

Telegraph Key



Railroad History

On October 3, 1833, the 136-mile rail line from Charleston to Hamburg in South Carolina was completed, making it one of the world's longest continuous railway lines at the time and utilizing early steam engines like the Best Friend of Charleston.

Iron Horse 2026

The Sunshine Region, Iron Horse 2026, Convention is finally upon us! Thursday October 15th through Saturday October 17th the Ocala Convention Center will host IRON HORSE 2026.

Expand Your Horizon 2027

The 2027 National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) National Convention, titled "Expand Your Horizon," will take place in Tacoma, Washington, from August 10 to August 15, 2027

In This Issue:

Your Editor:
The time is
NOW!

**News from the
President:**
History,
Fellowship, and
the Future

Division News:

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NMRA SUNSHINE REGION

IRON HORSE

2026 ANNUAL CONVENTION

Thursday, October 15 th – Saturday, October 17 th , 2026



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Place: HILTON OCALA

3600 SOUTHWEST 36 TH AVE., OCALA, FL

**Hourly Clinics, OP Sessions, Modeling Contests,
Meet & Greet & A Banquet with Speaker on Saturday Night
For more info and Online Registration, go to**

NMRASunshineRegion.com

**You Do Not have to be an NMRA Member to attend
This event is Open to Everyone who likes TRAINS!**



Editor's Message

.....

The time is upon us! Iron Horse 2026!
I ask that if you see me, you stop to chat
about, and share thoughts on the Telegraph
Key.

We have so many amazing clinics scheduled for this year!

I certainly can't pick which ones I want to go to. But, depending on how you look at it, that might be a good thing. I think I could just sit in one room the whole time and enjoy any clinic which is facilitated throughout the day. They all sound so amazing!

With so many great events and so many great clinics, I have to say I'm still most looking forward to the fellowship. This is my tribe!

If you see me, please stop me. I can't wait to spend time with each and every one of you!

See you there!

Choo Choo My Friends,

Todd

Todd H. Slaughter
CW3, USA (Ret)

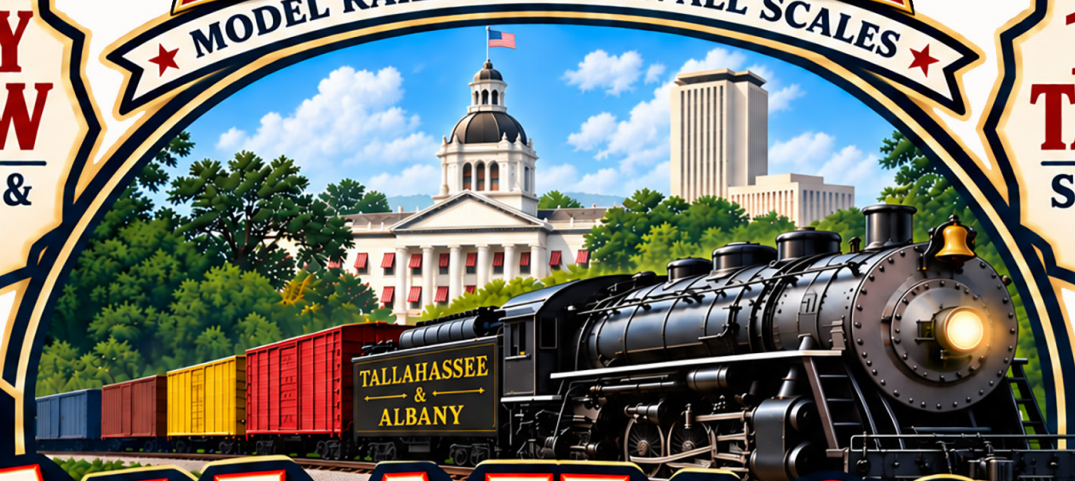
NMRA SSR At large Director
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SUNDAY
JUNE 27, 2027
9:00 AM – 3:00 PM





Fun, Friends, Trains

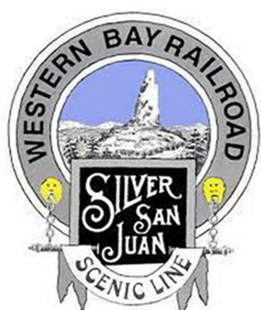
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The Western Bay Railroad is a 950 square ft On30 layout in Port St Lucie. We meet almost every Tuesday evening. We are looking for new members to join our group. There are OP sessions & scenery that we are still working on. If you're a

modeler and serious about learning, give us a try! Go to our website or contact Al Sohl MMR als0622@yahoo.com

'No dues, just a great experience'
westernbayrailroad.org





President's Message

.....

It is Convention time!!!

The IRON Horse Convention in Ocala is Here!!

My Fellow Ferroequinologists,

Over the past four years, we have accomplished a great deal together.

We have worked to strengthen our Region, rebuild connections, encourage participation, and remind ourselves that the NMRA is about far more than an organization or a hobby. It is about people.

Our guiding principles of Mentorship, Fellowship, and Community have become more than words. They have become part of who we are as the Sunshine Region. We mentor because the knowledge and skills we have gained should be passed along.

We value fellowship because this hobby is simply better when it is shared. And we build community because regardless of scale, modeling interest, experience level, or where we live in Florida, we are stronger when we come together.

That spirit will be on full display at this year's Iron Horse Convention.

Iron Horse Is Almost Here!

We have assembled a **fantastic lineup of clinics**, featuring outstanding **local, national, and international clinicians** who will share their knowledge, experience, techniques, and enthusiasm for this hobby. The website is being updated as we speak as we continue adding information about the program.

But Iron Horse isn't just about sitting in a clinic room.

.....

Orlando NTRAK and T-TRAK will be joining us with an operating N-scale setup.

Do you have a train you want to run? Bring it! There will be trains running and plenty of opportunities to enjoy model railroading in action.

Robert Raymond will also be providing Operations (OPs) sessions, giving attendees an opportunity to do more than simply watch trains run. You can become part of the railroad, experience operations firsthand, and enjoy another dimension of this great hobby.

And, of course, we will come together for our **Convention Banquet**, where we are looking forward to outstanding fare, fellowship, conversation, and an evening spent with friends from throughout the Region.

It promises to be a memorable gathering.

Four Years of Moving Forward

When I look at where the Sunshine Region was four years ago and where we are today, I am proud of what we have accomplished.

Not what one President accomplished.

Not what one Board accomplished.

What **we, as a Region, accomplished together.**

We have strengthened relationships. We have opened doors for greater participation. We have encouraged members to become involved, share their knowledge, mentor others, and take leadership roles.

Most importantly, we have worked to bring the Sunshine Region together.

There will always be more work to do. There will always be new challenges and new opportunities. But today, the Sunshine Region is stronger because more people are participating, communicating, sharing, teaching, learning, and working together.

That is **Mentorship.**

That is **Fellowship.**

That is **Community.**

.....

And that is the Sunshine Region I believe in.

Don't Miss Your Opportunity to Be Part of Iron Horse

Registration is now entering its final days, and there are two important deadlines you need to remember:

October 5 — Banquet registration closes.

If you want to join us for the Convention Banquet, you must register by October 5. Once the banquet numbers are submitted, we cannot guarantee additional meals.

October 10 — Convention registration closes.

After October 10, registration for the Iron Horse Convention will be closed.

So please don't wait until the last minute.

If you have been thinking about attending, now is the time to register.

Come for the clinics.

Come run trains with Orlando **NTRAK** and **T-TRAK**.

Sign up for an Operations session.

Join us at the banquet.

Reconnect with old friends and make some new ones.

And most importantly,

come be part of the community we have spent the last four years building together.

.....

The Sunshine Region belongs to all of us, and its strength comes from the people who choose to participate in it.

I look forward to seeing you at Iron Horse and celebrating just how far the Sunshine Region has come—and where we are headed next.

Mentorship. Fellowship. Community.

Those aren't simply our words.

They are who we are.

See you at **Iron Horse 2026**,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andy".

Andy J. Zimmerman
ATCS AW USN Ret.
NMRA SSR President
NMRA Standards and Conformance Manager
Ph- (C) 850-524-4399

.....
I hope to see you in Ocala.



**SUNSHINE REGION
IRON HORSE 2026
SUNSHINE REGION ANNUAL CONVENTION**

TWO DAYS OF CLINICS • OPERATIONS • FELLOWSHIP • JUDGING CONTESTS

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SUNSHINE REGION OF THE
NMRA

SATURDAY 10/17/25 PM		CLINIC SCHEDULE		BALLROOMS/OPSTRAIN ROOM	
LOCATION	SARATOGA ROOM	SEENELAND ROOM	FINBERG ROOM	BELMONT ROOM	AQUEDUCT ROOM
TIME	CLASSROOM	CLASSROOM	CLASSROOM	CLASSROOM	CONTEST & BATTLE ROOM
1:00 PM TO 2:00 PM	Chromatic Modeling: Creating Dynamic Scenes Using Total Production Design Principles	Crossing & Switching Layout: Limit 1 (and 1.2)	The Military Moves By Rail		
2:15 PM TO 3:15 PM	Budget Friendly Plan: Scenes for Your Dioramas	Advanced Tools Tips	Lower Cutting and 3D Printing		Judging Contests and ends at 4:00 PM
3:45 PM TO 11:45 AM	Quick Modular Railroad: Putting River Lumber Co	Water, Water, Everywhere	The Transcontinental Story: Trails and Trails		

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The collage features several items of railroad merchandise. At the top left, a blue apron with 'CSX TRANSPORTATION' is shown. Below it, a dark jacket with 'CENTRAL SYSTEM' is displayed. To the right, a collection of colorful t-shirts and jackets are shown, some with 'UNION PACIFIC' and 'Rock Island' logos. A large yellow starburst graphic says 'Best Prices'. A banner across the middle reads 'HOME OF THE RAILROAD JACKETS'. Below that, a section titled 'HATS and SHIRTS' shows various caps and shirts. At the bottom, a blue t-shirt with 'UNION PACIFIC SYSTEM OVERLAND' is shown. A banner at the bottom right says 'We also provide for Clubs!'. The Jelsma Graphics logo is repeated several times, along with the website address 'www.jelsma.com'.

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Treasurer's Message

Hello Everyone,

Here we are at the start of October, and another summer has come and gone. Hopefully everyone was able to stay cool and maybe have a little fun!!

We are on the verge of Iron Horse 2026 and if you have not registered yet, why not? What are you waiting for? The price is not going down!! Speaking of price, I want to let everyone know we've really done a great job by improving our operations and holding prices down for our conventions and making it a better experience.

For those of you who joined us in 2023 at the Holiday Inn you would of registered for the convention for \$90 plus \$35 for the banquet. Yes, in 2023 the cost for both was \$125. Now we all know inflation never goes down but we have been able to raise the bar and in 2026 hold our price to \$125 -- the same price three years later but with some additional bells and whistles!!

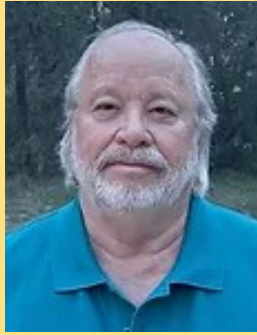
If you haven't registered yet the drop dead date is October 5th if you want to attend the banquet and October 12 for Registration Only – no banquet. Our hotel block was expanded to meet the overwhelming response to stay at the hotel. The lock in price was thru September but you can always call the hotel and see if they will honor a late reservation. So please, if you would like to attend, and we want you to attend, register today. 😊

Lastly, for those of you that are attending the convention, I will be emailing you convention specific info as a pdf attachment with clinic schedules and descriptions, and some more administrative items to keep you as informed as possible. This info will also be in the TimeTable you will receive once you get to the convention, but I wanted to give you a chance to review what and when clinics are occurring. You can expect to receive this between October 10 - 12 and please understand some things can change and if they do there will be a big white board showing the changes.

See everyone soon!!

Glenn

NMRA_SunshineRegionMail@yahoo.com



IRON HORSE 2026

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NMRA Sunshine Region Annual Convention

Our 2026 SSR Iron Horse will be arriving at the Ocala Station in 15 days, on Thursday, October 15th - Saturday, October 17th, at the Ocala Hilton.

We have a great SSR Convention planned with 36 Hourly Clinics, the Orlando N-Trak 40'x50' Traveling Layout for Operations, Robert Raymond's Tuscarora Layout, Friday Night Social and a Saturday Night Banquet with Guest Speaker Amtrak Police Detective, Chris Hogan.

Ocala Hilton still has rooms available at \$150 a night discount. Please remember that if you call the Hotel live, use the "SSR Convention" for your Discount Code. If you use the website to register for your room the code is automatically applied, so please don't snooze on your reservation, you can always cancel your room reservation if you need to.

On Sunday morning, there will be a Sunshine Region Membership meeting, open to all members and nonmembers, at 9am, and a closed Board of Directors meeting will follow right after. Room TBA, see Hotel's marque for room information.

I have provided a list of the current Clinics/Clinicians that are booked for the Convention, see below. You can see the full list on the Convention website link for the descriptions of the clinics I have so far, with more descriptions to follow as soon as I get them. Make sure to check the Convention Website for all Convention updates. On the list below, there were new clinics added (at the bottom #s 24 thru 30) but also 1 canceled clinic - Bringing it to life with Lights / Clinician: Jim Wiese.

The Clinics will be presented in 3 Rooms with 6 Clinics in each room on Friday and Saturday, with a total of 30 Clinics.

Looking forward to seeing everybody at the convention.

Jeff "Ski" Guzowski
Director at Large
Cell: 954-401-0804
email: JGuzowski@Bellsouth.Net

NMRA Sunshine Region Annual Convention

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2026 SSR OCALA CONVENTION CLINICS & CLINICIANS

- **Modeling a Pulpwood Yard with Jeff Hanke (MMR)**
 - This PowerPoint based clinic will review the history of the industry, how it interacted with railroads and how to model a pulpwood yard, vehicles and loads. Actual examples will be passed around.
- **Modeling Vehicles with Jeff Hanke (MMR)**
 - This PowerPoint based clinic will cover all aspects of modeling vehicles from available models, adding realism and creating an appropriate fleet. Creating custom decals will also be covered. The clinic will also cover the appropriate age, make-up and uses of vehicles to create the right feel on your layout.
- **Car Forwarding with the Micro Mark Car Card System with Jeff Hanke (MMR)**
 - This PowerPoint based clinic that will cover the complete set up of the car card and waybill system used to prototypically move freight cars over your model railroad. This will include filling out car cards, waybills and car request orders. The clinic will also cover modifications needed to make the system more complete. Finally, a brief overview of the Car Service Rules will be given to show the appropriate way to determine which empty car to choose for a given movement.
- **Timetable & Train Order with Robert Raymond**
 - Ever wonder how crews and dispatchers operated in the hundred years before radios became available? Robert Raymond explains the intricacies of Timetable & Train Order, including a method to bring it to your own club or home layout.
- **The Bicentennial and Semiquincentennial Locomotive with Gilbert Thomas Jr.**
 - This clinic is a review of the various paint schemes presented by the railroads celebrating our nation's 200th and 250th birthday. Gilbert will have models to display.

- **Pictorial History of the Building of their West Virginia Northern Railroad with Gail Allen Komar MMR 349**

- The West Virginia Northern was originally built in St. Petersburg by Ross & Gail Allen and was the cover article of the June 2005 Model Railroader titled "A Handcrafted Gem". After re-marrying, Gail moved the WVN to Tampa in 2007. This clinic is about how the WVN evolved into what it is today. The building of an addition for the WVN. Changes to the track plan, new overhead lighting & valances, photo backdrops, building coal mining facility, and other structures using historical data. Monthly operating sessions with call board, train orders, timetable, & signals.

- **Tuscarora Operations with Working Yard Tower with Robert Raymond**

- Operator Robert Raymond (designer of the Tuscarora Branch Line) gives ideas and tips on how to build your dream layout in a small and manageable area. The Tuscarora shows how much the N-scale railroad operations you can pack into a 2x4 foot space. Set in Pennsylvania in 1962, we can accommodate five operators (scheduled freight and local engineer, coal operations, an interlocking lever operator, a station agent and a dispatcher). If you are interested in how a Yard Tower works, the Railroad Tuscarora layout has an actual working tower with real Armstrong Levers. Come and run! Robert's Layout will be set up in the Ballroom for attendees to operate on, so make sure you give it a try, it's a lot of fun.

- **Modeling Considerations for the 2000's Modeler with Gilbert Thomas Jr**

- The 2000's have arrived in the usual way. The transition era is long gone, and the railroads have gone from 140 class one railroads to just 7 class one railroads. Oh, make that 6 class one railroads. I believe this is the perfect time to be a model railroader! This clinic will review the ever-evolving landscape of US railroads, latest trends in railroad cars and locomotives the railroads are utilizing and upgrades in railroad operations and technology.

- **Signals. How hard can they be? with Timothy Maslyn**

- A compendium on signals. A sample of Who, What, Where, and When it becomes necessary to install signals on your layout.

- **3D Printing for Model Railroaders: A Gentle Introduction for Beginners with Scott Peal**

- This clinic is designed for model railroaders who have little or no experience with 3D printing and want to learn how it can enhance their hobby. We'll walk through the basics in plain, non-technical language—what a 3D printer is, how it works, and how you can use it to create simple, useful parts for your layout. You'll see real examples, learn what equipment is truly needed (and what isn't), and discover how easy it can be to get started. By the end of the clinic, attendees will understand the full process from idea to finished model and will feel confident exploring 3D printing on their own.

- **Take Me to the River Again: Modeling mountain streams, rivers, and waterfalls with Dean Smith**

- Fast-flowing, clear streams, rivers, and waterfalls are part and parcel of the mountainous terrain shared by many of our favorite railroads. With their visible riverbeds, white water areas, and “see-thru” waterfalls, these cascading waterways can prove a challenge to effectively model. By utilizing a series of easy-to-follow techniques using natural materials and commonly available craft and hobby supplies, this clinic should give even the novice modeler the confidence to dive right in and create effective rivers and waterfalls. As an added bonus in a reprise of this popular clinic, we will also be taking a look at constructing a sawmill pond and log splash dam.

- **Swayne Lumber Company Northern California with Paul Beckstrom**

- The Swayne Lumber Company operated a 60 mile 3' gauge logging railroad in Northern California from 1917-1940. It ran from Oroville CA into the Merrimac Forest (Plumas National Forest) and was powered by Shay and Heisler geared locomotives, several of which still exist and operate to this day. This clinic is presented by the co-author of the Swayne Lumber Company book published by Pacific Fast Mail in 1992, and presents the history and eventual migration of much of the equipment to the Michigan-California and West Side Lumber Companies. Also covered are some of the discoveries and stories pertaining to the writing of the book, and the equipment and infrastructure remaining today.

- **T-TRAK 101 with Todd Slaughter**

- T-TRAK modules are dioramas with sectional track, specifically Kato Unitrack, that snap together to create layouts from a simple circle to large complex layouts. The modules are designed to fit on tables. Layouts are easy to assemble and disassemble. The convenient size of the modules makes them easy to store on a shelf or in totes when not in use, or to transport.” He is the founder of the Special Needs Model Railroad Association (SNMRA) as well as the Tampa T-TRAK club.

- **SoundTraxx: Demystifying Decoder Installation with George Bogatiuk**

- **Bridges – How do we Bridge the Gap? with Bob Leonard**

- There are seven types of bridges, which ones can a railroad modeler use prototypically? The clinic covers the use of bridge supports, the types and applications, era and timeframe. It talks to the types of bridges and who manufactures the different types.

- **Weathering on a Small Scale with Tim Ellis**

- Since last year Tim has ventured into other approaches to weathering, he uses the standard paint, pastels, powders and watercolor pencils; but in combination. The clinic describes the processes of all possibilities. Like last year, all who attend will have the opportunity to employ these techniques at your leisure as you follow along. There will be boxcar “mules” that will be distributed for your use to practice what you have been taught. Although they will not be “N” scale size.

- **Creating Realistic Water with Tim Ellis**

- The clinic explains the use of using two-part epoxies, UV epoxies, UV adhesives, modeling paste and glue to create the base and texture (ripples / waves) of water scenes. From open water to rivers and streams, the clinic describes the methods to achieve and give your water a look of realism. It also covers coloring, from sky reflection on the ocean to muddy, brackish backwater.

- **Bringing it to Life with Lights with Jim Wiese**

- How to add lighting effects to your engines, passenger cars, and cabooses using LEDs and the various components involved.

-
- **Layout Planning and Bench-work Construction with Mark Ellis**
 - This clinic describes an approach that can aid in the time it takes to create the bench-work for a layout. It outlines the different programs available and how, with some patience, the builder can utilize the software to solve problems.
 - **Operations on Their Level - How Deep Do You Want to Go with Mark Iannone**
 - The clinic covers the depth of operations an operator wants to go. From the simple scenario of moving cars from point A to point B to multi-train movements of freight and passenger consists and everything in between. How do you control this: TTTO, car cards, JMRI-created switch lists, how many set-outs and pick-ups, or termed Locations and Destinations? It all comes down to the question. How deep is too deep?
 - **Weed Control on the Railroads with David Leider**
 - Ever since the first rail was laid on the ground, weed control has been a problem for the railroads. Weeds foul the ballast, they obscure vision of the ties and they mat down, making the rails slippery. Weed control can be broken down into three categories: 1-Grubbing 2-Burning and 3-Chemical Control. I will discuss the pros and cons of each.
 - **Using DCC-EX with Steve Todd**
 - We'll describe the DCC-EX project and (hopefully) show why it's worth looking into using concrete usage examples for any size DCC or DC layout. Focus will be on usage, but resources for purchasing or building will be provided. It's easier (and more useful) than you think.
 - **From Ore to Finished Steel: Modeling the Steel Industry with Joe Grazulis**
 - Explore the fascinating world of steel mills and the railroads that serve them. This clinic follows the steel-making process from raw materials through the hot end, rolling and finishing, while examining the specialized railroad equipment and operations found both inside and outside the mill. Learn how steel-making has changed through the eras, how to select what portions of a mill to model, and how to realistically integrate steel-industry traffic and operations into a model railroad—even when space is limited.

-
- **How I Create Removable Flat Car Loads / Clinician: Richard Paul**
 - I am a big fan of operations and like to have open-type cars with the ability to arrive/depart with a load but also use the same car in arrive/depart as an empty visually. My method for adapting various commercial & scratch-built loads to be removable on a flatcar yet held on so they will not slide off during operation.
 - **Creating a portable AIO DCC System with Andy Zimmerman**
 - Focusing on N-scale and T-TRAK modular railroading, Andy walks attendees through the evolution of an all-in-one DCC control system designed to eliminate complexity, reduce wiring clutter, and expand operational capability. From concept to execution, you will see how integrating technologies such as Raspberry Pi, JMRI, wireless throttles, and modular power management resulted in a compact, portable, and highly functional system.
 - **Secrets of Integrated Signal Systems or How I Pay for Garden Mulch with Timothy Maslyn**
 - Exposing the secrets on how Integrated Signal Systems makes custom made signals in a step-to-step PowerPoint presentation.
 - **How to Keep Your Track Clean with Mark Juett MMR, NMRA Magazine Pulse DCC Columnist**
 - Unless your locomotives are battery powered a.k.a power on board or dead rail you need good, reliable contact between the wheels and the rail. This clinic will give you a few steps to condition your rails to stay clean longer. It will also cover cleaning track and cleaning locomotive wheels. Reliable contact is essential to good operation.
 - **How to Model Florida Scenery/Trees with Bob Miller**
 - Bob will show you how to model Florida trees, Cypress, Pine, and Palms. He will also be giving out a spiral handout on Florida Scenery.
 - **An Introduction to Layout Command Control with Rick Lull**
 - This clinic will introduce LCC, present common use cases, and demonstrate some basic functionality that attendees can then replicate on their layouts. This clinic is for all skillsets and LCC knowledge levels.

-
- **Making Molds, Could I, Would I, Should I? with Alan Chesler**
 - The process of making a latex Mold of an original to copy and make multiple copies. Follow the process, logic, value, and enjoyment of stepping out of comfort zone (again) to accomplish what you just thought was an amateur endeavor. We will follow the steps, talk about time and cost, and expected results with satisfaction. View and touch the products and create a shopping list
 - **Why We Model: The Hidden Science Behind the Hobby with Bernard from Miniprints.com**
 - Ask your doctor if model railroading is right for you. Most modelers know the hobby feels rewarding, but few have seen the research behind why. In this clinic dr. mini explores what psychologists have discovered about flow state, creativity, mastery, stress reduction, and social connection—and why model railroading happens to combine many of the ingredients most closely associated with human wellbeing. By the end, you'll see model railroading in a different light. It turns out we're not just building layouts—we're engaging in an activity that may be uniquely suited to how humans learn, create, connect, and thrive.
 - **Designing Your Next Railroad with Mark Juett MMR, NMRA Magazine Pulse DCC Columnist**
 - There are many reasons that we may begin again, to build a new model RR, or move it. I will share some of my experiences over nine moves and reconstructing my model railroads. Choices in retaining the same scale and gauge or not. Choices in keeping the same prototype and era or not. Selections of modeling the same locations or not. What to retain, what to let go. What will get an operational RR more quickly. What was learned in past attempts. How to make the next RR better and how to make only new mistakes.
 - **Basic JMRI Operations WITHOUT Paper! with Steve Todd**
 - Put away the car cards and switch lists! Learn how to use JMRI Operations to manage cars, routes, trains, pickups, and setouts right from your smartphone or tablet. This practical clinic takes you from basic setup to running trains using JMRI's Conductor interface—with no paper required. Perfect for anyone wanting to add realistic operations to their layout without the paperwork.

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- **SketchUp: Audience-Friendly, Building-Focused with Scott Peal**
 - This session shows model railroaders how to use SketchUp to create their own buildings, freight cars, passenger cars, and other larger layout items for 3D printing. No technical background is needed. We'll walk through two simple ways to get started: drawing your own model from photos or plans, and converting an existing model you find online. You'll learn how to bring pictures into SketchUp, trace the shapes, break the model into printable sections, and plan how to paint and assemble the finished parts. By the end, you'll understand the full path from idea to printed model—whether you print at home or use a service.
 - **Eastern Logging and Sawmill Clinic: Logging in the Blue Ridge Mountains History and Modeling with Dean Smith**
 - Travel back to the Blue Ridge Mountains circa 1925 and explore the Boone Fork Lumber Company and its accompanying facilities. In this clinic, we will be looking at prototype logging practices in the area, focusing on the large sawmill complex at Shulls Mills, North Carolina, and how I modeled it on the ET&WNC-Vida Division Railroad. The mill features board-by-board construction, a complete interior, and sound (from the early days before sound modules). The scene also includes a log pond created by damming a tributary of the Wautaga River with a log splash dam.
 - **Modeling the Pickle industry with David Leider**
 - Want a unique industry for your layout? Consider modeling the pickle industry. They are small, fit easily on a siding and you can use those pickle cars you got as a youngster. I will show the steps in making pickles and how they were transported with photos of salting stations and pickle cars. Did you know that there is a large pickle manufacturer in Palmetto Florida and Manatee County was the largest producer of pickles in Florida?
 - **Meet the President - NMRA President Gordy Robinson**
 - Join NMRA President Gordy Robinson for an inside look at the NMRA today and tomorrow—new initiatives, future plans, and his perspective on where the organization is headed, and why it's important for every member to play a part in shaping its future.



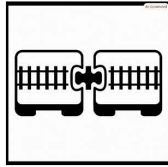
Achievement Program

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The Modular Railroading certificate is the newest NMRA Achievement Program Certificate, having been approved by the NMRA Board of Directors on 27 July 2026. If you see any issues or inconsistencies with the requirements below or attached forms, please let Ray Persing know at achiev@nmra.org. A FAQ section is at the bottom of this page and is being updated as additional questions come in. Meanwhile, if you have any questions, please contact Ray.

Thank you,

Kenn Hoot
Chair, Achievement Program

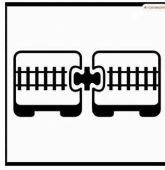


**ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM
MASTER BUILDER MODULAR RAILROADING
STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS FORM
JULY 2026** page 1 of 3

Member Name: _____ NMRA #: _____ Exp: _____
Street: _____ City: _____ State/Prov: _____
ZIP/PC: _____ Country: _____ NMRA Region: _____ Division: _____
Date Submitted: _____ E-Mail: _____ Phone: _____

To qualify for this certificate, you must:

1. Construct and complete a minimum of three (3) operable modules conforming to an established modular standard (e.g., NMRA, T-TRAK, NTRAK, Free-mo, Free-moN, or similar).
2. The modules must have a minimum total size of 44 sf for O scale, 32 sf for S scale, 24 sf for HO scale, 12 sf for N scale, 9 sf for Z scale, and 5 sf for T scale. Minimum square feet required for other scales are based on the ratio between that scale and 24 sf in HO scale.
3. Each module must include:
 - a. Standards compliant electrical and physical interfaces at connection points (connections between the member's module(s) and adjacent modules of others adhering to the same standard).
 - b. Operational trackwork
 - c. Reliable mechanical and electrical performance
 - d. Complete scenery and backdrop if appropriate to the module standard used.
4. Modules must be displayed and operated successfully at a minimum of three (3) separate public exhibitions or NMRA-sanctioned events.
5. Merit Requirement: Each module must earn a minimum score of 87.5 points out of 125 using the Modular AP Merit Scoring Matrix. The evaluation considers each of the three (3) required modules as a stand-alone body of work, emphasizing conformance to the relevant standard, the integration of the scene depicted within the module, its reliability, and craftsmanship. Evaluation Criteria are:
 - a. Module Construction (25 points) - Quality of framing, rigidity, surface preparation, joinery, durability for transport, and overall workmanship.
 - b. Trackwork, Standards Compliance & Operation (30 points) - Alignment, geometry, turnout performance, standards compliance at interfaces, operational smoothness, and reliability under public operation. Mainline track conformance is critical as a failure to meet standards on this affects all attached modules. Use of flex track or hand-laid track beyond required interface sections is encouraged and rewarded.
 - c. Electrical Systems & Control (20 points) Power distribution, wiring practices, connector and wiring type choice, strain relief, lighting circuits, control logic, sensor systems, sound systems, and operational reliability across multiple setups.



**ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM
MASTER BUILDER MODULAR RAILROADING
STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS FORM
JULY 2026**

page 2 of 3

- d. Scenery, Terrain & Scene Integration (20 points) - Realistic terrain shaping, drainage and slope, landform transitions, ballast application and blending, ground cover, vegetation, scenic textures, and effective treatment of module edges and seams, particularly across adjoining modules representing the same scene. For purposes of this certificate's Merit Requirement, scenery is evaluated on the overall effectiveness of the module as constructed to the applicable modular standard used (including standards, such as T-TRAK, that may depict non-prototypical or fantasy settings), and is not evaluated to the Scenery Achievement Program Merit standard unless separately submitted for Scenery certificate credit as described in Section A.
 - e. Structures, Details & Animation (20 points) - Quality, placement, provisions for durability, and integration of structures, bridges, roads, vehicles, and visual storytelling elements. Includes mechanical and electronic animation such as moving machinery, vehicles, smoke or steam effects, sound-equipped scenes, IR- or sensor-activated features, and other dynamic elements. Scratch-built, kit-bashed, or modified elements and well-integrated animation receive higher consideration.
 - f. Presentation, Documentation & Public Readiness (10 points) Professional appearance, clarity of documentation, educational labeling where appropriate, and evidence of successful public exhibition and operation.
3. Submit a completed Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) which shall include the following:
- ☐ Written description of design intent, construction methods, and operational purpose.
 - ☐ Copy of the standard to which the modules were constructed.
 - ☐ Wiring diagram for each module.
 - ☐ Minimum of five (5) color photographs of each module.
 - ☐ Verification of public exhibition (Record and Validation form).
 - ☐ Evaluation form signed by three (3) qualified AP evaluators.

ECHOS

EAST COAST H O EXHIBITORS SOCIETY
MIAMI, FL



E.C.H.O.E.S is a modular model railroad club located in Miami-Dade, Florida, dedicated to building and displaying our HO scale model railroad layout. Our purpose is to enjoy and promote the hobby of model railroading and preserve the history of railroading in South Florida. The club was started in the summer of 1985, with the goal of presenting a HO scale modular model railroad layout for display at "The Harvest Festival".

Throughout the years, the layout has been displayed at regional conventions, four NMRA National Train Shows (Atlanta twice, Ft. Lauderdale, FL and Orlando), and other events in Miami Dade and Broward counties. We do running/operating sessions several times a year and welcome guests to join us. Membership is open and we welcome anyone who shares an interest and passion for Model railroading.

For more information, please contact:

Rick Diaz

rickdiaz@att.net

305 496 9266

Tracey Sanders

tassailor@mac.com

786 514 5667

Herb Ford

ehf640@gmail.com

786 375 1424





Northern Division

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We need your help!

Hello Northern Division!

Have you been feeling lonely?

Not feeling the love?

Superintendent Wanted!!!
Apply within.

You know that the greatest hobby,
model railroading, has given you so
much.

This is your opportunity to give back.

If you'd like to experience how giving back to the hobby
by volunteering can be a truly rewarding experience...

Please contact Andy Zimmerman @

ssrprez@nmra.org



Central Division

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Hello Central Division!

Welcome to October!
Let's Connect in Ocala!

Our annual region convention in Ocala is just around the corner this October, and I am incredibly excited to connect with many of you in person.

If you are attending the convention, please don't be a stranger. Come say hi, let me know which part of our division you hail from, and let's chat! I want to hear your ideas for the future of the Central Division. What gets you excited?

- Do you want to tour **local railroad sites and museums**?
- Are you interested in gathering for **modeling clinics**?
- Do you just want more opportunities for casual **camaraderie** with fellow modelers?

I am completely open to your suggestions, and I want our future events to reflect what you want to do. I am completely open to your suggestions, and I want our future events to reflect what you want to do.

A Request for Division Help (Expanding East)

Because our new Central Division spans quite a distance from east to west, I am looking for a hand to ensure everyone is well-served. I live on the far west coast of our boundaries in the Tampa Bay area. To make division meets a reality for everyone, **I need a volunteer or two based in the east.**

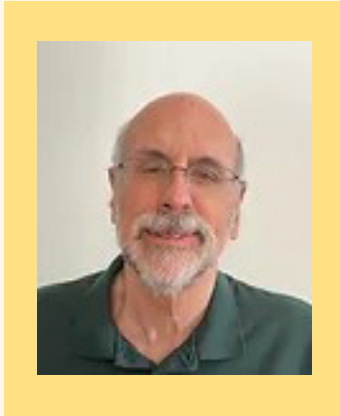
If you live in the **greater Orlando area or further east**, I could use your local knowledge to help find suitable meet locations and coordinate events. Realistically, I cannot support the eastern part of our territory with Division Meets without some boots on the ground. If you want to help shape our division's community, please contact me so we can discuss the possibilities!

Wrapping Up...

As always, I ask you to please work with me to do great things for all of us. See you in Ocala!

Thanks,

Mark Lewalski
Central Division Superintendent



Southern Division

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Hi, folks.

Hi, everyone. This is a final reminder that the annual Sunshine Region NMRA convention is scheduled for October 15-18th in Ocala. Registration is open on the Sunshine Region web site. Once you are registered for the convention, you can book the group rate for the hotel, although I don't know if there are any rooms left at the convention rate. If you remember, an October hurricane two years ago forced cancellation of the convention that year due to blocked roads, so keep your fingers crossed that things are quiet again this fall. Regardless, please be prepared, just in case.

As an early head's up to you, I will be away traveling the first 6 months of 2027. Mark Iannone, a friend and member of the South Florida Railway Museum will be filling in for me during that period, including assembling and submitting this column. As this transition gets closer in time, I'm sure that Mark will provide his contact information for those who need to reach him and as I do, he will reach out to collect updates.

In model railroad club news:

On the Gulf Coast, the ScaleRails of Southwest Florida club is located at 1262 Piney Street in North Fort Myers (zip code 33903). This is a well established and very active club with roughly 50 members. They have operating layouts in both HO and N scales. The HO layout models the southwestern US and incorporates an HOn3 operation located in Colorado. The modular N scale layout depicts the mid southeastern US. Their skills with scenery are impressive, featuring exact replicas of several iconic structures and well-known railfanning locations. Those interested in visiting the club may come on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday between 10 AM and 2 PM, with the exception of 11 AM-12 Noon on the 2nd Saturday of the month when the club members hold their monthly meetings. The club runs operating sessions on Monday nights, open only to members. For additional information, please contact the club president Jim Morse at jpmorse48@comcast.net or by phone at (239) 286-2499. The club web site is found at www.scalerails.org.

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There is also a club in Sarasota called the Sarasota Bay Model Railroad Society. Their layout is inside the Sarasota Toy Museum at 3580 17th Street, Sarasota, Florida, 34235. The HO layout depicts Vermont, which was its original location prior to the move to Florida. The layout was designed by famed modeler Dave Frary. The toy museum is open Tuesday through Sunday. It is unclear if you need to purchase admission to the museum in order to see the model railroad. Their web site is www.sbmodelrr.com and You can contact David Fontaine at (941) 685-2221 for additional information.

Scott Peal has informed me that he is also in the process of organizing a new club in the Babcock Ranch community. They have a Facebook account that you can check out for additional information

<https://www.facebook.com/babcockranchrailroad>. For additional information, please contact Scott at (239) 292-9156

On the Atlantic coast, The Florida Citrus Model Train Society (FCMTS) has just opened a small display at the Sunrise Civic Center. The Civic Center is located at 10610 West Oakland Park Boulevard, Sunrise, FL 33351. The display is open Tuesday through Saturday every week from 10 AM through 5 PM. The plan is to run the display right up until the third week of December. Admission is free for this exhibit. Please contact Ken Sargeant at (954) 253-0413 for any additional information. Their web site is found at www.fcmts.org.

The East Coast HO Exhibitors Society (ECHOES) club will be running every weekend in October at the Gold Coast Railroad Museum located at 12450 SW 152nd Street, Maimi, FL 33177. They are running at the museum from 10 AM to 4 PM, but please note that there is an entrance fee to the museum (see the Gold Coast Railroad Museum web site) which includes many displays of vintage full-size locomotives and cars. The exception to that is the first Saturday of each month when admission to the museum is free, so feel free to take advantage of that. The museum is holding a special Halloween Event in the evenings (6 PM-10 PM) of the weekend of October 23-24 called "SPOOKY ADVENTURES", with tickets available for purchase of the Museum web site.

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There is no indication that the model railroad will be available during this event, but I thought it was worth mentioning. The club is planning to reconfigure the layout this summer to improve the visitor experience and also to add plexiglass fronts to all the modules to eliminate damage being incurred by visitors. They do not expect this will result in closing the layout at all, as it can be updated while the museum itself is closed. If you are interested, ask about their operating sessions. For additional information on ECHOES events, please contact Rick Diaz, rickdiaz@att.net or Tracey Sanders, tassailor@mac.com.

The Palm Beach Model Railroaders (PMBRR) is located at the South Florida Fairgrounds, 9067 Southern Blvd, West Palm Beach, 33411. They successfully completed their big open house held during the Palm Beach County Fair. During the fair the layout is open all day, every day. During October they will be running their regular Tuesday evening operating sessions for club members. They can be contacted at PBMRclub@gmail.com for additional information. The club's web site is www.pbmrr.org.

Located at 1713 SW Castinet Lane in Port Saint Lucie 34953, the Western Bay Railroad is the On30 narrow gauge layout of the Port Saint Lucie O Scale Model Railroad club. The layout depicts the Denver and Rio Grande and Rio Grande Southern railroads. The club meets on Tuesdays. For additional information, please contact Al Sohl (Master Model Railroader) at als0622@yahoo.com and their web site is www.westernbayrailroad.org.

Also located in Port Saint Lucie is the Treasure Coast Model Railroad Club and Historical Society. It's located at 273 SW Becker Road, Port St Lucie, Florida 34953. The club is open to the public every Saturday from 10 AM through Noon and admission is free. Their web site is found at <https://tcmrr.org> and they can be reached via email to tmcrrclubflorida@gmail.com. Their facility is 1800 square feet devoted to a large HO scale layout using Digitrax DCC, dated to cover the 1940s through 1970s. Their web site has now published special extended hours for the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday season, so when the time comes, that's worth a look. The phone number is (772) 621-9636 but I don't have a specific contact name for them yet.

The South Florida Railway Museum (SFRM) at the Deerfield Amtrak and Tri-Rail station at 1300 West Hillsboro Boulevard plans their next open house on Saturday, October 10th with visitors welcomed from 11 AM through 4 PM. The HO scale layout is open and on display and the new N scale layout which depicts southern Florida is well under construction with all of the track already laid, almost all of the Tortoise switch machines operational, and much of the sophisticated electronics package close to completion. Trains are running in test mode now. Debug is taking longer than expected, and AI is being used to find and fix issues in the extensive software code. The custom software interfaces with Java Model Railroad Interface (JMRI) PanelPro, allowing the creation of an extensive centralized Traffic Control (CTC) display of the entire railroad as well as subpanels for the yards and switching areas. These displays can be viewed on a multiple display dispatcher desk as well as on iPads located around the layout. For younger visitors, there are wooden trains set out on the outdoor deck to keep the small children occupied with something more robust than the trains indoors. The HO layout team is currently finishing up their locomotive terminal and additional scenery upgrades are also in progress. The museum currently maintains a Facebook page in addition to the web site www.sfrm.org . For additional information, contact Bob Leonard, leonardstrait@gmail.com.

The SFRM is holding its annual train show and swap meet on Saturday, November 28th at the St. Paul Lutheran Church at 701 West Palmetto Park Road, Boca Raton FL 33486. This is a week later than in previous years, the Saturday of Thanksgiving weekend. Hours will be 9 AM through 2 PM with \$8 admission for adults and free admission for children up through 12 years old. Please contact Bill Steffen at btrain88@att.net or by phone at (561) 419-3676. The club itself will also be open to visitors on this day from 11 AM through 4 PM with both the HO and N scale layouts running.

That's all for now. Wishing everyone a wonderful autumn season.

Richard Berger

Southern Division Superintendent

South Florida Railway Museum

Come See the NEW "N" Scale
Layout



Home of the
South Farmington Rail & Mule RR
South Florida Regional & Metro



a new trackplan with an increased mainline

Follow us on our website www.sfrm.org and our Facebook page

**The Museum is Open on the 2nd Saturday of the
month, the following dates are for the 4th quarter.**

10-10, 11-14, 12-12 from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM

1300 W. Hillsboro Blvd. Deerfield Beach, FL
(The south end of the AMTRAK station in Deerfield Beach)