

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 south west to Durango (450 miles) and then extended north to Silverton (a further 45 miles) plus the branch line from Durango south to Farmington (50 miles) run as a Colorado & Southern operation. The date is 1905 at the peak of goods transportation in support of the precious metals mining industry in Colorado. The scene is set at Durango and its silver ore smelter. The layout has 1.25 miles of '0' scale narrow gauge track plus 34 switches ('points') and a turntable. Electric Dual Cab Control enables any two locomotives to be run at the same time. The Durango daily schedule of arrivals and departures is set out overleaf.

Trains featured are (a) the Durango/Denver Mails travelling the 450 miles just under 24 hours and reaching a maximum altitude of 10,015 feet at Cumbres near Chama, (b) the Durango/Silverton Accommodations and (c) the Durango/Farmington Flyers. In between are Way Freights to and from Alamosa and Chama (both along the line to Durango from Denver), metallic ores brought down from Silverton for smelting, coal for the smelter and for locomotives and local sale from the Durango City Coal Mine at Carbon Junction just south of Durango, lumber from the Posta forests for the Durango Sawmills, livestock movements (sheep from Silverton and beef from Farmington, plus hogs 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, plus special charters and railroad maintenance work.

Construction of layout buildings has now ended with the making of the Durango Sawmills (opposite the Depot proper) and the Stockyard (next to the Freight Depot) for the livestock trade. The Denver scene has had a 5 track Depot added to the layout near the two Portals visually separating Denver from Durango. Ballasting of the layout has also been completed – the Durango 4 Track Marshalling Yard is an ash and cinder strewn desert just like the Yard today at Durango on the part of the line run by the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railway so visit Durango for a steam ride!

A Forney 2-4-4 Tank engine has been acquired for the Colorado & Southern line to Farmington. This brings the steam locomotive register total to 13 (2 x Porter 0-4-0 Switchers, 1 x Porter 0-4-2 Switcher, 1 x 2-4-4 Forney Tank, 7 x 2-6-0 Moguls and the Colorado Mining Company's 28 Ton Climax and 14 Ton Shay geared engines).

Further Box Cars, Ventilated Box Cars and Reefers (refrigerated cars) plus a Side Door Caboose (50) have arrived to round out the stock roster. On the maintenance side Combine 213 now has a Cupola whilst two Snow Plows (102 and 104) and a Crane Car (7218) have been constructed ready for winter use at the high altitudes at which the railway operated (between 5,000 and 10,000 feet in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado). Watch out for the Snow Plows in action although you will have to imagine the snow which in reality was all too often many feet deep for long periods.

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

Thank you. (John Feltham (Gosport American Model Railroad Group))