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Digitrax Zephyr Xtra

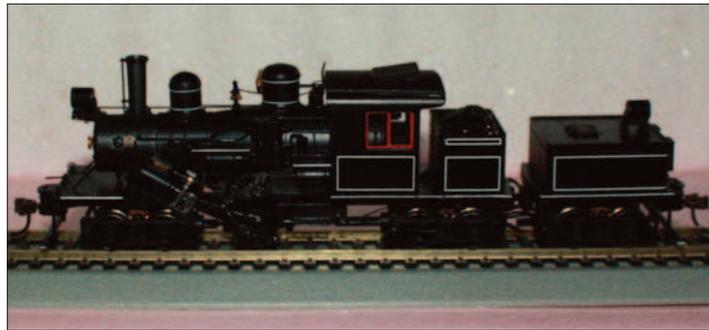
Total digital train control with an easy-to-program system

The Digitrax Zephyr has been a popular choice of railroad modelers for a number of years. In 2002 the Zephyr won the Model Railroader's Readers Choice Award for the most innovative new product. As time and digital technology progressed Digitrax realized it could expand the features of the Zephyr without compromising the final cost to the customer. As a result, it has recently released the Zephyr Xtra.

The Zephyr Xtra has an all-in-one command controller. It uses a numeric keypad for entering locomotive and turnout addresses and functions. Locomotive speed is controlled by a large rotating knob, and a toggle switch is used to change locomotive direction and brake functions. The large LED display is well lit and easy to read.

Also included is a universal power supply with adapters available for use in any country, a decoder test kit and a handy, easy to follow, quick start guide. Two spiral bound manuals—a 65-page command control manual and a 70-page decoder programming and troubleshooting manual—complete the package. Both are well written, easy to understand and cover just about every imaginable topic or question an end user might have. Plus, the spiral-bound instruction manual lays flat when open, allowing easy reference without having to fumble through constantly shifting pages.

A Bachmann DCC Spectrum Series HO 70 ton Climax locomotive, #82902, was used for test purposes.



A Bachmann Spectrum Series HO 70-ton Climax locomotive in HO was used for testing. Programming a DCC address with the Zephyr Xtra is easy and quickly becomes intuitive.



To simplify the initial running of the locomotive, the decoder address was left as it was set by Bachmann at the factory. I don't know that the programming could be any simpler. The loco key was pressed on the controller, the locomotive decoder address (03) was entered by using the numeric keys and the loco key was pressed again. The Climax was now linked to the Zephyr and ready for a test spin.

The Climax was a good choice as a test subject. The full-scale locomotive was not built for speed, but was geared down for traction, and was used to haul heavy loads in the lumber and in some cases, mineral mining industry. Turning the speed control started the loco in a very realistic manner. The mechanics began to rotate wildly while the unit just crept along on the rails, all in a very prototypical fashion.

The Zephyr Xtra has a host of functions beyond basic locomotive operation. There are over 9,000 loco addresses available so that up to 20 locos can be operated at a time. Another 999 stationary addresses are available for turnout control. In addition, 29 different functions, items such as directional lighting, can all be programmed into each locomotive address. Advertised as a starter set, the Zephyr is anything but basic. With so many advanced programming features available, it allows a user to grow his knowledge of DCC without having to constantly upgrade his control system. **HM**

Features

- Full numeric keypad for loco selection and function control.
- Large, easy-to-LED display.
- Smooth speed control with 128 speed steps.
- Simultaneously run up to 20 loco addresses and throttles.
- Expandable through the use of Digitrax LocoNet.

