

Albion Software Newsletter

January 2023

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Ship It! 10 Struggling Upgrade

The Cripple Creek District was on the layout tour for the Plano Train Show (just North of Dallas) January 21 and 22. Of course, my old DCC system died around January 7, and then I struggled to find a new one in time for the show. Thanks to Tony's Train Exchange and various vendors on Ebay, I managed to put together an NCE Power Cab system. A couple hours of work to install UTP panels and string cable, and I was good to go!

We had 22 visitors over the two day period, got to meet lot's of great people, and learned a lot more about the Cripple Creek District. Several of the visitors had driven up Phantom Canyon, and one gentleman whose family was from Colorado had done historical research on the area, so I learned quite a bit!

Ya'll know what it's like before a layout tour. Derailments where you never had them before, hand laid switches with cold solder joints giving way, etc.

Bad news: Ship It! 10 release delayed.
Good news: Brain Refresh!

Ship It! 10 Features

Continued from the last newsletter published in December.

- For a given industry, report the products that it ships and receives

Browse Industries

Settings for Session Generation

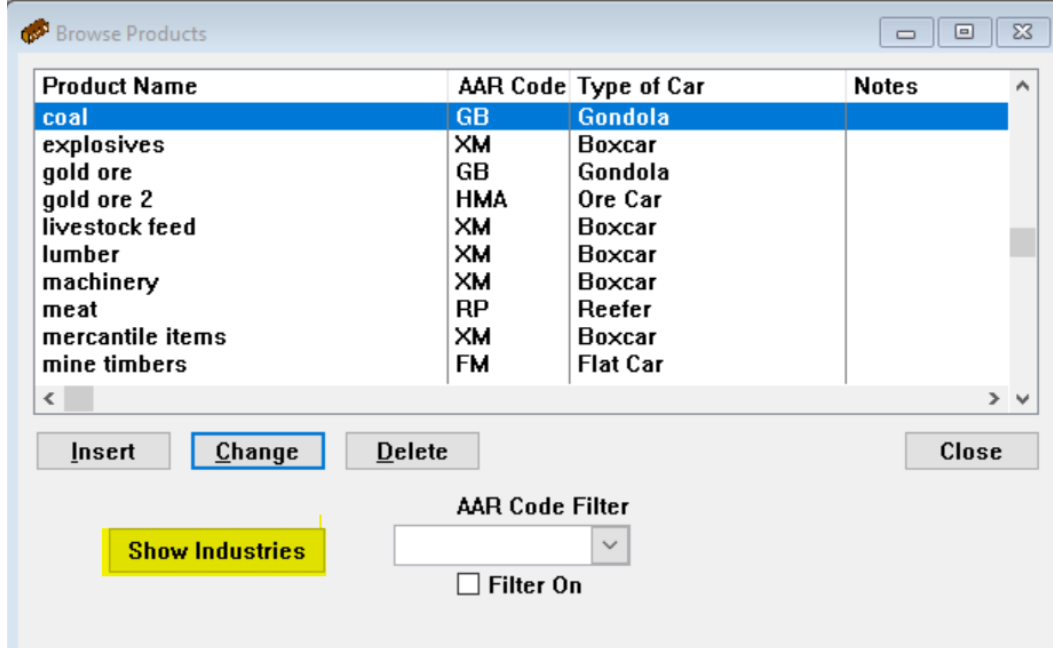
Industry Name	Town Name[+]	Capacity	Type of Sidin	Allow Divisional Shi	Pi
Alta Vista Yard	Alta Vista	11	Yard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ar
Golden Cycle Mill	Bull Hill	3	Industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ar
Golden Cycle Mine	Bull Hill	6	Industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ar
Theresa Mine	Bull Hill	6	Industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ar
Ajax Mine	Cripple Creek/Victor	2	Industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ar
Anaconda Mine	Cripple Creek/Victor	3	Industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ar
Cripple Creek Yard	Cripple Creek/Victor	6	Yard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ar
Elkton Mine	Cripple Creek/Victor	3	Industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ar
Portland Mine	Cripple Creek/Victor	2	Industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ar
Florence Mill	Florence	4	Industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ar
Florence Sampler	Florence	3	Industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ar
Florence Staging	Florence	12	Yard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ar
Florence Warehouse	Florence	4	Industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ar
Florence Yard	Florence	23	Yard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ar

Town Filter:
 Filter On

Pressing the "Products" button displays the following report:

Florence & Cripple Creek / Golden Circle Railroad		1/27/2023
6/05/1913		11:59 AM
Products for Industry: Florence Staging		
Product	Type	AAR Code and Car Type
livestock feed	Shipper	XM Boxcar
explosives	Shipper	XM Boxcar
meat	Shipper	RP Reefer
mercantile items	Shipper	XM Boxcar
produce	Shipper	RP Reefer
machinery	Shipper	XM Boxcar
mine timbers	Shipper	FM Flat Car
coal	Shipper	GB Gondola
lumber	Shipper	XM Boxcar
oil	Shipper	TA Tank Car
refined gold	Consignee	XM Boxcar
gold ore 2	Consignee	HMA Ore Car
gold ore	Consignee	GB Gondola

- For a given product, report on the industries that ship or receive that product.



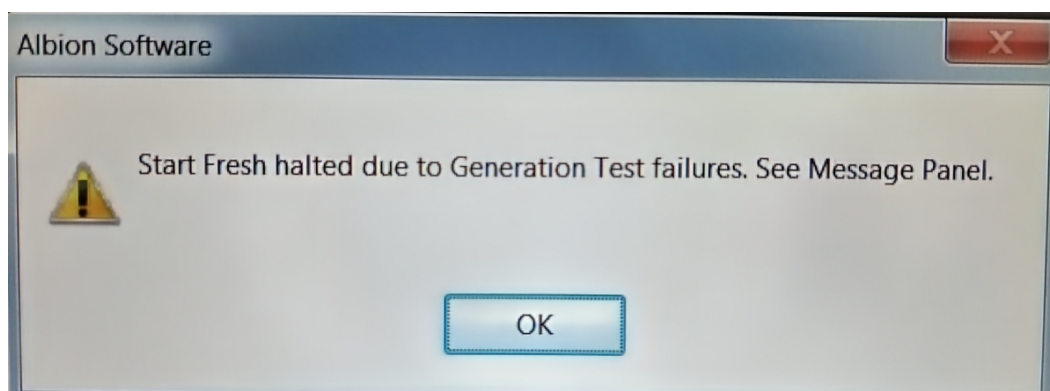
Pressing the "Industries" button displays the following report:

Florence & Cripple Creek / Golden Circle Railroad			1/27/2023
6/05/1913			11:56 AM
Industries Shipping or Receiving Product: coal			
Industry	Town	Type	
Florence Staging	Florence	Shipper	
Elkton Mine	Cripple Creek/Victor	Consignee	
Golden Cycle Mill	Bull Hill	Consignee	
Independence Yard	Independence	Consignee	
Ajax Mine	Cripple Creek/Victor	Consignee	
Theresa Mine	Bull Hill	Consignee	
Golden Cycle Mine	Bull Hill	Consignee	

- Start Fresh Diagnostics

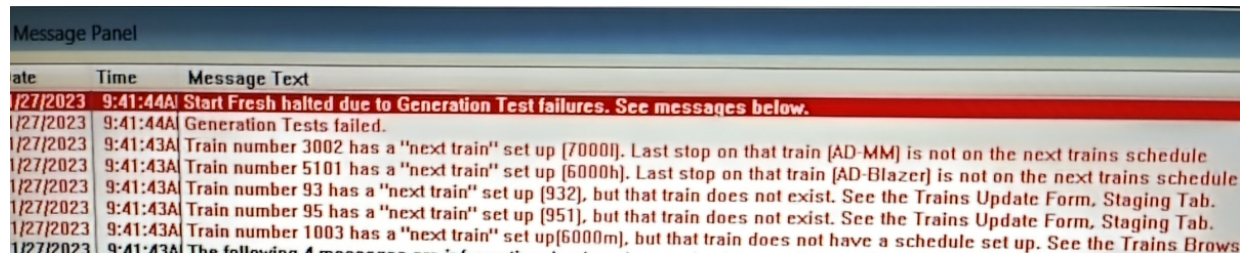
While working on this upgrade, I realized that some bugs that had been reported to me were actually data issues, so I decided to implement some diagnostics tests into Start Fresh for discovery purposes.

There are two type of warnings that can appear. Here's the first one:

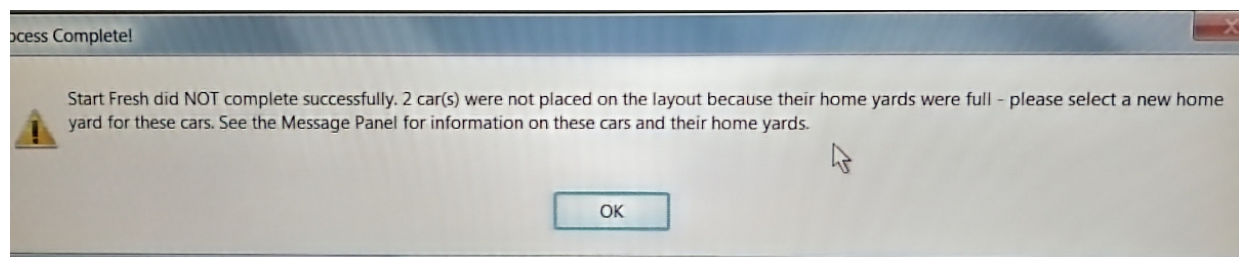


The message panel displays the data issue(s). This diagnostic test is all about hidden staging. It will warn you if the "Next Train" you've specified in staging either does not exist or has an empty schedule (no stops listed). It will also warn you if the last stop (where the current train converts to

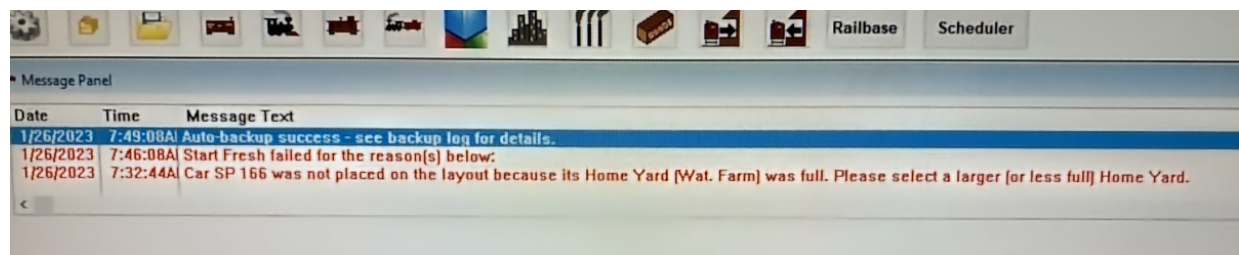
the next train) do not exist on the next train's schedule. Both of these issues can easily remain hidden and cause issues that look like bugs in the program.



The second Start Fresh Diagnostic deals with home yards. When Start Fresh occurs, it attempts to place cars based on the Shippers and Consignees of the Industries. It tries to keep the industry capacity about half full. Any cars left over from this process will be placed into their home yards. If the home yards are already at their capacity, the cars will be skipped over and not placed on the layout. This diagnostic warns you if this condition occurs.



In the message panel, the home yard that was full is listed as well as the car that was skipped over



- Home Yard Report

One of the Beta testers suggested I create the report below, based on his experience of going through all of his cars and listing where their home yards were and how the capacity compared to the number of cars "home yarded" there.

Florence & Cripple Creek / Golden Circle Railroad		1/27/2023
6/05/1913		12:03 PM
Home Yard Report		
Home Yard (Industry)	Cars HomeYarded There	Industry Capacity
Goldfield Yard	21	21
Florence Yard	26	23

- Session Generation Diagnostics

I decided to add the staging diagnostics (see Start Fresh Diagnostics above) to session generation, to help weed the issues out so users would not have to initiate a Start Fresh to find the staging issues.

Here's a short list of the Version 10 features described in the last newsletter:

For those of you who are new to the newsletter (or somehow missed the first one), email me, and I'll resend the December newsletter to you. I'm planning to index all of the newsletters on my website, but haven't gotten around to it yet.

- Sort options for car starting and car ending location reports
- Town/Train Departure Report
- Simplified Car Status Report
- Ability to set prefills for Train Type and Home Yard Columns.
- Exit program without running a backup.



A Tale of Buildings and Boxes

A few months ago I unearthed an old building that was still packed in the box from our move here to the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex in 2017. I saw no use for it on my layout and was tempted to give it to an old friend. One day I moved it onto the layout benchwork just to get it out of the way. At some point I looked over and saw the back of it juxtaposed against some of my rock scenery, and it dawned on me that from the back side it looked like some of the mines from the Cripple Creek area



Yep, you're right, those window openings are blanks - it was the backside and on the old layout (circa 1995), you couldn't see it. But it's going to make a great mine! The front side is another story.



This is the old E.L. Moore Fertilizer Factory, scratchbuilt from an old E.L. Moore article from a 1960's MR magazine. I'm going to have to chop off that front overhang though and rebuild the bottom half.

Inspired by that, and really wanting to spruce things up a bit for the layout tour, I dug into a few more boxes.

Below is another scratchbuilt model from that same time period in MR. I think the plans were drawn up by Harold Russell (I hope I've got his name right).



Below is an old Campbell kit - I think I built this sometime in the late 80's. I must have glued the figures and boxes, etc. on pretty well because this has been moved 3 times. Does anyone remember the name of this kit? If you do, shoot me an email.



Fortune Telling

There's two ways to get to a software release (well maybe there's more). One is to set a hard and fast date, and then when the things not done, you start to remove features so you can hit the due date. The other is to keep adding the things you want and work on them till you're done - but this can take forever - so then you gotta force yourself to stop adding in new things you think of and add them to the list for the next release. So it's a little bit of a guess - but my goal is to time the release with the arrival of the next newsletter - which put's that out 4 to 6 weeks. So February 25 to March 11 2023...as long as I don't add any more features in.

Albion Software | 2405 Aspen St, Richardson, TX 75082-3326 albionsoftware.com

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