

NMRA BULLETIN

DEPARTMENT & PROGRAM MANAGERS

Chief Administrative Officer —
Jenny Hendricks
P.O. Box 1328
Soddy Daisy, TN 37384-1328
O: (423) 892-2846 Fax: (423) 899-4869
e-mail: hq@nmra.org

Library -
423-892-2846 or adminrep@nmra.org

Education Department Manager —
Michael Hohn, MMR®
Morgantown, WV 26501-4535
(304) 296-6303
e-mail: educate@nmra.org

Howell Day Museum Committee Chair —
John Stevens
Tyrone, GA 30290
H: (770) 632-0753
e-mail: museum@nmra.org

Information Technology Department
Manager —
Gert "Speed" Muller
Murphy, TX 75094-3524
(469) 345-0022
e-mail: itmanager@nmra.org

Development & Fund Raising Department
Manager — Alan Anderson
West Jordan, UT 84088 H: (801) 613-0801
e-mail: fund@nmra.org

Marketing Consultant
VACANT
e-mail: marketing@nmra.org

Meetings & Trade Show Department
Manager — Jenny Hendricks
e-mail: mts@nmra.org

Publications Department Manager —
Riley Triggs
Austin, TX 78704 H: (512) 636-3521
e-mail: pubs@nmra.org

Standards & Conformance Department
Manager — Andy Zimmerman
Tallahassee, FL 32309
C: 850-524-4399
e-mail: tech-chair@nmra.org

Region Secretaries: send all
changes in Region officer infor-
mation to the NMRA Secretary:
secy@nmra.org

**Have you changed your address or
other membership information?**

Notify NMRA Headquarters

**e-mail: hq@nmra.org
Phone: 423-892-2846 (8am-4pm ET)
Mail: P.O. Box 1328
Soddy Daisy TN 37384-1328**

REGION PRESIDENTS

Australasian Region—Duncan Cabassi
Sinnamon Park, QLD, Australia
M: +61 0424 844 807
e-mail: president@nmra.org.au

British Region—Malcolm Gauld
Aberdeen, AB21 0HU
United Kingdom
H: 07808-663987
e-mail: brprez@nmra.org

Lone Star Region—Donna Orr
2625 Rolling Meadows Dr.
Rockwall, TX 75087
e-mail: lsrprez@nmra.org
H: (972) 342-8598

Mid-Central Region—Jerry Doyle
56 Justin Court
Huntington, WV 25705
H: (304) 638-2826 e-mail: mcrprez@nmra.org

Mid-Continent Region — Larry Diehl
7008 Millridge St
Shawnee, KS 66218-9608
(C) 913-441-1605
e-mail: mcorprez@nmra.org

Mid-Eastern Region—Scott Unger
115 S 22nd Street
Allentown, PA 18104-6400
C: (610) 462-0756
e-mail: merprez@nmra.org

Midwest Region—John Coy, MMR
6409 Woodhaven Court
Avon, IN 46123
H: (317) 294 4675
e-mail: mwrprez@nmra.org

Niagara Frontier Region—Gerald Arends
165 Eighth Ave
Kitchener, ON, N2C1S5, Canada
(226) 476-1801 e-mail: nfrprez@nmra.org

North Central Region—Richard (Rich)
Mahaney; 316 Arnstrom Drive
PO Box 265, Gobles, MI 49055
H: (269) 214-4221 e-mail: ncrprez@nmra.org

Northeastern Region—Ed O'Rourke, MMR®
5193 Pointe East Drive
Jamesville, NY 13078
H: (315) 247-0494 e-mail: nerprez@nmra.org

Pacific Coast Region—Chip Meriam
2260 Cherry Glenn Court
Chico, CA 95926
H: (530) 228 1544 e-mail: pcrprez@nmra.org

Pacific Northwest Region—Jeff Herrmann
PO Box 1012
Rathdrum, ID 83858
H: (714) 651-3903 e-mail: pnrprez@nmra.org

Pacific Southwest Region—Joel Morse
11891 Tunstall Street
Garden Grove, CA 92845
H: (714) 614-5401 e-mail: psrprez@nmra.org

Rocky Mountain Region—Gary Myers
e-mail: rnrprez@nmra.org

Southeastern Region—Roy Masterson
3502 Glendon Dr.
Chattanooga, TN 37411-4114
H: (423) 227-0334 e-mail: serprez@nmra.org

Sunshine Region—Andy Zimmerman
Tallahassee, FL 32309
C: 850-524-4399
e-mail: ssrprez@nmra.org

Thousand Lakes Region—Art Suel
14500 Alabama Ave
Savage, MN 55378
e-mail: tlrprez@nmra.org

NMRA Canada President—Ed Molenkamp
Edmonton Alberta T5M 2M9
e-mail: presca@nmra.org

2026 NMRA National Convention Dates and National Train Show Reservations
2026 Scenic City Express, Chattanooga, Tennessee www.nmra2026.org/
Train Show Booth Reservations—Jenny Hendricks Registrar • P.O. Box 1328, Soddy Daisy, TN 37384-1328
423-892-2846 • ntsreg@nmra.org
• 2027 Tacoma, Washington • 2028 Rochester, New York

rev 8/21/25

ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

NMRA AP CERTIFICATE REPORT

JULY 2025

GOLDEN SPIKE

Australasian Region

Alistair Wright, Banksia Beach, Queensland, Australia

Mid-Central Region

Dwight Yoakam, Canal Winchester, Ohio

MASTER BUILDER - CARS

Mid-Central Region

Benjamin Lanza, North Royalton, Ohio

Niagara Frontier Region

Mike Lafond, Ridgetown, Ontario, Canada

Pacific Northwest Region

Bert Cripe, Port Orchard, Washington

MASTER BUILDER - STRUCTURES

Australasian Region

Dale Richards, Ngannawal, Australian Capital Territory, Australia

Niagara Frontier Region

Ronald Tober, North Tonawanda, New York

MASTER BUILDER - SCENERY

Australasian Region

Erik Bennett, Bayview, New South Wales, Australia

Pacific Northwest Region

Doug Johnson, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada

MODEL RAILROAD ENGINEER - CIVIL

Mid-Eastern Region

Glenn Lapkin, Manakin Sabot, Virginia

Pacific Northwest Region

Greg Price, Puyallup, Washington

Rocky Mountain Region

Doug Jolley, Riverton, Utah

MODEL RAILROAD ENGINEER - ELECTRICAL

Mid-Eastern Region

Glenn Lapkin, Manakin Sabot, Virginia

Pacific Coast Region

Phil Edholm, Pleasanton, California

Pacific Northwest Region

James Miller, College Place, Washington

CHIEF DISPATCHER

Australasian Region

John Arrowsmith, Bowen Mountain, New South Wales, Australia

Mid-Central Region

Frederick Wilke, Lake St. Louis, Missouri

Pacific Northwest Region

Greg Price, Puyallup, Washington

ASSOCIATION OFFICIAL

Australasian Region

Randall Jones, St. Ives, New South Wales, Australia

Mid-Central Region

Dennis J. Coglianese, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

ASSOCIATION VOLUNTEER

Mid-Central Region

Julie Williams, Brecksville, Ohio

Pacific Northwest Region

Alex Sheppard, Seattle, Washington

Alex Zungia, Silverdale, Washington

Greg Price, Puyallup, Washington

Robert Kirkham, Surrey, British Columbia, Canada

Pacific Southwest Region

John Mick, Alpine, Arizona

Craig Carnell, Scottsdale, Arizona

AP QUESTIONS: If you have questions about the AP program or requirements, start with your local or Region AP manager. If you still have questions, contact Ray Persing at achiev@nmra.org.

The NMRA now accepts

PayPaltm

- Renewals
- Memberships
- Books
- Donations
- Online store
- EVERYTHING!

THE DEFINITIVE BOOK ON FREIGHT TERMINALS

The definitive text on the design and operation of freight terminals in the early 20th century.

- A significant resource for 80 years
- A thorough study of railway operation
- Perfect for designing freight yards
- Principles and practices of freight operation
- Printed on high quality, glossy stock
- 6"x 9" hard cover with dust jacket

\$36⁰⁰

NMRA Members

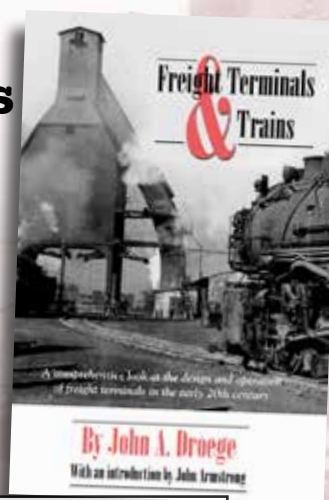
\$50⁰⁰

Non-NMRA Members

Dealer inquiries welcome

To Order: Online: www.nmra.org By mail: P.O. Box 1328, Soddy Daisy, TN 37384 By phone: (423) 892-2846 By fax: (423) 899-4869. U.S. shipping & handling: \$5.95; all others call. TN residents: add 9.25% sales tax. U.S. funds only. Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Discover, & PayPal

© 2015 National Model Railroad Association®



JOHN McHUGH

EARNs

MASTER MODEL RAILROADER® #799

Working on the NMRA's Achievement Program for the past decade has been a highly enjoyable experience. I met many interesting and skilled modelers in the Northeastern Region who were eager to share their knowledge. I learned a variety of new skills to help me become a much better modeler. But most importantly, pursuing the certificates re-energized my enjoyment of the hobby. I couldn't wait to get downstairs to work on the layout!

Like many of my generation, my exposure to model trains began one Christmas morning, when, in the second grade, I received a Lionel train set. Shortly later, someone gave my father a big box of Lionel track. I could make a large oval with passing sidings that would fill the room! In elementary school, all my buddies also had Lionel trains, and we would often combine them, spending most of the day laying track around the house. We had no idea about operations and ran our trains like Gomez of the Addams Family, but we had a ton of fun. Over the next few years, I would receive more Lionel pieces each Christmas to expand my train set. I can still recall the distinctive smell of the Lionel smoke from the steam engine.

My only railfanning during these years was at the small industrial yard in town. My buddies and I would occasionally go down to the yard and watch the weekly switcher do its work, and we would frequently put pennies on the track. The yard was easily accessible, and I don't remember any "No Trespassing" signs prohibiting entry. I recall thinking that those diesel switchers were substandard because, in my mind, real engines used steam, although by this time, steam was just a memory in New England.

A seminal moment for me came one day when we visited my uncle, and he brought me down to his basement. He had a small HO-scale "pike." It was essentially an oval with a passing siding, but it featured scenery, buildings, and a mountain. I was awestruck! I had never envisioned that a model railroad could look realistic. My uncle gave me a copy



of *Model Railroader* and a few cars. I went back to my buddies with my epiphany, and we instantly put away the Lionels. I started using my allowance to buy HO track, an engine, rolling stock, and structure kits.

During these early middle school years, I built a 5x9-foot pike in my basement. It was very basic, featuring a passing siding, station, a pond with real water, and an obligatory mountain with a tunnel. My buddies and I would spend hours working on scenery, building plastic building kits by Revell, detailing our Matchbox cars, and playing with trains. The problem was that the HO trains never ran well, primarily because we knew nothing about oxidation on the brass track. This pike brought me lots of enjoyment for a few years, until one day, when my mother came up from the basement and said, "The train set has to go!" (I had built the mountain with papier-mâché using flour as the paste. Mice had infested the mountain!) I dismantled the pike and packed the train components into a large box. By this time, modeling had taken a backseat as I was more into sports and had acquired a different set of friends.

My railroad modeling lay dormant for 30 years until the mid-1990s, when my pre-teen sons discovered my Lionel box in my basement. My older son set up and monopolized the Lionel. My younger son felt slighted, so I told him that I had

something special for him. I pulled out the HO trains and set up a figure eight on a piece of plywood. I nailed down the track and had him place my old Revell buildings around the track. I even had a bunch of my old Matchbox cars! Of course, the engine didn't work, having sat idle for 30 years — off to the hobby shop.

After being away from the hobby for 30 years, walking into the hobby shop was another seminal moment. I was amazed at how the hobby had changed. Everything was much better! We purchased an HO diesel engine and a few books, which sparked my reentry into the hobby. We soon built a table layout based on one of the Atlas track plans, purchased all-new nickel-silver track, and some rolling stock. The layout was DC with block control and two cabs. Running two trains independently was such an experience for us. This layout was a good place to hone my modeling skills. I learned about scale, scenery techniques, kitbuilding, weathering, etc. All along, I continued to learn about the hobby vicariously through buying modeling books and subscribing to *Model Railroader*. After a few years, my sons moved on, and I began to yearn for a more engaging layout.

Another epiphanic moment occurred when I bought Bruce Chubb's book, *How to Operate Your Model Railroad*. It had never occurred to me that models

could be operated in the same way as the prototype. I read that book many times and knew that my next layout would be planned for operations. I also purchased John Armstrong's book, *Track Planning for Realistic Operations*, and spent the next year determining my "givens and druthers," creating numerous track plans for my 11x12-foot space.

I started my current layout, the Ossipee Valley Railroad, and joined the NMRA in 2000. The OVRR is a three-level around-the-room design with a blob and a helix. When I joined the NMRA, I received a packet of information that included a sheet explaining the Achievement Program. I was instantly intrigued and confident that I could complete a few of the certificates when building the OVRR, but I wasn't sure if I had the skills to achieve MMR.

I started the OVRR with a flourish, but after a few years, life interfered again, and I put the layout on the back burner. While I intermittently worked on the layout at this time, I continued to stay connected to the hobby by receiving my magazines and occasionally visiting a local model train hobby shop. I attended a few conventions but did not participate in Division activities. I didn't know any other model railroaders and was the classic "lone wolf" that permeates the hobby.

My path to MMR received a dramatic boost in 2014 when I started attending a monthly Division's fun night in a nearby town. There I learned new skills and met like-minded, friendly people. The host, Bruce Robinson, was very welcoming to newbies and encouraged us to pursue the Achievement Program. He offered clinics to explain the process and invited us to operate on his railroad. At the fun night, I also met Tom Oxnard, the Seacoast Division AP Chair, who encouraged us as well. I finally decided to bite the bullet and complete the paperwork for my Golden Spike Award in 2015.

When Tom came over to inspect my layout for the Golden Spike, he told me that I was very close to completing the requirements for a few certificates on my layout. That started me on my way.

I had been a Boy Scout Railroading Merit Badge Counselor since 1997, so earning the Association Volunteer certificate was straightforward. All I had to do was contact our local council to obtain proof, and fortunately, they had my years of service in their database.

As I built the OVRR, I always kept the AP requirements in mind. When designing and installing the electrical components, I made sure that I met all the requirements. All I had to do was fill out the Statement of Qualification (SOQ), which is quite lengthy for the Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical certificate. Having been an educator for 39 years, I knew the importance of presenting a neat, coherent document that is easy to score. I organized the SOQ using a different colored font for my answers and cross-referencing the many schematics. Bill Brown, the Regional AP Chair, was impressed and invited me to give a clinic on preparing an SOQ, which led to my presenting clinics at conventions.

I had met most of the requirements for Model Railroad Engineer – Civil while building my layout, except that I had not scratchbuilt any turnouts. At the time, I was laying track on my upper level, and to save money, I bought a Fast Track jig and a few Fast Track tools to build turnouts, which was easy! Since I built all my upper deck turnouts and a few special turnouts, I easily met the Civil requirements. Tom and Bruce came over to evaluate my track, and I earned my third certificate.

Bruce Robinson is a huge fan of operations. As mentioned, he would often invite people over to operate on his layout and encourage us to keep track of our hours. Later on, I was invited to participate with his regular crew to learn the ropes and get hours. I also participated in a few weekend ops sessions hosted by other organizations and operated at a few regional conventions to gain my hours for Chief Dispatcher. Maybe MMR was a possibility, but there was one major roadblock in the way.

I had no idea how to approach the model railroad equipment categories. I never had a model evaluated and did not understand the merit process. I thought the Master Builder – Cars would be easier for me than Master Builder – Motive Power, but I had no idea where to start. I figured that I'd cross that bridge later. I was scanning the internet for scenery techniques when I fortunately stumbled across a blog by MMR Tom Gasior, who explained clearly how he built a flatcar. He received his inspiration from a Lone Star Region clinic. With the process of scratchbuilding a car demystified, I was psyched to get started on the Cars certificate. The only rub was the evaluation

process. I was aware of the five scoring categories, but I didn't know how evaluators arrived at those scores. Again, I lucked out by stumbling across the AP Judging Guidelines on the NMRA website. These guidelines explain what evaluators look for and provide evaluation matrices. The guidelines are somewhat buried on the website, but are easy to find if one knows they exist. Keeping the AP evaluation guidelines in mind, I scratchbuilt my four cars and superdetailed four more to earn the certificate. With Master Builder – Cars complete, I knew achieving MMR was possible.

As I pursued the certificates, I kept good notes and took photos of my scratchbuilt models and techniques. I used these to write articles and present clinics at Region conventions and Division meetings. After a few years, I had enough points to earn my Model Railroad Author certificate.

My last certificate was Master Builder – Scenery. I had scenicked more than the 32 square feet required for HO-scale from my previous efforts on my layout, but I wanted to improve my technique and present a more fitting demonstration of my ability. I redid a few sections of my layout and applied new scenery to my upper deck. After about a year of work, I was ready for Tom and Bruce to come over and evaluate my work.

Model railroading is a fascinating hobby. Many skills must be acquired to get the trains moving along the track in a realistic setting. Pursuing AP certificates hones those skills and requires us to possibly step outside our comfort zone. The result is a much better model railroad. I am very glad that I undertook the journey.

I'd especially like to thank my wife, Lorna, who supported me in this endeavor and didn't mind too much when I went down to the basement.

Certificates Earned
John McHugh, MMR® #799

Association Volunteer
Model Railroad Engineer –
Electrical
Model Railroad Engineer – Civil
Chief Dispatcher
Master Builder – Cars
Model Railroad Author
Master Builder – Scenery

PAUL DEIS

EARNs

MASTER MODEL RAILROADER® #801

One of my earliest childhood memories is my dad's Lionel trains in the basement room I shared with my two brothers. The layout was set up for Christmas in the fall and then he took it down in the spring. As I grew a little older, my dad would let me keep it up even longer. Many great memories were grown there. When I was 15, I got my first real job. I bought an Aurora N-scale train set for my nephew for Christmas. I set it up on the dining room table to test it. It was so much fun that I bought him a different present and started my journey with scale trains. I started buying *Model Railroader* magazine and I was amazed with what was possible.

I joined the U.S. Coast Guard in 1974. I continued working on building my N-scale collection and started assembling some small structure kits. I discovered that I really enjoyed building wood kits. I worked on small kits while serving on board the ships. I married while in the service and started building a small layout. I planned the layout so it could be crated and easily moved when I was transferred. My last transfer was to Morro Bay, California. When my household goods arrived, we discovered that the large crate holding all my possessions had somehow been turned upside down in transit from the east coast. Most everything in the giant crate was destroyed along with my layout.

I went to the local hobby shop to start over. The clerk in the store asked if I'd heard of "NTRAK"? It turns out that Jim Fitzgerald, who managed the NTRAK nonprofit group, lived in Atascadero, about 30 minutes from my house. I met with Jim and decided I would build an NTRAK module. About the same time *Model Railroader* magazine started the series on building the Clinchfield Railroad in N-scale.

I began building the module, along with a small home layout that would connect to it, keeping in mind that I would likely be transferred again in two years.

Well, I decided I loved the central coast of California, so when my enlistment ended in 1980, I chose to stay in San



Luis Obispo County. I continued to work on my N-scale module and home layout. I participated in some NTRAK events. In the mid-1980s, I met Kevin Isbister. Kevin worked at Laws Hobbies in San Luis Obispo. Kevin introduced me to the art of airbrushing and the concept of creating custom models of freight cars and locomotives.

Kevin also introduced me to a group of modelers who had recently formed the San Luis Obispo Model Railroad Club (SLOMRC). The SLOMRC was an HO modular club that would set up at various locations throughout the county. After attending a few meetings, I decided to sell my N-scale equipment and move to HO-scale.

I joined the NMRA in 1994. I attended my first National Convention that year in Portland, Oregon. At that convention, I met a couple of guys who were regu-

lar operators at the Gorre & Daphetid Railroad — Alan Fenton and Glenn Joesten. They had John Allen's original Time Saver. I really enjoyed the challenge of working that puzzle. They also took me through the auction room and taught me what to look for in brass engines, which is a fine example of how people in this hobby love to help one another.

I attended my first Region convention in 1996 in San Rafael, California. Our club set up our modular layout. The experiences at this convention really encouraged significant changes in my enjoyment of model railroading. I met Jim Providenza, who invited our club members to an operations session on his Santa Cruz Northern layout. The hook was set. Operations was my new favorite way to run model trains. I also entered my first model in the contest at the convention. I kitbashed a wooden

enclosed water tank. I took first place in the Novice category. I was also the only entry in that category. I think it scored around 45 points. The valuable part was that contest manager Bill Scott spent about half an hour with me discussing how I could improve my modeling for future entries. That marked the beginning of a long process of continually refining my modeling skills.

In 1995, some members of our club proposed adopting the Free-mo standards, which were already in use in Europe. I was club president at the time, and I strongly supported the idea. I built a 22-foot set of modules to meet the standard. The club took a mix of standard and Free-mo modules to the 1996 National Convention in Long Beach, California — a successful debut. Chris Palomarez and Art Armstrong then developed what would become the Free-mo standard now used across the USA. I also presented a couple of clinics at the convention.

I continue to attend PCR Conventions and some National Conventions. Also, I attend operating sessions, layout tours, and present clinics. I learn something valuable on every layout tour. There are numerous ways to approach things in this hobby. I started to volunteer in the contest room at conventions. When you work with experienced evaluators, you learn what it takes to be considered a fine model. You also learn the correct way to fill out the contest forms. If it isn't documented on the form, the evaluators have no way of knowing what you did. I also learned to keep extra information out of the forms. The evaluator's time is limited in an event setting, and they don't have time to read a novel.

In 2001 and 2014, I served as chairman of the NMRA/Pacific Coast Region (PCR) Convention, held in San Luis Obispo. I have served as Superintendent and Clinic Chair of the Daylight Division of the PCR. I have authored articles in the *Daylight Observation* and *PCR Branchline*.

While most of my modeling is in HO, I also built and operated a large 1:20.3 outdoor layout. For that layout, I kitbashed or scratchbuilt several pieces of rolling stock; some of which earned merit awards. I also scratchbuilt two 1:6 scale flatcars. They were over six feet long! They won first and second place at a Region convention.

I am currently working on my home layout. I model the Southern Pacific Coast Line from San Luis Obispo to San

Miguel, California, in 1949. I hand-laid all the trackwork, including 103 turnouts. Many of the structures were either kitbashed or scratchbuilt based on actual structures in the towns I model. During the COVID-19 pandemic, I spent many hours every day working on structures and scenery, making significant progress. I felt my layout was ready to be evaluated for the Scenery, Civil, and Electrical Achievement awards. Many structures could be assessed at that time, as I could not take them to the convention since they were installed in the layout. I live halfway between Los Angeles and San Francisco. Only one qualified evaluator lives in my area, so someone would have to travel several hours to do the evaluation. MMRs Earl Girbovan and Andrew Merriam spent a full day at my home. I earned my Scenery, Civil, and Electrical Achievement awards that day, along with several merit awards for structures.

I continue to build structures and rolling stock for my railroad. Some of these pieces have been evaluated or entered in contests and earned merit awards.

I continue to enjoy sharing our hobby and helping others improve their mod-

eling skills. I now serve as the Contest Manager for the Pacific Coast Region.

There are a lot of people to thank for helping me along this journey. For more than 20 years, a group of local model railroaders met every Thursday evening to work on each other's railroad: Hilding Larson, Terry Taylor, Glenn Geissinger, Rick Anderson, Matt Hoffman, and Michael Haworth. We all learned from each other. Jim Vail, MMR, taught me that good enough is not always good enough. Giuseppe Aymar, MMR, and Earl Girbovan, MMR, showed me that details matter. Many others demonstrated that a big part of the fun in the hobby is sharing with others. Most important is my wife, Dorothy, who has encouraged me to enjoy and share my hobby.

Certificates Earned
Paul Deis, MMR® #801

Chief Dispatcher
Model Railroad Author
Association Volunteer
Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical
Master Builder – Scenery
Model Railroad Engineer – Civil
Master Builder – Cars

Meet a bunch of modelers in your backyard.



When you're a National Model Railroad Association member, you're never very far away from fellow model railroaders because you're automatically a member of your local Division. There are over 150 of them all across the country! Some hold monthly or quarterly meetings. Some sponsor swap meets. Some take tours to factories and prototype facilities. Some do it all and more.

But one thing they all have in common: they like model railroads...and model railroaders.

Visit www.nmra.org to find your local Division. Then meet up with some of your best friends, right outside your door.



We make it even more fun.

www.nmra.org
4 2 3 - 8 9 2 - 2 8 4 6