

Trails, Rails, & Tales



May-June 2025
Volume 11 • Number 3

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

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

BY PHIL AYLWARD

I hope everyone had a productive winter and early spring working on their railroads before yard work and other conflicts of late spring and early summer distract us. One of the things I did was put in a lift gate. There is a short article with pictures later in the newsletter. If you have anything you want to share, I know Jim is always happy to publish those things in the newsletter.

I'd also like to remind every one of the Mid-Continent Regional Convention this August. These conventions are fun and you always learn something in the process.

– Phil

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK

BY CHARLIE MONCKTON

I just spent the last two days at the Arkansas City Train Show with the Chisholm Trail Modular Group. We had a great two days running trains. Thanks to The Wichita Toy Train Club and Museum for inviting us. I especially want to thank them for inviting us to make mini modules with all the kids to take home with them. There were only one or two children in attendance who chose not to make a module. The ones who did make one left with a smile on their faces. I want to also thank Toy Depot in Hutchinson for teaming up with us to make it possible and all the Chisholm Trail members who donated materials for the children to use on their modules. I am including some pictures of children enjoying themselves making a mini module.

When I attend this type of event and tell people about the National Model Railroad Association and invite them to join, I am often asked "Why would I want to join the NMRA?" Although it may seem like I

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is published bi-monthly.

It is sent to members of the
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NMRA

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are strongly encouraged.

am side-stepping the question, I'll start my answer by saying the reason is different for each person. For me the strength of model railroading and the NMRA is all the different ways a person can participate. You can be interested in operating model trains, in creating landscapes, in the history of railroads, looking at train pictures and videos, the cities and hamlets trains served, what people wore while working or riding on the railroads, and many other reasons for being interested in model railroading This is also what makes the NMRA a great organization to belong to. The NMRA is a source for information and products related at all these interests, but most important are the people you get to meet and participate with. They are a fantastic source of information and often become treasured lifelong friends. Thank you for being a part of our organization.

–Charlie



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

BY JIM MARLETT

Time flies when you're working on your model railroad! I can hardly believe it's time for another issue of Trails, Rails, & Tails, but it is. It snuck up on me again!

I thought I was going to have pretty much nothing for the newsletter. It turned out I was wrong. But as a result of my misconception, I looked into the way back machine for an article I wrote for Trails, Rails, & Tails in 2016, but it never made it to the "printed" page. At least if it did, I couldn't find it. It was about the sugar cane railroads of Australia. Even though it turned out that I wouldn't need it this time, I now have it in close at hand if I need it for the future.

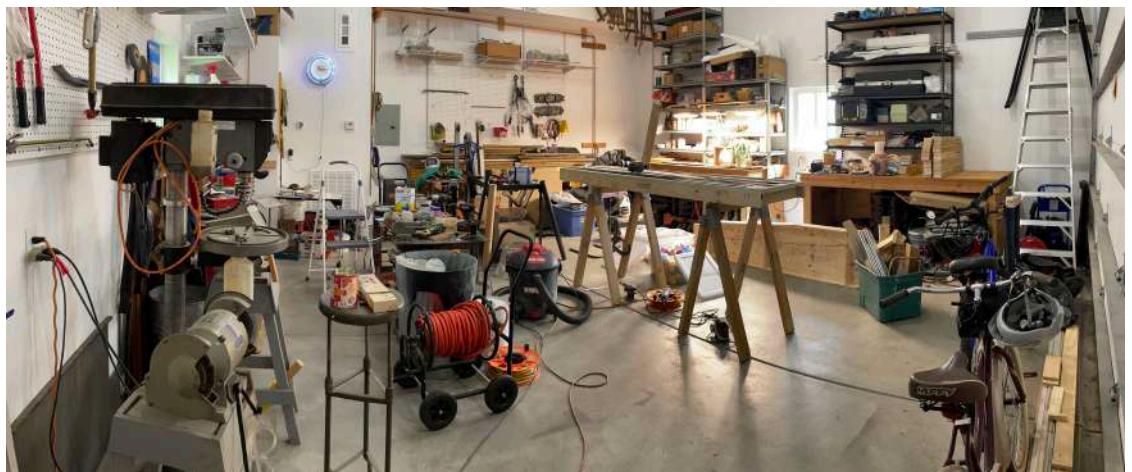
My digging around to see if the article had been published wasn't a complete waste. I have every issue of TR&T saved on my computer, from Alan Aagaard's first one to present day. My search led me down the path of remembrance. What a strange journey that was. I had forgotten many of the things the Chisholm Trail Division had done and some of the people who were active and have since moved, passed away, or are simply no longer active. I can't blame anyone for any of those things. Times change and our priorities shift. Personally, I'm glad I've stuck around and I'm awfully glad to have met those folks and participated in the Division activities.

The time I didn't spend working on the newsletter, I spent mostly out in the shop working on the good ol' San Juan Southern. I believe in my last report I had essentially completed the back side of the coaling tower, but it still wasn't ready to place on the layout. That would require getting grates over the tops of the coal bins and attaching rails over those bins so I could see where to lay rails on the approach. Besides more work on the tower, I would have to build an ash pit so I could lay rails in front of the coaling tower. This whole song and dance was to ensure I could figure out where to lay the tracks that feed the tower's coal bins and have the front tracks far enough back that locomotives could clear the front side. I also wanted to find out if I could build it with the coal chute down as shown in the instructions or if I had to build it with the coal chute raised to allow the tops of my largest locomotives to clear. If they wouldn't clear, I would be on my own to get it right without the benefit of instructions. I will let you know how things fit, but you'll have to read the article farther back in this newsletter.

I did most of the work on the modules affected by the coaling tower in my shop, a picture of which is below.

– Jim

This is a wide angle view of the shop. If you look through the clutter you can find two of the layout modules I have been working on for over a year, one on sawhorses and one on edge on the floor.



Plan to Attend

78th Mid CONTINENT REGIONAL CONVENTION

MCOR to KC
IN '25

AUGUST 22ND & 23RD

... Friday and Saturday ...

Lenexa/Kansas City

hosted with and overlaying

Turkey Creek Division Annual Show

Special Clinics



and Contest

Clinics

Modeling Photo Contest

Dessert Bar & Ice Cream

Speakers

Train Show

More Clinics

Turkey Creek Model Contest

Layout Tours

Banquet

Good Food

Speaker

Chinese Auction

Live Auction

Fun!





NMRA Mid Continent Region Convention

Having special focus on the KCS System, History, Contest Category ...
THE "SOUTHERN BELLE" passenger service to points South!

Hosted by

Turkey Creek Division

August 22nd & 23rd, 2025

To be held at

Holiday Inn & Suites

8787 Reeder Street

Registration Form

Name of Primary Registration: _____ NMRA #: _____

NMRA membership required to enter model contest.

Spouses's Name (if attending): _____ (keep name tag for banquet)

Name of other registrants: _____

(Spouse will receive a complimentary pass for admission to include the train show and banquet meal w/name tag.
other Extra fare participation must be purchased for each person attending.

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Are you registering as a Vendor? Yes ___ No ___ no MCoR registration needed...select wanted "Extra Fare Events".

Registration Fee (NMRA membership number required for reduced registration fee.)

NMRA member \$115.00 per person (includes Turkey Creek Train Show)

Non-member - \$135.00 per person (includes Turkey Creek Train Show)

Cost	# Persons	Total Cost
\$115.00		
\$135.00		

Extra Fare Reservations:

Lunch Friday 11:00 am to 1:00 pm ("box sandwich etc.)

\$14.00

Friday Dessert Bar at 6:30 pm, per person, including spouse

\$18.00

Lunch Saturday 11:00 am to 1:00 pm (box sandwich etc.)

\$14.00

Saturday Banquet (cash bar) choose 1 per person

\$30.00

(if a vendor wants to attend the banquet, this extra fare applies to each person)

TOTAL REGISTRATION:

--

Vendor Tables for Saturday Train Show Swap Meet (Vendors must register but no base fee)

are being reserved and paid for through separate Turkey Creek Registration forms.

(to be available soon)

Send Completed Registration Form to:

Larry Diehl
7008 Millridge Street
Shawnee, Kansas 66218
ldiehl066@gmail.com
for any additional information call (816)804-0152

MAKE HOTEL RESERVATIONS WITH HOTEL OR CLICK LINK BELOW

Holiday Inn & Suites
8787 Reeder Street
Overland Park, Kansas 66214
(913)888-8440
Rate: \$99.00 (includes breakfast)
Ask for MCoR/NMRA group rate
www.holidayinn.com/overland-parkkw

From the Caboose Kibitzer



The Head End—Second Section

By Larry Diehl, President MCoR



MCoR to KCS IN '25

MCoR is planning a unique regional convention in 2025. You all spoke!!

- ☑ Consider short convention.
- ☑ Reduce costs for member attendance.
- ☑ What can you do to “spice up” the convention?

We have secured the Holiday Inn in Lenexa, Kansas (same place we met in 2023). We have been able to negotiate what I feel is a “value stay.”

At \$99/night plus tax (vs. normal rate of \$159).

We are planning a 2-day convention, Friday afternoon and evening plus Saturday train show/layout tours/evening banquet/speaker/auctions and fun. We will have optional activities for Thursday evening and Friday morning for those who want to arrive early. The low room rate will apply to early arrivals.

We are holding the registration fee as low as possible at \$115, including banquet, plus dessert buffet Friday evening and lunches. I’m taking a risk that the cheaper cost will attract more attendance, resulting in overall better revenue.

We are planning a “special” model contest category “The Best KCS Model”, which will include associated railroads of the Kansas City, Pittsburg and Gulf (the Pee Gee RR) and the Kansas City, Mexico and Orient RR started by Ar Stillwell, 1902 thru 1928. Contemplating including “The Belt Line” (not yet decided).

The KCS started in Kansas City with The Belt Line and then the Pee Gee RR. Stillwell bankrupted the Pee Gee around 1898, lost the railroad to other investors then started the “Orient” RR. Recently the KCS merged with the Canadian Pacific continuing its success. I’m in question whether we should include any models of the new merger. (Thoughts anybody!)

We are trying to secure special clinics directed to these railroads, to include presentations on overall historic development of these railroads.

Looking forward to this variation in our convention and hope everyone of the region has the opportunity to attend. We need small models built by some of the members to be used in the live auction. I encourage everyone to consider bringing a model to participate in the KCS category. The award will be a very special nice plaque for Best of the Category. I know of a few KCS railroads and one in Oklahoma. Please participate! I am on the brink of sending out all the flyers and convention registration sheets.

See Page 11 for more information and Page 14 for a registration form.

Hope everyone had a good Christmas! Enjoy!

Sincerely,
Larry W. Diehl
President MCoR

A LIFT-UP FOR MY MODEL RAILROAD

BY PHIL AYLWARD

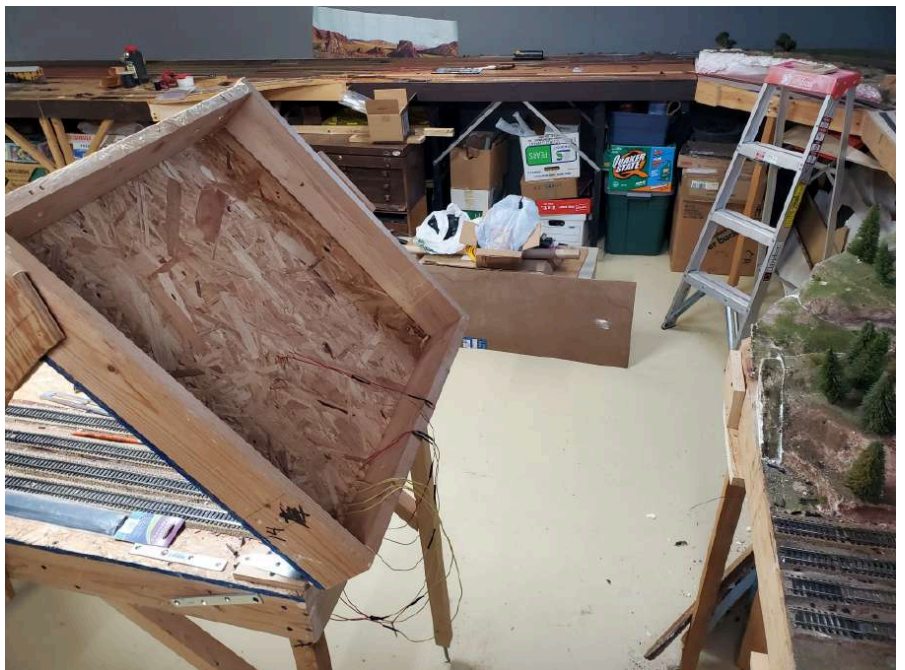
After considering all sorts of options, I decided the best way to get access into the center of my HO railroad was a lift gate. I tried a few things while building it and learned a few things along the way. Follow along and you may get some ideas and learn a few things too.

– Phil



The lift up is in a section with four sets of tracks – main lines with an industrial siding. The crossover just fit the space available and provides access to the industrial track.

The lift up was built as a box to keep it from flexing or sagging.



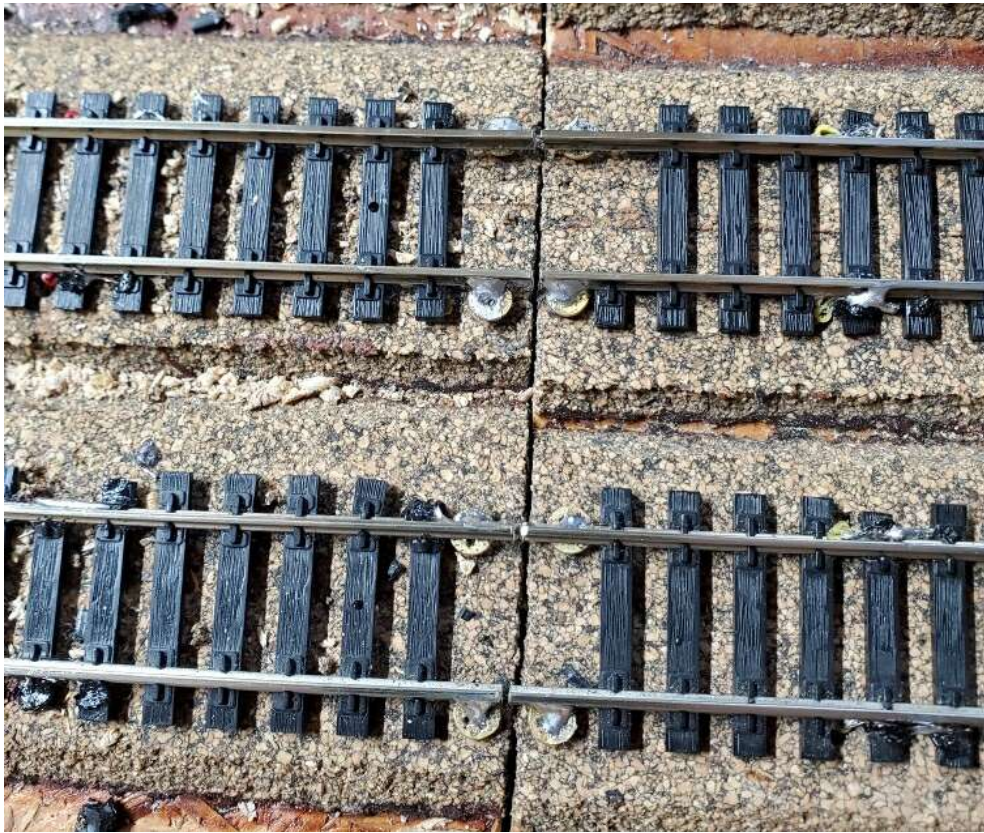


Right away I discovered that the hinges had to be above track level or I couldn't get it up without damage.

The unhinged end had to have enough space below track level to allow the gate to raise in an arc. That end also has alignment blocks and short shelves to keep the lift-up in place when it is down.



Wiring comes from the hinge end. The wires will eventually be tightened up and stapled to keep them out of the way.



At the track joints, flathead screws were inserted to the proper depth and the rails were soldered to the screw heads. Then the rails were cut. This ensured proper alignment. Except for hooking up feeder wires, this was all that was done on the hinged end.

On the unhinged end, the same basic procedure was followed except that that short springy wires were soldered to the lift-up rails/screws so that they rested on the screws on the fixed track next to the lift-up end. The stationary rails on the layout were gapped several feet back so that power was cut when the lift-up was raised and received power when it was down. This was to prevent trains from plunging to their death in the open space.





During construction, the lift-up was held open with a brace. This proved less than reliable and also presented the issues of what to do with it after the backdrop was applied and how to reach it once you were inside.



The answer to that dilemma was a chain, which didn't have to be messed with at all. Those dangling wires will be stapled to the lift-up when everything is finished.



A piece of Homasote was cut to fill in the uneven edge between the hinged end and the unhinged end and to serve as a scenery base.



A draw latch on the unhinged end worked well for holding the lift-up section tight against the rest of the layout. However, it couldn't be reached once you were inside the layout. This will be moved to the top side to be accessible from both inside and outside of the layout. I will have to figure out how to hide it.

PROGRESS ON THE SAN JUAN SOUTHERN

BY JIM MARLETT

As many of you know, the San Juan Southern is my freelance HOn3 narrow gauge railroad through a fictitious part of the San Juan Mountains of southern Colorado. I have track down on most of it, but the last few bits, which I'm building as modules, seem to be taking forever. Maybe that's because I saved the most complicated part for last. Funny how that works. It also involves making some detailed structures before the modules can go in their final location. The round house and turntable, coaling tower, ash pit, and probably the sand house need to be in

place before I put the modules in their final locations. That's because they go against the wall and back sides will be much harder to work on once the whole thing is in place. Not only that, but they are on the lower level where headroom is not what it should be for building things.

Follow along as I finally lay some track – hand laid, of course. My apologies to those of you on the Division's Facebook page who have seen most of this before.

–Jim



The picture on the left shows all three of the modules I have been working on for over a year. They were temporarily joined together so I could lay out the track plan. The turntable and roundhouse module are now in the basement to be finished up while the other two have been separated, but are still in my shop. Previous TR&T newsletters show a lot of the roundhouse construction.

The picture on the right is the module that goes on the far end in the picture above. It was the first to receive ties and rails. I did this one next because I was still working on the coaling tower that would go on the middle module and the tower needed to be nearly finished before I could accurately place the track in front of and behind that structure. The end near the camera goes against the middle module and the far end goes to staging.





The center module took some serious fitting and I still can't guarantee that I have it right. I had to do some cutting and fussing to get a ramp down for the ash pit and a ramp up for the cooling tower. The ash pit was scratch built and it came first since it is on the turntable lead and the cooling tower's final position is tied to that.

Trial fit of the cooling tower was next. When I was satisfied that I had enough room in front of it for my largest locomotive (a K-37 that has high hopes of hitting the paint shop one of these days), I had to see if the coal chute would clear in the lowered position as shown in the kit instructions or if I would have to build it raised, for which I was on my own without instructions.



Whoops! The lowered chute won't clear. I will have to modify the kit so that the chute is in its upper position. It took a lot of searching to see just how that worked, but I finally found a decent picture in my own files. And no, I don't plan to build it so it raises and lowers.

So now the middle section has rails spiked down and is ready for wiring except for the ramp to the cooling tower. I'm saving that until after I get the module into the basement. If you think I want to take the chance of bashing the installed tower during the move, you would be sadly mistaken! My aisles are wide enough to work on that before I slide the modules into their final location.



MODULAR NEWS

BY TERRY ROSS

We've had two outings since the last update – the Bel Aire Spring Fest, April 12th and 13th, and the Arkansas City Toy Train Club Show, April 20th.

Bel Aire was a very successful show for us. We were able to set up our 20' x 36' Rectangle with the “U” shaped center here at Bel Aire. We were open to about 1500 (est.) guests on Saturday and then we were able to run all day Sunday with just our group. Saturday, we had a large group of families as there were games, sports, and an Easter Egg Hunt. Most of the families came in to see the trains after games and hunting eggs. There were lots of interesting questions and excitement with all the kids. They are always a ton of fun. On Sunday we had our very first “Operations Session” with 4 crews of two operating the layout. We made some temporary car cards for cars on the layout, then assigned different sets of cards to the crews. It took us about 3 hours to work the assignments and then get all the cars

back to their original shipping point (owners’ module) to finish the job. We all had a really good time running “ops,” so I'm sure we will be doing more of this in the future.

Arkansas City was also a very good show for us, but a little more hectic. We set up the entire layout 20' x 36' with the “U” on Friday, ran trains Saturday during show hours, and then packed up the entire layout and returned home that evening. Needless to say, we all slept well Saturday night. The show had a nice sampling of vendors and four operating layouts. Some of our guys found some real bargains while shopping with the vendors. When they came back to show us their treasures, it was hard to find our guys when it was their turn to run. (These are the same guys that sat at dinner on Friday night and said, "I'm probably not buying anything. I already have more stuff than I'll ever use.")



Bel Aire was a real family affair with plenty of kids and their parents.



I'd bet all of us old buggers had the same sense of wonder about the trains in our youth. The picture is from Bel Aire.

We saw some familiar faces from our NMRA show back in February. The best part of doing these shows is seeing friends, families with kids, and talking to modelers of all skill levels. We had a lot of spectators and many questions about the hobby, and 1 or 2 inquiries about the NMRA meetings. Hope to see those folks at one of our upcoming meetings.

Our next display will be at the Center of the Nation Train Show in Hutchinson, June 14th and 15th.

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



Rick Coble and Ron Werak are doing a little yard work while Phil Aylward scans the whole setup at Bel Aire.



Part of the Gargoyle Oil module at the Arkansas City Train Show.

One of the newer modules at the Arkansas City Show.



A switcher rumbles into town at the Arkansas City Show.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT



The March and April Chisholm Trail Division meetings had last minute cancellations of the scheduled programs, so the internet provided videos for the “clinic” portion of the meetings.



The “Third Thursday” lunch group met at Connie’s Mexico Cafe in hopes of seeing a train pass by. There was a lot of fellowship and good food, but no trains.

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/

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/

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

JUNE 2025

June 14-15 – Center of the Nation Model Railroad Expo. Pride of Kansas Building, Kansas State Fairgrounds, Hutchinson, KS. Saturday 9AM-5PM, Sunday 10AM-3PM <http://www.kansascentralmodelrailroaders.org/train-show.html>

June 15 – Frisco Rail Fest. Presented by Ozarks Model Railroad Association. C-Street City Market, Springfield, MO. Saturday 9AM-3PM. <https://www.facebook.com/events/c-street-farmers-market/frisco-rail-fest/1402411714032640/>

June 24-25 – National N Scale Convention. Sheraton Overland Park, 6100 College Blvd, Overland Park, KS. <https://www.nationalscaleconvention.com/>

JULY 2025

July 5&6 – Spring Creek Model Train Show. Thayer County Event Center, Dreshler, NE. Saturday 9AM-5PM, Sunday 10AM-4PM. <https://www.springcreekmodeltrains.com/show-schedule/>

July 14-19 – 90th NMRA National Convention, Station No VI. Sheraton Hotel, 21111 Haggerty Rd, Novi, MI. <https://nmra2025.com/>

AUGUST 2025

August 3 – 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/>

August 9 – 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/>

August 22-23 – NMRA Mid-Continent Region Convention. Holiday Inn & Suites, 8787 Reeder Street, Overland Park, KS. <http://www.mcor-nmra.org/Conventions/>

August 23 – Turkey Creek Train Show and Swap Meet. Shawnee Civic Center, 13817 Johnson Dr #3802, Shawnee, KS. <https://tc-nmra.org/TrainShow.html>

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>

NOVEMBER 2025

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 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 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
jmarlett@cox.net