

Notes from the NMRA



Achievement Program

To get started in the Achievement Program, look at the “Golden Spike” award. The Golden Spike is the easiest and for many people, the first AP award they earn. It’s designed to demonstrate familiarity with different areas of the hobby, rather than expertise in a particular area. Here are your requirements.

Rolling Stock (motive power & cars)

Display six (6) pieces of rolling stock (scratch built or detailed commercial kits). The requirement is to “display” them. Contest points are not involved, just that they must be displayed (e.g., shown at your division meetings, set out on your layout, or a table in your home counts as “display”).

Your models need to show some extra effort. Building a kit straight from the box does not qualify. However, by additional painting, applying decals or dry transfers, adding extra detailing and weathering will qualify.

Model Railroad Setting (Structures & Scenery)

Construct a minimum of eight (8) square feet of layout. How much is 8 square feet of layout? Well, a typical module is 2x4 feet, and would easily satisfy this requirement.

Construct five (5) structures (scratch built or super-detailed from commercial kits). These structures may be separate, or one or more of them may be part of a single scene. The same comments apply here about the type of kits. The idea is to show that you can do more than glue a simple plastic kit together. Additional painting and weathering are good things to consider. Remember that "structures" aren't just buildings. Things like bridges and trestles also fall into this category.

Engineering (Civil & Electrical)

Three (3) types of trackage are required (turnout, crossing, etc.). All must be properly ballasted and installed on proper roadbed. You may use commercial flex track and turnouts or you may hand lay your track. The types of trackage can be just about anything: turnouts, crossings, and grade elevation (a change in elevation of the track) are all examples of “types of trackage.” Also, note the three types DO NOT have to be different. For example, just having three turnouts will qualify. The "proper roadbed" requirement can be met by laying the track on a raised roadbed, (such as cork) and ballasting it. The purpose of this requirement is to show that you understand roadbed profile, drainage, etc.

All installed trackage must be properly wired so that two trains can be operated simultaneously (Double-track main, single-track main with sidings, using block or DCC). This requirement is easier than it sounds. Notice the option for a single track main with sidings. This means that as long as you can cut power to the sidings individually, you can run one train, park it on a siding while you run another, then park it and run the first train again. This meets the requirement.

Provide one additional electrical feature such as a powered turnout, turnout indication, signaling, lighted buildings, etc. A powered turnout can be an Atlas turnout with a switch machine. Think in terms of anything that runs off the accessories terminal of a power pack.

Finally...

Not all the requirements have to be met on the same layout or even in the same scale. You may build rolling stock in one scale, a different scale for trackage and wiring and another scale for scenery. The important thing to remember is you must demonstrate the different skills required regardless of scale you build in.

For an entry form and any other questions, contact the division Achievement Program Chairman, Ben Bartlett at b3j2c@yahoo.net.