

Division Descriptions

We have two long pieces here. Howard Goodwin's excellent article from Scale Rails called "The Division IS The NMRA" will revive your faith that the divisions are where the rubber meets the road. We have with another piece from Scale Rails about "How Cincinnati's Division 7 came back from the dead." Revitalizing dormant divisions is an important problem for both regions and for the individuals who don't have a local group.

But before we get to them we have a number of shorter comments on divisions and how the function

Bill Kaufman

PNR—4th Division

By Ed Liesse

I'm a life member of PCR and also PNR now that we live in Washington State. I just wanted to share what we do here in the Fourth Division (4D) that compares somewhat to Coast Division (PCR). The real comparison is that Coast Division and 4D sort of surround bodies of water (San Francisco Bay and Puget Sound) which makes the division fairly large with water to get around.

In Coast Division they hold a meeting

once a quarter, which is a well done meeting as has been described in other mail. In 4D we have monthly meetings in various locations around the Sound. They follow somewhat the same format of a greeting and introduction of new guests, announcements, video library description and availability, tips and tricks, a show and tell time, what's new at the hobby shop (usually by one of the local hobby shops showing new items received) and then a break for refreshments and voting on the show and tells. After the break, there's a clinic presentation, followed by the voting results and then a drawing for door prizes. This usually occurs between 7:30 and 9:30 PM at the various sites. Members quite often attend more than one meeting. There's usually one or more in the first three weeks of the month. The meetings are open to NMRA members and non-members with the usual recruiting of the non-members to join.

PNR—5th Division

By Shirley Sample,

5th Division Superintendent

Just a little input from the 5th Division of the Pacific Northwest Region.

We currently have a little over 200 members in our division which encompasses Eastern Washington, Northern Idaho, Western Montana and part of the northeastern region of Oregon. The majority of our members live in the Spokane, WA/Coeur d'Alene, ID area and the Tri-Cities, WA area.

We generally have our annual meeting in April and have around 50 members attending. We have been trying to do a fall mini-meet in various parts of our division - first one was in Kalispell, MT and the 2nd one was in Kennewick, WA. At our fall meets we generally have between 40 and 50 people.

We are planning to do a fall mini-meet in the same format in the Lewiston, ID/Clarkston, WA area and hope to do at least two mini-meets per year.

We have a quarterly newsletter for our division, but have had problems getting an editor. Another problem we have been encountering is getting people to volunteer to be officers or to have their home layouts open. I would be open to suggestions on how to approach people so they would be willing to help out.

In the past we have had monthly clinics in Spokane during the fall/winter months and are hoping to do that again this year along with having a monthly layout visit. We have three 100% NMRA clubs in our division, two in Spokane and one in the Tri-Cities.

Our fund raising has been via raffles, charging a fee for mini-meets, and the membership money we get from NMRA and our Region.

For the past several years we have been fortunate to be able to use a Club House at a Mobile Home park for our annual meeting free of charge. This past April we charged \$10 for NMRA members and \$12 for non-NMRA members to attend and included for that fee was the following:

A very informative clinic on DCC installation and programming, our annual meeting, donuts, coffee, juice & fruit, a hot lunch of lasagna, salad, garlic bread, desert, and beverage. After lunch we had layout tours for the afternoon, 2 home layouts and 2 club layouts. We had planned a clinic on painting, but ran out of time so that will be held at a later date. We had door prizes and also a raffle for items we had purchased. The raffle generally pays for the items purchased plus a little more.

All attendees were NMRA members except two and they have since joined.

The fee charged generally off-sets our costs for lunch and refreshments and adds a little to our treasury.

TLR— Prairie Lakes Division

By Doug Harding

The PLD holds a one day meet twice a year, which is open to the public. We move the meets to different areas of the division. The meet will have clinics, model contest, with layouts and prototype tours if available in the area. We might see as few as 25 attend, or well over 100. It depends upon travel distance, weather, other conflicts, etc. A year ago we held a meet in a town of less

than a 1000. The highlight was the chance to walk the ground where foundations still exist of a former Great Northern division point roundhouse and service yard.

We also publish a quarterly newsletter, or did until we began losing editors (on our fifth one in four years). There have also been attempts at a website and email lists. Both of which are lagging because the people who started them are no longer doing it, often because they no longer live in the area. As Super I have done the newsletter this past year, plus maintain the email list. I have the "stuff" for the website, but have not done anything (can't even keep my own updated).

I have had the pleasure of attending a number of PCR conventions in recent years, where I have been a presenter. As an outsider I will say they are perhaps the best region conventions I have attended, worth taking a week of vacation to attend. I have attended over 20 nationals, but only a few Region conventions. My work schedule prevents me from attending most Region Conventions, unless I take a week of vacation. I lived in the Mid-Continent Region for a number of years, but their conventions were often too far away to attend and get back for work. I find the same with TLR.

TLR— Dakota Southeastern Division

By Terry Anderson, Supt. DSED

The Dakota Southeastern Division is located in Southeastern South Dakota.

We are an active organization, and have been adding new members every year. Our main fund raiser is a model railroad open house we host every October. This year will be our fourth. We try and rotate the layout visits each year to add variety to the visits. We have had great success, with the event, not so much financially, but in drawing new members to the organization. It is a GREAT recruitment tool.

I had the pleasure of attending the TLR convention in Hutchinson, MN and can & have given kudos to the organizers. It was great! As with any organization you will get out of it, what you put in. The DSED was basically stagnant for several years. New leadership came in and revitalized the group and got going forward and upward. (Thanks Alan!!) The lesson I learned from the stagnant period. We need leadership that is dedicated and really wants to put forth an effort in keeping the organization going. We also need to give the leadership a break by changing of the guard. I know firsthand how easy it is to get burned out as a division official. Ok enough rambling. :)

PCR— Multiple

By Pat LaTorres, V.P. PCR/NMRA

I think the thing that works best for us is that we seem to be blessed by a very sociable group of people and model railroading just happens to be another excuse to get together. A lot of times, rather than trying for a knock-em-dead divisional (or regional) meet, go for a lower key get together that happens to include trains. An operating session on someone's railroad is an excuse to get

folks together and enjoy each other. Maybe a bar-b-que with a table set aside for folks to show off models built or in progress. A big thing is to keep the option open for non-NMRA members to attend.

The most restrictive of our activities within the PCR is the Coast Division auction which is held in conjunction with our quarterly meets. Unfortunately, due to California's tax laws regarding sales tax, we need to restrict participation in the auction itself to NMRA members (as a "private" activity it is exempt from sales tax, if we allowed the general public in we would be required to collect the sales tax) -- though even here, one can have a friend purchase an item for you so they aren't entirely shut out. But prior to the auction we have at least two clinics in the morning (some which have been or will be presented at conventions up to the national level), which can be attended by non-members.

The Redwood Empire Division (RED), our smallest "main-land" division often has fifteen or twenty at their divisional meets, but with a raffle, a couple of clinics (EVERYBODY has something worth sharing!) and a model show and tell, it is still a great social activity. Even our Hawaiian Division, which had been hurting the past few years is starting to come back -- even though they have a distance issue which makes yours seem minor <g>. Getting 80 people to a regional convention sounds like a pretty good turnout to me. The key point of focus should always be quality over quantity. If you have a good "product", the people will attend.

For us, our annual convention is a chance for folks to get together and

recharge our modeling batteries. In 2011 (when the NMRA National will be in our region) our RED will be putting on a mini-convention of Friday, Saturday, Sunday --much the same as the Coast Division did when the National was here in 2000. Maybe invite in clinicians from outside your region to present a clinic or two -- offering them a place to stay with a modeler near the convention, or a shared room with a member of the region will help cut their costs. My wife and I took an extreme step to get Doug Harding to present a clinic at the 2007 PCR convention, we flew him in to preside at our wedding, so we could get a couple of clinics out of him -- a GRAND time was had by all! The key is to stress the fun factor.

Good luck,

(In light of the NMRA National's invitation to everyone, member or not, to attend the national convention a little clarity seems in order about what constitutes being open and inviting.

From my perspective, we always want to be open and inviting. Anything else drives people away, just the opposite of what we are trying to achieve. However, it is not as simple as that. It never is. There seem to be three pitfalls to be avoided.

First is a sort of "Who is in charge." A number of divisions have been tested by folks attending without joining the national and eventually feeling empowered and trying to be elected to the leadership. There are very few things that the executive documents of the NMRA say about the divisions but one of them is that there must be two officers (titles unspecified) and they must be members of the NMRA. You have to be a

member of the NMRA to hold any leadership position in a region or division.

Second concerns insurance. The insurance company is taking a bit of a flier on us because we don't have to specify in advance all our meeting places and dates. It is in a position where it might not hear about a catastrophe until well after it has occurred. This is just terrible for any sort of prediction of costs on its part. They get very twitchy about people who attend meetings but don't join after about the third meeting. Can't blame them. We would hate to have more restrictions placed on our insurance coverage or have it the company decide that the risk was too great and opt out. The more we can adhere to this idea of three meetings and decide the better for everyone.

Third involves commitment. There are people who buy their raffle ticket or pay their five bucks at the door and feel that they are supporting the organization sufficiently. It's not really true. None of that money filters back to the national organization, nor should it. Usually it pays for the hall and, maybe, some coffee. As in all organizations there is infrastructure to be supported. As a very minimum the insurance mentioned above is paid for by National. One can squabble about the specifics of who pays for what, but, in all organizations, there is some national overhead. If one was to go to church every Sunday and put two bucks in the plate, a fairly miserly amount, one would be contributing twice what the NMRA asks for its commitment.

One of the bottom lines in salesmanship is "Asking for the Sale."

Somebody has to walk up to the hangers-on and ask them to join, point out the "rule of three". Surprising how many will join.

Bill Kaufman)

PCR-Daylight Division

By Bruce Morden
Daylight Division, Pacific Coast Region

I am also in the PCR but not the Coast Division. I am in the Daylight Division and we recently started something in our division that I believe started in the Coast Division - Layout Tours outside of regular meets.

Sure we have had layout tours for years associated with regional and divisional meets, but recently the Coast Division set up four layout tours a year that are not associated with other events. They have named a division layout chair who has four assistants who are responsible for getting layouts in the four different areas within the division to be on the tours. The tours have been so successful that the Daylight Division emulated the model and now has had 3 layout tours of its own. It expands the camaraderie of the division outside of the regular division meets, encourages members to share their layouts, and (as a layout owner I know this one) puts a spark under the owners to work on their layouts so they can share them. I had over 60 people come by my layout in January on the Division's second layout tour. I also participated in the Division's third tour and saw some wonderful layouts.

PCR—Sierra Division

By Jim Long.

I am the Superintendent of the Sierra Division, PCR. I have been doing this job for a couple of years now and have 2 more years to go. We generally have 4 division meets a year. They are the second Saturday in Jan, May, Aug and Oct. On the second weekend in Nov we are one of 4 groups that sponsor the International Railfair in Roseville, CA. This is our major fund raiser of the year.

Our Division covers a large area. It is all of the northeast part of California from Modesto to Oregon and east of the Bay Area. We also cover all of Nevada except the 4 southern counties around Las Vegas. We move our division meets around the area. Our next Meet will be August 8 in Truckee, CA. This will be our summer picnic and all are welcome. We will be providing hot dogs, hamburgers, potato salad, chips and drinks to all that attend. There will be a model contest, I hope, a clinic, a couple of layout tours, and a visit to the Tahoe Donner Railroad Museum where they have some equipment on display. We will be at Donner Lake which is right next to the transcontinental railroad. You able to see the line that the Central Pacific built back in the late 1860s. It is still in use today by UP.

We are also hosting the Silver Rails 2010 PCR Convention that will held in Reno, NV. It will be on April 28 - May 2, 2010 and all are welcome. You can find more information at <http://www.pcrnmra.org/conv2010/>

I am also very active in PCR. I find the best part of NMRA is the friends

that I have made by attending the division meets and PCR Conventions. I have attended many national conventions as well but have made most of my friends at the local level. I feel that NMRA should do more to help the local level because that is where the membership growth will be.

PCR—Sierra Division

By Mary Moore-Campagna

Greetings! I'm the Sierra Division director in the PCR. Jim Long already gave an excellent summary of basically who we are and what we do (with which I wholeheartedly concur); so I'll just take this opportunity to add a few other thoughts about what makes our division work successfully.

Our signature fund-raising event is an annual event called International Railfair, which is a two-day collection of layouts, vendors, ride-on steam trains, swap meet tables, organization displays, and other railroad-related stuff of all scales and gauges. It's co-sponsored by four different groups (of which Sierra Division is one) and is held at the fairgrounds in Roseville, CA the second weekend of every November. The Sierra Division is responsible for recruiting volunteers to staff the ticket booth at the entrance and to run the time-saver/NMRA membership display.

While Railfair (like just about everything else) has been impacted by the economy and the receipts have been down from what they were in previous years, they still provide the funding for the division's operations.

One of the things I personally enjoy

about Railfair is that it draws volunteers from other PCR divisions, so our members (especially those who aren't able to go to conventions) get to talk to people from other areas of the region. During the last few years, we've done a pro-active outreach asking for volunteers, and I was gratified to see that last year we had some volunteers who had been Sierra Division members for a long time, but who had never come to a meet...and the even better part is that they've since come to other meets and become more active in the division and the region.

Because of our large geographic boundaries (a phenomenon familiar to many people here, I know), we also try to make a point of holding our quarterly meets in different parts of the region. It gives the people who live in that area an opportunity to put their layouts on tour, attend/give clinics they might not otherwise be able to, and put faces to some of the names they see occasionally.

We've been fortunate in that many members from other divisions often attend Sierra meets, which gives new attendees a broader perspective of the benefits of membership. One of the things that I believe has made the Sierra Division run so successfully recently is that a number of the leaders have previous and/or ongoing connections with other divisions. For example: Jim Long, our superintendent, was previously a member of the Coast Division and has introduced a number of new ideas (not to mention calling in a few favors here and there to get people to come and do clinics at our meets!). He also makes a point of including the entire division leadership team

(including the past superintendent) in brainstorming ideas and weighing in with opinions, which I believe makes for better planning and decision-making. And since my spouse is a past officer and current active member of the Redwood Empire Division (don't ask; it's a long story), I also have the benefit of some additional insights from other division leadership.

As part of our focus on encouraging our membership to become involved, we've been featuring "show and tell" sessions at our division meets where members can display their works (finished or in progress). They can describe how they built them and/or ask for suggestions from other people. Our most recent contest is a kitbashing contest, where the division purchased a bunch of identical kits and made them available to the contest entrants for a nominal fee: the idea is that each entrant is supposed to build the kit however they want, kitbashing to whatever extent they want, and then bring it in for display at our October meet.

It's an opportunity for people to participate and demonstrate/improve their modeling skills, regardless of their experience level or financial situation. It's a new venture, so we'll have to see how it works; but we have approximately 20 or so enthusiastic participants who signed up for it, so it ought to be interesting!
OK, end of soapbox (for now)...

MWR—Central Indiana Division

By Thomas Cain, Indianapolis, IN

I will say that the Central Indiana Division/Midwest Region is strong in numbers and we have regular activities, great attitudes and sufficient funding. We have three train shows a year that have the potential to earn money that can be turned around to support our Kids In Trains projects or clinic presentations at those Trains shows. We also have organized layout tours, and sponsored exhibitions of model train portable layouts at libraries or other community events. Our goal is the promotion of model railroading. It is a tricky thing to do when you are trying to help a dad and his son or daughter get started with their first train set, or on the other hand helping someone who has been in model railroading for a decade move from DC to DCC.

Our Board Members are great and do an excellent job in showing their enthusiasm and openness to everyone at all levels. One thing that we often tell people who are just learning about model railroading or the NMRA, we tell them that the National part of the NMRA creates standards to facilitate the hobby and to make things work. Our local organization will help to connect one modeler to another to learn from each other. Modelers have developed friendships and learned who they can go to for help through our organization. Modelers have had opportunities to go visit other folk's layouts through our organization. I look forward to hearing what works for others and we will show

what works for us.

For a start, I'll mention our Train Shows. Our Train Shows have Dealer Tables, Clinics, Modular Train exhibits, Model Contest judging for achievement points and popular contests too. I sometimes wonder if the Train show cuts into Hobby Shop revenues, but in our case some hobby shops rent tables and bring their own stuff. I also know that some attendees will go straight from the train show to the hobby shop if they didn't find what they wanted at our train show. However, I think the greatest portion of our dealers is the local guy who is trying to thin his model collection or the collector who enjoys having a large audience to sell from his or her collection. At our shows we occasionally take in a new NMRA member and the whole Board enjoys knowing that we have grown a little when that happens. The informal thing that happens at these Train Shows is that there are always chairs and tables for people to sit at and just chat about what they are doing on their model railroad.

LSR—Region 1

By Chris Atkins, Lone Star Region
Division 1 Director.

My division is roughly everything west of DFW airport. On the north side is the Red River. The south boundary is more or less a line between Brownwood and Cleburn. Somewhere out in rural West Texas is line where the Lubock/Amarillo division takes over.

We have about 160 members, and all but a handful live within 45 minutes of

Ft. Worth. The Lockheed-Martin club in Ft. Worth provides space for us to have a quarterly meeting. This usually consists of some kind of presentation. Usually we have some kind of clinic, but we've also taken the time to visit some of our local railroads and a few division operating sessions. We were also lucky to have Bobbie Hall speak and sign her book about a year before she passed.

Our division has been an active part of the North Texas Council of Railroad Clubs for 8 years. This group puts on a train show in Ft. Worth in November and one north of Dallas in January. The return from these shows is my division's main source of income. It is also a chance to promote the NMRA, LSR, our division and our division 3 neighbors in Dallas.

The division's other income source is the LSR convention. Every four years, the convention comes to the DFW metroplex. In 2005 it was hosted by division 1 in Ft. Worth, and in 2001 by division 3 in Irving. It also goes to San Antonio and Houston every four years. The fourth slot is a wildcard, and in two years it will be in Lubbock. Two years ago it was in Austin (Round Rock.)

This year we combined forces and had it in Irving again. We had 238 register for the convention which lasted from Wednesday afternoon until Sunday morning.

The LSR bylaws determine that the hosts get half of convention profits, with the other half going back to the LSR. This does not include things like raffles, which all go to the hosts. The two divisions agreed to split our share evenly.

We also received somewhere in the neighborhood of \$7000 in sponsorship and donations. A lot of this was for raffles, door prizes and promotion, but some of it was cash to offset expenses, which affects the division's bottom line. Anyway, that's what we have going on.

MWR—South Central Wisconsin Division

By Chris Roeben,

You could say that I am the big sucker fish caught on the line, and the hook is set deep. I am a Past Superintendent (and still on the Division BOD because of it), Newsletter Editor, Volunteer Coordinator, Picnic Chair, Director At Large on the Region level, Region Contest Co-Chair, and many other hats that I've worn over the years and I am only 38 yrs. old. But enough about me.

The SCWD covers 9 counties in South Central Wisconsin and is bordered by the Rock River Valley Division to our south, WISE Division to our east, Winnebago and Division to our north, and Thousand Lake Region to our west. The main population center is Madison, pop. over 200,000. Members come from as far as 45-60 minutes away to attend Division functions. The distance to our furthestmost boundary line is about 90 minutes on 2 lane roads, while the rest are accessible by 4 lane super slabs. Our members come from 6 different clubs from outside the NMRA. 5 of these are modular, and one is permanent in the basement of a railroad depot. The rest

call the SCWD their home club.

The SCWD holds monthly meets on the First Sunday of each month (except September when it's the second Sunday) September-May in the Madison suburb of Fitchburg. Every other year we have an auction for our December meet, May is our Joint Meet with our neighbors to the south in the Rock River Valley Division-MWR alternating between our location and theirs, and every January is our Rail School. Rail School is our clinic extravaganza with as many as 20 different clinics going on at one time in one large room. It is geared towards those new modelers that bought train sets for Christmas and don't want to just store them until next year and others curious about the hobby.

The monthly meets use a Greeting-New Member Greet-Announcements-Clinic 1- Break- Clinic 2- Break- Contest Awards- Door Prizes- 2 Layout Tours format. The two clinics are live clinics given by SCWD members or outside of division clinicians (thanks to the folks at Kalmbach and others from in and outside of the MWR), and are of modeling technique or prototype theme. Starting this next season we'll be incorporating videos into our clinic rotation as we are running out of new material/ clinicians. We were purchasing the Allen Keller Videos for the local library, however they went to a DVD only format and returned the videos to us for our tape library. Contests follow a theme that the past year and next coincide the AP certificates. The best part of our monthly meets is NO DUES, and being a 501(3)c we are open to all who enjoy the hobby of model railroading.

Our big fund raiser is the Mad-City Model Railroad Show & Sale held the 3rd weekend of February. This show is 90,000 sq. ft. of dealers, modular layouts, clinics, and exhibitors from Historical Societies, Museums, Railroads, and Operation Lifesaver. Average attendance is 11,000 people at the gate. Largest was 16,000 when Thomas the Tank Engine was a guest at our show a few years back.

We publish a monthly newsletter called the *Bad Order* that ranges between 16 and 20 pages per issue. In the summer we host an annual picnic that until this year was held at various sites within the division boundaries. We are fortunate to have two Grand Scale train operations. One is a 15 inch gauge operating museum train, the other a 24 inch gauge amusement park train. And one full size train museum in our division. The "kiddie" trains were very successful, while we didn't get to enjoy the Mid-Continent Railway Museum last year due to extreme flooding at their location. This year we are back in our own back yard in Middleton (actual city that hosted the 1997 NMRA National Convention) at a city park. The added attraction is inviting the local railroad (Wisconsin & Southern [WSOR]) to bring a couple of MOW trucks and equipment for display. And every spring we have the annual Awards Banquet to recognize the volunteers, and award the top contest awards in modeling and photography.

The SCWD also has an active Youth Group. They hold monthly meetings at a local hobby shop to do hands on projects presented by members of the SCWD and store staff. The group takes the hands on

idea to the Rail School and runs the Make-N-Take clinics for kids. Each child goes through 4 stations ballasting a piece of Atlas Snap Track, making a Woodland Scenics tree, putting together an Athearn rail car, and running a locomotive on a circular track pulling their just built rail car. Other clinics that have been substituted in include decal application and weathering with chalks. Our Youth Group also has its own 3x6 layout built to fit in a minivan that they set up at the aforementioned train show. The Rail School and Rail Show are their two recruiting opportunities besides recruiting their friends to join. NMRA membership is not a requirement to be in the Youth Group but we do try to recruit them. Some of our youth members are NMRA members and attend the National Conventions such as Ryan Lamb who was featured last year after the convention in Scale Rails working on an electrical project with the SR Editor.

Finally, so that the youth don't get all the fun of building something and showing it off to their friends we have the annual Project Contest. This activity is for both the youth and adults, and consists of making a diorama using materials supplied for a nominal fee that is refunded if you bring your completed model in for popular vote at the end of the year (usually April). Past projects included making diorama scenes using a 3 ft. piece of flex track and cork road bed. Diorama scenes using a DPM building kit (see Scale Rails article by Sean Hadfield on building a fire station from DPM kit). Dioramas using an Athearn boxcar kit that cannot be used as originally used by the railroad. Scenes using 2 Atlas bridge kits. This

contest has the added prize of gift certificates to a local hobby shop for the winners in the N, HO, and Youth divisions. Sorry not enough other scale modelers in our division as of yet. Our membership committee is starting to tackle that issue along with a couple others.

I know I covered a lot of ground here, and hopefully we'll be able help with information in future discussions. Let's not forget that this hobby is about having fun.

NCR—Division 1

By Fred E. Lux, Superintendent
Division One, NCR, NMRA

North Central Region covers most of the lower peninsula of Michigan, as well as parts of northwest Ohio and northeast Indiana. The region has about a 1000 members according to the NMRA database. The region publishes a quarterly newsletter, The Hot Box, in magazine format, and so far at least, has interesting content. We have asked each of the 8 active divisions within the region to provide articles for the publication, with different divisions responsible for different issues. We also try to publish division news in each issue. Currently we are transitioning from a printed publication to an electronic publication.

Region funding comes from the annual stipend from national as well as a \$7 head tax per attendee at the annual regional conventions. Annual regional conventions usually draw around 200 people. The region also charges a \$12 subscription fee to those who still wish

to receive the Hot Box in print format, rather than electronically.

The region has an annual convention in the fall. Each year, one of the 8 divisions is responsible for planning and hosting the regional convention. This responsibility is assigned on a rotating basis. A regional convention was not held in 2007 when the National Convention was in Detroit, and will not be held in 2012 when the National Convention is in Grand Rapids. In the North Central Region, most of the activity takes place at the Division Level, rather than at the region level.

The region holds at least one board meeting per year at the annual convention. Some years there is also a spring board meeting.

On the division level, I have just taken over as superintendent. I am also the editor of our division newsletter, the Train Order, and was general chair of the NCR regional convention held in Toledo in 2008. Our division covers northwest Ohio (the Toledo area) as well as the southernmost two counties of southeast Michigan. As mentioned by others, our division has virtually no funding. A train show is not an option since a local commercial enterprise sponsors four major train shows a year in the Toledo area. We do put out a donation basket at division meetings for those who would like to support the division, but no record is kept of who donates and who doesn't. Donation is not a requirement to attend the division meetings.

Our division holds nine monthly meetings per year, September thru May. Meetings are held on a Friday evening

and consist of a short business meeting, a show and tell table, a period for two-minute clinics (tips from the membership) and a main program. According to NMRA records, there are a little over a 100 members in our division. Of those, we usually get 30 – 40 members at a division meeting.

When I took over as editor of the Train Order, I personally went through the NMRA roster and contacted by phone every member of Division One that I did not have a good email address for. The Train Order is published electronically monthly, September thru May, and usually has one mid-summer issue after the annual division board meeting.

The division maintains a web site (<http://www.divisiononencr.com>) and maintains an archive of past issues of the Train Order starting with 2007, and a link to the current issue of the region publication, the Hot Box. Printed copies of the Train Order are mailed out by request only to active members of the Division who do not have access to email or the internet. Currently we mail out 6 printed copies per issue. The division covers the cost of duplicating the newsletter, in black and white, and postage for these six people. An announcement containing the date of the next meeting and a link to the current issue of the Train Order is sent out each month to all members of Division One with valid email addresses, regardless of whether or not they are active. Also, anyone outside of Division One who would like to these announcements can request to be added to the mailing list.

NCR-Division 9

By David Simmons, Superintendent
North Central Region Division 9.

Our division is pretty small, covering just Washtenaw County in Michigan, although we do pull members from points south and west, who don't have active divisions. Division 9 historically was the Ann Arbor Model Railroad Club and went inactive about 10 years ago with the passing of one of the founding members of that group. A few local modelers got together a few years back to jump start Division 9, and so far we have been doing ok. We now have no association with the Ann Arbor Model Railroad Club. As a matter of fact, I'm the only person in the club that is also active in Division 9. For some reason, that club has no interest in the NMRA.

We meet monthly from September to June, with show and tell and a clinic at most meetings. We currently plan to do an operating session and a layout tour each year, and are looking at a possible project based meeting as well.

I personally am relatively new to being actively involved in the NMRA, but have been a member since 2000 when I reentered the hobby after a 20 year absence. I attended the NCR regional convention last year and hope to attend the National next year. My personal goals are to learn what other divisions do and try to keep our group growing.

NCR-Division 6

By Glenn Joppich, Superintendent of
Div 6 NCR.

Howdy folks,

Guess I better get my feet wet here. I have held this position a little over two years now and was Asst. Super for four years before that. I am also Model Contest Chair for the NCR and have had that position for about four years.

Our division does not have a handbook and to the best of my knowledge has not had one since it was established in the early 60's. I am fortunate to have had some great Superintendents as examples and hopefully am living up to the high standards they set.

To raise money for our Division, we hold a one day model railroad show which is not a flea market nor do we sell anything at all. The members participate by demonstrating different parts of our hobby from track laying to building models and scenery. Jack Watson, the NCR President has mentioned this in past posts. The charge is 4 or 5 bucks and kids get in free. We get a couple hundred people attending each year. It does not make a ton of money but between that and hosting a regional convention every few years we are able to pay the bills which primarily involve printing and postage for a free monthly news letter.

Our division is run pretty simply... My prime goal is for the members to have fun. Meetings are monthly and we have around 50 members at any given time in attendance. Meetings consist of a show and tell, a history lesson, announcements, a clinic, and, if time allows, modeling questions. We try to keep business to a minimum.

PSR-Arizona Division

By Rick Watson, Arizona Division Director

In the Arizona Division, our geographic area is the entire state. This affects meet attendance. As Phoenix is the largest population center, the Phoenix meets have the greatest attendance. But meets in the northern part of the state (Flagstaff) or southern part of the state (Tucson) have less. And many members aren't interested in driving 100+ miles to go to a meet.

Inputs for all divisions are valuable to me, but I would also be interested in knowing what divisions with larger geographies do to increase attendance and involvement in the division.

In checking the NMRA website, I found the listing of regions and divisions as well as North America map with the regions listed. But, I haven't seen anything with a geographical description of divisions.

MER-Potomac Division

Potomac Div of MER has put on auctions, field trips to not so local places like East Broad Top RR, a power plant tour. Rail repair places abound and we get to visit them. Once a tour of Amtrak power generating plant.

West Division of SSR has a mini meet every quarter summer and winter, tours of local Tour ship facilities. During Potomac's early years we had a family picnic at Point of Rocks RR Station. An idea that works is to present MMR

Plaques at Division meets in addition to Region and National Banquets.

SER-Piedmont Division

By Howard Goodwin,

The Piedmont Division here in Atlanta just held its monthly meeting and had 114 members present including some visitors. We have a show and tell each month along with the theme of the month, do some quick announcements, present AP awards, then break for some fellowship time before the clinic is presented. This month we have our annual model contest where members can bring in models to have judged for AP. This generated about a dozen models, several of which won Merit Awards. We also have two home layout tours on the Sunday immediately following the Tuesday meeting.

We just kicked off a new project, a video showing some of the home layouts we've had on tour this year, very nicely done for 10 bucks if anyone is interested. It's 90 some minutes in length with 9 layouts, some of which will be featured during the 2013 NMRA convention here. The video is locally produced by one of our members in the video business, but it is NOT your typical Keller or Green Frog production. It is some great footage of some great railroads with some commentary and narration. It is a fund raising event for the Division and will be one of several more video's to follow. Maybe it will inspire some of the other groups to do something similar which can be good for them in generating some revenue.

Later this month we kick off our Annual Piedmont Pilgrimage, a home layout tour program celebrating Model Railroad Month in November. Because of the large amount of layouts on this year's tour (nearly 80) we had to back up into October to accommodate them all. Check out our website (www.piedmont-div.org) for details, schedule and photos.

MWR-Wise Division

By Linda Sukup, WISE Division Superintendent

We have monthly meets in the Wise Division. There are clinics given by the members and a clinic given by one of our members for the Youth that comes to the meets. It is hands-on. We meet at a hotel/motel in the city here and two of our meets take place out of the city.

The presentations are slide/movie, power point presentations or DVD showing. After all of the activities, there are two or three layout tours available in the area.

We have contests every month, too.

There is a raffle for those who stay to the end of the meet.

In November, we do not meet because of Trainfest, but start up again in December.

MWR-South Central Wisconsin Division

By Chris Roeben, SCWD Newsletter Editor

The South Central Wisconsin Division has held two meets so far this

modeling season. Our first in September drew a light crowd due to the beautiful weather allowing those with outdoor projects time to complete them, and this meet followed the fall meeting of the MWR BOD. October saw a more robust crowd including 2 new visitors and 2 recently new Rail Pass members attending. We also were treated with a couple of visitors from the WISE Division, 2010 National Convention Co-Chairs Reid Kahrs and Gary Children.

While I personally did not get a chance to view September's clinics I am sure they were great. The Region AP Chair, his brother, the Division AP Chair, and I were in the contest room judging two models brought in for Merit Award judging. Only one of the two passed, but I am sure we'll see the other one back after a couple of minor fixes to be re-judged.

October's clinics were both by the same person. Rich Mahaney, who many of you in the Mid-Continent Region and Eastern Iowa Division know, came down from near Detroit to give us two wonderful clinics. Rumor has it he'll be back for the 2011 Region Convention, and could be a 2010 National Clinician. His first clinic on Junctions and Crossings was very informative showing examples in both the modeling and prototype worlds. The second was on rail traffic and the Great Lakes iron ore shipping. Again another well put together power point presentation showing examples from both ends of the spectrum. Rich also convinced a past SCWD clinician and EID member Tom Persoon to join him that day at our meet.

Contests. Yes we have them. Besides the two AP entries in September, members brought in their Motive Power and entered in one of the four categories. October was a new theme and turnout was very light. Close to the Backdrop was the theme. Either building flats or those protruding a couple of inches from the backdrop was the intention. Now that everyone has had a chance to see the contest, entry numbers will be up next year.

After each meet we go and visit a layout or two. September had us over to Donn Tolley's outdoor G-scale railroad. Donn is on the 2010 Fitchburg Express Layout Tour (L3417). October had us on two more tours that will be featured in the Lake Junction Layout Tour (L4433) in 2010. Ned Ferguson's 2 rail O-scale and Harold Krietz's HO scale layout.

Our 3 modular clubs will be busy in November. All of them will be in Milwaukee for Trainfest. November 14 & 15. This is a WISE Division sponsored show and one of the best in the Mid-West. Second would be the Mad-City Model Railroad Show and Sale to be held in February in Madison, WI. This show is sponsored by the SCWD.

November is another SCWD meet month. We'll be meeting on November 1st. Yes, we know that attendance will be really light because some guy named Brent Favre and the Minnesota Viqueens will be in Green Bay at Lambeau Field to play football. Hey, at least FOX moved the time back for us to 3:30. Our meetings start at 1, so you have time to catch a clinic and get home in time for kick off.

MWR-South Central Wisconsin Division

I have two men that go out for the clinicians and the layout tours. They do an incredible job.

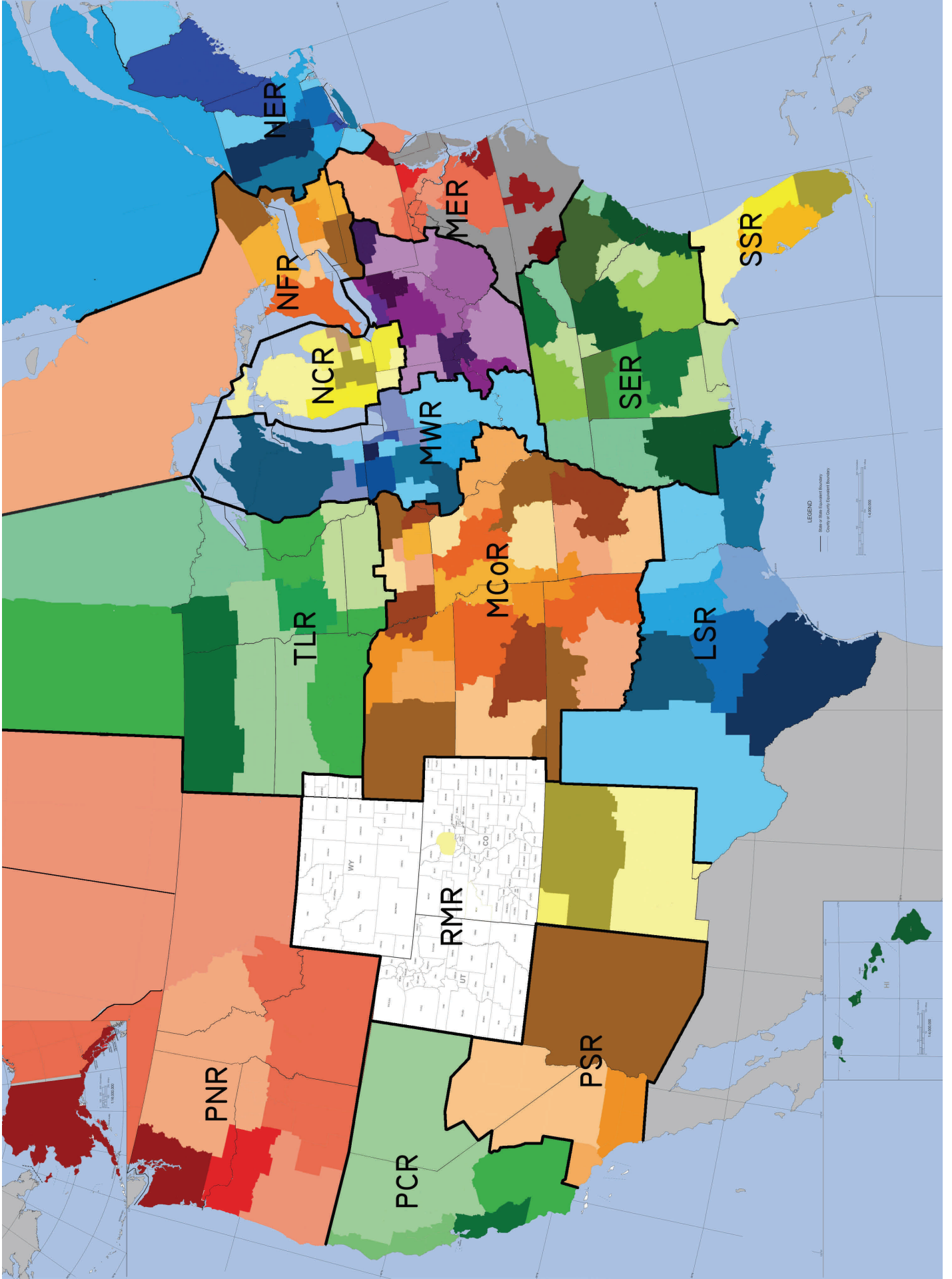
We do meet at a motel for a nominal fee that is picked up by the division. Our Board of Director's meeting takes place in a restaurant and this is also picked up by the Division.

All of funding that the Division takes on is provided by the proceeds created by Trainfest. Our Division is very lucky to have Trainfest.

We have a Board Member that is committed to the Youth Group and she announced at the Board meeting last month that she was offering this Youth Clinic to whoever wants to come and participate. It will be all hands on for the youth. The Youth Group will have a display at Trainfest. They are currently working on this.

Our contests are organized by popular vote and include different categories every month. Best of Show is another category. The winners are awarded gift certificates from area hobby shops. There are times that the Achievement Program kicks in and people can bring in things to be judged for points.

Our newsletter The Owl Car tells where the meets will be. This can be accessed by going to www.wisedivision.org



The Division IS the NMRA

Howard Goodwin

Over the years, great minds have assembled in the ever-important quest of preserving the NMRA for future generations of model railroaders. Volumes have been written, exotic programs have been created, and pronouncement of vast volumes of resources and information made available to the membership. Has any of this really made any impact on those un-initiated considering membership in the NMRA? Not really! How then, do we not only entice and retain those who would consider membership in our organization at the ever increasing cost of that membership? The answer is and has always been right in front of our noses practically since the inception of the organization. Very simply, it's called the Division.

"The Division by definition is a sub-group under the Region. It is essentially the link between the individual member and the NMRA. Every Region should have Divisions, organized in some fashion by geographical location for the most part, but somehow organized. Its function is to inform and educate those in these geographical areas of events and programs offered by the NMRA and to provide some activity or program for the NMRA member, and for the general public in an effort to recruit new NMRA members. Sounds really complicated, you say?

It took my moving to Atlanta, Georgia, after being in the NMRA for more than 20 years, to realize that the Division is THE grassroots organization of the NMRA. It is, in fact, THE NMRA. What happens at Division

level is perceived as being the NMRA. Why? Because the Division is in the face of the potential as well as the actual NMRA member. What takes place or doesn't take place at Division level makes or breaks membership, or any attempt to recruit members. Our Division in Atlanta, the Piedmont Division, is living and breathing proof that active divisions can be instrumental in helping to increase NMRA membership. There is not a railroading event that takes place in the Atlanta area where we have a membership booth that we don't sign up new members. Our success is a matter of

While I realize that not all Regions have the luxury of having a large Division in some areas, there can be programs offered even on a smaller, or sub-Divisional, scale in an effort to serve and entice membership. While the thought of cloning the Piedmont Division for the rest of the NMRA is nice. It is obviously not possible as the exact things we do may not work in each scenario, but our general approach can be used in part or whole by any Division. What it takes is people — people who are willing to give some time in order to help us save and support each other and grow our organization. In some cases, all that's needed is a little kick-start.

So what do we do in our Division that makes all this work? First off, we have a monthly meeting and program. We have a clinic given by Division members at each meeting dealing with some facet of model railroading. Our meetings will typically attract between 80 and 90 members, month after

month. While this represents more members than many Divisions have, it can be proportional depending upon how many members you can get to participate in such a program. Our Division membership is well over 400. Not every Division needs to hold a monthly program. It can be once every other month or so. The key is consistency. If you offer it, offer it consistently. That way the member, or potential member, will feel as if you are trying to meet his or her model railroading needs and will come to rely on the consistency. If you have such a program, you will attract more and more people and your group will grow.

Our monthly program also includes a monthly home layout tour, held on the weekend following the monthly meeting. This serves to help inspire and educate those who are in the process of building or considering building a layout. Questions are asked and answered, which cultivates the learning experience. Our program is eagerly anticipated by the membership, as evidenced by nearly 20 percent of the membership attending meetings, as well as the constant stream of visitors considering membership. We advertise our monthly program you can provide is better than no program at all and is well worth the time and effort. Any number of venues can be found and made available to hold this type of event, including churches, community centers, and libraries.

Another activity our Division sponsors is an annual train show. Vendors and dealers come from all over the country to display their wares while several modular model railroad groups participate and set up displays. We also have a model contest where models can be displayed, viewed, and, if desired, judged for AP awards. You may not be in a position to have such an elaborate affair in your division, but perhaps consider some sort of model railroad swap meet. It doesn't have to be a big operation, merely something you can do on a

regular basis to unite the local model railroad population and to attract other potential members.

Other possible activities include but are not limited to:

- Model railroad auctions, live and silent
- An annual program during November, Model Railroad Month
- Teaching the Railroading Merit Badge for local Boy Scout Groups
- Having Boys and Girls Clubs visit one of the local home layouts

The bottom line is that if our beloved NMRA is to survive and prosper, we need to make it happen on a local level and that is the Division. Show me an active division and I will show you a healthy NMRA membership. I know there are other active and successful Divisions in the NMRA, and we can learn something from each one of them. Most will agree that cultivating members is a whole lot easier because of the program* they are providing and the visibility of the NMRA that is created.

The Division IS the NMRA. I'll bet that if our less-than-active Divisions were to contact those active and healthy Division¹ for ideas and assistance, the support would flow like the Niagara River (on either side of the border, eh!). We have to help each other plant the seeds that will become the next generation of model railroaders



Blueprint for success

How Cincinnati's Division 7 came back from the dead

by Charlie Atkinson, MMR

I recently read a report that some Regions and Divisions want the NMRA National organization to provide them with funding to support their yearly activities and operation. In an ensuing discussion, members of the Cincinnati Division 7 of the Mid Central Region wondered why NMRA should do this. In these hard economic times, National has had to cut costs due to loss of membership, less advertising revenue, and increased costs to maintain the headquarters facility and (smaller) staff.

Based on our experience over the past 45 years, our members felt that each Region and Division can and should find a way to create funds for its own activities and operation. Taking responsibility for one's fate is exciting and empowering, and success breeds success. That is what happened in Division 7.

The Division disintegrates

After the NMRA National Convention held in Cincinnati in 1966, the club sponsoring the convention, which had a number of Division 7 leaders, pulled away from all leadership positions, and Division 7 disintegrated. Several of us felt a great loss due to this. I had recently moved to Cincinnati and was one of the convention volunteers giving clinics and supporting the sponsoring club in other ways. Just when I was getting really involved in the local NMRA, the whole thing blew up!

After a short while with no activity, some of us got together to see what could be done to reactivate the Division. There was no remaining leadership and no money, so we began to meet at a suburban school where I was a band director. We met in the band room, a free space. I was able to start a newsletter using the music department's duplicating machine. We had monthly meetings and elected a superintendent and other officers.

But we still had no money, and the Mid Central Region was a dues-free region. We did not want to charge activity fees or subscriptions, since that would automatically limit our market. At first we depended on donations and the proceeds from a small raffle to get enough money to mail our newsletter. We also passed the hat when necessary. There were times in those early days when we had less than \$5 in the treasury.

Our first show

Along with a local model railroad club that had recently been formed, we initiated some activities. Our first effort was to hold a show during Model Railroad Month (November) in a Cincinnati suburb where the model railroad club had its layout.

Our first show was in a small, one-room building. Admission was free, and we featured how-to displays, mini-

clinics, and some small layouts. We continued to hold the show there for a few years, but interest in the show was growing and we were bursting at the seams. An automobile dealer who lived in the community heard about our growing pains and offered his dealership for us to use for the show. He cleared out his showroom, service area, and body shop on Friday; we set up tables on Friday evening and held the show on Saturday and Sunday.

While the show was still free, we sold snacks and drinks to visitors who were lingering at our show for increasing lengths of time. We cleared about \$1000 the first year we offered snacks, and we used the money to establish a treasury. Because of the additional space available at the car showroom, we were able to invite local model railroad dealers to attend, not to sell, but to display layouts and do some how-to clinics. In later years, the car dealer allowed us to set up in his service bay, and we were able to allow our dealers to do some selling as well, but we required each dealer to have a running layout or some kind of educational display.

Another move – or two, or three – to larger quarters

After a few years in that location, the show had grown to the point that the local police were having traffic problems around the car dealership. We negotiated with a new vocational high school to use their facilities for that same weekend, which worked well.

We continued to grow, with the show attracting hundreds, then thousands of people. We were able to use their cafeteria facilities to expand our food

service, and although we began to charge a small admission fee to cover the expense of renting the school, the bulk of the money we received was from the sale of food. Our first-year net income from food was around \$3000, an astounding amount of money to us at that time. That money, as well as income from the new admission and table fees, was enough to finance our expanded Division activities through the year.

After a few years at the vocational school, a church contracted with the school to use the facility every week for their Sunday church services. So we again had to find another place if we wanted to continue having the fall model railroad show.

By that time we had enough money in our treasury to pay market rates for a place for the show. We negotiated a great rate with the Cincinnati Gardens, the former home of the Cincinnati Royals NBA team. At that time, the main arena was used by a professional hockey team and by the University of Cincinnati and Xavier University for their home basketball games. We just had to arrange the dates of our show to avoid dates the Gardens had games.

Some luck intervened at this point: The Gardens lost their hockey team and suddenly had two hockey rinks with no one to use the space. So they deactivated a practice rink and made it available for our show space. With the show in a familiar and popular venue, our attendance exploded, and as a result our treasury grew significantly. The later shows in the Gardens regularly brought in 6,000 to 8,000 people or more, and resulted in an annual surplus for the Division of up to \$10,000. We were

rolling!

After a number of years, the Gardens picked up a new hockey team as a tenant, and they needed to reactivate the practice rink. Once again, we were looking for a home for our show.

We moved the show to the Northern Kentucky Convention Center, located in downtown Covington just across the Ohio River from Cincinnati. This was a beautiful, modern – and very expensive – facility. Our shows during this time were very successful from the standpoint of attendance, show quality, and member and dealer participation. However, the rent was high and, since the show was in the fall, there were conflicts with parking for Cincinnati Bengals football games. The show attendees had to pay for parking in addition to the fee for the show.

These shows forced us to hone our management and expense structure as we tried to ensure that there was something left for the Division after paying our very large convention center rental. After three years, including two that lost money due to the high rent, we knew that we had to find a new, more reasonable location so that we could recapture the formula that had made the show such a success for so long.

Proving ground for Division leadership

Fortunately, we found a new high school north of Cincinnati. The rent was agreeable, and there was plenty of free parking. We had to work around the high school football schedule, which required moving the event to a weekend in late October when there was no home football game.

For all those years, even when we were in northern Kentucky, the show had continued to grow, and so did our Division membership. We started with a small group of around 25 at those first band-room meetings in the late 1960s, and by the late 1990s we had around 350 members.

Everyone knew that the financial independence of the Division, as well as its extensive activities and programs, hinged on the continued success of the show. For this reason, a great many members were willing to participate in working – setting up tables, manning the doors and admission tables, and whatever else was needed.

When one member was forced to give up some administrative tasks necessary to the success of the show, such as taking vendor registrations, allocating space, and making the set-up diagram, others volunteered to take his place. Whenever the call for help went out, there were plenty of members who were there to help do whatever needed to be done. The show also became a fruitful proving ground for Division leadership, and most of our Division leadership for the past 40 years has come from the show management team.

With the stable income from the show, as well as an annual flea market that was added in the early 1980s and is held in March, we were able to support a number of other activities. They include paying travel costs for well-known hobbyists to give clinics at some of our monthly meetings. As a result of this, we have 80 to 100 members and some visitors at each of the monthly meetings, which are generally held on the second Sunday afternoon of each month in a

rotation of locations around the Division.

We have set up programs where some of our Division surplus proceeds go to finance various model railroad promotional activities, including the local Boy Scout Railroading Merit Badge programs. We also buy a number of introductory model railroading books each year and place them in the 70-plus public libraries located in our division.

In addition, we have helped the National NMRA and the Kalmbach Memorial Library with various projects, and we have sponsored the local public TV stations' acquisition of various railroad- and model railroad-related shows. We have also donated sale items and other assets to new divisions in the MCR to help them establish themselves. It is our goal each year to spend as much on hobby support as we spend on our own activities.

We also initiated a custom-decorated car program in the early 1970s, and we have developed and sold a number of cars painted for model railroads, including the Virginian & Ohio and the Allegheny Midland, and for a number of prototype roads, including the C&O, L&N, Southern, Clinchfield, NYC, and others. Like all our other activities, the car program has been run by a cadre of knowledgeable, dedicated, and enthusiastic members over the years.

A tale of two conventions

Along with all of the activities and shows, Cincinnati Division 7 has hosted a number of Mid Central Region conventions over the years. In 2003, I had just come off 15 years as a national officer, including president, of a large international RV association. When the

Division superintendent found out that I was no longer traveling around the country six months of the year, he asked me if I would chair our Regional convention. I had chaired both the 1972 and 1977 Regional conventions, but that was almost 30 years ago! A competent and enthusiastic convention committee was already in place, so I took on the job.

Knowing that Regional conventions can be iffy for funds, attendance, and activities, I decided to work on the idea of creating a budget that would break even or had a little surplus left over. I had about twenty members on the committee, and all but one had email, so we did most of the organization by email with very few face-to-face meetings. Each person on the committee had specific things to do, and everyone did his or her job on time and without any prodding. As a result, we had a successful Regional convention and had a much larger surplus than any of us expected.

Then I was informed that the original chair for the 2005 National Convention had been forced to resign due to business commitments, and that the vice-chair had just accepted a National NMRA office, and I was asked to chair the National. I knew that would be a much larger job than the Regional, and I asked the committee if they would stay on with me. They all accepted. By then, the committee had 24 members, and all but one had email. We also had a lot of help from National's capable and experienced convention team, especially Henry Jordan.

Again, I was very frugal in setting a budget, but we had much more to consider when planning than we had for

the Regional. In the end, we had what we felt was a good and successful National convention. Because of being very watchful of our income and expenses, we ended up with a very sizable surplus. With all of our previous shows and with the Regional and National conventions, the Division 7 treasury was in a great position. As a result, our Division was able to give the National Office a \$25,000 donation earmarked for the new online database system that is now being rolled out.

The moral of the story

The bottom-line reason for all of the Division 7 successes between the post-National Convention meltdown in 1967 and the successful 2005 National Convention is the consistent leadership of the Division, clear goals, and the willingness of our members to jump in and help wherever help is needed.

One area where our fortune has not been entirely of our making is in Division leadership. Although it is not all that large a town – Cincinnati currently ranks somewhere in the 30s in terms of metropolitan market size – the Cincinnati area is blessed with a disproportionate number of very successful national corporations, including the headquarters for Procter & Gamble, Macy’s (Federated) Department Stores, Toyota U.S.A., and Kroger Foods, as well as the General Electric Jet Engine Division, Great American Insurance, and many other large and well-managed companies. Our leadership has come from a cadre of managers from these businesses, as well as from a group of talented members from other walks of life, whose abilities have been recognized and nurtured over

the years. Part of our success has been due to our “farm system” method of recognizing and developing talented members so that they are ready for the “big leagues” when their time comes.

While every area is different, I am convinced that the possibility for growth, success, and enthusiastic member support is present in almost every Division’s situation, around the country and around the world. Wishing that someone would do something for you is boring, debilitating, and depressing. But working together to figure out ways to contribute to your Division’s prosperity is fun, both for the Division’s members and the people it serves.

Running an interesting and successful Division benefits not only the membership of the Division but also the entire model railroad hobby in your area. All you have to do is to remember where you came from, why you’re doing what you’re doing, to whom you owe your success, and what you need to do to spread the success around.

What Division 7 has done over the past 43 years can be done by any other group if everyone is willing to pitch in and not let egos get in the way. Volunteerism has been, is, and will continue to be the key to the success of the NMRA.