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## Model of historic Syracuse train station debuts at the fair

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By **Marnie Eisenstadt, The Post-Standard**

The New York Central Station on Erie Boulevard used to have as many as 50 trains a day running past its platforms. But the trains stopped running long ago and it's now known for being the home of Time Warner Cable's news operation. At the New York State Fair, you can still find the train station as it was decades ago.

### **Old Erie Blvd. Train Station Model Up and Running at New York State Fair**

The Central New York Chapter of the National Railroad Society built a 99% accurate, semi-scale model of the old New York Central Station railroad on Erie Blvd., complete with running trains, on the second floor of the Art and Home Center at the 2012 New York State Fair.

The Model Railroad group of the Central New York Chapter of the New York Railway Society spent four years researching the lost details of the old building and reconstructing them.

The finished product — a scale model of the station complete with a switching room you can see into and miniature trains running on three tracks — is making its debut this year at the fair, said Phil Edwards, of the model railroad club. It's running all day, every day in the Harriet May Mills Art & Home Center.

The model is not one of those kid things that comes from a kit. It's accurate down to the smallest details — like the design etched into the building's stonework. Edwards said they had to make everything from scratch, starting with plywood and a rough idea of the details.

The greatest challenge, Edwards said, was that there were few pictures of station as it looked when it was used for the railroad. He and others in the club sifted through pictures from the Onondaga Historical Society and used them to make pieces for the building model.

The switching room on top of the station is thanks to a coincidental meeting — the model was out in Edwards' store, JR Junction Train and Hobby — when a customer noticed. He told Edwards he had taken pictures of the switching room decades ago and still had them.

The room was the most important in a train station back then — it's where the switchmen monitored what trains were on what tracks and prevented crashes.

The actual station was built in 1936 when the New York Central Railroad elevated its main passenger railroad line. The trains had been running on tracks on the streets of downtown for more than 100 years. But as the cities became

more congested, the railroad decided it was safer to elevate the trains.

The station operated there for 26 years. It was the city's hub — soldiers shipped off to World War II from there and the lucky ones had their homecomings there. It was converted to a bus station in 1964, then abandoned in 1998. In 2001, it became the home of Time Warner Cable's news operation.

"It's a [local](#) reminder of the great city that Syracuse was," Edwards said.

The model project isn't quite done. The club members are still [working](#) on models of the buildings that are north of the platform as well as a steam plant. Edwards said remnants of the platforms and the building are still there. He hopes someone restores them so there's more than a model to remind people of the great history there.

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