

ATHEARN CABOOSE

Reviewed by Bob Walz

ATHEARN CABOOSE REVIEW OF ATHEARN'S SANTA FE STYLE CABOOSE

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Athearn "ready to roll" Santa Fe style way car with added steel battery box, marker lights, and radio ground plane and antenna

Athearn introduced its Santa Fe style caboose (way car in Santa Fe parlance) as a "shake the box" kit. Later it produced a ready to run version as part of its "Ready to Roll" series. Neither version is in the Athearn catalog today. The prototype for the model was Santa Fe's round roof way car with Ajax brakes in the 1750 and 1875 classes. It is similar to the earlier 1500 class of round roof steel way cars, except for the brake stand and wooden tool boxes. Many of the 1500 class were later upgraded to include Ajax brake stands and

steel tool boxes. While detailing was "state of the art" at the time, it has been surpassed by later, more highly detailed models. The underbody especially was bare bones.

However, the look and feel of the Athearn model is correct except for one major error. The prototype had tool boxes on both sides of the car and Athearn provided a tool box on only one side. This is easily remedied by getting two models, cutting the tool box off one, and placing it in the correct place on the other. This will give you a good basic model that you can detail to the level you want. You can still find either the Blue Box kit or the Ready to Roll version on the web and at swap meets at a very reasonable price and detailing it can be a very enjoyable experience.

The photo shows my Athearn Ready to Roll Santa Fe way car from the 1500 class with upgraded Ajax brake stands and steel tool boxes in a 1960s era paint scheme. I have added a second battery box on the side shown. I have also added 60s-era appropriate details: a pair of Cal-scale marker lights, a Details West ground plane antenna stand, a Details Associates can antenna and a cut down diesel grill to simulate the vent over the battery box.

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