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Maricopa Live Steamers

THE ADOBE & WESTERN RAILROAD

by John Draftz and Cliff Fought

You've ridden lots of 7½" gauge railroads before and wonder what would make this one any different as you watch the train pull into the Pottsville station for a twilight run to Adobe City eight scale miles away. Like many towns in this part of the country, Pottsville's name was changed as civilization moved in and a more refined image was needed. After all, how romantic is Pottsville.

You board the train and hear the engineer blow two long blasts on the whistle to indicate your journey is about to begin only to come to a stop after just three car lengths. Glancing up ahead of the engine, you see why. The engineer is looking at a red block signal. In less than a minute, a local freight pulls into Pottsville turning the block green when it clears the wye.



As the train pulls out of Pottsville and approaches North Junction, you begin to suspect that just maybe the Adobe & Western is different than other railroads you've ridden. After all, how many railroads have ground squirrels scurrying into their holes dug under the track to keep coyotes from trying to dig them up. The A&W after all is a desert railroad. This is made more apparent as you reach the passing siding at Massie and notice a jackrabbit hopping along between the cactus and clumps of brush.

Leaving Massie, the train picks up speed and soon it's rolling along at a scale speed of about 40 mph (that's 64 km/h for the metric types). After passing the siding at Mad Dog, the train crosses Deadman's Trestle. You make a mental note to ask the train crew the origin of that name

To your surprise and concern, the signal stays red and on a bi-directional, signaled railroad, that means you can't proceed. Then you see it. While you were waving at the other train, another passenger train had come into Perryview from Dirt Water along the Clifford Cutoff and was waiting at the signal bridge. The dispatcher has given it the green light to follow after the other one into Pottsville.

As it clears the switch, your train gets a green light and takes the main to continue its journey to Adobe City. The multi-colored western sky serves as one more reminder that this indeed is not just another railroad but a flashback to an era long since gone.



The A&W RR currently has two branch lines emanating from Adobe City each about a mile long. The Pottsville branch is already CTC controlled and the Bobberg branch is fast approaching that same status. There are still some parts of Bobberg radio dispatch controlled. Since the entire A&W is bi-directional, safety requires that trains obey either the signals or the dispatcher at all times. In keeping with our agreement with the agencies which own the land, construction is underway on a 1½ mile third branch running to the southwest of Adobe City. The master plan has provision for three more branches thus taking advantage of the land made available to the [Maricopa Live Steamers](#).

The [Maricopa Live Steamers](#) has over 170 members and growing. It seems that as people come out and see the potential of the Adobe area, they see a place where their entire family can have fun. There's room for everyone and their ideas.

The Adobe City area is already the site for nearly a dozen inter-modal storage containers and a well developed steaming facility. A kitchen

when the train stops at Adobe City.

As the train reaches Perryview, it takes the siding. Again, another red block signal. You glance off to the front left and notice the headlight of another passenger train inbound to Pottsville. As the engines pass, the engineers wave at each other. And almost unconsciously, you and the other passengers wave at the passengers on the other train and they wave back. A smile crosses your face as you realize railroads seem to be the only place where people wave at each other. And someone had the nerve to call the skies friendly.

facility, toilets, and other “creature comforts” are already being developed at Adobe. There’s even a picnic area available to outside groups whose main access is by rail.

What a hobby! What a railroad!!!



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