

The Pie Card

Volume 60, June 2026, Number 6

Division 8, Mid Central Region, National Model Railroad Association

NMRA

Division 8

MID CENTRAL
REGION



FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK

By Darcy Elliott

It's hard to believe that four years have passed since Ron Ellison "assumed command" of our merry band of misfits known as Division 8. In that time, he has guided us through membership growth, the launch of a second 100% NMRA club, and record-setting attendance at both of our annual train shows. His steady hand and no-nonsense leadership have kept Division 8 firmly on course. Ron — thank you for your service, your time, and your commitment to this Division.

Division 8 has always been fortunate to have people of vision step up when needed. Ron is one of many who have done so. Past Superintendents Fred Soward, Russ Weis, Mark Norman, and Bob Johnson are just a few of the other leaders who poured their energy into making our corner of the NMRA a place people want to belong. To all of them — and to every volunteer who has ever moved a table, staffed a booth, or shared their passion — thank you. You built the foundation we stand on today.

As a reminder of why we do what we do, our mission remains clear: "To promote the hobby of model railroading through public education, to promote fellowship among members, to develop technical skills, to educate modelers in building and operating model railroad equipment and prototype practices, and to advance the hobby through publications, meetings, events, and all necessary means."

Over the years, through train shows, Roundhouse work sessions, and club events, I've had the chance to get to know many of you. For those I haven't met yet, I'm looking forward to changing that over the next two years.

We'll have several opportunities coming up. Our monthly membership meetings at the Jeffersontown Public Library are a great place to reconnect — and if you haven't been in a while, consider this your invitation. We also have our Member Picnic on Saturday, July 18th at the Depot Museum in Salem. Advance tickets are just \$10 and can be purchased through the link in this issue. Please grab yours by Sunday, July 12th.

I'd like to leave you with a quote from one of my all-time favorite TV shows, one that comes to mind often:

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful and committed citizens can change the world. It's the only thing that ever has." — The West Wing

I believe that Division 8 is that small group of thoughtful and committed citizens.

Looking forward to the future,

Darcy

TIME TABLE

Jun 4-7, Mid Central Region Convention, Dayton, OH.

Jun 20, Sat 2PM, Div 8 Hybrid meeting, Jeffersontown Library and Zoom.

July 18, Sat, Div 8 Picnic, 11:30AM Meet & Greet, 12:00 Lunch, Salem, IN, Depot Museum.

July 23-25, National NMRA Convention, Chattanooga, TN.

Aug 15, Sat 2PM, Div 8 Hybrid meeting, Jeffersontown Library and Zoom.

Sep 1-5, Narrow Gauge Convention, Minneapolis, MN.

Sep 19, Sat 2PM, Div 8 Hybrid meeting, Jeffersontown Library and Zoom.

For the complete Time Table, find it online here - [Division 8 Timetable](#)

JUNE 2026 CHARLIE KEELING HYBRID MODEL CONTEST*By Barry Christensen, Contest Chairman*

June	Open loads
July	NO CONTEST
August	MOW equipment
September	Photos (model) and photos (prototype)
October	Steam locomotives
November	Displays (no size limit)
December	Highway vehicles
January	Freight cars
February	Non-steam motive power
March	Structures
April	Passenger cars
May	Cabooses

For May, Division 8's Charlie Keeling Hybrid Model Contest category was cabooses. There were seven entries, modeling unique and notable prototype cabooses.

Honorable mention goes to Bob Frankrone for "Abandoned and Forgotten," to Craig Hatter for "L&N Northeastern Caboose #998," to David Mertz for "Illinois Central Caboose," and to Eric Waggoner for "SCL Family Lines Steel Caboose."

Third place goes to Bob Kuchler MMR[®] for "Northern Pacific Shorty Caboose." Second place goes to Ed Brennan MMR[®] for "Hey David, Bring Your Camera!" First place goes to Steve Lasher for "Bringing Up the Markers." Kudos to our modelers for their creative caboose modeling.

The revised point totals are now: Ed Brennan MMR[®] with 28, Bob Frankrone and Steve Lasher with 21 each, Craig Hatter with 14, Randy Griggs with 11, Russ Weis with 9, Rudy Licandro with 6, Al Goodman, Scott Griggs, John Helton, and Bob Kuchler MMR[®] with 5 each, David Mertz with 4, John Gillespie, Fred Soward MMR[®], and Eric Waggoner with 3 each, Chris Broughton MMR[®] with 2, and Sean Britt, Ethan Davis, and Duke Green with 1 each.

The June Contest is OPEN LOADS

We will send out a reminder but below are some of the Contest timeline dates for June:

- June 6th - First day to submit entries
- June 13th - Last day to submit entries
- June 18th - Members will receive the Contest Ballot
- June 18th & 19th - Voting in the Contest Ballot ends @ 10:00 PM on the 19th
- June 20th - Winners announced at the meeting - 1st, 2nd and 3rd
- August 1st - First day to submit August contest entries **MOW EQUIPMENT** (continued to column 2)

**JUNE MEETING INFORMATION**

The June Division 8 meeting is 2 PM Saturday, June 20, 2026, at the Jeffersontown Library, 10635 Watterson Trail, Louisville, KY 40299. Russ Weis is presenting: "Buffalo Engine Facility and Operations." To maintain the security of the meeting, the Zoom connection information will be sent directly to members by email about a week prior to the meeting and will not be published online.

CONTEST (continued from column 1)

For complete Contest information, visit the Division 8 website here <https://div8-mcr-nmra.org/2463-2/>

To enter the June Contest, click <https://forms.gle/BRbXBcXChiRihBhL8> and follow the simple instructions in the form. Entering the Contest has never been easier.

See contest photos beginning on page 3.

MEMBER WELFARE

By Mike Berry Member Welfare Chairman

This past month David Burris was hospitalized and is home recovering well. David was sent a get-well card and gift card. Also, we found out that member Robert Hoffman passed away in March. Please, if you hear of any member or their family with health issues, be sure to let us know. The Member Welfare Fund stands at \$140.

**IN MEMORIAM ROBERT HOFFMAN**

Robert Hoffman passed way unexpectedly in March. Above: Robert (center) with his dad talking to Russ Weis in 2024. Robert and his dad were attending a layout open house hosted by Russ after the October 2024 Division 8 meeting.



FIRST PLACE

Left: Steve Lasher's HO scale "Bringing Up the Markers on the Blue Streak Merchandise - The Pride of the Cotton Belt:"

Steve, started with a Walthers car lettered for Rock Island. He carefully removed the lettering and decaled it for Cotton Belt. Cal-Scale Adlake markers were added. He finished by weathering it and adding a trainman.

SECOND PLACE

Ed Breenan's HO scale L & N Caboose, "Hey David, Bring Your Camera!"

Right: Ed assembled a "Big Woody" kit from the L&N Historical Society. He modeled the caboose to look like it had recently emerged from the shop.

He painted the model with Floquil primer. After it dried, he painted it with Floquil Caboose Red and Floquil signal yellow on the steps and details. Decals were in the kit. Finally, window screens were installed and secured per the prototype.



(continued to next page)

MAY CHARLIE KEELING MODEL CONTEST (continued from previous page)

THIRD PLACE



Left: Bob Kuchler's N Scale "Northern Pacific Shorty Caboose."

This was a standard length Rio Grande caboose. Bob removed the paint and cut a section out to shorten it. He redid the roof walks to place the ladders on the correct side of the car. He painted it boxcar brown, decaled it for Northern Pacific, and replaced the ladders and end railings to match the prototype. The trucks were replaced with archbar trucks to represent an older car. He added Cristal Clear for windows and lightly weathered it with pan pastels.

HONORABLE MENTION (four)



Left:
Bob Frankrone's HO scale "Abandoned and Forgotten."

Bob built his model from a kit. He used a combination of acrylics, oils, weathering powders, and graffiti decals to create this severely weathered caboose.

Right:
David Mertz's HO "Illinois Central Caboose"

David assembled an Athearn Blue Box Illinois Central Wide Vision caboose kit.

He replaced the Delrin wheels with Intermountain metal wheelsets, and the couplers with Kadee #148 whisker couplers.

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APRIL CHARLIE KEELING MODEL CONTEST-HONORABLE MENTION (continued from previous page)



Left:
Craig Hatter’s HO scale “L&N Northeastern Caboose #998.”

The model is a Proto2000 Northeastern caboose that Craig purchased at a train show, probably for \$5 or less. He stripped the paint with 90% alcohol, used Scalecoat II NYC gray for the body, and Scalecoat II Reefer yellow for the steps and grabs. Microscale set MC-4105 were used to letter as shown in the photos. Minimal weathering was applied.

Right:
Eric Waggoner’s HO “SCL Family Lines Steel Caboose”

This is an Overland Models SCL Family Lines steel caboose (1132) that was listed as custom painted.



MAY MEETING PHOTOS

Photos by Bob Dawson



Left: Darcy Elliott conducting his first meeting as Superintendent.



Right: Craig Hatter presenting “Vehicles Who needs them?”

OPERATING SESSIONS

Photos by Fred Soward MMR® unless indicated otherwise

Two local layouts hosted operating sessions in May.

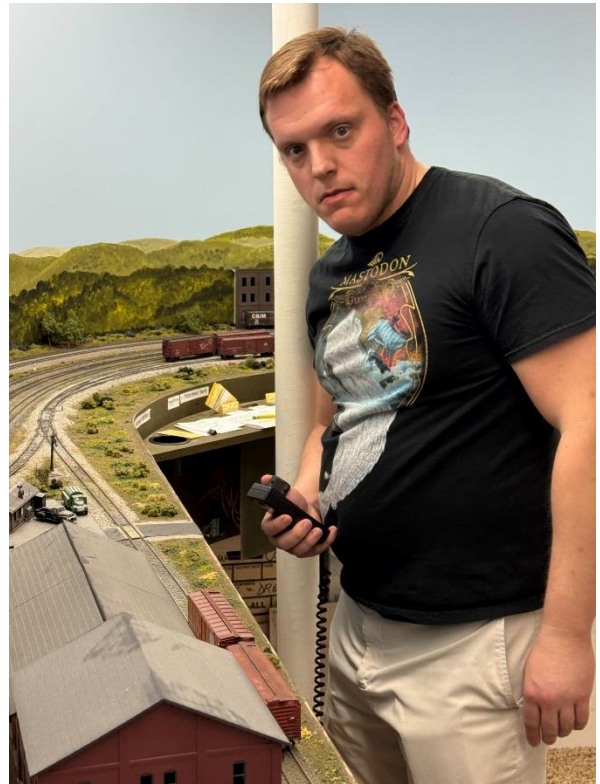


Left: Rick Maloney's Midwest Central Railroad. From left to right: Patrick Hardesty, Fred Soward, Eric Waggoner, Rick Maloney (host), and Bob Kuchler.

Photo by Bob Dawson

Right: Jackson Thomas keeping a close eye on his train as he switches industries on the edge of Albany yard on Russ Weis's New York Central.

Photo by Fred Soward



Above: Barbara Soward and Jim Mayer worked the Buffalo Engine Facility turn late in the session. Russ Weis will tell us all about the facility in his June 2026 presentation during the Division 8 meeting. As part of Russ' talk, maybe Barbara & Jim can share their thoughts with us about how it was to work that turn.

Right: Russ Weis decided to add an extra to the lineup late in the evening, so he had a little bit of extra paperwork to do before assigning a crew to the train.



MAY MEETING REPORT

By Rick Maloney MMR® Division 8 Clerk

The Division 8 Membership meeting was held at the Jeffersontown Library on May 16, 2026. It was a hybrid meeting with 21 members in person and 11 on Zoom. Assistant Superintendent Fred Soward acting for Superintendent Ron Ellison called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM. He then turned the meeting over to incoming Superintendent Darcy Elliot. Darcy announced that the Division had two new members, Tom Ritenour and David McRae. They were not present.

Stan White, acting for Member Welfare Chairman, Mike Berry, reported that Robert Hoffman had passed away. Our condolences to his family. A donation has been made to the California State Railroad museum in his name. He also reported that David Burris had been hospitalized and was now home recovering. He also gave the treasurer's report for Mike.

Be sure to check out the photos and results of the model contest as posted elsewhere in the Pie Card.

Fred Soward reminded us of the Division Picnic, Saturday, July 18, 2026 at the Depot Museum, Salem, IN. He also gave his third installment of his Back to Basics talk about stretching modeling dollars. After a break Craig Hatter gave his presentation on Vehicles, "Who Needs Them". The meeting adjourned at 3:10 PM.

FROM THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

By Fred Soward MMR®, Division 8 Assistant Superintendent

May was a crazee busy month! Barbara & I were in California early in the month, spending an afternoon with Jack Burgess and about twenty others visiting his HO scale Yosemite Valley Railroad (YVRR) and looking through his voluminous cache of YVRR prototype memorabilia. We followed that up with two more days driving and walking what remains of the route of the actual YVRR across the California Central Valley into the Sierras from Merced to El Portal. After four days on our own in Yosemite, we took a two-day detour to Santa Cruz on the way to the Pacific Coast Region Convention in Rohnert Park, CA. The PCR convention was awesome, and I was fortunate to be able to get a seat on Jim Providenza's HO scale Santa Cruz Northern, working the Mac Street Yard job.

If you didn't make it out to LaGrange for Rail Fest, you missed a great day! We visited with a lot of folx who enjoyed the layouts and the fellowship. And, we had a whole bunch of Junior Engineers running trains, too.

We're continuing our work getting Rick Maloney's layout ready to open up for regular operating sessions. The first few sessions have gone well, with only a few issues, so we're now working on expanding the operating scheme to the rest of the layout. For what we have in-hand, there's enough to keep folx busy for a few hours, but there's still more layout to add before we're finished setting up operations there. If you're interested in setting up operations on your layout, reach out to Bob Dawson and me to see what it might take to make it happen.

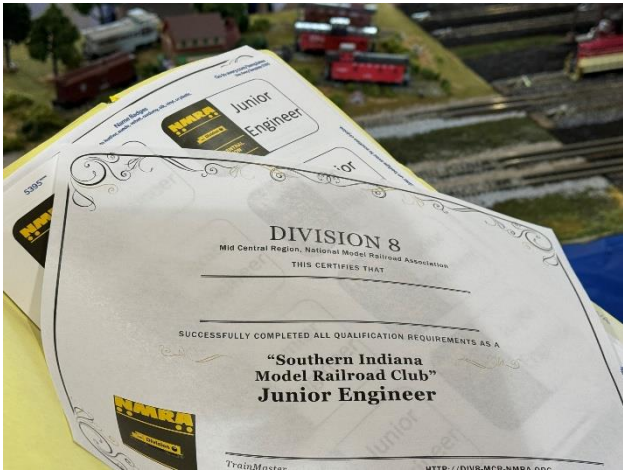
Early in May, shortly after Barbara & I returned from our California adventure, I decided we'd had way too many "no work on the layout" months so I enlisted Ron Ellison and Russ Weis to help install fascia in the areas from the west end of Watsonville Junction Yard up to Felton. Basically, all the places on the Santa Cruz and Felton where we've installed Blue Point turnout controllers. We'll get all the turnouts connected to throw rods soon, then we'll be ready to run some trains much further along the roadbed.

Finally, toward the end of the month, an operating session road trip to Dan Hinel's RailXpress layout with a small group of Division 8 folx. As I've said before, if you want to attend an operating session, YOU have to speak up. It's up to you to step up and tell me you want to be included. Door's open – step on through.

LAGRANGE RAILFEST 2026

By Fred Soward MMR®, Photos by Barbara Soward unless indicated otherwise

On May 9th the city of LaGrange, KY celebrated LaGrange Railfest 2026. The celebration included music, food, craft vendors, and other entertainment. Division 8 and local railroad clubs, modular layouts, and displays participated in the event. A Division 8 focus during the event was the “Junior Engineer” activity.



Left: Every youngster who ran a train during LaGrange Rail Fest 2026 received a "Junior Engineer" sticker (badge). They also received a "Junior Engineer" certificate with their name for every layout they operated a train.



Right: Mike Berry looks on as a “Junior Engineer” works out the switching moves on the Division 8 “Time Saver” switching module.

Photo by Bob Dawson



Left: Division 8 member Don Fowler supervising a Junior Engineer on the Division 8 scenery demo layout.

Right:
Darcy Elliott (left) and Duke Green (right) running the Southern Indiana modular layout.

Photo by Bob Dawson



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LAGRANGE RAILFEST 2026 (continued from previous page)



Left: A train running on KSONS Free Mo N Scale modular layout.
Photo by Bob Kuchler



Right: Louisville's Lionel Operating Club President Travis Moore coaching Junior Engineers on the layout.



Above: Gary Dean had a full house of Junior Engineers at the Crystal River Logging Company Railroad layout.



Above right: Conductor Fred (Soward) was on-hand all day at LaGrange Rail Fest, greeting and speaking with Junior Engineers and their families.

Right: This train ran up and down Main Street all through LaGrange Rail Fest. The line was never empty waiting to get on the train.



PACIFIC COAST REGION CONVENTION 2026

By Fred Soward MMR®, photos provided by the author

Barbara and I attended the 2026 Pacific Coast Region (PCR) Convention in Rohnert Park, California. I was there primarily to represent the NMRA National Board as the Central District Director. In that role, I presented the "What's Happening at National" talk, visited with PCR leaders and convention attendees, and participated in the convention. We saw a LOT of interesting layouts and I was able to participate in an operating session on Jim Providenza's HO scale Santa Cruz Northern layout. When it's all over, I also prepare a trip report for the NMRA Officers and Directors to review.



Left: As usual, one of the great things about attending conventions is reconnecting with old friends. You may remember previous photos of Paul Hobbs from Auckland, New Zealand, as he routinely pops up at the Amherst show in Springfield, MA, PCR Conventions, Pacific Northwest Region (PNR) Conventions, and our own Mid Central Region (MCR) Convention. He will of course join us this summer at the NMRA National Convention in Chattanooga, TN.

Right: Fred doing stand-up, presenting his "What's Happening at National" slide deck.



Left: The first layout visited was Ken Brody's "Westie Line" garden layout. In the photo, Barbara is near the upper level of the layout, nearly five feet above the lowest level on the 400 foot long mainline that winds through multiple detailed scenes, across bridges, and through several tunnels.

Right: An overview of part of Ken Brody's "Westie Line."



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Left and Below: Many of the layouts represent the local northern California area, as seen here on Ron Learn's HO scale "Northwestern Pacific" layout. Most of the detailed scenes reflect Ron's experiences in the area with photos providing details to model. Structures are mostly scratchbuilt or craftsman kits.



Left: Richard Schoentein's 3-rail O Gauge layout is in a 70' x 30' former Recreation Vehicle garage. The photo shows about half the layout. Scenery is in place on most of the layout. There's a lot of animation including a large amusement park and a baseball game. He's using MTH for layout control with a Lionel sound system.

Right: Dave Croshere's HO scale A B & Old C layout is in a real basement and occupies about 435 square feet. The basement area was originally nothing more than exposed hillside under the deck. When the deck was enclosed and pushed further out from the hillside, Dave dug back into the hillside to "expose" the basement where he built the layout. Every piece of track is handlaid and every turnout is custom built in place. For most of us that would be challenging, but for a former boat builder and yacht racer, it was therapeutic. Also unique to the layout is Dave's custom built vertical staging system on one end of the layout. The trackwork is about 95% complete and will likely not progress further as Dave and his wife are contemplating a move to a smaller piece of property in the very near future.



(continued on next page)



Left: Fred being focused as the Mac Street Yard Master on Jim Providenza's HO scale Santa Cruz Northern layout.

Right: After stopping in a parking lot to watch the Kentucky Derby on their iPhones, Fred & Barbara drove way out to the Russian River, where they found John Follansbee struggling with Jack Nullmeyer's HO scale Blue Lake Springs - Mountain Division layout. The layout had recently been purchased and moved into John's garage on his property, and he was having electrical issues. Fred figuratively rolled up his sleeves and helped work through the issues. A few minutes of troubleshooting and the trains were once again cruising across the layout.

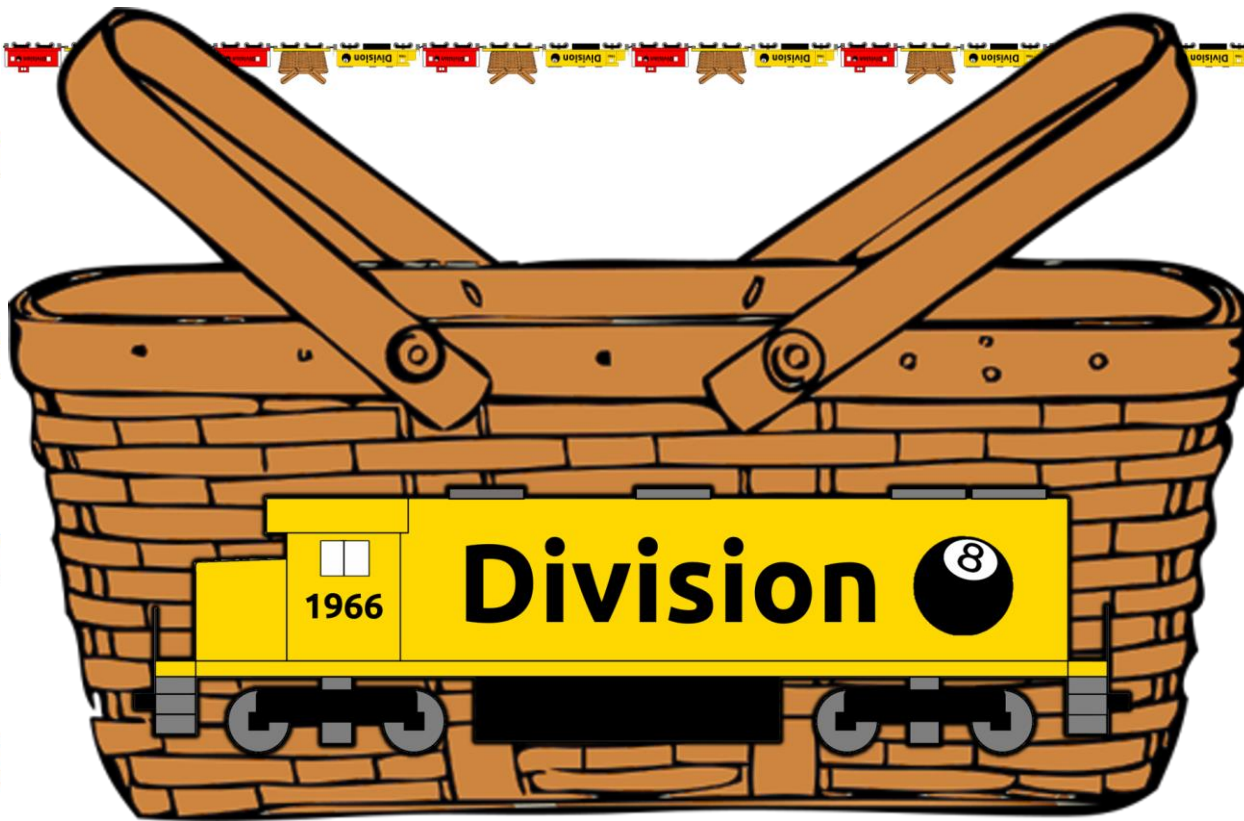


Right: Visiting Rich Mossholder was a twofer. In his basement (yes, really, another California basement!) are two model railroads - the HO_n3 scale Silvertongue Southern and the N scale Ileton Sub. Much of the HO_n3 layout is comprised of scenes from Malcom Furlow's Denver & Rio Chama layout. In the photo, Rich is showing Fred a scratchbuilt HO_n3 critter he built from paper using a laser cutter to cut and emboss the paper. It is equipped with DCC, but not sound.



Left: Barbara & Fred were both disappointed that they didn't bring anything to enter in the PCR contest as there were very few entries. But, traveling to California with photographs or models would have been extremely challenging. So, Barbara emptied her "Bestie Bag" aka scratchbuilt purse into the Convention goodie/welcome bag, entered the bag in the Arts & Crafts contest, and walked away with Best of Show!





DIVISION 8 PICNIC

SATURDAY JULY 18, 2026

DEPOT MUSEUM
206 SOUTH COLLEGE AVENUE
SALEM, IN 47167

[MAP LINK TO SALEM DEPOT](#)

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Model Contest, /Celebration, Displays,
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**Clinics
Held in
Three
Rooms**

Clinics Morning, Afternoon and Evening
-Topics include: Prototype and Models that Followed,
Growing Up with the V & O plus Dayton & Troy Electric Railroad

Model Contests/Celebration:
Models Judged by AP

Company Store: Will be offering Convention Cars

Self-Guided Local Attractions:

Rail Tours, Non-rail Activities, including area Museums and Historical sites

Layout Tours & OP Sessions: Self Guided Friday, Saturday & Sunday

Evening Displays: T-Trak

Consignment Sales: Sell your excess items



Banquet Speake: Otto M. Vondrak

Clinic Topic

The Impact of Allen McClelland's
Virginia & Ohio

Banquet Topic:

90 Years of the RMC History



For More Information and Reservations

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Host Hotel - Marriott University of Dayton

2026 NATIONAL CONVENTION

Roy Masterson, Chairman, 2026 Convention



Have you registered for the 2026 NMRA National Convention being held in Chattanooga, Tennessee from **July 27 to August 2**. At the end of February over 800 NMRA members had registered. And we are still 5 months away from the start of the convention! Rooms are still available at the Chattanooga Marriott Downtown Hotel connected to the Chattanooga Convention Center.

The [Convention Registration website](#) now has all the current extra-fare items available with more to come.

These extra-fare items will be popular attractions, and many could sell out. Head over to the convention website to lock in the ones you want:

- Layout Tours
- Prototype Tours
- Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park Bus tour for 50 attendees.
- Modeling with the Masters®
- TVRM Missionary Ridge Local with Backshop Tour on Wednesday pulled by the 4501 for 150 attendees
- TVRM Dinner Trains on Tuesday and Wednesday for 102 attendees
- TVRM Homefront Tea Room Experience with 2 seatings for 50 attendees each
- TVRM Night Photo Shoot Wednesday night for 100 attendees
- TVRM Hiwassee Loop Excursion Train on Friday for 193 attendees
- TVRM Summerville Steam Special on Thursday (chartered by ScaleTrains) and pulled by the 4501 with room for 300 attendees.

Instead of having a banquet at this year's convention the following extra-fare social events are available for convention attendees at the Chattanooga Marriott Downtown tailgate Party & Welcome Reception - Monday 7:00 PM

- Tailgate Party & Welcome Reception - Monday 7:00 PM
- Rooftop Garden Ice Cream Social - Wednesday 7:00 PM
- Pizza Party - Friday 7:00 PM



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[The Depot Railroad Museum](#)

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Treasurer:	Mike Berry

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Secretary:	Bruce DeMaeyer
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To contact a Division 8 board member or committee director call or text (502) 653-5371 and tell us your needs. We'll get back to you. To contact Division 8 or any board member or committee director by email use - division8.mcr.nmra@gmail.com

THE PIE CARD

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Please address all correspondence to Bob Dawson, Editor, 7305 Ticonderoga Dr., Louisville, KY 40214, or email: dawsobl@aol.com.

Deadline for submission of articles is the 20th day of the previous month. The Pie Card goes to press by the first of each month. Photos are preferred to be a JPEG format. Documents should be submitted as a Word or similar format. No PDF's please.

DIVISION 8 COMPANY STORE IS TEMPORARILY CLOSED

The Company Store is closed. Not only are we on holiday but if you have not heard, there is a new NMRA logo. The Division 8 logo will also be changing to be co-branded with the NMRA logo. The Company Store is currently working with our vendor to develop the new designs. And there will be some new items along with all the current items with the NEW logo. As soon as new items are available, we will update the Company Store link and let you know.