

EMPIRE BUILDER

A North American Freight Charter · Rulebook

EMPIRE BUILDER

NORTH AMERICAN FREIGHT CHARTER

9

Open

Continental Rwy.

\$51M

\$20M

9/9

3/6 · \$250M

SEASON

SEASON

AT THE THROTTLE

TREASURY

LEFT TO SPEND

MILEPOSTS LEFT

CHARTER

LAY TRACK

RUN TRAIN

OPERATIONS

LEGEND

+

-

FIT

TRAIN

RULES

FULL

BUY FLYER · \$20M

BUY HAULER · \$20M

TAKE UP LAST LENGTH

NEW CONTRACTS

CLOSE THE SEASON

LAYING TRACK — CLICK A LIT MILEPOST TO BUILD TO IT

ORDER BOOK

TOBACCO → NEW ORLEANS

PLAN

19

CITRUS → SPOKANE

PLAN

24

STEEL → CULIACAN

PLAN

21

POTATOES → LOUISVILLE

PLAN

44

AUTOS → OKLAHOMA CITY

PLAN

22

ELECTRONICS → CHARLOTTE

PLAN

15

POTATOES → RAPID CITY

PLAN

23

COAL → SUDBURY

PLAN

19

CHEMICALS → VANCOUVER

PLAN

54

CONSIST

STEEL

POTATOES

DROVER · 9 MILEPOSTS · 2 CARS

RAILROADS

Railroad	Value	Maj	Track	Access
CORDILLERA PACIFIC EXPANSIONIST	\$119M	4/6	60	+\$0M
CONTINENTAL Rwy. PLAYER CONTROLLED	\$114M	3/6	48	+\$0M
GULF & NORTHERN FREIGHT OPTIMIZER	\$111M	2/6	55	+\$0M

DISPATCH LOG

6 · Continental Rwy. loads Potatoes at Boise.

7 · Gulf & Northern loads Electronics at Dallas.

7 · Cordillera Pacific delivers Hogs to Boston for \$36M.

6 · Gulf & Northern delivers Paper to Torreon for \$37M.

6 · Continental Rwy. delivers Tobacco to Regina for \$37M.

5 · Cordillera Pacific loads Hogs at Des Moines.

4 · Gulf & Northern loads Paper at Mobile.

4 · Continental Rwy. loads Tobacco at Louisville.

The charter map. Every coastline, lake, river and boundary is real, and every one of the 102 cities sits at its true longitude and latitude. Red rosettes are the 7 major terminals.

Charter a railroad, lay line across the continent, and haul freight from the regions that raise it to the cities that want it. The charter is discharged, and the game won, by the first railroad to bring 6 of the 7 major terminals onto one connected system and hold \$250M in the treasury at the close of a season.

Major terminals: Vancouver, Chicago, New York, Denver, Los Angeles, Houston, Mexico City.

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The season

Each railroad is chartered with \$60M, and roads chartered later are subscribed a little richer — \$3M for each seat after the first. The first 2 seasons are charter seasons: survey and lay line only, up to \$20M each, because no train is yet in service.

After that a season is one turn, not two. You may run your train and lay grade in whichever order suits you, switching with the Lay Track and Run Train buttons — or the b and r keys — as often as you like. Nothing forces you to build before you run. Close the season when you are done, and the books are closed at the end of a full round, so every road takes the same number of turns.

Construction is capped at \$20M a season. A locomotive costs \$20M and spends the whole of that season's construction. Take up last length undoes the most recent milepost at full refund, as often as you like within the season.

A railroad whose treasury falls below \$8M is topped up to it by the mail contract. That grant is operating money: it is deducted from what you may spend on construction, so the floor cannot quietly finance a railroad.

What line costs

Ground	Per milepost	Ground	Per milepost
Plain	\$1M	Swamp	\$2M
Desert	\$1M	Mountain	\$2M
Forest	\$2M	Alpine	\$5M
Hills	\$2M	River crossing	+\$2M
		River crossing	+\$2M

Reaching a town costs \$2M, a city \$3M, a major terminal \$5M. Only 3 railroads may reach any one town or city; the major terminals are open to all comers. Your first length of line may start at any city; every length after that must join the system you already own.

Running over another road

You may run over track you do not own. It costs \$4M, paid once per season to each owner whose line you use, and it is recorded on both books: as access expense against you and as access income for the owner. A well-placed bottleneck earns its builder a rent.

Freight

You hold 3 contracts at a time, each carrying three demands: a commodity, the city that wants it, and what it pays. Click any demand to swing the map to that city and to ring every city that raises the commodity, with the milepost distance from your train. Load at a source, set down at the destination, and the payment lands at once.

The catalogue holds 2,573 deliverable commodity-and-city pairs, so what your railroad can earn is decided by where it reaches. A road that touches only the plains hauls grain; a road into the Sierra Madre and the Gulf hauls silver, coffee and oil.

Locomotives

Locomotive	Movement	Cars	Cost
Drover	9 mileposts	2	\$20M
Flyer	12 mileposts	2	\$20M
Hauler	9 mileposts	3	\$20M
Superhauler	12 mileposts	3	\$20M

You begin with the Drover. Buying power is a real decision, not an obvious one: it spends a whole season's construction, and a road that upgrades before it has traffic to carry has bought speed it cannot use.

Rivals

One to five computer railroads may be chartered alongside you, at three standards of opposition. A cadet misjudges what a run is worth and keeps its first locomotive too long; an ace prices every run exactly and re-equips as soon as the traffic pays for it.

Each computer road also follows a corporate operating style — Balanced Network, Freight Optimizer, Expansionist, Terminal Hunter or Conservative Carrier — which weights how it values freight against construction, major terminals and the use of other roads' track. The Railroads table ranks every company by operating value; click a name for its company card.

The operating desk

Everything below is advisory. None of it moves your train, lays your track or spends your money — the tools read the position and tell you what they think, and you decide.

Freight Advisor

Plan beside any demand works out the best producing city for that commodity, the construction needed to reach it, the freight path, the payment, the build cost, the projected net and the movement required, and draws the whole thing on the map.

Turn Strategy Advisor

Reads the whole order book, ranks the freight opportunities, and recommends what to do with the season: which contract to work, how much line to lay, and whether to buy power. It shows the route it has in mind and names the alternatives it rejected.

Trip Planner

Evaluates two- and three-contract circuits, combining the construction they share, respecting the locomotive's capacity, and reporting total revenue, net, distance and seasons against the best single contract. Numbered stops show the pickup and delivery order.

Network Expansion Planner

Ranks long-term corridors rather than this season's run: construction cost, how many present contracts the corridor improves, how many future catalogue routes it unlocks, average route and build savings, major-terminal value, and how the cost sits against the season's construction budget. A corridor costing more than \$20M is reported as the multi-season commitment it is.

Railroad Operations Center

One dashboard over the lot: locomotive, location, treasury, cargo, movement, construction budget, owned track, cities reached, major terminals, deliveries and freight income, with operating notices and a Next Best Action. Below them sit Path to Victory — your major terminals and treasury measured against the 6 and \$250M the charter requires — and the competitive intelligence: every rival ranked by operating value with a threat assessment drawn from terminals held, network size, company value and the trackage rights flowing between you.

At the table

Action	How
Pan the map	Drag it, or the arrow keys
Zoom	Mouse wheel, or + and -
Fit the whole map	The Fit button, or f
Fullscreen	The Full button, or Shift+F
Find your train	The Train button

Switch what a click does	Lay Track / Run Train, or b and r
Legend	The Legend button, or l
Standing orders	The Rules button, or ?
Close a dialogue	Escape