



THE BRASS POUNDER

Newsletter of the Carolina Southern Division 12, Mid-Eastern Region, National Model Railroad Association

Division Coming Events

CSD February Meeting
Saturday, February
14th at 10:30am

Lake Wylie Public Library Community Room

185 Blucher Cir, Lake Wylie, SC 29710

Superintendent's Corner

By Chad Barnette

2026 is upon us! As Andrew said last month, the winds of change are upon us. I want to start off with a heartfelt thanks to Andrew for leading us the last two years. I think our division is in a good place starting off the new year. We have been able to make some gains again in membership. Additionally we have done several community-facing events in 2025 that help to keep our name out there.

One of the things that I would like to focus on for the year is how do we leverage the different communication platforms that are available to us to reach more modelers in the area. It's interesting to think....just how many modelers are there in our area? Certainly we know the ones we know, and we can only

guess beyond that. But I'd like to take it just one baby step further than that. I did some searching and found a source that says there are conservatively 1 in 1,000 people that are active model railroaders. Apparently 1 in 500 is the more aggressive figure. With 2.4 million people in the Charlotte Metro, that means there could be 2,400 active modelers. That does not include our other counties either. So suffice to say I think there are plenty more folks to bring into the group.

I am excited to see what the year holds - my thanks to Alan as he has stepped up to help with RMU this year. We would still love to have someone step up in an official capacity as Alan already has many duties to fulfill. I feel like this is the year that folks that have been waiting in the wings are ready to step up and help take our division to the next level. Consider this your sign! Cheers to 2026 everyone!

Editor's Notes

By Chad Barnette

Happy 2026 everyone! I was so glad to see everyone that was able to come out to the Newton Depot for our annual meeting. And a special hello to those of you who joined via Zoom. If there's anyone out there who may be feeling a little shy to jump on to our Zoom meeting, please don't feel that way. In fact, you can join without the camera turned on or whatever makes you feel most comfortable. We'll just be glad to have you there.

I wanted to share a few shots I got while I was there. Enjoy!



Division and Regional News

Wade's Train Town

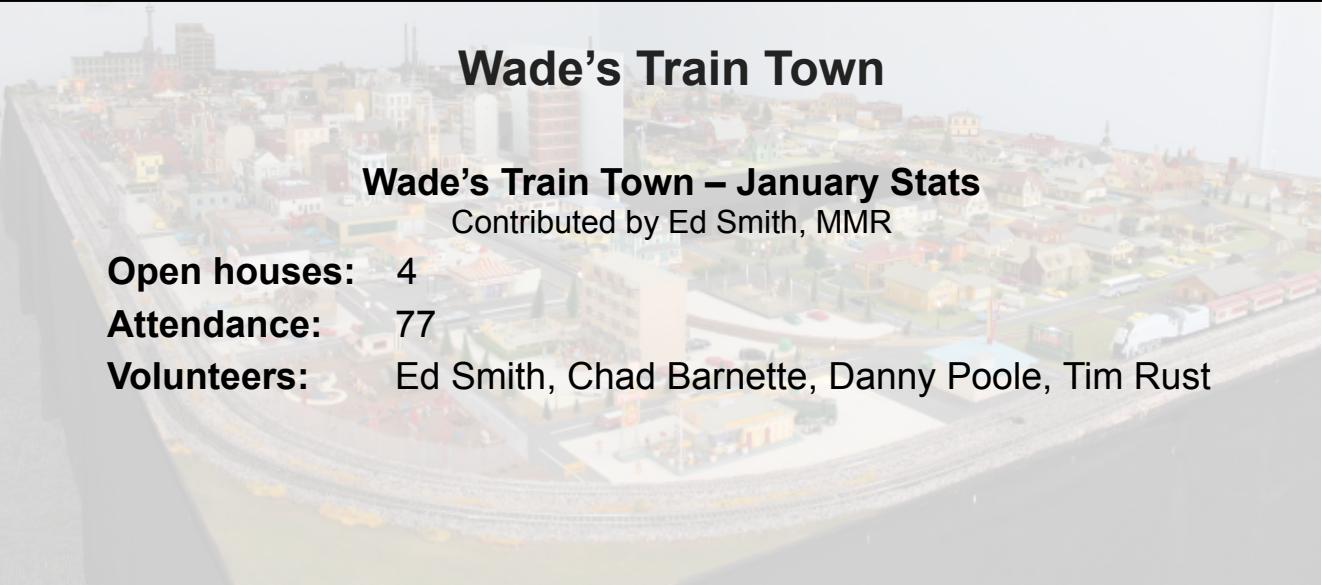
Wade's Train Town – January Stats

Contributed by Ed Smith, MMR

Open houses: 4

Attendance: 77

Volunteers: Ed Smith, Chad Barnette, Danny Poole, Tim Rust



AP Updates from the Plywood RR Desk

Contributed by Neal Anderson, MMR



So, I have been working on some AP Awards and hoping they come back soon. I will be in Florida this Month. If I'm in town I will be at the meeting.

For the ones that would like to work on the Chief Dispatcher AP Award . Classes will start back up in March. Please contact me with an email to be put on the list.

Annual Meeting

Contributed by David Myers, CSD Clerk

Carolina Southern Division, Mid-East Region
National Model Railroad Association
Annual Meeting
January 17, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 by the Superintendent, Andrew Stitt. A quorum was present.

The Superintendent called for annual reports.

1. Neal Anderson reported on the Achievement Program. He presented several Merit Awards. He noted that “national: NMRA is currently reviewing and changing classifications and requirements for the Achievement Program. He announced that he will be conducting sessions on his layout in March for qualification as “Chief Dispatcher”.
2. Ed Smith reported on the Train Town project. His written report is attached. He announced that there are now five “docents” for the Saturday visitations. Ed noted that the layout is approaching forty years old and much of the trackwork is wearing out. He asked for donations of Code 100 Flextrack to make repairs to the layout as needed. He needs someone familiar with N Scale to attend to the couplers on the N Scale layout.
3. Dave Thrams gave the Paymaster’s report. His written report is attached. He announced that the Division had received revenue from donations of model railroad materials that had been sold at train shows.
Year’s beginning balance: \$8308.80
Year’s ending balance: \$7527.97
4. Chad Barnette reported on the *Brass Pounder*. He enjoys preparing the newsletter. He requests and encourages submission of articles.
5. Joe Skorch reported that the website receives 2000+ “hits” each year. He would like the website to become a resource of links to other model railroading sites.

The Superintendent conducted the annual elections. Nominations from the nominating committee were:

Superintendent: Chad Barnette
Assistant Superintendent: Richard Shulby
Clerk: David Myers
Paymaster: Tim Rumph
Director (2029): Joe Skorch
Director (2028): Alan Hardee

Nominations from the floor were solicited. Tim Rumph moved that nominations be closed and the slate elected by acclamation. Seconded by Ed Smith. The motion passed unanimously and the election process was completed.

The Superintendent called for club reports.

1. The Piedmont and Western (P&W). Tim Rumph reported that the HO scale P&W is still in the same location, but now tenants of the Mecklenburg County Utilities Department. They are still conducting operating sessions on the first Saturday of each month and the preceding Friday evening. Operating positions are open.
2. Piedmont Central. Tim Rumph reported that this is a South Charlotte “round robin” group that meets monthly at members’ layouts. New members and layouts are welcome. Anyone interested in joining may contact Tim Rumph for more information.

3. Metrolina Model Railroaders. Alan Hardee reported that this is an HO scale modular club. They travel frequently to present a modular layout at train shows and special events in the area.
4. Concord Area Modelers. Neal Anderson reported that this is a “round robin” group that meets on the fourth Saturday of each month and presents modular layouts.
5. Coastal Carolina N Scalers. Gil Brauch reported that it is an N scale, modular club. They support any activity in “Normal” scale. They maintain a semi-permanent layout at the NC Transportation Museum in Spencer, NC. The annual meeting will be held on Saturday, January 31, 4:00 p.m., at Hendrick’s BBQ in Spencer.
6. Southern Piedmont Live Steamers. Neal Anderson reported that this group operates 1/8 scale, live steam locomotives
7. The Superintendent presented the annual renewal of the Carolina Southern Division’s membership/partnership with the museum Rich Colton of Southeastern Narrow Gauge & Shortline Museum. Rich thanked the Division and presented a brief update on the many improvements, additions, and planned projects at the museum.

The Outgoing Superintendent presented Certificates of Appreciation to: David Thrams, Joe Skorch, Ed Smith, Neal Anderson, and Alan Hardee.

The Outgoing Superintendent reported the following:

1. Model Railroad University (RMU) for 2026 is in jeopardy. At present, no one has accepted the position as Dean, therefore, no organization is in place. No date has been set.
2. Division boundaries may be changing. An effort is being made to re-establish the Roanoke Division as the Appalachian Division. If this happens, CSD will lose the Virginia counties currently in our Division. This will have no significant impact on the Division.
3. The new NMRA logo became effective on January 1. Division logos can be retained in appropriate colors. Old Division logos cannot be used after April 1. All of this renders our recently acquired banners obsolete.
4. The 2026 National NMRA Convention will be held in Chattanooga, TN. Registration is now open.
5. The National Narrow Gauge Convention will be held in Hickory, NC, 2027. Some events will be held at the Newton Depot and Division members may be requested to open their layouts for tours.

The Outgoing Superintendent distributed a member survey.

The meeting was adjourned at 1125 a.m.

Submitted by,

David Myers
CSD Clerk

2025 ANNUAL REPORT- NEWTON LEGACY MODEL TRAIN ROOM

2025 was, once again, a productive and successful year for the Legacy Room. Although it started on a somber note, the passing of Keith Iritsky and Gil Brauch's medical leave of absence, we were able to rebound with the help of new volunteer Chad Barnette. With Chad, Tim Rust, and me, we were able to fulfill all CSD obligations and extra events.

In a short 4 years, the Room has expanded to include static model train displays, Wade's Train Town HO display, two N-gauge displays, a Standard-gauge display, a soon-to-be-completed S-scale display, and plans for a Lego display. Our Room and the Model Railroad Center offer visitors an entertaining and educational experience. The model railroad aspect is an attribute of the museum.

2025 Results

Open Houses — 56 dates (obligatory Saturdays and special events) Guests — 1,789 (up from 1,569)
Volunteers — 4 regular and 5 periodically throughout the year

2025 Finances

| | |
|--|-------|
| Beginning balance | \$291 |
| Expenses | \$317 |
| Purchases — Gandy Dancer, Trolley, 4 Diesels, Skating Rink, 2 keys, miscellaneous scenery, and cleaning supplies | |
| NOTE: CSD purchased 4 Southern diesels from an estate for \$140 and donated them to the Legacy Room | |
| Yearly donations | \$132 |
| Year-end balance | \$106 |

I would like to thank Tim Rust and Chad Barnette for their volunteer work; also, Danny Poole and Joe Pulsone, our new volunteers. And much appreciation to Fred Miller, Bob Halsey, Andrew and Chloe Thompson, Dave Manko, and all museum volunteers who assist us throughout the year.

Respectfully submitted,
Ed Smith
Train Town Manager
01/07/2026

Recorded volunteers for 2025

| Name | Open Houses |
|-----------------|-------------|
| Ed Smith | 27 |
| Tim Rust | 12 |
| Chad Barnette | 9 |
| Bob Halsey | 6 |
| Gil Brauch | 5 |
| Danny Poole | 2 |
| Joe Pulsone | 2 |
| Andrew Thompson | 1 |

CSD Treasurer Report

2025

Submitted by Dave Thrams

| CSD 2025 Treasurer Summary | Income | Expenses | Balance |
|-----------------------------|--------|----------|----------|
| 1 Jan Checkbook Balance | | | 8,308.80 |
| 1 Jan PayPal Balance | | | 92.22 |
| Total CSD beginning balance | | | 8,401.02 |
| 2025 transactions | 779.08 | 1,619.88 | |
| 31 Dec Checkbook Balance | | | 7,468.00 |
| 31 Dec PayPal Balance | | | 59.97 |
| 31 Dec 2025 Total Balance | | | 7,527.97 |

2025 CSD financial report

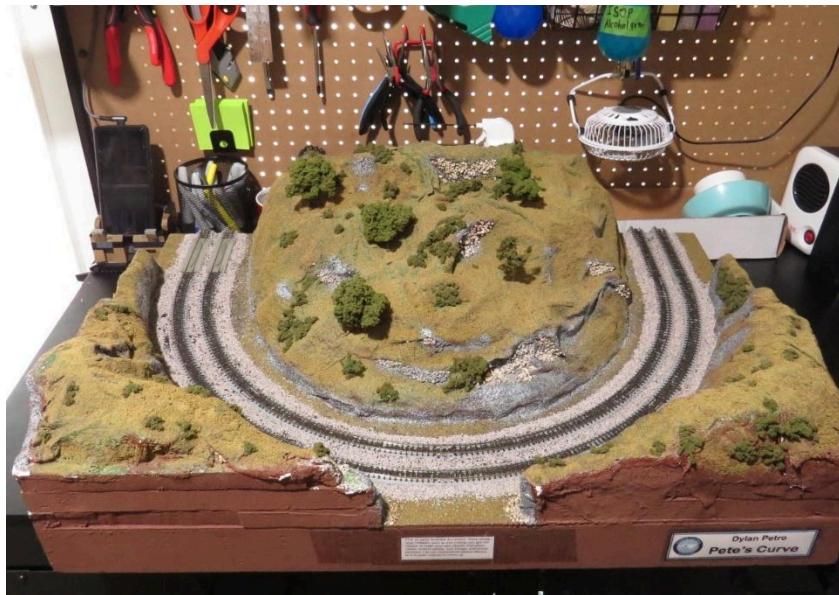
| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| | \$ |
| checkbook beginning balance | 8,308.80 |
| | \$ |
| Paypal beginning balance | <u>92.22</u> |
| | \$ |
| Total CSD beginning balance | 8,401.02 |

| 2025 Transactions | income | expenses |
|-------------------------|--------|---------------|
| Newton Depot | | 250.00 |
| Annual Mtg lunch | | 375.00 |
| RMU rent | | 150.00 |
| Zoom Dues | | 159.90 |
| Vistaprint CSD sign | | 162.11 |
| Clinic Reimburse | | 35.00 |
| Pizza lunch for meeting | | 61.31 |
| Annual Cookout | | 164.36 |
| hometown hero train set | | 122.20 |
| Train Town locomotives | | 140.00 |
| Interest Earned Bank | | 6.08 |
| RMU deposits | | 104.00 |
| Spring MER Dues | | 111.00 |
| deposit transfer from | | |
| PayPal | | 454.00 |
| Fall MER Dues | | <u>104.00</u> |
| | \$ | \$ |
| | 779.08 | 1,619.88 |

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| | \$ |
| checkbook ending balance | 7,468.00 |
| | \$ |
| Paypal ending balance | <u>59.97</u> |
| | \$ |
| 2025 CSD ending balance | 7,527.97 |

The Backstories of My T-Trak Layout

Contributed by Dylan Petro



Phase I:

Pete's Curve was the first of many modules I decorated. When I plan new modules, I usually change my mind several times before setting in stone what the theme, era, and scenery will entail. At the time, I was fresh to the CCNS club and was told they needed more curve and endcap modules for their T-TRAK layouts, so I decided to do an endcap so my module would be used in the layout.

All the names of my modules are generic because I just need something simple to remember them by, usually the name has something to do with what is on the module, but for this one, a lot of railroad curves are, at times, named after people. Pete was a short and simple name, so I went with that. I planned this endcap to be a tall hillside that was cut through for coal drags to run through on their way up and down the mountains of Virginia. A small detail I found out was that sometimes the bay doors on the hoppers would wear and be accidentally opened, so I applied that detail to the module by putting coal dust on the track. When doing large hillsides such as this endcap you get the chance to make your own blends with paint colors, texture paints, turf, foliage, and scenic powders. I had used plaster sheeting before to make several hillside landscapes for my previous two layouts. This time though, it did not work as well as usual and I spent several hours tediously trying to paint and cover up all the tiny holes. I won't and have not used plaster sheeting for any scenery work since.



One of my favorite classical music pieces is The Four Seasons by Antonio Vivaldi. So, I created a four module set for the four seasons; Spring, Summer, Fall, & Winter. Duskvale for spring, Beffy's Park for summer, Barrel Factory for fall and Winter Curve for...well winter of course. Duskvale was the first town module I created. The town name came from a fantasy online name generator. Right from the start I knew I wanted the buildings lit. I was unsure though as to how to light them. That's when I came across the "Just-Plug" wire systems from Woodland-Scenics. It greatly helped that they also had 9v battery holders since the regular electrical way proved to be difficult for layout setup, so eight 9v batteries power all six of the buildings' lights. I wanted to have a raised portion to act as a sidewalk but I wasn't sure what to do for the sidewalk and raised base for the buildings, so a flat piece of balsa wood came in handy. I looked at a few pictures of different cities throughout America in the 30s-40s to see how the building layout would've looked. The buildings came as seen, with a few added details. Over time I will be adding more details to the town here and there such as more people, manhole covers, and street signs, maybe some lamp posts.



Bethany and I share an absolute love for Autumn, so much so that our apartment stays decorated for the season of Autumn year round! The third installment of my Four Seasons

set is for fall. I wanted to try modeling a different season for a change. For years now I've always decorated everything in shades of green. Well, this time there was going to be more colors added. The ground cover I used is Woodland Scenics red, yellow, & orange mixed turfs. Really made everything pop! The wooden billboard kit is from an actual hobby store in Millvale, Pennsylvania. To my knowledge, the store is still there, but I think the owner passed several years ago. If you ever get the chance to go there, or happen to be passing through Millvale in your travels, I recommend taking a drive through there since the town always seems to be stuck in time capsule. The boxcar that is permanently stuck next to the factory has barrel loads and pallets inside for viewers to see the fine details. Since I used flex track for the loading track, and didn't have any bumpers lying around I meticulously formed a track end out of the plastic poles you get with flatcars sometimes.



The third installment of my Four Seasons set is for the summer. This simple park was made for my partner since she wanted a park and playground design. It's still slowly being updated over time. I'd seen a 3D printed fountain on another module at the Spencer show and thought it would go quite well as a centerpiece. I wanted woodchips at the playground base since that's what I remember running around and falling on as a kid. Since at first, I couldn't think of how to model woodchips that small, I took to Facebook group comments for ideas. The answer? Loose leaf tea. Yes, tea. So, after some trial and error Vanilla Chai was the best looking one. A few sprinkles and some glue water later and, voila, woodchips.



Following my favorite season of Autumn is Winter. The fourth and final installment of the Four Seasons set. The snow base was easy-peasy. White paint and snow powder from Woodland-Scenics. Snow covered trees were hand dipped in glue then snow powder. For some reason the tops of some of the trees turned yellow. A small detail I added was some brown lines behind the truck as if the owner returned home a short bit ago. The fence is made of plastic posts and real fine wire. As with any of my modules that has a tree line, deer must be included. The wreck of ol' #6 was an old Bachmann B&O 0-6-0 I had lying around so it was added as remnants of an old abandoned wreck. Normally I wouldn't sacrifice an engine for a module without good reasoning. Well, I went to run the engine and after lurching forward and running about six inches it did what most old cheap Bachmann engines do, smoke. No, not from the smokestack, from the wheels. So, it was gutted and used on the module.



I've wanted an ol' fashioned country store on my layout for a very long time but it didn't ever go with the theme I had, so I was excited to give this store kit its own module. Years ago, I tried weathering an abandoned caboose just for the hay of it and held onto it, since it was the first time I ever tried to weather a car. I planned for this store to be set in the deep countryside kinda in the middle of nowhere, but near farmland so farmers could get their necessities. Dale, the store owner, is on the side deck having a beer watching the beverage truck arrive and unload.

T-Trak Model Railroading

Contributed by Fred Miller

I am a resident of a Senior Living Community, but have had a lifelong interest in the hobby of Model Railroading. I, like many modelers, was faced with the challenge of downsizing my MR activities. I recently explored a new aspect (at least to me) of the model railroad hobby – something called T-Trak, or table-top model dioramas designed to 'plug together' on a table top to form a model railroad layout.

The trains.com website has a series of video articles about the staff of the Model Railroader magazine and their T-Trak adventures. Each staff member built a module and then

'plugged' them together to form their table top layout.

The Central Carolina N Scalers are a club based at the NC Transportation Museum in Spencer. They also frequently bring T-Trak modules to local shows. The

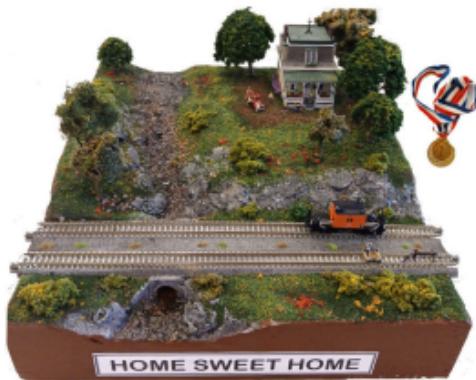


standards developed for T-Trak and pack a lot of modeling fun into a small one-square-foot space, ideal for the model railroader living in a senior living community such as my Barclay of South Park.

The T-Trak standards are a set of guidelines for building modular, N-scale model train layouts using Kato Unitrack. Key standards include module height, depth (max 14 inches), and using common track lengths and spacing (33mm). The standards are important for consistent, aligned track placement so multiple modules can operate together.

Building my T-Trak modules

(1) The starting point for my *Home Sweet Home* diorama was a Woodland Scenics Sub-terrain (straight) T-Track kit. The kit includes a basic standard size frame to be constructed with Styrofoam blocks and some hardboard strengthening pieces. A double track Kato N-Scale track is also provided. Woodland Scenics *Shaper Sheet* and plaster is also included to form the landscape.



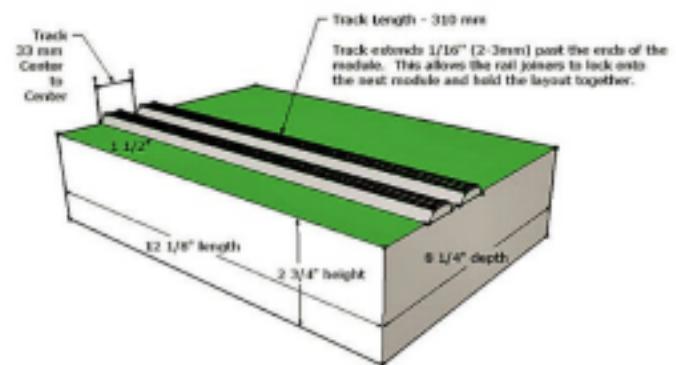
group has a large number of modules, albeit many of the larger size.

<https://www.facebook.com/CCNScalers>

My first attempt using this new approach was a module titled *Home Sweet Home*, which I entered into an art contest at my resident community, winning a first-place prize in the event.

With the satisfaction derived from that first attempt at the new world of T-Trak, I went on to develop a second module. This one focused on modeling an urban setting rather than the rural atmosphere of the first module. Both modules follow the

T-Trak Module using Alternate (33mm) Track Spacing





After adding additional pieces of Styrofoam and carving to shape I used Shaper Sheet and plaster to form the contours around the track.

Small pieces of bark were positioned within the plaster coating. A Woodland Scenics culvert casting was also placed where a small stream would go under the tracks. The rocks and scenery were stained and painted prior to adding grass. Two part Epoxy was used for the stream flowing from the top, under the culvert and out to the front of the module. An application of trees, shrubs and an auto and some figures were added to complete the scene. Railroad track workers were (temporarily) added for effect.



(2) The *Downtown* diorama was my second attempt at building a T-Trak module following the T-Trak standards. The starting point for this project was an Osborne N Trak



12x13



Straight Laser Cut wood base. The kit includes a basic standard size frame to be constructed from laser cut pieces of thin plywood. A double track Kato N-Scale track was mounted using a spacing template provided in the base kit. Additional foam core boards were used to raise the overall base level around the track.

The structures included on the module are from Blair, Walther's Cornerstone and Woodland Scenics kits. A few of the buildings were heavily modified to fit the available space. Trees, vehicles and figures were added to complete the scene. A Micro-Trains passenger car is temporarily positioned at the station for display purposes

Conclusion

I found the opportunity offered by T-Trak modeling to satisfy my need to continue in my model railroading while taking minimum space.

Help Wanted

Contributed by Chad Barnette

CSD Program Chair – The Division needs someone to take on the responsibility of arranging for programs to be scheduled and presented at Division meetings. This can be accomplished by doing the presentation themselves, getting a commitment from someone else to make the presentation, or arrange for presentations to be conducted remotely (via Zoom). When the presentation has been established, the who, what, when, where needs to be sent to the editor of the Brass Pounder and the webmaster prior to the meeting so they let the members know about the upcoming program.

RMU Chair – The Division conducts Railroad Model University (RMU) annually to provide all model railroaders within our area the opportunity to attend a day-long event featuring clinics on a wide range of model railroad topics. The chair is responsible for recruiting member and non member clinician presenters as well as setting the schedule for these presentations. The chair also coordinates with other Division members to enable them to secure a location for the event, schedule and promote the event, and assist with any registration or A/V issues.

Please contact me (superintendent@carolinasm.org) if you have any questions or would like to volunteer.

CAROLINA TRAIN SHOWS



★ TWO UPCOMING EVENTS! ★

JANUARY
10th

9am - 3pm
Admission: \$5

ROCK HILL, SC

Student Activity Center
611 Myrtle Drive
Rock Hill, SC 29730

FEBRUARY 7th

CONCORD, NC
7831 Gateway Lane
Concord, NC 28027

FEBRUARY 7th

9am - 3pm
Admission: \$5

Show Hours: 9am - 3pm - Admission: \$5

Save the Date!

Central Railway Museum's



**Model Train
Expo 2026**

Fri – Feb 13th 12:00 – 6:00 pm
Sat – Feb 14th 9:00 – 3:00 pm

Rock Springs Church – Impact Center
207 Rock Springs Road
Easley, South Carolina 29642

Admission \$10.00 Adults

Under 10 **Free** with adult

Admission good both days

8+ Operating Model Railroads

KidZone

with Thomas & Brio

180+ Dealer Tables



COMPLETE INFO AT: WWW.CRMHA.ORG

Co-chairs: Sandy Eustis – (513) 325-8850 seustis13@gmail.com

Scott Unger – (412) 491-4655 scott.d.unger01@gmail.com



RPM Carolinas

May 2-3, 2026

9140 Arrowpoint Blvd. Suite 140

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Carolina Model Railroaders

- Friday Setup: April 17th – 5:00PM until 8:00PM
- Saturday Setup April 18th – 7:00AM until 8:45AM

First Baptist Church, 1000 W Friendly Ave, Greensboro, NC 27401.



Digital Distractions



What's that you say? The Carolina Southern Logo?! That's right, it's time for those of you that haven't joined us to join us on Facebook. Click the link below to get in on the conversation. Or better yet, start a new one. This is a great space to hang out, talk trains, or just catch up.

See you there!

Check out our page [here!](#)

Division Brass

Superintendent

Asst. Superintendent

Clerk

Paymaster

Director 2028

Director 2029

Director 2027

AP Chairman

Webmaster

Newsletter Editor

Program Chair

RMU Chair

Chad Barnette

Richard Shulby

David Myers

David Thrams

Alan Hardee

Joe Skorch

Ed Smith, MMR

Neal Anderson, MMR

Joe Skorch

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