

## N-Circle Railroad Update 34 – April 25, 2026

### Micro-Scenes Development Background

The N-Circle Railroad layout scenery approach makes it difficult to create detailed scenes with human figures, animals, etc., as they do not attach well to the paper scenery on the panels. Therefore, I developed the “Micro-Scene” technique.

A “Micro-Scene” is a small scene built on a styrene sheet which foliage materials, vehicles and human figures can be securely glued to, but the scene is not attached to the underlying panel and module base.

Given my limited reach, it is much easier to develop these scenes on the workbench than on a layout.

A Micro-Scene can be preserved if the underlying scenery panel is updated, or it can be moved somewhere else as the layout scenery evolves. Thus, further extending the concept of the scenery on the N-Circle Railroad layout being changeable movie or theater “sets” acting as backdrops for the “show” of the passing trains.

I have already developed several Micro-Scenes for the N-Circle layout discussed in earlier N-Circle Updates but am now presenting it as a “technique” to expand upon further.

### Existing N-Circle “Micro-Scenes”:

- Wayne Feeds Grain Mill – Updates 8 & 9
- Passenger Station – Update 9
- Mini-Golf Course – Update 10
- Shell Gas Station – Update 12
- Park Restrooms – Update 13
- Construction Scene – Update 20
- Rail Yard Tower – Update 21
- Barnyard – Update 29

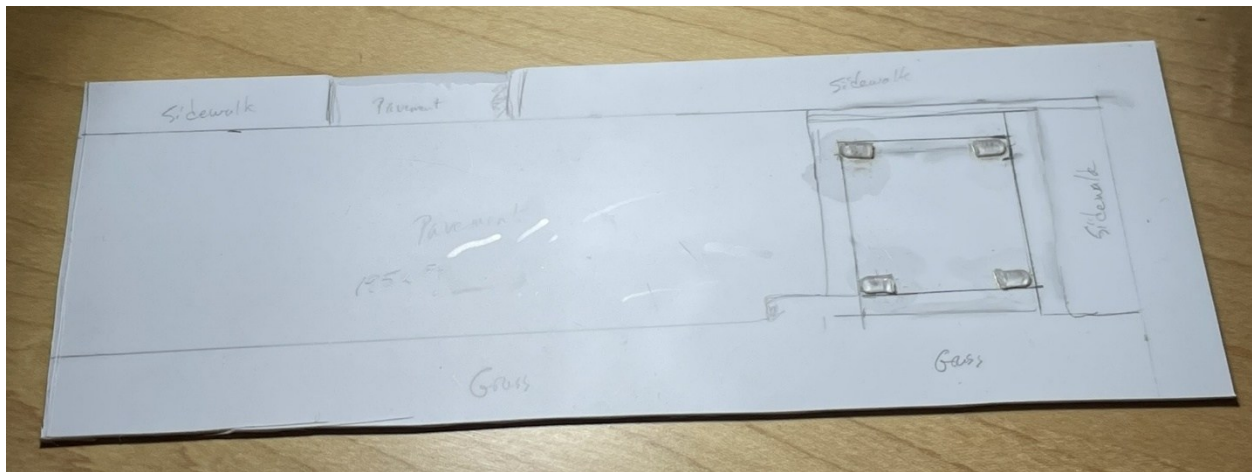
### Planned Future N-Circle “Micro-Scenes”:

- Wedding Party in Front of the Church
- Sidewalk Dining in Front of the Old Firehouse Restaurant
- More Barnyard Animals for the Farm
- Hot Air Balloon in the Park with 1950s and 1980s “Fly High” trucks
- Camping Scene in the Park
- Pond in the Park
- Farmer’s Market in the Park
- RV Area in the Park
- Suburban home and mobile home backyards using privacy fences, dog houses, laundry lines, swimming pool., lawn tractor, pets and people and yard furniture.

## Creating a Micro-Scene Around the Post Office

As planned in N-Circle 33, I created a Micro-Scene for the U. S. Post Office, placing the building on a styrene sheet but not attached to it. I could then add details around the building, glued to the sheet, but the building could be reused in a different scene later. The styrene sheet is 1.0 mm thick, to simulate the curb height of about 6.3 inches of a sidewalk above the street. The sheet is 195 x 74 mm to fit the space between Main Street and North Yard and the building is aligned to the base with four corner styrene pegs like my McDonald's restaurant in N-Circle Update 28. Here we see the alignment pegs glued in place, with the areas for the sidewalks and parking lot sketched out for painting.

### [N-Circle\\_26-03-16\\_PostOffice\\_Scene\\_Cropped](#)



I beveled the styrene edge with a file where the rear parking area exits to the street through the sidewalk, then applied a coat of Vallejo grey primer to the shiny styrene surface, to ensure that later painting will adhere well.

I brushed on Tamiya Flat Earth paint over areas which will be covered with ground foam grass, so the earth will show through any gaps in the grass.

I used Tamiya Medium Grey on the sidewalks, then tried to add sidewalk sectional cracks using dark grey paint applied with the sharp tip of a metal clothing pin. Even that produced lines that were too wide and uneven, so I applied another watered-down coat of the grey to soften the view of the cracks. That came out okay.

I wanted a fence between the scene and the North Yard tracks, so I chose to use Model Power iron fence which is 12 mm = 6.3 feet high. This fencing does not have posts extending below it to insert into holes in the base, it can only be glued to the surface. Therefore, I placed two Woodland Scenics deciduous trees along the fence to support it. These trees have a peg in the bottom which can be used to go into an included separate base piece. I drilled a hole in the panel and superglued the trees directly to the panel, after trimming off the peg with sprue cutters to the length of the thickness of the styrene panel. I then put superglue along the bottom of all of the fence posts and on the two trees, so the trees hold the fence vertically in place. Ground foam placed around the trees will disguise the joints.

I also added an Osborn Model Kits 40-foot American flagpole in front of the Post Office, drilling a hole in the styrene base with a #57 bit and supergluing it in place. The flagpole is very thin, so getting it to be perfectly straight is a bit of a trick.

I placed the styrene base up on foam blocks during this whole process, so the bottom of the tree and flagpole holes would not be superglued to the workbench!

#### [N-Circle\\_26-04-14\\_PostOffice\\_Scene](#)



In retrospect, the trees are a bit too large for the scene and the middle one is too close to the building, I had to trim it back some. But the trees do seem to be holding the fence stable.

I then added people, mailboxes, bench and dog detail parts to the front. Note that the coat of the woman at the bottom of the stairs touches up against the stair railing, allowing a drop of superglue to provide better vertical stability.

I considered adding light posts, but do not have them on other city streets, so I will probably hold off until I upgrade the other sidewalks on Main Street. They probably will not be working electric lights, just pewter poles (sorry, George!) Adding electrical lighting is difficult in the N-Circle layout methodology which does not place buildings in permanent locations.

After all the details were in place, I added green grass ground foam around the perimeter using Woodland Scenics scenery cement. Here are photos of the final scene from multiple angles.

N-Circle\_26-04-24\_PostOffice\_Scene\_1\_Cropped



N-Circle\_26-04-24\_PostOffice\_Scene\_2



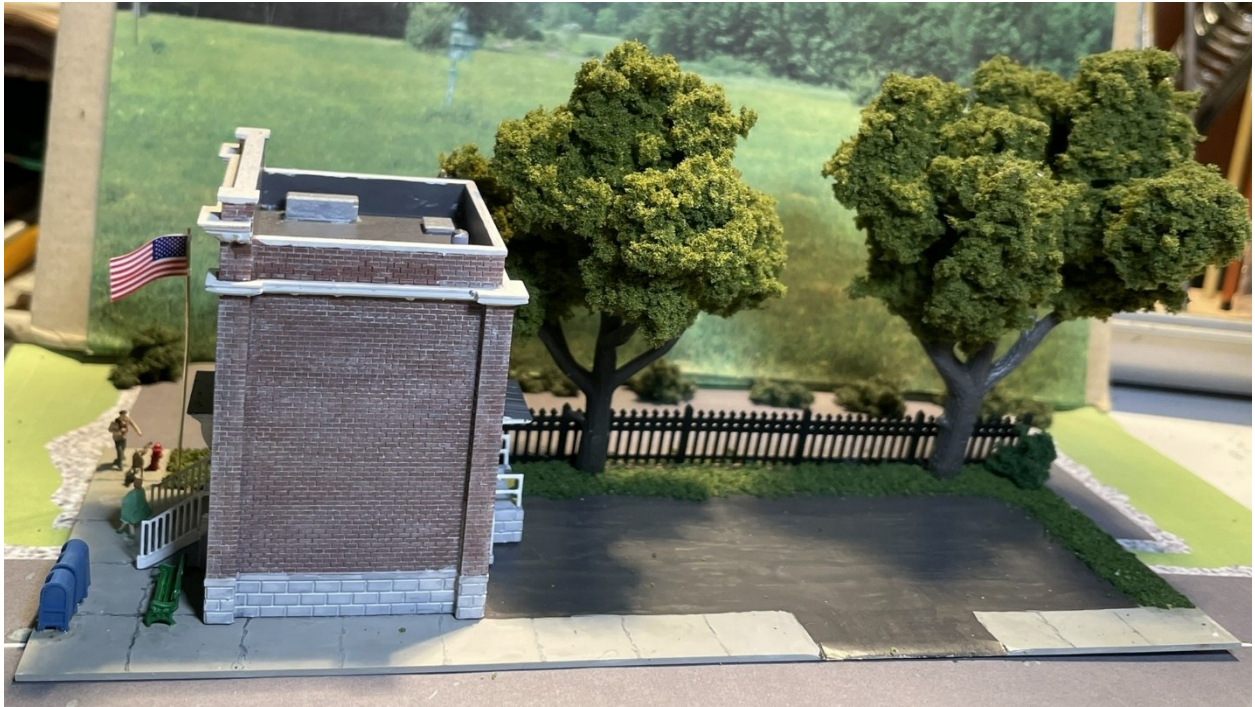
N-Circle\_26-04-24\_PostOffice\_Scene\_3\_Cropped



N-Circle\_26-04-24\_PostOffice\_Scene\_4\_Cropped



N-Circle\_26-04-24\_PostOffice\_Scene\_5\_Cropped



This Post Office Micro-Scene panel required about five hours to complete over twelve sessions.

## Creating a Small City Park Micro-Scene

With the base for the Post Office defined, there was still an open area between it and the grain mill along Main Street, which I decided to fill with a small city park micro-scene, using a few of the detail parts accumulated for the larger park scene planned for the east end of the layout. This panel is only 87 mm long by 74 mm wide, the same width as the Post Office panel, to fill the same space between Main Street and the inner track of North Yard. I defined this as a separate panel, as it could be used elsewhere later perhaps. I painted and added the grass on this panel at the same time as the Post Office panel, so they would have a consistent appearance.

As with the Post Office base, I applied a coat of Vallejo grey primer paint to the shiny styrene surface first, to ensure that later painting will adhere well, then brushed on Tamiya Flat Earth over areas where there will be ground foam grass, so the earth will show through any gaps.

Rather than extend the fence along the tracks from the Post Office, I chose to use a more decorative style fence around the three sides of the park, to keep the children away from the dangerous areas on all three sides. I had a box of Atlas hair pin iron fence which is 9 mm, thus 4.7 scale feet high.

Unlike the Model Power fencing used for the Post Office scene above, the Atlas fencing does have short posts extending below it to insert into holes. This fencing comes with 4 mm diameter, 1 mm high round bases that the fence posts fit into. I assume the intent is that these bases can be "buried" in the surface of traditional layout materials by drilling a larger hole to accommodate them. But it seemed like they would be more intrusive to the appearance around the fence, so I chose not to use them. Instead, I drilled holes in the styrene sheet with a #56 bit. Careful marking of the hole locations is critical – I did better here than with the Monroe barnyard fencing in Update 29! I glued the fence with styrene cement. Here we see the painted base with the fence glued in place.

### [N-Circle\\_26-03-25\\_CityPark\\_Scene\\_1](#)



## Building a Laser-Cut Wood Gazebo Kit

The centerpiece for this scene will be a small gazebo kit that I bought on eBay in 2022. It is 28 x 28 mm, so it fits well in this small space. It came in an unmarked bag but was listed as “Garden Gazebo Pavilion Building.” It has “Micro Wellen” etched in the wood sprue, but I could find nothing for this name in searches in eBay or the general web. It is definitely not the Osborn hexagonal gazebo kit #3081 one often sees on eBay.

Cutting out the tiny, curved laser-cut sides from the sprue plate was a challenge, even with a new, sharp hobby knife blade. But the parts fit together well.

I should have applied a first coat of white paint on the sides before assembly, to reduce the risk of getting the paint on the floor when painting them (You would think as many times as I have advised this in previous N-Circle Updates I could learn and remember it, so don't feel bad if you don't either. Unfortunately, the urge to grab the glue and “see how this is going to fit together” can overwhelm us all!). I used a sharp wood toothpick to get paint into the lattice work to have more control and avoid getting it on the floor. After two coats it looks okay, a little “weathered” in a few spots. It looks more grey than white in this photo, due to the lighting.

[N-Circle\\_26-03-25\\_CityParkGazebo\\_2\\_Cropped](#)



Assembling the roof is another wood kit challenge. There are no alignment tabs on the four triangular roof panels or on the top of the structure – you have to get them to rest together at the correct angles until the glue dries. Fortunately, I realized in advance that there would be no advantage to doing this on top of the structure, it would be much easier to assemble the panels separately on my metal pan with alignment magnets, then place the unit on the gazebo after it was dry.

After multiple failed starts with panels right-side up, I ended up laying all four panels together roofing-side down on the steel pan, applied wood glue to the mating edges, then gently folded them upwards and propped them against magnets to get the four joints all aligned at the proper angles, then applied a liberal amount of extra glue along the joints, as seen here.

[N-Circle\\_26-03-25\\_CityParkGazebo\\_3](#)



Surprisingly, the structure ended up almost square with the four edges almost in plane to attach to the top of the gazebo. For extra strength, I glued shims to the undersides of the panel joints after the initial assembly was dry; they will not be visible when the structure is on the layout.

I really don't know of a better way to assemble these four panels together, or how to make it "fun." It seems to me that someone designed the pieces to be laser cut but gave no thought to how they would be assembled. Perhaps that is why I can find no history of the manufacture of this kit...

Given the roof joints were not perfectly aligned, one corner of the roof was a few millimeters high when placed on the walls. I did not feel like playing the "human clamp" for half an hour pressing it down until the wood glue dried, so I came up with a set of foam blocks to prop everything in place to allow using a C-clamp to hold it. Note the piece of foam between the peak of the roof and the clamp to avoid damaging the fragile wood panels.

[N-Circle\\_26-03-27\\_CityParkGazebo](#)



I waited to paint the roof until after it was on the structure. I thought this sequence would reduce warping problems with these very thin wood panels – which it did. The Polly Scale acrylic dark grey paint did not warp the panels, as their small dimensions were tightly held by the glue on all sides.

I added a pre-painted Woodland Scenics picnic table with three people inside the gazebo, then superglued the gazebo to the base. The park benches on the edge of the sidewalk at both ends of the fence are superglued to the base and the fence to add stability, and I also glued pieces of shrubbery into both back corners to further stabilize the fence. I painted 3-D printed trash barrels and barbeque grills from Whistle Stop Models and added one of each to the scene. The others will be used in the larger park scene in the future. I don't know the manufacturer of the ice cream cart and accompanying figures purchased on eBay a few years ago. I decided not to add trees, as they would overwhelm the gazebo in this small space. Here is a photo with all the detail parts glued in place, before adding the ground cover.

[N-Circle\\_26-04-21\\_CityPark\\_Scene](#)



I added reddish-brown gravel/ballast on the driveway access area, then green ground foam for the grass, using the scenery cement again as for the Post Office scene above.

[N-Circle\\_26-04-24\\_CityPark\\_Scene\\_1\\_Cropped](#)



[N-Circle\\_26-04-24\\_CityPark\\_Scene\\_2\\_Cropped](#)



Note that the scenery details in this micro-scene are not time specific so it can be used for either 1950s or 1980s operating periods.

This City Park Micro Scene panel required about seven hours to complete over nineteen sessions, with about three hours of the seven being for building the gazebo.

After putting the two scenes on the layout I added a couple of 1950s U.S. Mail trucks to the rear parking lot and a 1948 Ford Country Squire Woody station wagon pulled into the park. While the two trees block some of the view of Main Street, these scenes nicely fill in the previously vacant lot between the passenger station and the grain mill!

[N-Circle\\_26-04-25\\_PostOffice\\_and\\_CityPark\\_Scene\\_1](#)



N-Circle\_26-04-25\_PostOffice\_and\_CityPark\_Scene\_2



As can be seen here, all of those friendly folks along the front of the City Park sidewalk are waving to the Maine Central bus just turning in to Main Street!

[N-Circle\\_26-04-25\\_PostOffice\\_and\\_CityPark\\_Scene\\_3](#)



### Updating Earlier Municipal Urban Scenes

The Osborn Models flagpole that I used in front of the Post Office came in a package of three which I had purchased to use around the downtown municipal buildings. So, while adding flagpoles and scenery details, I decided to update the City Hall and Fire Station scenes built in N-Circle Update 7, adding more to the details added to the City Hall in Update 16.

The #57 drill bit used to drill the hole for the flagpoles was a ¼-inch hex bit, so this time I placed it in a manual screwdriver handle rather than the small electric drill used previously and that worked well for drilling such a small, precise hole. Going through only a millimeter or so of soft styrene only requires a few turns of the bit, a high-speed drill is not needed. I used small blocks of foam to hold the poles squarely vertical while the superglue set.

Note that when placed on the layout, all three flags at the Post Office, City Hall and Fire Station are all flying in the same direction! The wind is out of the east, but hey, that can happen!

Before adding more details, I painted the sidewalk around City Hall a lighter grey to better match the other sidewalks on Main Street and to contrast to the color of the building's block walls. Fortunately, the phone booth and bicycle rack were not attached to the base, so they could be removed to allow the sidewalk to be painted easily. (Again, the advantage of never making anything "permanent" ...!) I also painted the rooftop HVAC venting a brighter metal color, as that was not done during the original building of the kit.

I added a policeman by the side door to the police station and a concerned citizen reading the newspaper by the front steps. Notice the addition of a red fire hydrant to protect City Hall and the theater next door!

[N-Circle\\_26-04-23\\_Life-Like\\_PoliceStation](#)



The base of the fire station is unrealistically high relative to the sidewalk – eventually it needs to be recessed into the sidewalk base. But note that the two highly-detailed GHQ fire trucks from N-Circle Update 14 are now resident in the station!

[N-Circle\\_26-04-23\\_Life-Like\\_FireStation](#)



Perhaps my modeling skills have improved in the five years since Update 7, these two scenes are better after some sprucing up!