pigs from Iowa transferred at Denver to the narrow gauge – all destined for Durango's slaughterhouse), imports of beer from Denver, a host of domestic and industrial goods, and railroad maintenance work.

Construction of layout buildings has started – the Denver Signal Box and the Durango Switcher Shop are completed. The American Smelting & Reduction Company's smelter at Durango is under construction with the first two stages completed. Work on Stages 3 and 4 (the Main Smelter Building and the Bullion Despatch Depot) will begin shortly which will then be followed by ballasting of the smelter tracks and the adjacent turntable area. Other buildings required are the Locomotive Depot and its Coaling Facility, the RIP/Maintenance Facility, Durango Station and the adjacent Car Servicing Facility, the Durango Sawmills Facility, the Stock Yard, and the Durango Freight Depot. In addition, a number of small sheds are required around the layout.

Since the last Show in August two new locomotives have arrived (a second Porter 0-4-0 Switcher for Durango Marshalling Yard and a third 2-6-0 Mogul in Vanderbilt Black livery to cover way freight services to Chama and Alamosa on the Denver line). These additions bring the current locomotive register total to 7 (2 x Yard Switchers, 3 x Moguls with Tenders, 1 x 28 Ton Climax and 1 x 14 Ton wood-fired Shay).

The Pullman stock (Sleeping Car 'Navajo' and Dining Car 'Durango' in Pullman Green livery) for the Durango/Denver Mails has been delivered. More freight stock has arrived - a mixture of Box Cars, Flat Cars, Coal and Ore Hoppers, and Ballast Wagons for track repair work. These additions enable a more comprehensive service to be operated on both the main line and the Farmington Branch. Further additions to locomotive, passenger and freight stock are planned as the layout progresses.

Please feel free to give advice and ask questions – your interest will be appreciated.

Thank you.

(John Feltham (Gosport American Model Railroad Group))