N GATX TankTrain
GATX Early Lettering

ATH15020  N TankTrain Intermediate, GATX/Now/Early #48625

ATH15016  N TankTrain A/B Ends & Intermediate Car Set, GATX/Org/Early (3)
ATH15017  N TankTrain Intermediate, GATX/Now/Early #1 (3)
ATH15018  N TankTrain Intermediate, GATX/Now/Early #2 (3)
ATH15019  N TankTrain Intermediate, GATX/Now/Early #3 (3)

Era: 1977+
In service in Canada & California on the TankTrain. These cars could also be seen being tested on the Alaska Railroad for a period of time.

ATH15021  N TankTrain A/B Ends & Intermediate Car Set, GATX/Now/Late (3)
ATH15022  N TankTrain Intermediate, GATX/Now/Late #1 (3)
ATH15023  N TankTrain Intermediate, GATX/Now/Late #2 (3)
ATH15024  N TankTrain Intermediate, GATX/Now/Late #3 (3)

GATX Late Lettering

ATH15025  N TankTrain Intermediate, GATX/Now/Late #28287

ATH15020

Era: 2005-2019
In service on the Union Pacific Coast Division between Wunpost and Dolores.

$30.98 Individual SRP  $89.98 3-Pack SRP

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While tank cars are prolific, most railroads do not own large fleets of these relatively specialized cars, preferring to make use of fleets managed by freight car companies, such as GATX. One of the larger equipment management companies, GATX, can trace its history to the turn of the century, and is best known for its large fleet of tank cars of varying designs, many of which were built in-house. One of the more distinctive designs to originate from GATX is the “TankTrain”, which made its debut in the 1970s. The TankTrain concept was a solution to the problem of long load/unload times for unit train shipments of particular commodities, such as crude oil. A typical unit train can take significant time to load or unload, with the need for workers to attach the necessary hoses and other fittings to each individual car, coupled with the necessary time to load or unload the commodity from each car. The TankTrain was designed to significantly reduce this time. TankTrain cars are interconnected with a large-diameter, flexible hose between each car, which allows the commodity to be siphoned off at a single point at the end of a set of cars while being “pushed” at the opposite end with inert nitrogen gas. Using this method, TankTrain cars can be loaded or unloaded at a rate of approximately 3,000 gallons per minute, allowing a train of 90 cars to be loaded or unloaded in under five hours. This has the obvious benefit of increased equipment utilization, as well as reduced labor costs, and shorter dwell times at terminals. Additionally, TankTrain cars were built in various sizes and designs to handle various commodities resulting in a wide variety of TankTrain cars roaming the nation’s rails.

TankTrain cars are typically grouped into interconnected sets ranging from two to thirteen cars, the set size varying upon the car types, commodity, and shipper being served. One of the commodities routinely handled by TankTrain cars is crude oil, whose viscous nature, and tendency to thicken inside the car, which would slow down the unloading process.

These all-new Athearn N-scale models represent 23K-capacity GATX TankTrain cars from the 486-number series (built in 1977), and 282-series (built in 1982). Based upon GATX diagrams, as well as photos and field measurements taken from prototype TankTrain cars at GATX’s West Colton repair facility, these new N-scale models faithfully replicate the prototype differences between the two different series’, including variations on the tank saddles, walkways, manways, brake rigging, and transfer piping. While these cars are most closely associated with Southern Pacific, TankTrain sets comprised of these cars have been, and can be seen in operation across the country. Grand Trunk Western, for example, operated TankTrain cars from the 486-series in the Great Lakes region, hauling fuel oil, in the late 1970s. And despite construction of a pipeline that eliminated the need for Southern Pacific’s original routing of TankTrain equipment, a new TankTrain, operated by Southern Pacific successor Union Pacific along the former SP “Coast Line”, operated until 2019 with many of the same cars, from a loading facility in San Ardo, California, to a refinery in Carson, California.