

# Trails, Rails, & Tales



September-October 2025

Volume 11 • Number 5

The Official Newsletter of the *Chisholm Trail Division* of the **NMRA**

## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

BY PHIL AYLWARD

The NMRA is developing a standard for Region and Division Logos, and requires Divisions/Areas to decide on an identification method (name or number) by September, and inform Marty Vaughn for the NMRA National Office.

We were to have our Division/Area to decide whether to use Division Name or Division Number for the logo and provide the consensus to Marty Vaughn.

I took the liberty and told Marty we will use the Division name.

Thank You

– Phil

## FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK

BY CHARLIE MONCKTON

On July 5, I had the pleasure of attending the semiannual train show hosted by Spring Creek in Deshler, Nebraska. Our division was well represented with at least twelve members in attendance. If you have not ever made the trip to Deshler for the show or to visit Spring Creek's showroom, I highly encourage you to do so. There were several vendors present and lots of modular layouts in operation from several states in the region. The concessions were provided from families in Deshler and were themselves worthy of the trip. I would have eaten a few of the pieces of homemade pie, but the group I was with was ready to leave and move to nearby Belvedere, Nebraska, for

### TRAILS, RAILS, & TAILS

is published bi-monthly.

It is sent to members of the  
Chisholm Trail Division of  
NMRA

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Submissions for publication  
are strongly encouraged.

some rail-fanning on the Union Pacific. When we arrived, we were greeted by a very enthusiastic local lady who lives across the street from the Railroad Museum, park, and viewing location. She was full of local information and had buttons and stickers to share with us. As sometimes happens to me, trains ran twice that day – just before I got there and just after the two hours I was there. I do plan to go back to this great viewing spot any time I am within fifty miles of it. I have included a few pictures of our trip.

–Charlie









## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

BY JIM MARLETT

Since the last issue of Trails, Rails, & Tales, I had the pleasure of visiting Len Wigton's layout and Len was nice enough to send me an article for this issue. I really appreciate it and want to remind everyone that you can do the same, even if it is a "Plywood Pacific" with little to no scenery or even if the tracks aren't all in place. I can assure you that other modelers are interested in what you are doing. At the very least, I am.

One thing I learned at Len's was that a background hillside I had always assumed was bushes from the pictures I had seen on Facebook were, in fact, bumps that naturally appear from insulating foam sealant. He cleverly added scenic material to them and, voila, he had a sturdy, light weight backdrop with bushes.

Terry Ross sent a report on the modular group and their set-up in Olivet Baptist Church's gymnasium. I went to see it on the Saturday it was available for viewing. I continue to be impressed by what they are doing and love to visit when they're set up.

The Mid-Continent Region Convention was held just before I had to put this publication to bed, so there is a report on it. I hadn't been to one outside

of Wichita and I have to say, I really enjoyed it. I hope someday we will host one again.

Back in my basement, the ol' San Juan Southern received some work that looked like progress, despite my long suffering wife having to help me lift things due to my ailing back. I can assure you that the work sessions were short.

The roundhouse was glued in place and the tracks connected to power. The turntable was finished and functional except for still being finger operated, and the coaling tower had a bunch of really fiddly work done to it. It still needs more and all of that is fiddly, too.

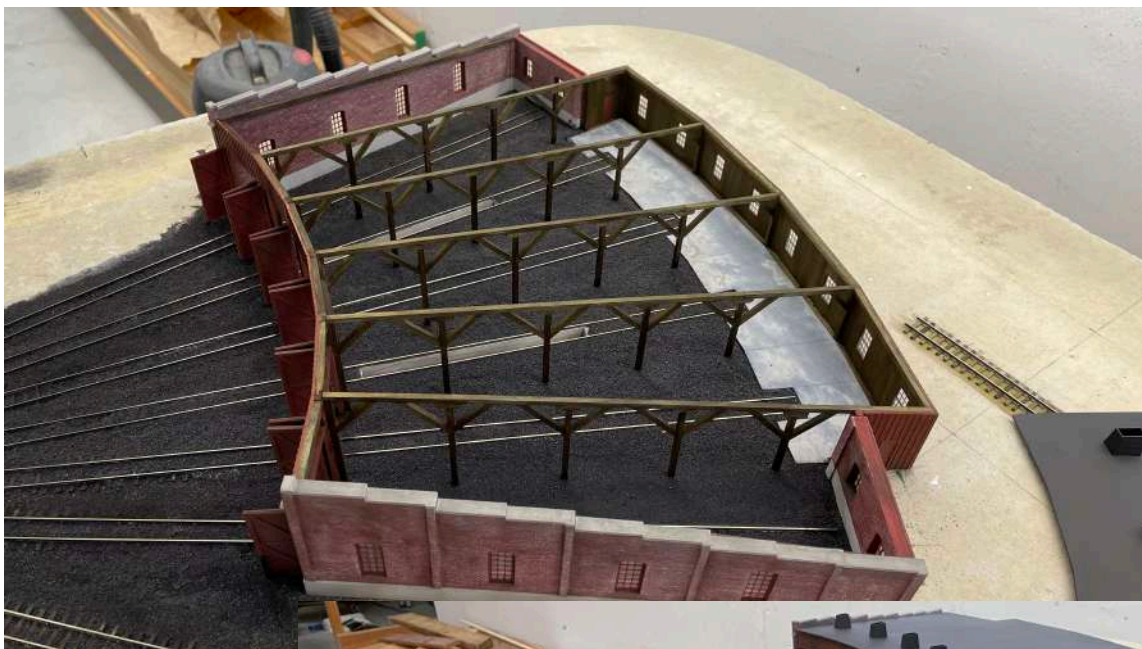
I did have a major do-over when I ballasted the interior of the roundhouse with finely ground coke (the kind you burn, not the kind you drink), which looked a lot like an unpaved roundhouse floor, but conducted electricity. That is healed now. I recently discovered that the cinders I collected from the Rico, CO engine house were not conductive and looked good when finely ground, but I'm not sure I have the wherewithal to do the roundhouse floor over another time.

— Jim



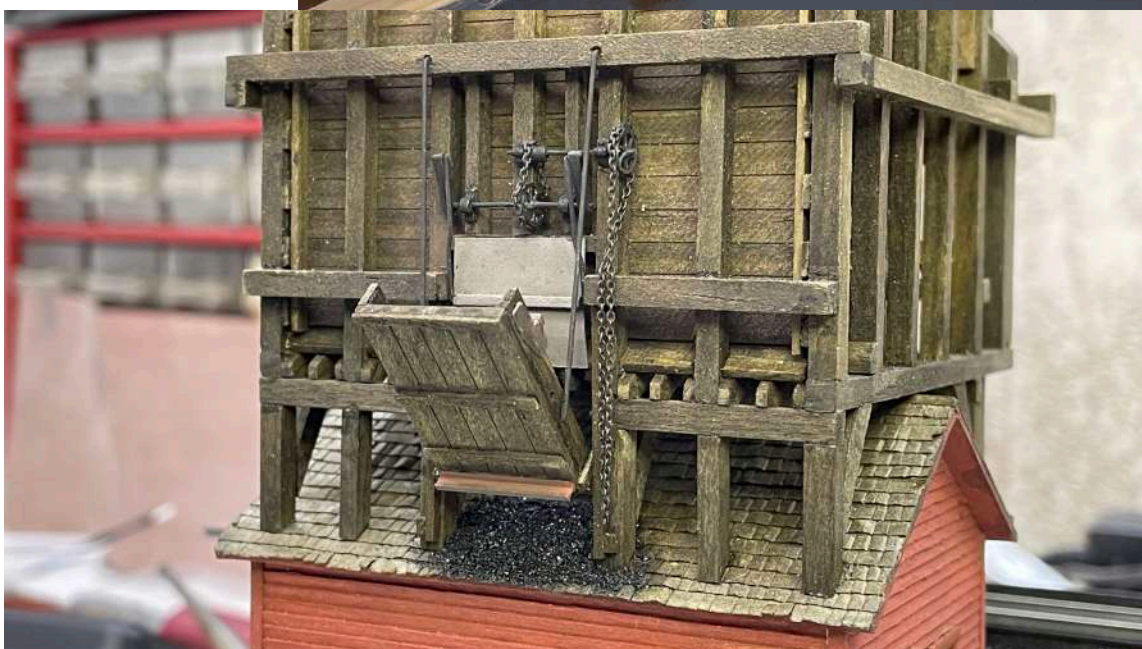
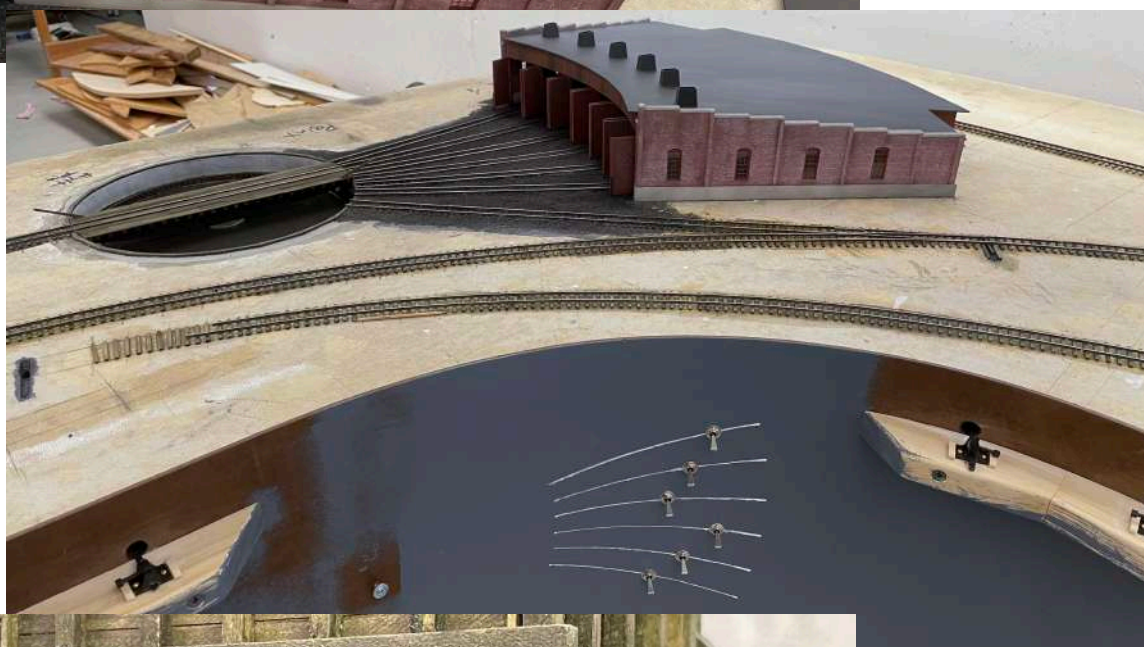
*A section of Len Wigton's bumpy foam hillside with the bumps converted to bushes. Looks great!*





*Back in my own basement, the roundhouse is glued in place and ballast is down. That's a long story that members of our Facebook page heard all about.*

*The turntable is pretty much done. It and the roundhouse are wired and working. Toggle switches activate each track. Scenery is still needed in the back where it will be difficult to reach once this section is in place.*



*The rather complex coal chute and gate mechanism is complete on the coaling tower. Now I need to get some platforms and ladders in place as well as a "steel" protective sheet on the front of the hoist house.*



# DENVER NEVADA PACIFIC

BY LEN WIGTON



*Len's favorite locomotive is the SD40T-2, "tunnel motor." This is one of the first of those that was purchased about the year 1983 and then painted into the usual DNP scheme.*

I started my HO scale layout over 40 years ago. I never followed any rule book; I just took notes from other modelers at that time. Originally, I called my railroad the "Denver and Pacific" and planned on only running between Denver and Grand Junction. Living in Los Angeles, I hung out with other HO scale guys that I met at the Van Nuys Train store. I merged my tiny railroad with another guy's Nevada Pacific and my system became the new Denver Nevada Pacific. All others in the group only ran steam locomotives and preferred to model the 1930s and 1940s. I chose to model the "Modern Era" with a now merged railroad from Denver to the West Coast. But my modern era kept creeping forward, so I then settled on the era of 1980 +/- a few years.

My choice of location was simply my favorite part of California, Mammoth Lakes. Before that

it was going to be Silverthorne CO, but I was now a CA resident. I named my town "Rock Wall" because a view of the Sierra Nevada Range from the east appeared as a gigantic wall of rock. I visualized a small town on a major east-west route that would see both through trains and also receive local deliveries. Our small California group did operations, mostly as if we were rail fans rather than as individual dispatcher and operators of locomotives. Therefore, I still prefer operations as seen by a rail fan, rather than by operators.

To this day I tend to run operations to basically entertain myself. Whenever visitors view my layout, I simply run either a DC powered train or a DCC powered one around my closed double loop. This is what I refer to as the "Train Show" mode. Sometimes, I will show my visitors how I can pull the locomotives from the train and

replace them with another set. I once had magnets at a specific location, but they did not always work well to disconnect, so these days I manually uncouple. However, I like to maneuver and park one set of locomotives and then run a second set of locomotives to take over the train, while I am only using the controls. This “no-hands” control does usually impress visitors. Any more detailed operations just bore everyone except me, even other model railroaders.

Like most all model railroaders, I have multiple unfinished projects. My worst in this category is all of the boxcars and other pieces of rolling stock that were never finished. Many are painted the basic color but have no lettering. I have concentrated mostly on painting and detailing the locomotives. My current paint scheme in the 1980 era is usually the large “billboard” white letters “DNP” on a deep cyan painted long hood with a gray top. In my early years in California, I painted a number of the

Athearn model SD45 and the Athearn U30C and U33C models. These were usually the easiest to obtain from the local hobby shops and train stores. Then about 1982, Athearn introduced the SD40-2 and the SD40T-2, both becoming my new favorites.

After retirement, we bought a house in rural Butler County KS and I moved nearly my entire layout piece by piece from Andover to the new location. The current layout is a little smaller than before but easier to manage. Rather than having the light gray ballast as before, I added a dark maroon ballast to allow photos to not appear as “washed out” as on previous layouts. My town site was shortened somewhat, and not all previous features would fit. Also, my basement wall that was previously used as a backdrop no longer was available, so I created a backdrop hill to separate the town site from the staging yard portion of the layout.

– Len



*Control panel area. Computer screen can be displayed on the large wall monitor. Control board is used for switch control and DC locomotive control. DCC locomotives can be controlled by computer, remote wired and wireless – even by a modern phone. A program track is available for DCC locomotive programming.*





*Rock Wall Post office sits alongside the depot siding. Of course, the town of Rock Wall is fictitious. It is situated on the east side of the Sierra Nevada range, just before a grueling 3 percent grade west up the entrance to Mammoth Tunnel.*

*Len, next his Pontiac GTO, is waving to trains passing by on the mainline. (Len really did have a car like the one here.) It is the year 1979 and passenger traffic ceased long ago, but the local dispatcher next door is still in control of the yard.*



*The Rock Wall yard usually has a steady supply of locomotive power available for substitution or for mid-train helpers or rear pushers. The SD45 number 2302 was likely one of the first to receive the DNP "Billboard" paint scheme.*





*It took a few years before Len finally “kit-bashed” a quick-concrete facility in the tight area of the layout.*

*It must be the year 1986 as a Santa Fe SD40-2 in pre-merger colors has been detoured over DNP rails on its way to the California Bay Area. Both units were easily made into DCC units by way of the Athearn installed “Quick plug.”*





# MODULAR GROUP REPORT

BY TERRY ROSS



*This is the biggest set-up yet. It's at our meeting place, Olivet Baptist Church. (Photo by Rick Coble)*

On Saturday and Sunday August 9th and 10th, we were able to set up our modular layout at the Olivet Baptist Church. Fortunately, they asked to set up in their gymnasium room on the basketball floor. We brought everyone in the club with a module. Our layout foot print was 20' wide x 44' long with our U-shaped center modules. If we didn't set up the U-shaped center and put those modules on the outside rectangle, the layout would have been 20' x 64' long. We have 168' of double track main line when it is set up like last weekend. As you can see in some of the pictures I sent, we can and do run some long trains. We also have plenty of action to see as we sometimes have three or four trains on each track running at the same time. Rick Coble shot a really cool video of the entire loop with two trains running east to west on track 1, and at least three, sometimes four, trains running west bound on track 2. Rick is working on posting the video on our web site or on our Facebook account, but the length of the video has posed some problems. I'm sure he will find a way to get it posted. I have sent some pictures of the trains all meeting at one point with the main lines full, and trains on the sidings as

well. We had plenty of time on Saturday to run another ops session for those interested. We had four teams of engineer and conductor crews all operating at the same time, as well as a couple of thru trains running on track one. Operating sessions using take about 2 1/2 to 3 hours to complete. In addition to running a lot of trains, we have some members with some very nice equipment, both power and rolling stock. Check out the pictures to see some very nice consists of Jeeps and SD 40's. If that's too modern for you, check the pictures for all the steam activity running this weekend. One of our club members came over with a very nice Amtrak train to bring us back into the present time period. We welcomed him to join in, but we made him wait on some sidings while the money-making freight trains pushed by. A couple of our retired railroaders said that's "real railroading." We also had a member stop by with his wife, and he ran trains with DCC for the first time. They are both very interested and hope to see more of them at our next show. A good time was had by all.

We had such a good time, I almost forgot to tell you about the folks that came to see the trains.



Sunday morning, we were open after the 10:00 services ended. We started preparing Trains around 9:00 so we would have at least 4 or 5 trains running when people began coming in. We tried to stay quiet so as not to disturb the services and to not get the children too riled up for church. That didn't work very well, as there are six or seven large glass windows in the main hallway that open directly into the gymnasium. You could see a lot of little heads and hands pressed against the windows as moms tried to pry them loose to attend church services. Everyone seemed to have a nice time and stayed quite a while. We were busy from 11:00 till around 1:30. Good exposure

to several hundred people that aren't already model railroaders.

Our next display will be at the Toy Train Club Show at the Cessna Activity Center here in Wichita, October 25th and 26th. Then we also have a display showing at Pine Village in Moundridge on November 15th and 16th.

Again, we would like to invite everyone to come out, bring a friend, your favorite train or rolling stock to run, and most of all just join us in the "Fun of Model Railroading." See you at the next show!!

—Terry

*The after church crowd gathered around to see what was going on. We hope we sparked some interest in model railroading.*



*It was certainly not the typical after services activity.*





*Saturday we had the chance to operate and just run trains with the as expected small drop-in crowd. It was a fun time for all despite the expressions on these participants. They must have been concentrating on the crowded multi-train meet.*









# MID-CONTINENT REGION NMRA CONVENTION

BY JIM MARLETT

This year the Mid-Continent Region (MCoR) was having a very difficult time finding a Division host. The solution was to combine the convention with the Turkey Creek Train Show and shorten it to make it more affordable. What resulted was a just about right convention in my opinion. Chisholm Trail Division was represented by Dean Lippincott, Jim and Shirley Ann Hogben, and Patty and me.

Due to conflicts, Patty and I couldn't go up for the "early bird" activities on Thursday evening. Instead, we drove up early Friday morning and went directly to the Missouri Model Railroad Museum to visit the Missouri Model Railroad Club's layouts. While there are N, O, and G gauge layouts in the museum, the premier layout is the HO layout. All I can say is WOW! It is far from finished, but there was plenty to see and hear about. First off, it is just huge! It is on a scale of the Colorado Model Railroad Museum's layout, but considerably different in landscape and track plan. Dean Lippincott was there and being shown around by a club member, so Patty and I joined in. One thing that particularly impressed me, although we didn't get to see it, was an enormous backdrop created by AI. Having just ordered a backdrop that was sized outside the norm and not completely as I would have liked it, I slapped my head and said a few "magic" words wondering why that hadn't occurred to me. I would not be surprised if AI backdrops became a trend in model railroading.

After checking in at the motel, I attended clinics while Patty went shopping in Kansas City. I had brought some of the Stainless Steel passes our family had churned out to give to some of my Kansas City modeling friends and was talked into entering one into the pass contest. I'm glad I did. It took first place in the category!

There were six possible clinics that afternoon and evening with time to attend three. Emphasis was on

the Kansas City Southern. I took in "Historical Review of KCS's Beginnings" by Bill Humenczuk, "Pictorial History of the KCS's Motive Power" by Terry Lynch, and "Historic Restoration of the Pacific RR Station in Kirkwood, MO" by David Lowell, MMR.

That evening was a desert bar and video of nighttime operations on Jim Eudaly's fantastic O scale Hinton Division of the Chesapeake & Ohio. It was a nice way to chat with a few folks and cheat on my diet. A low carb adult beverage and half-a-slice of pie did that for me.

The next day was the Turkey Creek train show at the Shawnee Civic Center, layout tours, and the final banquet, but it started with Dean Lippincott and I sharing the proxy duties for Phil at the MCoR business meeting. Two things struck me in the meeting. First was the vote to divide an existing inactive Division into two currently active Divisions. It made me think that Montgomery County could be moved into Chisholm Trail Division, which would make the Hogbens official members of Chisholm Trail. The other was the re-branding of NMRA, which meant that not only was NMRA's logo changing, but Mid-Continent Region and Chisholm Trail Division logos would change as well. They wanted to know whether Divisions preferred to be known by their number or name. I can't imagine not wanting to be known by name, but we didn't take action on it. I left early because the one clinic I absolutely did not want to miss that morning was Dean Smith's "River/Waterfall/Log Pond Clinic." Dean models the East Tennessee and Western North Carolina narrow gauge. I have heard him present a number of clinics and he is simply one of the best presenters out there.

The Turkey Creek Train Show was a smaller event than the Wichita Train Show, but it was still



a quality event in a very nice venue. There was even some narrow gauge stuff there, but I managed to get out without spending a penny. Because the other Clinics were of less interest to me and I had pretty well covered the train show itself, I decided to rescue my wife in the hotel room and eat a nice low carb lunch. After a short rest, we headed out for the layout tours. There were four, but we only had time to get to three. Luckily, the one we skipped I had seen before.

First was the must see O scale layout of Jim Eudaly. Since it was a long drive, we left the hotel in time to arrive just as the tours officially began. This is jaw dropping layout! It models the Hinton Division of the Chesapeake & Ohio. It is located in a free standing 35ft x 50ft building in Jim's backyard and represents the railroad in the fall during the steam to diesel transition era. It is fully sceniced, signaled, and features scratch built structures. Two dispatchers use a rebuilt real CTC machine to align routes and clear signals. Track heights vary from 20" to 68" above the floor. I'll let the pictures do the rest of the talking.

From there we went to Mike McLain's HO scale M-K-T Northern Division. This was another big one with 220ft of mainline and scenery is

about 70% complete. Aisles were plenty long with switching opportunities galore.

From there we went to Gary Davidson's ON3 Cedar Gulch & Northern. I'd seen this one in June at the Kansas City Narrow Gauge Annual Meeting, but it deserved a second look. It fills two rooms for a total of about 850 sq ft with about 450ft of mainline on two levels. Although one room is about 90% sceniced, the other is only 10% complete.

The one layout we didn't visit was Mike Fyten's S scale Kaw Valley RR. I wish I'd had time, but the two hour visitation window ran out before we could get there. I'm including some photos from my previous visit since it is a very nice layout and deserves recognition. Besides, S scale standard gauge layouts aren't all that common.

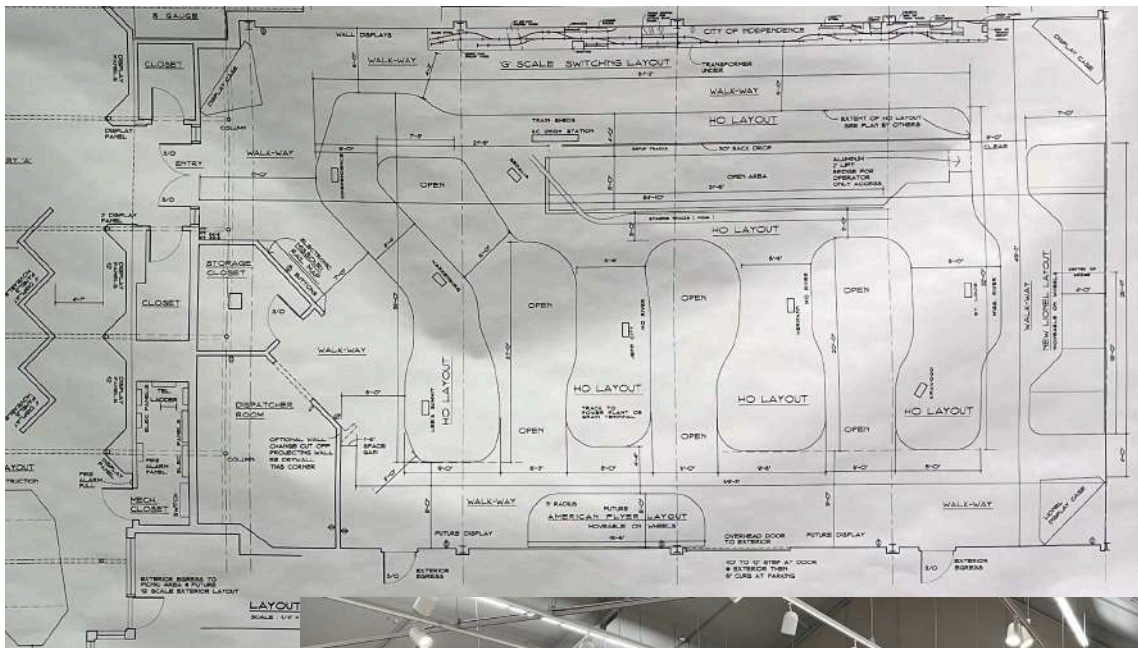
The convention closed with a banquet, a speaker ("Cowcatcher" publisher Tim Blackwell), awards presentations, a drawing, and a live auction. I got my first place recognition in the Pass contest and I was able to get the two items I wanted from the drawing so I went back to my room a happy camper, inspired to charge ahead with my own model railroad.

—Jim



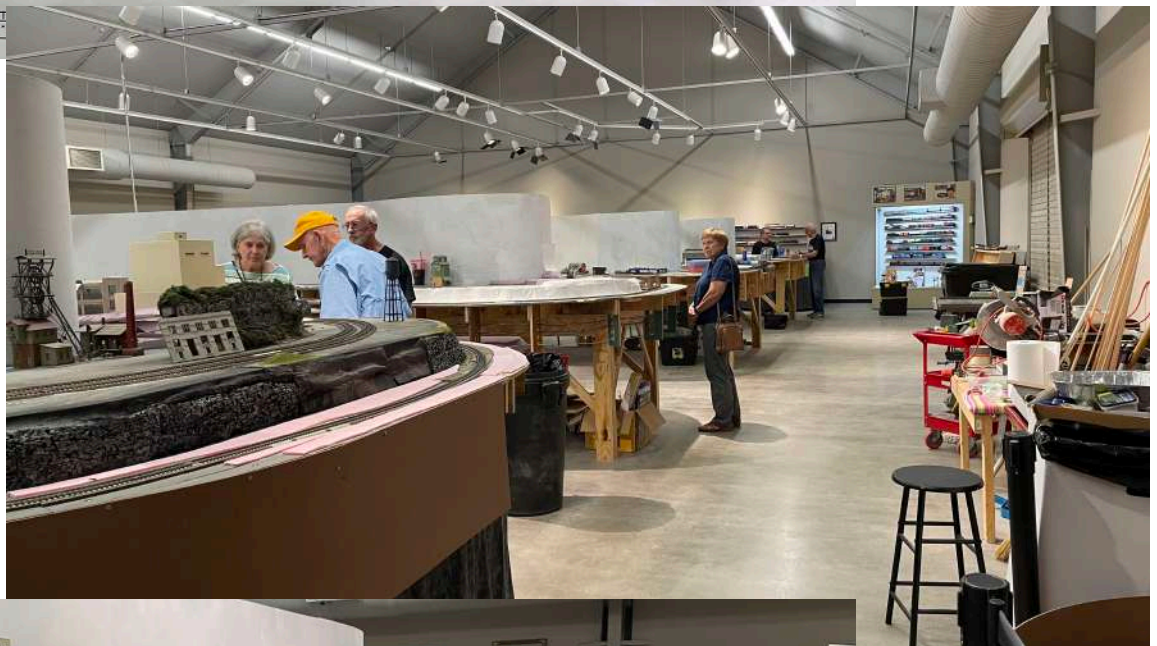
*The Missouri Model Railroad Club is housed in the Missouri Model Railroad Museum, which is situated in a lovely little park. The HO layout is the feature exhibit and takes up most of the space in the Museum. Yes, that's Dean Lippincott strolling back to his car.*





*The Missouri Model Railroad Club's HO layout fills most of the museum. Aisles are very generous, varying from over six feet to squeeze downs of about four-and-a-half feet.*

*Patty is scoping out the peninsular side of the layout. Lighting is mostly from overhead spot lights. The aisles between the lobes go WAY back there.*



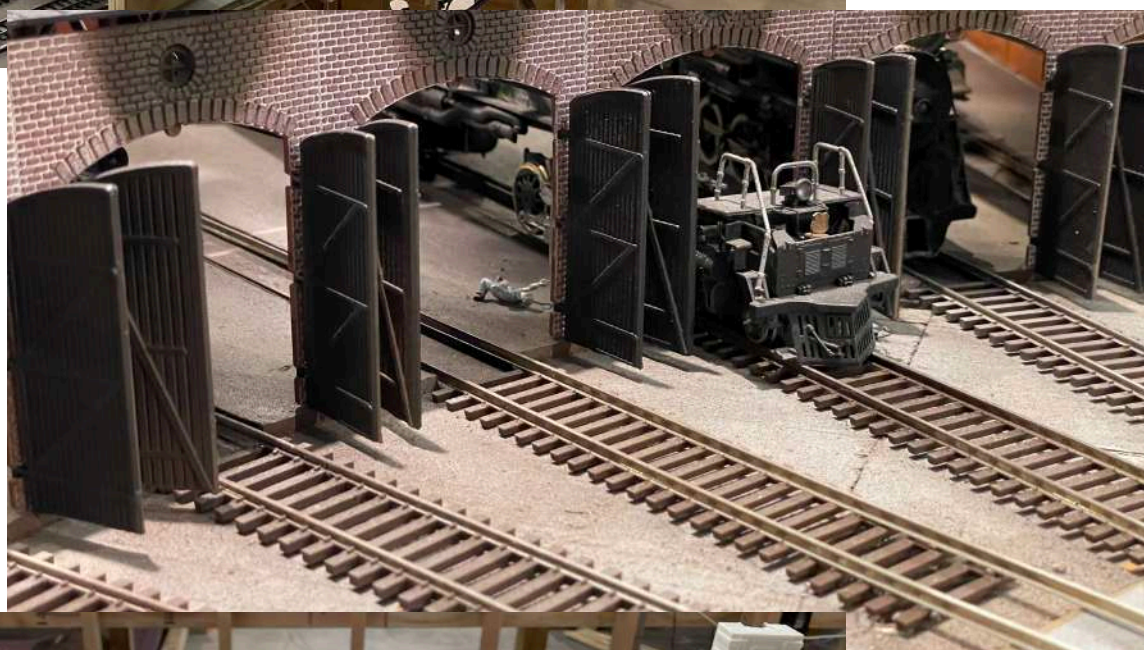
*Looking down that first curved peninsula gives some idea of the space involved. I don't think trains will be chasing their tails in this monster.*





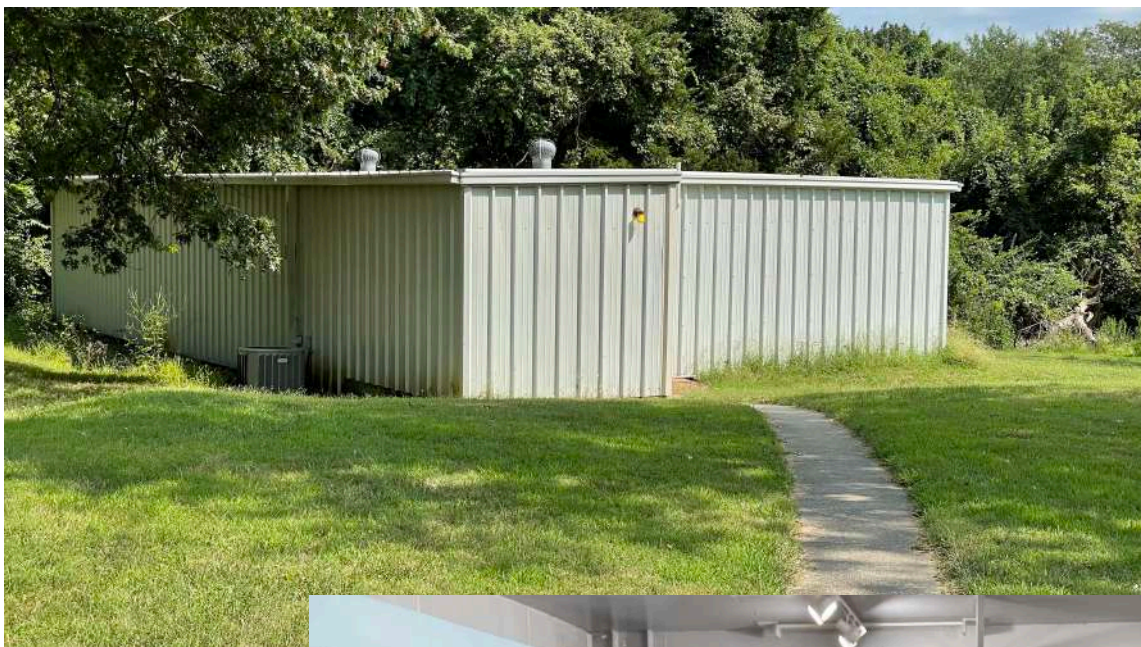
*The Kansas City Union Station, still under construction, will be a landmark feature of the Missouri Model Railroad Club layout. It's being built with the assistance of Dr. Nick Muff who quite literally wrote the book on building this station.*

*A quick peek inside the roundhouse showed one of UP's big articulateds separated and being worked on. Not too sure about the guy on the floor*



*This display caught my eye. It shows how they built rows of bushes or trees. I have a places for such things on my own railroad.*





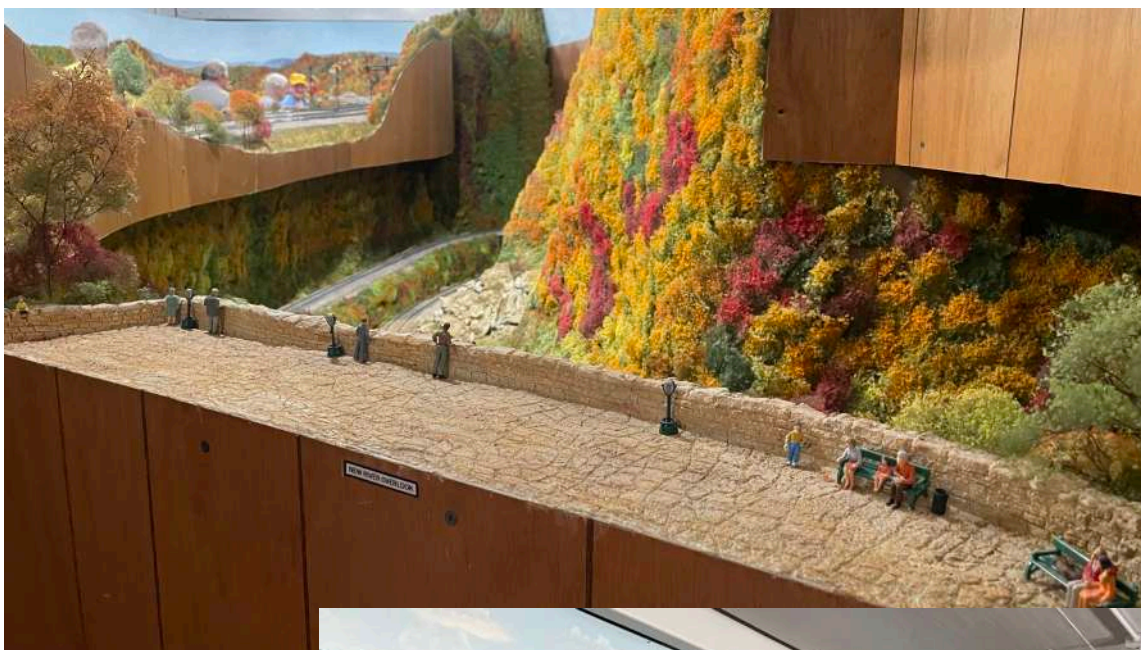
*Jim Eudaly's very large O scale Hinton Division of the Chesapeake & Ohio is in this purpose built Butler building in his back yard.*

*This scene greeted us when we entered. The vastness is almost overwhelming – big scale, big layout, big trains.*



*Seeing the rest of the railroad required a duck under, but it was well worth the effort.*





*When we popped up on the other side, we were treated to a tourist's view of the New River Gorge.*

*The yard and engine service facilities are just massive. The small photo on the fascia is the prototype. The boxes held motive power cards with individual DCC functions for each locomotive.*



*The dispatcher's office was in a separate alcove out of the way of running trains, but not completely cut off. According to the printed tour guide, two dispatchers are used for operating sessions.*





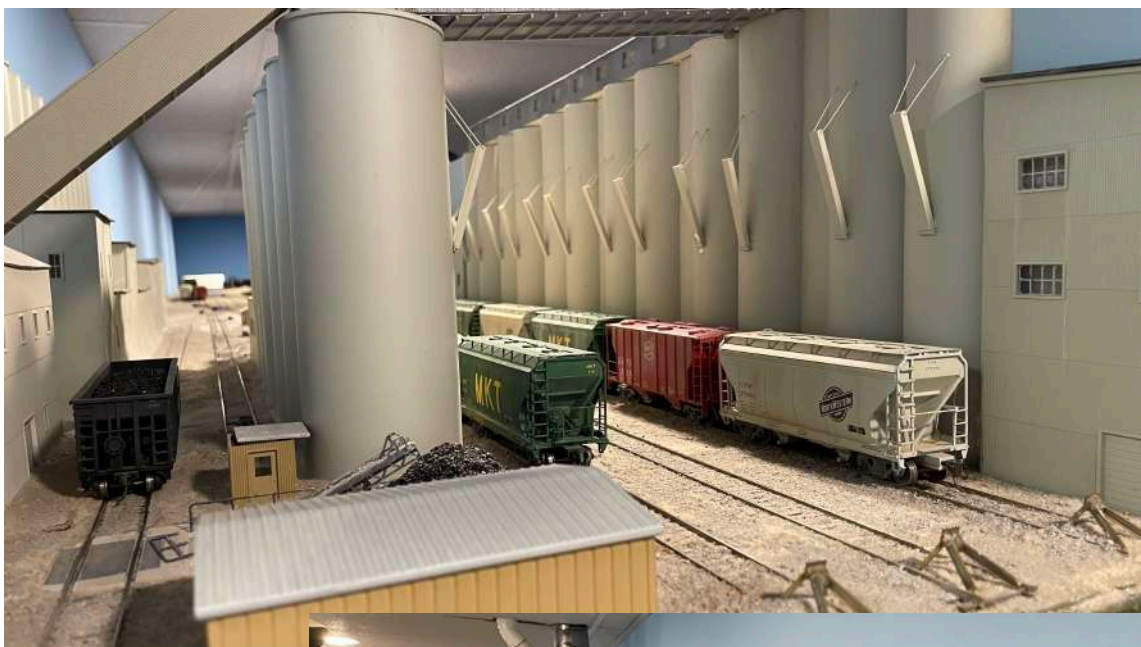
*The scene that first greets you on Mike McLain's HO scale MKT Northern Division gives a hint that it is another pretty good sized layout. It has 343ft of track with a mainline length of 220ft.*

*On the left of the divider in the picture above is the Parsons yard.*



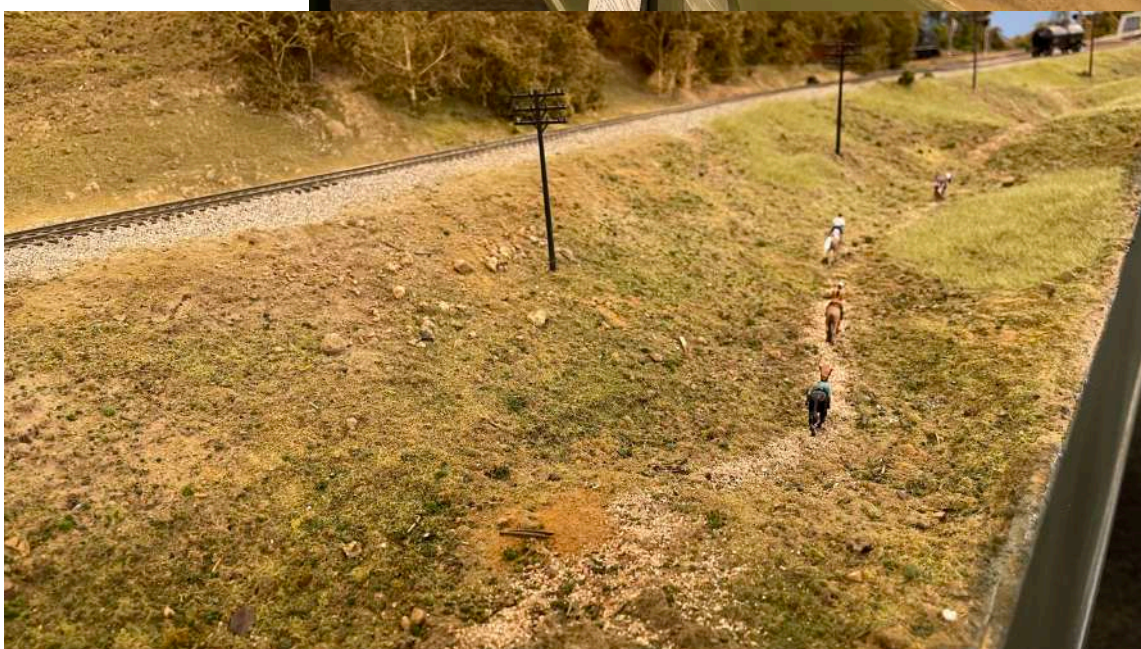
*On the right side of this divider is a rural scene. Mike McLain is the fellow second from left. I thought the photo backdrop was particularly effective here.*





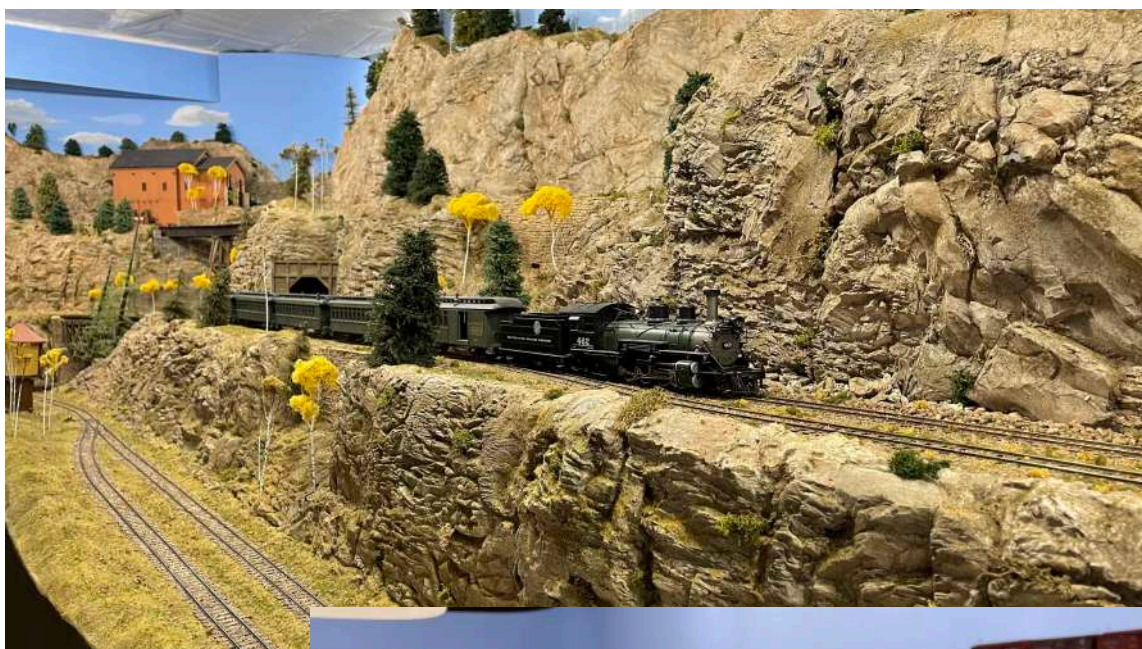
*This massive grain elevator was at the end of one of the peninsulas.*

*I believe this visible staging yard represents Kansas City, although I could be wrong. The other end of the line is Muskogee, OK.*



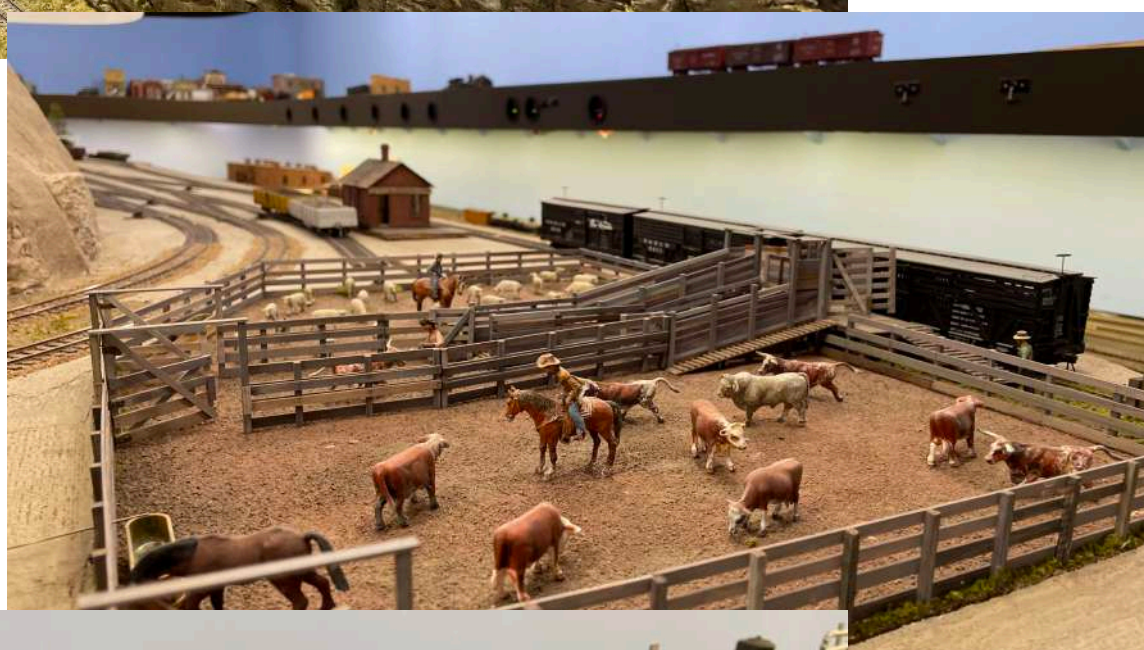
*Patty was quite taken with this riding trail. It's not something you see on every model railroad.*





*Gary Davidson's On3 Cedar Gulch & Southern I had visited before and reported on in the previous issue, but what harm is there in a few more photos. Here D&RGW #462 is climbing the grade to its next stop.*

*Cattle and sheep loading pens seem to be busy. Most of the uncoupling is done manually by skewers, but the upper level in the background has retractable magnets because it is too high for easy reach.*



*Gary told me this Chama oil loading facility was 3D printed in subassemblies. I think I'll be looking into that since I plan to have one on my own layout.*





*The layout I didn't have time to visit was Mike Fyten's S scale Kaw Valley RR. Luckily, I had visited it a few years earlier so I can share some pictures from then. This layout is clearly built for operations with plenty of room to move around.*

*You could have fooled me into thinking this was a grain elevator; but it's a cement plant. I see potential for mixing and matching parts.*



*I'm quite fascinated by minimalist coal dealers. It looks like this one sells other particulate materials as well.*



## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT



At the July meeting of the Chisholm Trail Division, Thomas Schults spoke to us about 3D printing.



In August, Lionel Smith gave us the ins and outs about which HO diesel locomotives make the best candidates for upgrading to DCC.



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## INCLUDES NON-NMRA EVENTS

### RECURRING EVENTS

**Chisholm Trail Division of NMRA Monthly Meeting.** Every first Tuesday of the month. Gather at 6:45PM. Olivet Baptist Church, 3440 W 13th St, Wichita, KS (13th & High) [http://www.mcor-nmra.org/Divisions/Chisholm\\_Trail\\_Division/](http://www.mcor-nmra.org/Divisions/Chisholm_Trail_Division/)

**Kansas Central Division of NMRA.** Every second Saturday of even numbered months at 1:00PM. Locations vary. Contact information is here: [http://www.mcor-nmra.org/Divisions/Kansas\\_Central\\_Division/](http://www.mcor-nmra.org/Divisions/Kansas_Central_Division/)

**Kansas Central Model Railroaders Business Meeting.** (Not the same as Kansas Central Division of NMRA) Every second Saturday from 11:00AM-Noon. Hutchinson Public Library, 901 N Main St, Hutchinson, KS. <http://www.kansascentralmodelrailroaders.org>

**Wichita Area Model Railroaders Luncheon.** Every second Thursday at 11:30AM. Spear's Restaurant and Pie Shop, 4323 W Maple, Wichita, KS

**Third Thursday Model Railroaders's Lunch.** Every third Thursday at a location and time to be announced. If you are not receiving notices and would like to be included, contact Terry Ross (316) 258-4029.

### SCHEDULED EVENTS

#### SEPTEMBER 2025

**September 3-6 – 45th National Narrow Gauge Convention.** Gateway Convention Center, 1 Gateway Dr, Collinsville, IL. <https://www.45thnngc.com/>

**September 19-20 – Ozark Model Railroad Association Train Show.** Ozark Empire Fairgrounds, E-Plex East Hall, 3001 N Grant

Ave, Springfield, MO. Friday 4PM-8PM, Saturday 9AM-3PM. <http://www.omraspringfield.org/train-shows.html>

#### OCTOBER 2025

**October 5 – Heart of America Model Train Swap Meet.** American Legion Post 370, 7500 W 75th Street, Overland Park, Kansas. Sunday 9AM-3PM. <https://ozarkdivisiontca.org/files/HOA%20Swap%20Meet%202025.pdf>

**October 25-26 – The Wichita Toy Train Club Annual Train Show.** Cessna/Textron Activity Center, 2744 George Washington Blvd., Wichita, KS. Saturday 9AM-5PM, Sunday 10AM-3PM <http://www.wichitatomytrainmuseum.org/club-shows-1.html>

#### NOVEMBER 2025

November 8 – Joplin Model Train Show & Swap Meet. Joplin History & Mineral Museum, Schifferdecker Park, 504 S Schifferdecker Ave, Joplin, MO. Saturday 9AM-3PM. <http://www.tristatamodelrailroaders.com/>

**November 9 – Mid-America Train & Toy Show** KCI Expo Center, 117 NW Ambassador Drive, Kansas City, MO. Sunday 9AM-2PM <https://kciexpo.com/organizer/midamerica-toy-and-train-show/>

**November 15-16 – OKC Train Show** Bennett Event Center, Oklahoma State Fairgrounds, 3101 Gordon Cooper Blvd, Oklahoma City, OK. Saturday 9AM-5PM, Sunday 10AM-4PM. <https://www.okctrainshow.com/>

**Please send me information about any events or meetings you think should be included on this calendar.**

Jim Marlett  
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