

Chugging along

All aboard Northern Ontario's largest model railroad

Capreol museum displaying model until Sept. 3

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New media reporter

A new model railroad has been unveiled at the Northern Ontario Railroad Museum and Heritage Centre in Capreol.

But this isn't your average hobbyist set-up.

This model, claimed to be the largest in Northern Ontario by museum staff, takes up 1,000 square feet with 600 feet of track, cost nearly \$50,000 and took two years to complete.

Its landscape is as diverse as it is vast. From a quaint rural downtown, the model spreads outwards into farm country, rolling hills, and rocky cliffs.

The attention to detail is staggering — no area of the landscape is unfinished. If you look closely, you can even spot tiny little people sitting around even tinier little campfires in the hills.

This isn't the kind of model train set you



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The Northern Ontario Railroad Museum in Capreol claims its new model railroad is the largest in the region. It takes up one thousand square feet with 600 feet of track, cost nearly \$50,000, and took two years to complete.

might find at Toys R Us, either: One little scene in the model's commercial district — a few construction workers, some tiny orange pylons,

and a utility truck — cost around \$55, according to Jacqueline Melanson.

She and her husband, Albert, were the

principal “architects” of the model, spending countless hours over two years — along with a dedicated team of volunteers — sculpting every inch of the terrain.

“We have three rooms of trains in our home,” says Melanson. “This is what you do when you retire.”

The Melansons had a general plan for the design of the model, but they found themselves having to improvise many times along the way.

In one corner of the model, Jacqueline points to a steep cliff that takes up roughly two square feet. A road zig-zags up its incline where a mine shaft is perched up top.

“Here, we decided to build a canyon,” she said.

“And then, we added the cliffs with a road. But then, we had to figure out, well, where does this road go? So, we added a mine. And then from there, we had to build the whole rest of the scene.”

The new model railway is on display daily from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. until Sept. 3. For more information, visit normhc.ca.

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