

ILLINOIS VALLEY DIVISION 2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS BALLOT

PLEASE READ VOTING INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY!

1. Record your name and NMRA Membership Number in the lower right corner of this instruction box.
2. To Submit Your Ballot, fold the ballot address outward, tape shut on both ends and add a First Class Stamp or send your ballot digitally as delivered to you by e-mail.
3. Mail-In Ballots must be received no later than March 20, 2026 by mail or be delivered to the meeting March 21, 2026 to be counted.
4. Ballots must be submitted by mail or the digital format, delivered to all e-mail addresses of Illinois Valley Division members as provided to the NMRA.
5. Ballots will be destroyed following the election meeting.

NAME _____ AND

NMRA MEMBER # _____

FOR THE OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT

(Vote for One) - For all Members of the Illinois Valley Division

Gary Baker

FOR THE CHIEF CLERK

(Vote for One) - For all Members of the Illinois Valley Division

Randy Sommer

***** IMPORTANT—VOTE FOR TRAINMASTERS IS VALID ONLY FOR IVD MEMBERS**

RESIDING IN THE INDICATED COUNTIES. VOTES FROM MEMBERS WHO RESIDE OUTSIDE THE INDICATED COUNTIES WILL NOT BE COUNTED.

FOR THE OFFICE OF TRAINMASTER OF DISTRICT 2

(Vote for One) - Only For Members of the Illinois Valley Division residing in Grundy, Liington, McLean & Woodford Counties.

Ben Fehr

FOR THE OFFICE OF TRAINMASTSER OF DISTRICT 4

(Vote for One) - Only For Members of the Illinois Valley Division residing in Fulton, Henry, Knox, Mercer, Rock Island & Warren Counties.

Larry Nelson

**Minton Dings, MMR, Asst. Superintendent
Illinois Valley Division, NMRA
15548 State Route 78
Havana, Illinois 62644-6803**

THE TIMETABLE



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE
ILLINOIS VALLEY DIVISION

NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION

Volume 45, No. 2, March 21, 2026

WEBSITE: nmra-ivd.org



FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

The New John Henrys

Anyone interested in railroads has no doubt heard the ballad “John Henry was a Steel Drivin’ Man” once or twice in their lifetime. The first time I remember hearing it was around 1960 when Tennessee Ernie Ford sang it. Although much of the John Henry legend is subject to debate, researchers have found evidence of a man named John William Henry who worked for the C&O railroad at the time when steam drills were starting to be used for building tunnels in West Virginia. One of the tunnels believed to be the actual tunnel that gave birth to the legend was the Big Bend Tunnel now owned by the CSX Railroad. A statue of John Henry with a plaque commemorating the legend is on permanent display in a small park above the tunnel.

According to the legend, John Henry was a hard working and very muscular laborer with a job as a hammerman for the C&O Railroad during the building of the tunnel. When the foreman brought a steam drill to the site and bragged about how it would replace the laborers John Henry took offense that a machine could outwork any man, particularly him, so he challenged the machine to a race and won, only to die from exhaustion when the race was over with the hammer still in his hand.

In a sense, we as model railroaders face a similar challenge today as technical advances in computing, personal electronic devices, and now AI threaten to make our physical model railroads a thing of the past. Given today’s penchant for instant gratification why would anyone spend years planning a physical layout, learning carpentry, track laying, wiring and soldering skills, and then build the physical buildings, trees, and landscaping to make it all look realistic when inexpensive programs for our smart phones and computers can create a highly detailed railroad that can

be operated from the comfort of your couch in a fraction of the time and a fraction of the expense?

It's a fair question, particularly with the cost of today’s sophisticated model railroading controls, equipment, rolling stock, and motive power. In the face of declining NMRA membership year after year it is incumbent on us to figure out a way to lure today’s youth away from social media and get them interested in physical modeling because if we don’t, our generation is likely going to be the last one with physical model railroads, and the last one with the physical skill sets needed to not only build a physical model railroad, but to build lots of other necessary things we use in life.

I believe the answer is to make youth more aware of our existence and most of all, show them that physical model railroading is FUN. One idea that is becoming more prevalent is to hold public “Train Schools” to introduce kids to the hobby and whet their appetites for building things with their hands through make and take projects. Another way is to hold open houses to let them see the results of our work. And if anybody says “I could never build something like this” (like I recently heard from a person viewing my layout), it’s a segue to the AP program which is designed to help them learn the skills. One big thing the IVD is already doing all over Central Illinois is handing kids the throttle and letting them run the trains on our portable layout at local events, and it’s a big hit every time. So we have the tools and the expertise within our ranks to make a difference. All we have to do is commit to doing it and execute the plan.

WE are the John Henrys of OUR time

Gary Baker – Superintendent, IVD

DIVISION OFFICERS



SUPERINTENDENT (2026)
Gary Baker
(309) 264-6797
afpgary@mac.com



ASST. SUPERINTENDENT (2027)
AP CHAIRPERSON
Minton Dings, MMR®
(309) 241-4504
greenriverbranch1957@gmail.com



CHIEF CLERK (2026)
Randy Sommer
(309) 274-4563
chief.clerk@nmra-ivd.org



PAYMASTER (2027)
Tom Dooley
(309) 706-5321
paymaster@nmra-ivd.org

TRAINMASTERS



District 1—Peoria & Tazewell Counties
(2027)
Russ Smith
(309) 255-2058
district1@nmra-ivd.org

To Be
Appointed

DISTRICT 2 - Grundy, Livingston, McLean
and Woodford Co.



DISTRICT 3 - Bureau, LaSalle, Marshall,
Putnam and Stark Co.(2027)
David Hawkey
(309) 274-6150
district3@nmra-ivd.org



DISTRICT 4 - Fulton, Henry, Knox, Rock
Island and
Warren Co.(2026)
Larry Nelson
(309) 789-6447
district4@nmra-ivd.org



DISTRICT 5 - Adams, Brown, Cass,
Logan, Mason, McDonough, Menard,
Morgan, Pike Sangamon, Schuyler and
Scott Co. (2027)
Thomas Ose
(217) 483-4368
district5@nmra-ivd.org

Year listed with title indicates the end of present term.

2026 IllinoisValley Division, Midwest Region, NMRA
Photos by the contributors and editor
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Contact editor at docshock31@yahoo.com

Upcoming 2026 IVD Meetings

Membership Meetings:

Unless noted otherwise, meetings are held on the third Saturday of January, March, May, September and November at a branch of the Peoria Public Library, Peoria. Doors open at 12 noon for a time of fellowship. A \$3.00 donation is welcomed by members which qualifies each donor participation in the door prize drawing.

MARCH MEETING

The March Division will be March 21, 2026 in the meeting room of the Peoria Main Library, DOWNTOWN 107 NE Monroe, Peoria, Illinois. Doors open at 12 noon and the meeting at 1:00 pm. See the map on the last page of this newsletter.

Board of Directors Meetings:

The next Board of Directors Meeting, will be Monday, April 20, 2026, 6:30 pm by ZOOM. Members who wish to attend need to contact Gary Baker, Superintendent, at the email address listed to the left of this page to receive the ZOOM invitation.

2026 Popular Vote Contests

March
Scratchbuilding, any category
Kitbash, any category

May
Freight Cars
On Line Dioramas

September
Passenger Cars
Buildings—On Line

November
Water Scenes
Dioramas—Off-Line

January 2027
Freight Cars
On Line Dioramas

Superintendent: Gary Baker
Term of two years for election by all members of the Illinois Valley Division.

My name is Gary Baker and I am running for re-election for the position of IVD Superintendent. I live in Pekin, Illinois and have been a member of the IVD since 2005 where I served as Chief Clerk from 2010 to 2018.



Professionally I am a graduate Electrical Engineer from Bradley University after which I worked for Keystone Steel (now Liberty Steel) for 16 years. In 1990 I started my own business specializing in the installation, startup, and maintenance of high power substations and control systems for Steel Mills with clients worldwide so it is little wonder that the HO railroad empire in my basement focuses on Steel Mill operations.

My association with the IVD over the last 19 years has been a great experience where I have had the pleasure of meeting and associating with tremendously talented, like minded people who have not only taught me a lot about model railroading, they have shown me the true value of the world's greatest hobby which is fellowship and sharing of ideas. As I wind down my professional career in 2024 I feel like I now have the time to be able to spend the time necessary to assume the duties of Superintendent.

With 8 years of previous experience as Chief Clerk I am confident I can perform the duties required of the Superintendent and represent the IVD well in the Midwest Division. Please consider voting for me for another term as Superintendent of the IVD.

Chief Clerk: Randy Sommer
Term of two years for election by all members of the Illinois Valley Division.

I am a mechanical engineer who retired after 40 years at Caterpillar. In retirement, my wife and I are enjoying spoiling our 5 grand-children, and Lord willing will celebrate our 52nd wedding anniversary late in 2024. I enjoy the outdoors, fishing and golfing. My dad had some HO model trains in the 1950's and I created my first layout (4x8), which grew to two 4x8's when I was a teenager. Model trains took a back seat to go-kart racing after college. I raced go-karts on the Daytona International Speedway, Mid-Ohio, Milwaukee County Fairgrounds and Indianapolis Raceway Park. I retired from go-karting when the first of our children was born.



I have gotten back into model railroading in my retirement and am presently serving as the Chief Clerk of the IVD.

Trainmaster: District 2, Term of two years for elections by members residing in Grundy, Livingston, McLean & Woodford Counties.

I'm Ben Fehr and I live in Hudson, IL with my wife and two children (ages 10 and 14). By day, I'm an Information Technology engineer at COUNTRY Financial in Bloomington. I've been working on a small HO scale layout in my basement for about three years now, and have been enjoying the hobby immensely.



In addition to family activities and modeling, I also enjoy railfanning, photography (rail and otherwise), tinkering with electronics, and playing/writing/recording music.

Trainmaster: District 4, Larry Nelson

For election by members of Fulton, Henry, Knox, Mercer, Rock Island & Warren Counties.

I am Larry Nelson. My wife, Diane, and I live in Fulton county about 7 miles west of Canton, Illinois. We have two grown children and five grandsons. None of them live in our so I'm building a model railroad there. This layout is strictly designed for switching. It is an urban point to point layout, approximately 27 feet by 2 feet. I purposely designed the layout so that I couldn't run trains in a circle. This is my first home layout except for some small loops of track on top of a ping pong table for kids and grandkids.



I became interested in trains as a child growing up. I loved watching the steam engines pulling strings of empties and loads in and out of the coal mines around Canton. The CB&Q passenger station was right next to our church and I would slip out of church many Sunday mornings when the passenger train stopped at the station. My mother would send my dad to fetch me back and he and I would watch the train until it left the station. I'm sure he enjoyed it as much as I did. Santa brought me my first Lionel train in the early 1950's. Before the day was over I had built my first scratch-built tunnel out of cardboard boxes and spent the rest of the day

Larry Nelson, continued

laying on the floor watching the train coming through the tunnel with its headlight on and horn blowing. I've had a love affair with trains my entire life. I joined the NMRA several years ago so I could attend the National Convention in St. Louis, MO. When I retired I became active in the NMRA and it has become the best move I could have made. The things I have learned and the friendships I have made couldn't have been possible without becoming an active member of the NMRA. As Trainmaster I want to build the hobby and make new friends. I am hoping that if you vote for me, that you will be an active member. It is important to be active in order to get the most out of your NMRA membership. Please share your time, your abilities, and knowledge. We will do the same. I need all the help I can get!

The March meet is election day. The ballot and candidate biographies are included here. The ballot will be presented in an email. You can print the ballot and bring it to the meet to be counted.

Information compiled herein is presented to the membership on an "as submitted by the authors" basis. It is assumed to be complete and accurate by the Editor. Statements contained in the newsletter (Timetable) are strictly the beliefs and/or opinions of the writer and not necessarily those of or endorsed by the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA), the Midwest Region, nor the Illinois Valley Division. Information herein is presented as guidance for the enjoyment of model railroading and should not be considered as the only source of such information.

IVD NMRA APPAREL 2026

For some time there has been a request for the availability of IVD green T-shirts and other apparel. Previously, these items could be acquired through the Locker Room in Spring Valley, Illinois. When contacted, they could not find the patterns to make the shirts. As a result, the IVD BoD looked into possible providers in the Peoria area and looked into a new logo for the shirts. A provider in Washington was chosen and a new logo was picked after a long, long discussion. After these decisions were made, the pattern produced and paid for and a few shirts made, the Locker Room reported that they had found their patterns. Therefore, members who wish to order the older logo style can still get them through the Locker Room. The new shirts are dark green with a bright yellow logo.



Short Sleeve Shirts

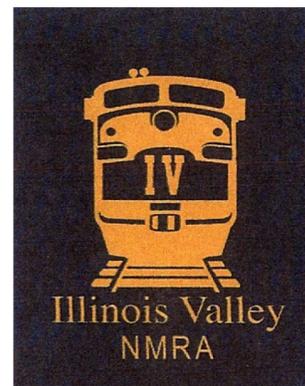
\$32.70 Regular Sizes
\$34.88 Extended Sizes
(sizes 2X and larger)

Long Sleeve Shirts

\$37.06 Regular Sizes
\$39.24 Extended Sizes
(sizes 2X and larger)

ORDER FROM: Team Works, 2168 Washington Road, Washington, IL 309-745-9924, Cell: 309-712-1494, email art@teamworks2003.com.

Orders can be done anytime, no minimum order. Russ Smith can pickup and bring to meeting if you wish.



Gregor Moe's Layout



Thomas Ose's Layout





Springfield Train Show

Sunday, March 15, 2026

Orr Building,

Illinois State Fairgrounds

801 East Sangamon Avenue,
Springfield IL

The IVD Layout will be there.

Volunteers needed!
Layout and sales table

Castle Trains Layout



DUELING DIORAMAS !!.....

Enter the IVD's "Dueling Dioramas" contest for a chance to win this highly detailed Design Preservation Models Gold Kit "Emery Lane" which consists of 2 Victorian houses with molded-in details and over 90 white metal castings including picket fences, a motorcycle, lawn mower, trellis, clothesline, clothes, and MORE!....

The rules are simple: Build an online or offline diorama in HO scale for any era, not to exceed 144 square inches in size. Any physical dimensions are acceptable as long as the total area modeled does not exceed 144 square inches. For instance, a creative modeler might consider building the diorama on a 13-1/2 inch diameter circle which would just sneak in under the limit at 143.2 square inches.

The deadline for the contest is March 21, 2026 at the regular IVD meet in Peoria. There are no forms to fill out, just bring your entry for display at the meet. All contestants must be current IVD members and the winner will be chosen by popular vote of those attending the meet.

So now that we're all indoors for the Winter, let's make good use of the time and get busy building what could be the winning entry! Good Luck !!....

DPM
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Take a stroll down Emery Lane. Smell the fresh cut grass, run a stick along the picket fence and wave to Elsie as she brings in her wash. Watch your neighborhood come to life with two separate plastic Victorian houses with molded-in architectural details and over 90 white metal castings including motorcycle, lawn mower, trellis and many more.

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2 VICTORIAN HOUSES

EMERY LANE

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES FOR MODEL RAILROADERS

Great Midwest Train Show, Sunday, March 1, April 12, May 3, June 7, August 2, September 13, October 4, November 1, December 6. DuPage County Fair Grounds, 2015 Manchester Road, Wheaton, Illinois. The show is scheduled for the first Sunday of each month of 2025 (except no show in July), 9 am to 3 pm. Admission \$8, online \$7, and children under 11 free. Free parking and handicapped accessible.

Springfield Train Show Sunday March 15, 2026

Orr Building, Illinois State Fairgrounds 801 East Sangamon Avenue, Springfield IL

Illinois Valley Division Meet, Saturday, March 21, 2026 1:00 pm to 3:15 pm, Peoria Main Library, DOWNTOWN 107 NE Monroe Ave. Doors open at noon \$3 donation accepted.

2026 Galesburg Scale Train Show, June 27, 2026

Knights of Columbus, 1556 E Fremont St. Galesburg IL

NMRA NATIONAL CONVENTION,

nmra2026.org. Scenic City Express, Chattanooga Marriott Downtown/Convention Center, Chattanooga, TN, July 27-August 2, 2026.

2026 Midwest Region Convention. There will be no region convention since the National Convention will be held in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

34th Annual Rail Fair, Saturday, July 18, 2026, Onalaska Omni Center, 255 Riders Club Road, Onalaska, Wisconsin, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Admission \$8.00, children under 12 free with an adult.

MAINLINE

MODEL RAILROAD PRODUCTS LLC

BUY – SELL – TRADE

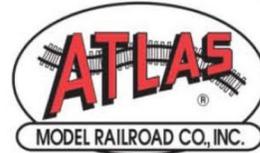
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WED – SAT / 12 NOON TO 6 PM

SUNDAY / 12 NOON TO 5 PM



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Real Rail, Bradenton, Florida

e-mail: greenriverbranch1957@gmail.com

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phone: 309-353-8877
Gary: afpgary@comcast.net
Cullen: cmb3998@comcast.net

**The May meet will be a
potluck on May 16th at Trinity
Presbyterian Church. Noon
to 4 pm. Come for the meal,
stay for the meet.**

4400 Airport Road

Bartonville Illinois

**Across from Limestone High
School.**

James F. Wise, MMR, 3207 N. Sheridan, Peoria, IL 61604



(309)231-9425

jameswise1234@comcast.net

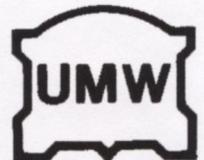
Ed Brown's

UTICA AND MIDWESTERN

"Route of the ROCKET"



339 Johnson Street
Utica, IL
phone: 815-667-4818
email: brownes86@msn.com



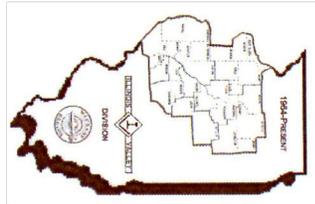
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IVD TIMETABLE
Michael Shockley
1107 S Apache Lane
Peoria IL 61607-1116



FIRST CLASS MAIL

Postmaster:
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March 21, 2026

Illinois Valley Division of the NMRA

Division Meeting

Peoria Main Library

107 NE Monroe in Downtown

Contests:

Scratchbuilding, any category

Kitbashing, any category