

New Valance Material Used by Eastern Loggers

by John Burchnall

At the February 2013 Cincinnati Division 7 meeting many enjoyed seeing the dramatic "shadow box" effect of the new lighting valance system on the Eastern Loggers layout. Several folks asked about that new black sheet material used to form that system. The material is 100% expanded or foamed Poly Vinyl Chloride (PVC) sheet, often used for commercial signs. It comes in various colors, thicknesses and sheet sizes (most 4' x 8', some 5' x 10'). There are several brands, including Sintra, Komatex and Kydex.

The trick is to find a local dealer that has the exact color, size and thickness in stock, as each dealer carries a different subset of all the varieties. The Eastern Loggers needed black in 5' x 10' panels (since our layout sections are 5' wide) and found only one local dealer stocking that, conveniently in 3 mm (about 1/8") thickness. For those interested in buying this material, please contact Tim Edmons at Sabic Polymershapes at 513-936-9666. They are located just south of West Chester, near the north end of Mosteller Road, at 12074 Best Place, Sharonville, OH 45241.

The Eastern Logger sheets were about \$50 each and Sabic slit them in half lengthwise for free. Most standard ceiling height rooms likely could use them slit in thirds lengthwise, netting 30' of 16" high valance material for about \$50. We hung the sheets within a dado groove in a 2" x 2" wood "beam". Joints were fabricated with overlapping sheets glued on the backside. Corners were similarly constructed, except also using white vinyl 5/8" square "door stop" molding from Home Depot or Lowes. We used PVC pipe liquid glue. We also placed removable metal bars on the backside across the bottom of all joints and corners to enforce straight lines.

Cutting is best done with multiple passes of a sharp utility knife and a metal straightedge. Keep cutting until all the way through - do not score and snap as with styrene. We hung the valance at the perimeter of our 10' x 20' layout, plus added an interior grid of 3 panels to prevent seeing lights on the other side of the layout. Cleaning is easy with a rag and standard window cleaner. We've never before seen this material used for model railroads. It should also make nice profile/fascia boards (it bends easily), and perhaps even cookie cutter style roadbed. Curved cuts can be done with a saber or jig saw using a knife blade. We may do a clinic on this in the future.