

THOUSAND LAKES REGION
NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION



CONVENTION HANDBOOK

April 2015

The purpose of this manual is to provide a guide to planning and managing a successful convention. It is an outline of dates and times that will ensure that Thousand Lakes Region dates and reports are met. There are two keys to successful convention effort: First, the total commitment of the people of your Division to hosting a convention; and, Second, start early. This handbook is formatted so that you can insert pages, remove pages, and so it can be updated simply by the Region issuing replacement pages.

INTRODUCTION: Conducting a model railroad convention is a complex and time consuming task. However, if the effort is organized early, approached via a carefully constructed time line, and competently staffed, it can be enjoyable and the results profitable.

At the outset, it should be stated that the purpose of this guideline is not to create a mold into which all conventions must fall. A problem with many past conventions, both national and regional, is that they were too similar. They followed a predictable pattern and schedule and often introduced the participant to very little in the way of new activity. Were it not for the fellowship - opportunities to see new faces and become friends with other model railroaders - many conventions would have been failures. It must be remembered that camaraderie is one of the strongest attractions of a convention and those who plan these events will do well to permit ample time for socializing. Convention sponsors are encouraged to propose concepts that have not been tried before and present them to the Thousand Lakes Region (TLR) Board for approval. Conventions that constantly separate participants into special interest activities without providing mass opportunities for "rubbing elbows" may deprive participants of much needed experiences.

The Thousand Lakes Region has a Convention Director who is elected at the Region's annual convention and serves on the TLR Board of Directors. The individual is the representative of the President in working with individual Convention Chairmen. The Convention Director is responsible for determining feasible sites for future conventions and soliciting individuals in those areas to host a convention. The Convention Director is required to ensure that planned conventions are financially sound and all aspects are properly planned and executed. The Convention Director is required to report to the Board of Directors on convention business, including identifying that an approved convention host is having difficulties organizing a convention and/or that there are financial problems for a convention. It is important for Divisions considering sponsoring a convention to get in contact with the TLR Convention Director as early as possible and make the individual aware that planning is commencing. An open dialogue with the Convention Director will facilitate a successful convention.

The Thousand Lakes Region has numerous resources that can be called upon to support a successful convention. There are many experienced individuals who will willingly answer questions that may arise in the planning and execution of a successful convention. The Thousand Lakes Region Board of Directors is responsible for setting the policies that govern convention operations. Do not hesitate to call upon the Convention Director and Board Members when questions arise that clearly are of a policy nature and not answered in this handbook.

The timeline that follows is not an absolute; it is a recommended schedule to keep a convention on track from start to finish.

TIMELINE:

3 to 2½ years before: Establish a Division commitment for hosting a convention and establish a Convention Bid Committee to prepare a convention bid to be submitted to the TLR Board Meeting at the May Convention at least 2 years before your proposed convention.

24 Months Before: Submit a formal bid to the TLR Board for consideration and approval. The proposal should be a rough outline of the concept being proposed for consideration including proposed dates, location and a rough overview of what is being considered for highlights. Coordination with the proposed host facility and any prototype tour sites should have been accomplished by this date.

Immediately after TLR Board Approval:

Establish a Convention Committee

A. Select a Convention Chairperson and an oversight group of as many individuals as possible to assist the Chairperson.

B. Begin Planning and organization of Convention details in the following areas:

1. Facilities

- a. hotel rooms for attendees
- b. meeting rooms (coordinate with TLR President)
- c. clinic rooms (coordinate with Clinic Chairman)
- d. Contest Room (coordinate with Contest Chariman)
- e. Social activities
 - i. Opening night “meet and greet”
 - ii. Banquet

2. Finance

- a. Budget
- b. Registration

3. Clinics

- a. Presenters
- b. Rooms and times (coordinate with Facilities Chairperson)
- c. Audio-visual needs

4. Tours (including all related transportation requirements)

- a. Prototype
- b. Model railway
- c. Non-rail

5. Speakers (generally coordinated by Convention Chairperson)

6. Silent Auction

- a. model railroad related items
 - b. non-model railroad related items
 - c. auctioneers (2)
 - d. "gophers (3 or 4)
7. Family activities/non-rail activities
8. Publicity
- a. Pre-convention
 - b. Printed matter for
 - i. Convention specific material
 - ii. Site related materials
 - iii. photographer
9. Insurance (contact NMRA Headquarters)

23 Months before:

After Board acceptance of the sponsoring organizations proposal, secure draft contracts for convention facilities (hotel and/or facilities outside the host hotel for review by the Region President and Region Convention Director. Once approved, obtain signed contracts.

Secure contracts/letters of agreement for special events, services and tours.

- A. Prototype fan trip(s)
- B. Transportation for trip(s)
- C. Non-rail events requiring specific appointments with museums or business establishments.

Solicit and secure agreements with clinicians. Usually a series of e-mails will suffice. The Division needs to emphasize to the clinicians that they are a key part of the success of the convention. The Division needs to keep contact with clinicians on a regular basis in order for both parties to be assured that nothing is "falling through the cracks."

Fall TLR Board Meeting

Report convention planning progress, with selected theme. This report should be in sufficient detail in order for the Board to be confident that the convention planning is on track. It does not have to be in "hour by hour detail" but needs to have key elements in it such as the planned dates, hotel/accommodations available-including rough estimate of cost per day, availability of clinic and contest rooms, and the goal of the planned cost per person.

January of the year preceding the convention year

Year: Begin bi-monthly reports to the TLR Convention Director on progress toward the convention. These reports should be as detailed as possible. They need to support the TLR Convention Director's confidence that the convention can be accomplished as planned in order that the Director can assure the Region President that the annual convention will occur as required by the TLR Bylaws.

12 Months before: Report to the TLR Board meeting at the Spring Convention with details of the convention plan. The Board recognizes that invariably there will be changes required in the plan. At this briefing, the dates should be firmly established as well as hotel site/accommodations. The proposal must include the election by the Division to either operate the convention as the financial responsibility of the TLR or the 50/50 option where the net proceeds or losses of the convention are split equally between the host Division and the TLR. Prepare a presentation for the general membership meeting on the approved plan for the convention. The presentation should be in sufficient detail to generate interest in the convention and get members talking about your concept. Prepare a short article for inclusion in the fall edition of *The Fusee* to inform the TLR members of the upcoming convention and its theme.

Fall Board Meeting: Present a detailed briefing of the convention plan. Registration fees and participation fees should be included in this briefing. It is not anticipated that the Board would disapprove any aspect of your convention plan. The purpose of this briefing is to assure the Board that there will be a well-planned annual convention.

December before your convention:

Prepare a detailed article on the convention for publication in the upcoming spring issue of *The Fusee*. (To the Editor before February first.) Include the schedule of activities with the actual convention opening and closing times and dates. If activities are available before and after the convention closing they should be included in this article. It is also helpful to the reader to give an outline of activities and times planned during the convention to assist registrants with planning their arrival and departure times. The registration form to be used by participants **must** be in this issue.

January of your Convention year:

All arrangements/contracts should be reviewed and confirmed. Provide any information concerning problems that have arisen promptly to the TLR Convention Director.

1-2 weeks before: Confirmation and final inspection of convention facilities and review of all arrangements made to support the convention activities with the facility management team. Don't forget to talk about such things as parking and other facility requirements that might impact on the orderly presentation of the convention.

1 day before: Set up registration facilities, check systems, open contest area. Be prepared for participants to begin arriving early that day.

Opening day: All personnel should be on hand to ensure operation of the convention in accordance with the approved program.

Convention Closure: Work with *The Fusee* Editor to prepare a summation article for the next issue of *The Fusee* that contains a summary of the event, results of the modeling and photo contests, and photos from the convention. The Division through its Convention Chairperson needs to coordinate well in advance who will take the pictures of the contest winning entries, the annual picture of the TLR Board, and convention activities. Numerous pictures need to be taken at the event from which the *The Fusee* Editor can choose those that best compliment the article about the convention.

Fall Board Meeting after the Convention:

Provide the TLR Treasurer a report of the proceeds and receipts for expenses that reconcile with the financial statement for filing.

Present detailed financial statement to the fall TLR Board meeting and a wrap up briefing. Do not hesitate to include lessons learned and recommendations for future conventions. Be prepared to answer Board questions concerning the convention. All receipts from the convention will be provided to the TLR Treasurer for inclusion in the TLR Records.

Initial Decision:

The decision to bid on hosting a TLR convention requires careful consideration by the members of the Division developing that idea. The convention process is a lengthy commitment that must be undertaken by a Division that has the full backing of its membership. There are several aspects to this undertaking that will require a considerable amount of work. In making the decision, the Division should evaluate its members and itself as an organization looking for individuals with strong organizational skills; a strong business/finance background; negotiating skills; an understanding of the community and what is available for resources in the community; individuals who have been involved in the organization and operation of a model railroad convention conducted in accordance with National Model Railroad Association guidance; and the contacts the members of the Division have within the railroading and model railroading community. The strongest assets available to support this effort are dedicated individuals within a Division who are capable of providing the support required. The Division should appoint a Convention Bid Committee of at least three (3) individuals to be responsible for preparing the proposal to hold the convention.

The first presentation to the TLR Board occurs 2 years prior to the proposed convention. The Division is responsible for convincing the Board that it is capable of conducting a convention at the site they have chosen. At a minimum, after coordinating the availability of the facility on the dates being proposed for the convention with the facility management, the proposed facility should be presented, proposed dates for the convention; and a rough outline of activities. The TLR convention has traditionally been held in May the weekend before Memorial Day in the United States. The dates correspond to the Queen Victoria Day weekend holiday, which gives those members traveling to the United States an extra day to get home. Conventions held in Canada are held on Memorial Day weekend in the United States to give members traveling to Canada an extra day to get home. The dates **are not fixed in "stone."** If there are other conflicting activities that weekend, the Division should present the dates it proposes and the logic of the dates to the TLR Board. Additionally, if the Division has the capability, a short video presentation about the convention may be posted on the TLR web site. Assistance is available from the TLR Convention Director and other Board members concerning issues that a Division needs to raise during this process.

TLR conventions have in the past included clinics, prototype tours, a contest where the modeling efforts of individuals are evaluated in accordance with the NMRA criteria, a banquet, a Silent Auction and tours of member's layouts. Additionally, the TLR Board meets on Friday night of the convention, and a general membership meeting is conducted on Sunday morning. The initial Board presentation should be viewed as a sales presentation by your Division that will begin to peak interest in your proposed agenda. As a bottom line, the TLR Board must be confident that the Division is capable of carrying out the proposal.

Conventions in Canada require notification to the Region members a year in advance to ensure that United States citizens have ample opportunity to review and/or obtain a United States passport or review the status of their entry card. The Canadian Border Services Agency will allow you to enter Canada without these documents, BUT the United States will not let you back in without these documents. An article must be in the fall or Winter *Fusee* pointing out this requirement and the customs regulations that apply. Appendix A contains the US and Canadian government requirements for crossing the border and returning. The article needs to include information dealing with entering and leaving Canada. An e-blast needs to be sent out in March of the convention year reminding members again of these requirements. When the convention is in Canada it is recommended that two registrars be appointed, one in Canada and one in the United States. This will eliminate the currency conversion issues associated with the convention registration.

Facilities

An individual, or group of individuals, needs to do market research of the facilities available at the convention city. Most cities have a Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) that willingly will assist with all aspects of having a convention in their city. The CVB will assist in the development of knowledge of the business relationships that may exist between hotels, Chambers of Commerce and conference centers. The CVBs usually have an abundance of no-cost handouts that they will provide to be given to registrants that promote the host city and the many activities available in the area for guests to enjoy.

It is wise to assume nothing when doing the market research and ask a lot of questions. New hotels will most likely give large discounts during their first year of operation to attract more business in the future. Hotels commonly discount their room rates when blocks of rooms are reserved for conventions. Room rates that do not exceed \$100 per night are conducive to greater attendance, i.e. the lower the room rate the greater the attendance may be. If the entire convention is to be conducted at the same hotel, it may also be possible to negotiate for clinic, contest and meeting rooms at no cost. If possible, these rooms should be out of the main traffic flow patterns within the hotel in order to maximize the benefit of the activities being conducted. A copy of the proposed hotel contract must be sent to the TLR President and Convention Director for review prior to signature by the Division representative. **GET A SIGNED CONTRACT** with the lodging facility as early as possible. Past experience has shown that occasionally hotels double book facilities; the earliest in time contract prevails. If the convention is to be conducted at a facility other than the hotel, the lodging should be in extremely close proximity (i.e. a very short walk) to the convention site—**GET A SIGNED CONTRACT** for these facilities as well. The meeting room requirements remain the same wherever the clinics, contests, and meetings are to occur. The contest room must be securable. Banquets and social events are most often held in the convention facility when the primary location is a hotel. For the banquet, negotiations are required with the hotel concerning the space and food service aspects. For example, will the hotel allow an outside caterer to handle the banquet or must the banquet be served by the hotel?

If the hotel that will serve as the convention site requires a deposit, notify the TLR President and Treasurer. The hotel contract will have been reviewed by the TLR President and Convention Director prior to this request for funds. The TLR will provide funds if a deposit is required.

MARKET RESEARCH AND NEGOTIATING SKILLS WILL RESULT IN CONVENTION FACILITIES THAT COMPLEMENT THE THOUSAND LAKES REGION CONVENTION GOALS.

Finance

The Division needs to appoint a central point of contact for managing all financial aspects of the convention. This individual needs a strong background in budgeting and finance. There will be numerous “what if” questions that will arise concerning revenues and costs. This individual must be able to make accurate calculations to support the decisions impacting on the convention.

The Division has a most fundamental decision to make prior to the presentation to the Board in the fall before the proposed convention. This decision focuses on the financial risk to be assumed. Will the TLR assume all the risk (and possible profit) or will the Division opt for the 50/50 split of the risk and net proceeds of the convention? This decision must be made by the Division based on their research of the costs that are anticipated for the various convention activities.

Many of these costs are directly controlled by the negotiating skills of the Division members with responsibility for contracting for the support. Large areas of expense in the past have been the banquet and transportation costs to various activities during the convention. Prior to announcing the Division approach at the Board meeting, the Division membership needs to view a rough budget estimate prepared by the individual responsible for the financial aspects of the planned convention effort. The Division decision should be made after an evaluation of the risks associated with the costs and revenue projections.

For financial planning purposes, in the past, a target registration fee of \$100 has been successful. Also, a break-even number of 75 full paid participants will give the Division leadership a good planning number. It is recommended that the estimated costs of individual activities such as the banquet and/or a prototype tour(s) off the convention site planned as part of the convention should be identified in order that the decision-making process is based on substantial information. The Division’s convention financial manager should present an estimated revenue/cost breakdown to support the Division financial option decision that will be presented to the Board.

There are some basic principles that need to be observed when incurring costs for a convention.

First, no individual Division member should be in a position of profiting individually from the convention.

Second, a separate checking account needs to be established through which all convention proceeds are deposited and all convention expenses paid.

Third, when in doubt about the appropriateness of an expense, immediately contact the TLR Region President, Treasurer, or Convention Director. Do NOT incur expenses using the concept that is better to ask “forgiveness” after the fact than raise the issue up front.

Fourth, paying the expenses of guest speakers and clinicians (Complimentary) is a decision requiring Board approval. The host Division must seek Board approval prior to offering to pay these expenses. The Division shall present an explanation in writing to the TLR President and Treasurer no later than 180 days prior to the convention's opening detailing why such expenses should be incurred. Paying such expenses without prior Board approval will create a convention expense that the Division must reimburse the TLR for, from Division funds.

Fifth, if the Division has chosen the 50/50 option as the financial arrangement for the convention, the proceeds from the Silent Auction are revenues subject to the 50/50 split of the net proceeds. If the Division has chosen to have the TLR solely responsible for the convention financing, the Region retains all of the net proceeds from the auction.

Sixth, Train shows or flea markets that will run in conjunction with a TLR convention will be the sole responsibility of the host Division, not the TLR. The TLR will not supply funds to support a train show or flea market. It is the host's responsibility to advertise the event. Fliers should be printed, posted in local hobby stores, and handed out at other train shows to advertise the event. Consideration should be given to requesting posting notice of the train show/flea market in Model Railroader Magazine and the NMRA magazine in the upcoming events section. The host is responsible for contacting the State Department of Revenue to see if temporary sales tax permits are needed and notifying participants of tax requirements. **Failure to do so may result in fines that will be the host Division's responsibility.**

The Division Superintendent or Treasurer on behalf of the convention finance person is required to present a detailed financial statement to the fall TLR Board meeting immediately following the conclusion of the convention and answer questions from the Board. The detailed statement needs to include a complete financial analysis (breakdown of attendees, amount paid by attendees, all other revenues and receipts for all expenses). **All convention expense receipts must be provided to the TLR Treasurer for inclusion in the TLR Records.**

Since some of the convention expenses for the convention occur prior to obtaining registration fees, an advance from the Region may be obtained by contacting the President and requesting an appropriate amount. The advance is a temporary loan that requires reimbursement to the Region

Clinics

One of the most important functions of a TLR Convention is to provide information to the members of the Region on techniques that will assist in the development of their skills as a model railroader. The topics presented should be dynamic, hands-on in nature and relevant to current developments in the hobby. The Division needs to appoint one individual member as the Clinic Coordinator. This individual should be a person who likes to meet, greet, and talk with people. Starting early with this planning is critical. Initial keys to developing a clinic schedule are to look at the clinics conducted in the past 2 or 3 TLR conventions and to conduct discussions with your Division membership on topics that they believe are relevant to today. Review the NMRA and commercial publications for current developments and ideas that might support a clinic. Also, by going to other Region Web sites you can see the nature of the topics being presented at other Region conventions. There is always a need to complement the NMRA's Achievement Program in order to encourage more members to participate. As a general rule of thumb, a goal of having from 8-10 clinics, from which the attendees may make selections that interest them, will give a broad opportunity for attendees to find clinics that appeal to their modeling interests. Some clinics may be requested to be repeated, so planning for this contingency should be done.

Obtaining clinicians is best described with one simple word: **ASK**. There are numerous Master Model Railroaders within the TLR who are always willing to make presentations to support the clinic program. Additionally, there are individuals who attend TLR conventions with unique skills and the willingness to share them. Start early, talk to individuals within your Division and within the Region to find topics of interest to them. One can always use an insert in *The Fusee* to make a general request for presenters and topics that will be of interest to attendees. The TLR also has the advantage of having active Regions to its East and South with individuals who may be willing to present a clinic at a TLR convention. They may bring unique perspectives and experience on topics that are very relevant to today's hobby. Ask early enough and they may be willing to come to the TLR convention and make a presentation. If possible, one of the members of your Division might attend another Region convention or Division meet, attend clinics there, and if believed to be of interest to the TLR membership, extend an invitation personally while at that activity.

Clinics need to be limited to 45-50 minutes in length. This provides the opportunity for the presenter to clear the room and the next speaker to set up. It gives the members an opportunity to "stretch their legs" between clinics. The clinic rooms should be large enough to comfortably accommodate 20-25 attendees. Be prepared to handle an overflow crowd if that should occur, or to offer a second presentation of the clinic. Try to balance the clinic topics; clinics that build on the previous presentation need to be scheduled consecutively.

Once your clinicians have agreed to make a presentation, the next issue for each one is to determine what, if any, audio/visual and or administrative support they need. The Clinic Coordinator needs to work with the facility where the convention is being conducted to determine the capability of that facility to support the requests of the presenters. It may be

necessary to rent equipment to support a presentation. It may also be necessary to have a Division member there to support the presenter with his presentation. These needs should be determined early in the development of the clinic program.

The presentation by the Division at the Fall Board meeting prior to the Division convention needs to include a rough overview of the clinics being planned and the scheduling of those clinics. One last word, be prepared to have at least one, if not two, clinics ready to go for presentation by Division members in the event that at the last minute a clinician cannot make it to the convention.

Contest Room/Contest

An important part of every TLR Convention is the evaluation of the work of the numerous individuals who spend many, many hours completing model railroad projects for the purpose of the judged contest and Achievement Program. A separate room needs to be clearly dedicated to this portion of the convention and times planned for registration of items for evaluation that do not conflict with other on-going convention activities. The room MUST be able to be secured so that access can be controlled during the judging process. It also must be VERY WELL LIT in order to support accurate judging.

The Division is responsible for coordinating the contest with the TLR Contest Chairman. The contact needs to occur early in the planning process. It is recommended that the Contest Director and the Division develop a contest schedule. The schedule should include such things as the time period for registration of entries, including the cut off time for entries; the time period when judging will occur; the time period when the room will be open to the public for viewing; and closed periods for such things as breaks and eating times for the judges and contest room staff. The schedule should be published in *The Fusee*.

The actual evaluation of entries is accomplished under the leadership of the TLR Contest Chairman. There is usually a need for assistance in this process, volunteers are always welcome.

The convention program should include an opportunity for attendees to view the work of their fellow model railroaders. Generally this precedes and follows the banquet, and may occur again before and after the Region's annual business meeting. A planned time for the participants to remove their items from the contest room should be included in the agenda.

The end result of the evaluation process is a determination of the best exhibited skills in the various categories. It is always a "hit" at the banquet when pictures of the winning entries are shown as the awards are being presented. If the Division has an individual capable of building a Powerpoint presentation for the award portion of the banquet and the facility has the capability of showing the presentation, recognition of the hard work that goes into the models is enhanced. Suitable awards are presented at the banquet recognizing these accomplishments. The cost of the awards as outlined in the TLR Administrative Manual is paid for by the Region.

Prototype Tours

It is rare for a successful convention not to include some prototype related activity. It is recognized that very few cities in the TLR have an excursion or dinner train within a reasonable distance. However, most cities in the TLR have a rich railroad history and railroad activities within the proximity of the convention site. Opportunities to see local railroad activities and hear from the present management of those activities and/or obtain lecturers who have studied railroad activities in the area should be available throughout the Region. Excursions and rail fan trips often increase attendance at conventions. One of the keys to offering these activities is the contacts that Division members have with local railroad operations and local industries served by the railroads in the area.

Arranging prototype activities may be as simple as calling the local yardmaster and requesting a meeting to discuss the possibility of a guided tour. Most railroads are reasonably accommodating for this type of assistance, but a truly businesslike approach must be used. Recognize that in today's security climate there will be restrictions on access to railroad facilities; those restrictions must be respected. Discussions with railroad management personnel in the area of the convention should begin early.

Do not overlook the opportunity to visit industries in the area of the convention that are railroad related or serviced by rail. The members of the TLR enjoy visiting rail supported activities and looking to these types of industries for modeling on their layouts. There is a tremendous variety of these industries, both big and small, in the TLR area. Some industries operate their own rail service with varying motive power equipment. There is a tremendous emphasis today on getting more and more industrial output transported by rail and off the nation's highways. Members of your Division may work for, or know individuals, whose industries are serviced by rail. The key to these tours is knowledge of what is available in the area of the convention, either through research, through your Division member's contacts, or by asking.

If a prototype tour is on the agenda, the arrangements for the tour **MUST** include a discussion of any requirements for the participants to wear special clothing, e.g. hard-toed shoes (i.e. no sneakers or open-toed footwear allowed), or if the area is going to be dusty which could affect asthmatics. Also, participants need to be informed in advance if a tour involves lots of walking or goes over rough terrain. These requirements need to be published early and often.

Transportation will be an issue associated with prototype tours. The options are a contract with a local transportation company, or arranging car pools from the convention site to the tour locations. Coordination with the tour hosts will be essential; their preference must guide this decision. For example, if a tour involves transportation within sites, the host will most likely require you to contract for a tour vehicle. Parking at tour sites may also lead to the conclusion that a bus is the most efficient way to ensure that participation is maximized. This issue may impact the financial planning for the convention, therefore, it should be addressed as early as possible.

The Division will receive requests from attendees for maps to local hobby shops and railfanning sites. If there are sites that can be easily reached, i.e. without trespassing on railroad property, including a list and maps to these sites will be appreciated by the attendees. A word of caution, in the security environment of today, the Division MUST coordinate with the railroads in the area before publishing any such list. Also, it is appropriate to coordinate with local law enforcement agencies by informing them of the fact that there will be a model railroad convention in the area and that they may see folks with out-of-state license plates on their vehicles taking pictures of railroad activities. The Division MUST include a statement in the convention guide that states that if a participant is planning on railfanning, the individual MUST have his convention badge on at all times and MUST stay off railroad property at all times.

Layout Tours

One activity that convention participants look forward to is the opportunity to tour members' layouts. The quantity and quality of the layouts in the area of the convention will vary widely throughout the TLR. As a general rule, the layout tour takes place on Sunday afternoon after the close of the Region's annual business meeting. The hosts of these tours may want to have their layouts open at other more convenient times, such as Friday evening or Saturday afternoon; if so, the Division needs to be flexible in setting up this portion of the convention schedule. There is no requirement that a layout be "show ready" to be on the tour. There is always lots of interest in how the theme for a layout was developed, the methods of construction utilized by the host, and the operations or concept of operation on the layout. The tour also provides the host an opportunity to solicit ideas from attendees on ways to accomplish tasks that remain to be completed and ways to improve the overall layout.

Maps with detailed driving instructions are essential to support the easy transition between the convention site and the various locations in the surrounding area. Not everyone has GPS capability in his/her vehicle, thus a good map (or maps) is essential. Once they are developed, it is recommended that the routes be driven by several different individuals to confirm that the directions are correct. As a suggestion, the Sunday afternoon before the convention, invite the Division convention staff to visit the layouts that will be open the following weekend. This not only gives the staff the opportunity to participate in this phase of the convention, but also gets feedback on both the routes of travel and ease of making this journey. Also, an area map posted at the convention registration desk with pins showing the locations of convention activities off the convention site grounds will not only assist attendees in making both the decisions on what activities they choose to participate in, but also assist them with driving.

Friday Night Gathering/Banquet

The Division should plan an informal gathering on Friday (or the first) night of the convention in order for folks to socialize, get re-acquainted with old friends and meet new ones. Avoid a formal gathering; a “Wine and Cheese” approach has been common in the past. Generally it needs a room large enough to accommodate a large percentage of the attendees so that they can mingle. It has normally been at the main hotel but could be held at a near-by location that has a local interest element. The program and amenities (if any) are up to the Division—remember your budget.

TLR tradition is to hold a banquet on Saturday night of the convention to share a meal with the other convention attendees. It is also the time for acknowledging many things the TLR’s “Old Goat Award”, distribute Achievement Program certificates, recognize new MMRs, present awards (President’s Award, the Bob Dew Sr Award, and other Awards), that may occur; to conduct the traditional Silent Auction, and thank the host Division for their efforts. This activity may be conducted at the host hotel or at an off-site location with the capability of handling such a gathering. Planning for both of these social parts of the convention needs to start more than a year in advance of your convention date. This will ensure that contracts are in place with sufficient time to ensure all contingencies can be addressed. The host Division needs to conduct market research in the area to determine the site that will most fit the needs of the evenings. Once the decision is made as to where the events will take place, contracts need to be negotiated.

For the banquet, be careful not to sign a contract that guarantees a certain number of dinners too far ahead of time. Generally the registration ends two weeks before the convention at which time you will have a better idea of how many attendees can be expected. Make sure the contract allows you to specify how many meals are to be served no earlier than the Monday preceding the banquet. The caterer will always ask for a ballpark figure, and they will expect you to give them a number higher than they believe will need to be served—don’t allow them to put the ballpark figure in the contract before you sign it. **GET A SIGNED CONTRACT IN PLACE**, in order to avoid conflicts at convention time—as a general rule, the earliest signed contract will be recognized by the provider if there is a conflict. At least one month prior to the planned banquet, the Division **MUST** reconfirm every aspect of this event. The banquet evening usually begins with a social gathering, followed by introductions and welcoming remarks from the Division and the Region Presidents, the meal, a guest speaker if one is planned, all the presentations, and closes with the Silent Auction.

Depending on the site chosen, the meal may be required to be provided by the host hotel or site. If catering by an outside firm is an option, market research will give the Division a cost basis to make comparisons. As a general rule of thumb, a catered meal will be less expensive and offer a wider range of choices than a meal provided by a hotel or host site. In the past, a buffet has been the most popular approach to the meal as opposed to a plate specific meal. A buffet also offers a

wider choice of main courses and complimentary dishes; it also reduces the administrative burden of keeping track of who ordered what. If an attendee needs a special meal, be sure to coordinate this with the provider of the food. In either case, the menu should offer at least 2 main dishes. A group of Division wives is an excellent resource when it comes to helping with the choices to ensure that a balanced meal is offered. For budgeting purposes, the cost of the meal should be included in the registration fee for the convention. DO NOT FORGET to budget for a tip. Once again, GET A SIGNED CONTRACT IN PLACE.

For planning purposes, it is always best to ensure that there are at least one or two more tables of seats available for the banquet than the number of full registrants. This will allow participants the flexibility of seating with friends and in groups, and gives you the flexibility of accommodating last minute walk-ins who pay at the door. The TLR does not require a head table, but a table near the front of the room should be reserved for the senior Region leadership and guests. The TLR does not do seating charts, the participants are free to sit wherever they want and with whomever they want.

There should be an overall goal of a time limit on the activities of the evening—DO NOT let the evening drag on. There needs to be a Master of Ceremonies who controls the agenda and the speed with which things happen. The person needs to be familiar with such duties, and be of good humor.

The agenda for the evening should follow this format:

Brief Welcome by the Convention Chairperson

Brief Remarks by the Region President—include appropriate thank yous

Introduction of Dignitaries

Invocation

Dinner

After dinner speech by guest speaker (if planned)

Contest (and other) Award Presentations

Fifteen Minute Break

Silent Auction

Announcement of next year's convention site

Adjournment

Speakers

There is no requirement for a speaker to participate at the Friday night gathering or at the Saturday night banquet. Many TLR conventions are conducted in locations where there are individuals who have deep roots in the railroading community and in the model railroading community. In addition, many Division members have contacts in the local community through their participation in a local historical society, community development activities, and various service and social groups. Also, many community Chambers of Commerce maintain lists of speakers knowledgeable about the local area that may be called upon. If a member of the senior leadership of the NMRA is in attendance at the convention, the individual should be asked ahead of time if they would like to address the convention, either on Friday night or at the banquet. A speaker needs to be lively and entertaining. If a speaker is invited to make a presentation of interest to the attendees at the convention, the speech should be kept to a reasonable time, perhaps 15-20 minutes. If a local speaker agrees to speak at the banquet, certainly the convention should plan to provide that person's meal as an expense of the convention.

Silent Auction

A TLR Convention tradition includes a Silent Auction to conclude the Saturday evening festivities. The auction in the past has proven to be a great opportunity for the attendees to “let their hair down,” and good humor is always a good way to wrap-up an evening. There are keys to organizing and running a good auction, the first being, start early seeking items for the auction—it is recommended to start the July immediately after the last convention. There are three principle places to solicit items for your auction; manufacturers, hobby shops, and Division members. Appendix B is a sample letter that can serve as a reference for asking for manufacturer donations. At most, a recommendation might be that you should offer no more than 75 items in the auction.

Manufacturers in general run their business accounting systems on an annual basis, January 1 to December 31. Therefore, it is important to make requests for items for the Silent Auction early in their accounting year; they write off the donations as an advertising expense. There are several ways to develop a list of manufacturers to solicit for donations. There is a model railroad manufacturer’s web site with a massive listing of manufacturers of model railroad items. Manufacturers advertise in model railroad magazines, some in magazines of general interest, and others in magazines dedicated to a particular scale. Check with your members to see who has the current publications. Manufacturer listings at conventions such as the NMRA convention and trade shows are generally available with the site map of the exhibit hall, and if not, the host organization usually will provide a list of participating manufacturers. It takes time to build the list, start early and be careful to get the correct e-mail address. Mail your solicitation letters starting in December before your convention; make sure you have the date of your convention in the letter, where to send the donations and a statement that every firm making a donation will be recognized in your convention program. Boxes will start arriving sporadically; do not get “up tight” if you don’t receive anything for a month.

Local hobby shops that support model railroading will usually want to donate items for the auction. Ask politely and inform them that you intend to put a listing of local hobby shops in the convention literature. Do not be afraid to solicit hobby shops that regularly rent space at local and national train shows. They know who, within your region regularly shops with them. These solicitations should take place in late February or early March, with a reminder in early April. Also, look for hobby shops that advertise in *The Fusee* and Division publications. Just because the store is not close to the convention site does not mean that the store may not wish to participate.

Individual Division members are an interesting place to look for auction items. Most model railroaders have items that they purchased and cannot now remember why or for what scene. This gives them an opportunity to donate “white elephants,” some of which get the greatest number of humorous comments during the auction. This is a fun way for Division members who might otherwise be so inclined to participate in the convention. You may receive very few items or many items—there is no way to judge the success of this effort in advance.

You need several items in the auction that are not purely model railroad or railroad related. These items are the items that spouses will seek. By interspersing these items in the auction, additional fun and frivolity may occur. These items are generally purchased locally. Division member's wives have many good ideas about items of local interest that would be good in the auction, and unique stores in the local area where these items may be purchased. Also, the Convention and Visitors Bureau of the hosting city can identify stores where they purchase gifts for speakers and spouses who are attending conventions in the local area.

If the donations for the Silent Auction are not sufficient, a budget line item may be included to purchase items for the auction. It is recommended that no more than \$150 be allocated.

Organizing the actual auction requires a small committee of 3 to 4 people to oversee and support this activity. The auction items need to be set up as a display before the closing banquet for participants to see and "think about." This generally will take a couple of hours so the group needs to set up mid-Saturday afternoon. The items need to be in an area with easy access and plenty of room to move about the tables that the items are set on; plan on early arrivers for the banquet who will want to view everything. You should anticipate that the closer the auction is to commencing, the greater the crowds at the tables--have plenty of room around the tables. Once the display is set up, have a container for each separate item so that individuals can place their tickets with items they would like to win. Confusion can be avoided by numbering each item in the auction and placing a corresponding number on the container that will have the tickets in it.

Tickets for the auction can be purchased from manufacturers that make tickets designed to support such an activity. For example, National Ticket Company sells a ticket set that has a total of 27 tickets on a 9X4 inch perforated sheet. The cost of 500 ticket cards is minimal, and they are very prompt with their deliveries. The alternative is to buy rolls of double tickets generally found in such places such as office supply stores and Walmart. This alternative is the easiest for the purchaser to use, but is a little more difficult to keep track of the purchasers numbers to match with the drawn number. If the double roll option is chosen, the tickets need to be broken off in 10 ticket increments for sale. There are usually 1000 tickets on a roll; two rolls may be needed for the convention to ensure that you do not run out of tickets.

It is recommended that ticket sales take place before the dinner activities begin. A group of 3-4 folks needs to be circulating among the guests arriving for dinner and offering the tickets for sale. A price of \$5.00 for 10 tickets, or \$10 for a card with 25 tickets is a recommendation, the decision on cost is up to the host Division—the more reasonable it is the greater the number of tickets that will be sold. Make sure that you have change available. Ticket sales can proceed up until about 5 minutes before dinner is scheduled to start. Just prior to the auction activity, the Master of Ceremonies needs to allow for a 15 minute break, a time when guests may purchase more tickets and place tickets in the containers with each item they want to win.

The actual festivity needs to be conducted by at least 2 individuals who can have fun with the audience and keep the show moving. They need a group of about 6 individuals to pick items from

the display table and bring them, along with the tickets, to the front for the actual drawing. As a general rule, there will be several high value items that have been donated. These items should be dispersed randomly during the auction. Once a winning number is drawn and a winner found, the item needs to be taken to the winner by the individual who brought the item to the front. Speed during this part of the evening creates a higher potential for humor and sidebar comments.

FAMILY AND NON-RAIL ACTIVITIES

Given the wide expanse of the Thousand Lakes Region and the many varying activities throughout the Region, many individuals and families attending a TLR convention will have had little contact with the host city and its activities. This is an opportunity to sell not only your State or Province, but also your local community attractions. Many Chambers of Commerce and Convention Visitors Bureaus have published local guides that contain not only the hotels and restaurants in the area, but also listings of the attractions in the city and surrounding area, usually with very good driving directions. These organizations will help you with this aspect of the convention; they do not want folks to leave your convention unhappy about their city and the activities it has to offer. A copy of the visitors guide should be in everyone's registration packet.

It is important to plan activities for attendees that are outside the normal convention schedule. This may include tours of museums, zoos, historic and unique landmarks, and shopping excursions. The key to this portion of the convention program is finding someone or a group of individuals who are knowledgeable about the host community and surrounding area and have sensitivity to the interests of families. A potential resource for building this part of the program is the wives of Division members—wives seem to have an excellent understanding of what will interest families in your host city. The pre-convention publicity should contain overview information on some of the activities available in the area of the convention. By the time the spring deadline for *The Fusee* article on the convention with the registration form arrives, the Division should have the outline complete for non-rail activities.

The issue of transportation to the non-rail activities needs to be addressed in *The Fusee* article. If transportation is to be provided for scheduled non-rail activities or events, be sure to provide alternatives for participants who provide their own vehicles. Offer maps, bus schedules, information on cab companies and their rates. If there are walking tours of some areas of the host city, be sure to provide advice on these as well.

The bottom line of this portion of the convention---you have recognized that not all individuals accompanying registrants have an interest in model railroading. By providing a well-rounded program for these individuals you will increase attendance at your convention in addition to introducing folks to your unique community and area.

Transportation and Logistics

Transportation issues are dependent on the convention program and the decisions made by the Division. If there are off-site activities planned, the first issue is whether or not to contract for transportation to get participants to the activity site. This may be dictated by the host of the activity, generally they will prefer that participants arrive via a bus—everybody arrives at the same time in one vehicle as opposed to many cars—and departure is facilitated. Market research in the host city into costs becomes critical; i.e. is there privately-owned bus company available in the area; a city transit system; or a school bus company. A contract will have to be negotiated for this service. The cost of the transportation will have to be worked into the overall cost of registration, either as a part of the total registration cost, or assessed only to those participating in the event. This support needs to be contracted for early, and confirmed just prior to the convention.

Logistics for a convention ranges from setting up the registration area, to closing out the convention at the site after the convention ends. It is an area that needs several volunteers from the Division to man or support activities from before the convention to the closeout. The Division needs to develop a task list and get volunteers signed up in advance so everybody knows their responsibilities. During the convention, there needs to be at least 2 individual manning the registration desk who are knowledgeable about the convention activities and the surrounding area; two individuals supporting the clinics who have experience with any audio/visual equipment being used; one individual assigned to the contest room who has the key to that room and is responsible for opening and closing it during convention activities; and several roving Division members to assist where needed. As a general rule of thumb, there needs to be a volunteer coordinator responsible for logistical support.

The host Division needs to plan ahead for contingencies that may arise. For example, if a tour is taking place on a very hot day, there needs to be coolers with ice water available for the participants. If there is a breakdown in the transportation support, a contingency backup plan needs to be ready--a van with driver. If outside activities are planned, there needs to be a backup plan in the event of rain.

Publicity

The need for publicity for the convention begins when the TLR Board accepts your proposal to conduct a convention and runs through the time of the convention. Because of the wide dispersion of the TLR membership, it is wise to “get the word out” about when and where the Division is planning on holding the TLR’s annual convention. The greatest resource available in the TLR is *The Fusee*, starting with the notice of the original approval of the Division’s offer to hold the convention. There are fixed deadlines for articles to be submitted to *The Fusee* Editor which ARE NOT FLEXIBLE. The winter issue before the convention needs to have an article that generates interest in coming to the convention. The spring issue needs to have a very detailed article concerning the convention. In addition, the spring article MUST have the registration form for members to fill out and should include a detailed schedule of events.

In addition to *The Fusee*, the TLR also maintains a very active website site which needs to have on it as much information as possible as early as possible on it concerning the convention. The initial information does not need to be in great detail, but it needs to serve as notice so that potential attendees may plan ahead. As the convention year approaches, the TLR website site has the capability of including a short promotional video to garner interest in the convention. In addition, the Division must notify the National Model Railroad Association magazine of the dates and location in order that it may be added to their roster of conventions. Surrounding the TLR are several Regions that also have their own publications. The Division needs to send publicity to those Regions in order that the dates and location of the convention may be published by them. Their Region publication may publish an article about the TLR convention that includes the TLR registration form and contact information. Often people who live on the outskirts of other Regions may be more apt to come to the TLR convention if it is on the outskirts of the TLR rather than travel a greater distance to their own Region convention.

A decision needs to be made as to whether or not to advertise the convention in local publications in the host city. In some areas there are community bulletin boards where the convention can be posted without cost. Local Convention and Visitors Bureau’s maintain a listing of upcoming conventions in their area and regularly publish that listing. The amount of local advertising is a decision the Division should consider based on their knowledge of the community and the planned activities.

Every convention needs printed materials that are prepared by the Division. The convention needs a program that contains all the relevant times, locations, maps and useful community information. It is a good idea to find a Division member with experience designing printed materials. With more and more people becoming involved in desktop computer publishing, it may be possible to get the compiled information into a program format without contracting for that service. The actual publishing of the convention program can be done by the Division or contracted out. In many areas, there are small publishing companies that specialize in this type of work. Market research will enable the Division to find a cost effective solution to this need.

Insurance

The purpose of the NMRA insurance is to protect the National Model Railroad Association, the Thousand Lakes Region, the sponsoring Division, and the individual NMRA members. Insurance for the event is automatically covered by the NMRA. There is no application or notification required. It is NOT to insure attendees. If there is an incident, it's these groups who are insured, regardless whether the injured party is an NMRA member or not. The insurance provides liability coverage to these groups and individuals (as long as they meet the requirements) no matter who gets hurt.

There is NO requirement that all participants in the convention are NMRA members in order for the insurance to apply to the convention activities. Injuries to the general public and non-members are covered. Therefore, invite the general public to attend if it's that kind of event. If an individual is injured at a sponsored event, member or not, and he or she turns to the NMRA insurance for reimbursement, that's when we're protected.

The NMRA national convention and most Regions require that the primary registered attendees be NMRA members. Usually, spouses, children, and grandchildren can also register at a family rate if available. If they're attendees at the convention and are injured, the NMRA entity sponsoring the event and individuals supporting it are covered if they are members of the NMRA.

If the sponsoring organization contracts with a commercial transportation firm to provide transportation to and from a planned activity, that company has its own liability insurance policies. The NMRA's insurance company does NOT provide liability coverage for the transportation company or its drivers---they need to do that on their own.

The NMRA's insurance also does not provide coverage for private cars that are used to transport attendees from event to event. The drivers' insurance would come into effect for that. The sponsoring organization should carefully consider the use of private vehicles to support convention activities.

Layout owners on a home tour are covered by the NMRA liability insurance if they are NMRA members. Non-NMRA members with their layouts open for a tour are NOT covered by the NMRA's liability policy if there's an incident at their home. The NMRA policy protection is IN ADDITION to their homeowner's policy for homeowners who open their private home layouts for NMRA sponsored tours and operating sessions. It DOES NOT REPLACE or duplicate standard homeowner's insurance, rather it offers the NMRA, its officers, tour organizers, and members supplemental lawsuit protection in the event of an injury or accident.

If a location is chosen to host some or all of the Region convention events requires a Certificate of Insurance, contact the TLR Treasurer to arrange for it. The NMRA requires these requests to be sent to headquarters at least 30 days prior to the event, so contact the TLR Treasurer at least 7 weeks prior to the convention dates. There is a \$25 charge for each certificate request,

The Division needs to understand that In order for every person from the Division who is supporting the convention to be covered by the NMRA insurance, they MUST be a member of the NMRA. It is an acceptable cost of the convention to purchase RAILPASSES for individuals who are not current members of the NMRA; for example if several wives agree to support the convention, the Division may purchase RAILPASS memberships for each of these individuals.

If additional questions, clarifications, or guidance is needed concerning the application of the NMRA insurance program to a Region or Division event exists, you are encouraged to call the NMRA Headquarters at 423-892-2846; or email the request to nmrahq@aol.com.



National Model Railroad Association, Inc.

January 1, 2015

The following is an update on the NMRA Property and Liability Insurance program. For information on liability limits, please contact NMRA Chief Administrative Officer Jenny Hendricks at nmrahq@nmra.org.

To: All Directors, Region Presidents, Division Superintendents, 100% NMRA Club Coordinator, NMRA SIG Coordinator

From: Michael C. Brestel, Insurance Coordinator, At-Large World-Wide District Director, and Past President

Date: January 1, 2015

Subject: Current NMRA Liability and Property Insurance Program

Late last year we concluded our negotiations for the NMRA's insurance coverage for the current year. Our primary coverages renew each January 1. They continue to require less effort than previously on the part of HQ, Regions, and Divisions from an administrative viewpoint. Coverage continues to extend to 100% NMRA Clubs and NMRA Special Interest Groups (SIGs).

Our main insurance carrier for liability and property coverages continues to be the Peerless Insurance Company of Boston, Massachusetts, which is part of Liberty Mutual Insurance Group and has been providing business insurance to groups like the NMRA since 1901.

It is our hope that this memo will assist the leaders of all levels of the NMRA in understanding how our liability insurance program works, and how the policy impacts each level of the organization. We've also included a list of questions and answers that are most frequently asked.

Please read this memo carefully, and please help us make sure that each Division Superintendent, 100% NMRA Club, and NMRA SIG Group does the same. If you have any questions, please forward them to HQ Administrative Department (Jenny Hendricks, CAO, nmrahq@nmra.org) or to me (mbrestel@zoomtown.com) for review and/or clarification. Please do not contact our broker/agent or supplier directly.

This policy is in place primarily to protect the NMRA national corporation, and

secondarily to protect the interests of Regions, Divisions, 100% clubs, NMRA SIGs, and members where conventions and regular and special activities warrant coverage.

Overview of Coverage:

The current Liability and Property Insurance Program is with Peerless Insurance Company (same company as last year). Our General Liability Insurance Policy covers all NMRA business activities in the U.S. and Canada, including NMRA Canada. All Region-, Division-, 100% NMRA Club-, and NMRA SIG-sponsored events are covered up to a specific limit of liability provided for in the policy. For clarity, consistency, and assurance of coverage, it is necessary that SIG events be co-sponsored by the National, a Region, or a Division.

The policy covers all NMRA entities located within the U.S. and Canada. Unfortunately, we have not been able to obtain coverage for NMRA entities located elsewhere.

Once again, this year's policy does not require reporting of meeting or event sites to trigger coverage – it's automatic. **We would appreciate an annual report of all meeting dates and locations from each Region and Division so that the underwriter (Peerless Insurance) has a thorough understanding of the NMRA's exposures. We ask that at or around the first of each year, each entity planning to use the insurance send a list of applicable events to HQ.** If dates or locations of meetings change, don't panic – coverage is in force even if the venue changes. The coverage has been arranged this way to cut down on the amount of paperwork and interaction on insurance with the Administrative Department and others.

The insurance carrier has no problem with how we choose to identify an event (e.g., train show, flea market, swap meet, convention, jamboree, seminar, clinic, tour, event, meeting, etc.) as long as the event is officially sponsored by an NMRA entity.

If you need specific Certificates of Insurance (for landlords, building owners, etc.), the process will be explained later in the memo.

Coverages for national conventions are detailed in the convention procedures. Questions about national convention coverage can also be directed to Bob Amsler, Meetings and Trade Show Department Manager, at nmramts@charter.net.

Who Is Covered?

If there is an accident or other loss situation, **it does not matter whether or not the injured party or parties are NMRA members.** Our policy is intended to respond to an accident claim and to handle appropriate payments for medical and other claims if they are deemed to be our (the NMRA's) liability.

If the injured party decides to take legal action against every possible party involved, our policy is going to protect only the NMRA entities, members, and others to whom we may have chosen to extend coverage by Contract or Certificate. If a non-member is directly

brought into a lawsuit as a result of an incident at an NMRA event or activity, our policy will probably not cover that non-member (this is a gray area – we cannot predict the specifics of every situation).

The definition of *who is covered* in our policy has been made as broad as possible. For obvious reasons, it is not the underwriter's intent to extend coverage beyond what they are contractually required to provide.

The coverage is automatically in effect as long as the event in question is an NMRA event. Officers and individual members are covered as long as they are engaged in an activity on behalf of the NMRA.

It is important that event host groups do a good job of "policing" meeting rooms, show sites, vendor/displayer areas, etc. for potential hazards that could cause an accident. If a claim occurs, our insurance carrier's claim adjuster will review the accident cause. If it is determined that negligence on the part of the meet location landlords or vendor/displayers has contributed to or caused the incident, our insurance carrier will pursue getting one or more of these entities to participate in, or even take over entirely, the responsibility for payment of a claim.

Because the coverages extend to Regions, Divisions, 100% NMRA Clubs, etc., it is critical that these entities of the NMRA operate their organizations in line with the National Regulations of the NMRA. If they do not, they will jeopardize coverage for their organization, as well as its officers and members, should an incident occur. If Regions, Divisions, etc. operate contrary to or in disregard of the National Regulations, their actions could also jeopardize the National's ability to provide the same quality and breadth of coverage in the future.

What Is Covered?

All officially sponsored (by 100% NMRA organizations) NMRA events in the U.S. and Canada are covered. Unfortunately, we are not able to get coverage extended beyond the U.S. and Canada at this time. Officially sponsored events do not have to be reported to trigger coverage. Earlier this year, our insurance broker sent each Region President a master Certificate of Insurance so he or she can show meeting site landlords, etc. that the Region, as an NMRA entity, has Liability Coverage. Each Region President should pass along a copy of this Certificate to his or her respective Divisions.

There is no administrative fee for this basic Certificate of Insurance. NMRA SIGs and 100% NMRA Clubs can also request sample certificates from HQ at nmrahq@nmra.org. Individual meeting sites do not have to be endorsed onto the policy for coverage to apply.

The only time a Region, Division, 100% NMRA Club, or NMRA SIG will be charged a fee is when a particular landlord or meeting site provider wants a Certificate of Insurance specifically showing them as an Additional Insured for the timeframe of the event. These requests should be sent to the HQ Administrative Department at least **30**

days prior to the scheduled event (please complete an **NMRA APPLICATION FORM FOR CERTIFICATE OF INSURANCE**, available at this url:

<http://www.nmra.org/sites/default/files/memberservices/insuranceapplication.pdf>).

If you call on a Thursday for a weekend event, you will not get the certificate in time and may have to cancel the event because the location may not let you hold the event without the Certificate of Insurance adding them as an Additional Insured on the NMRA Policy.

The HQ Administrative Department will continue to process all requests for specific site certificates. There will be a **\$50 administrative fee** for each certificate request. This will be charged to each Region/Division/100% Club/SIG for any certificate showing a requesting party as an Additional Insured for a specific event. Again, you do not need a specific certificate for each event **unless the landlord or location of the event requires one**.

Multiple certificate requests can be included on one request form for the single \$50 administrative charge. We will not specifically name anyone as a "Named Additional Insured" directly to our policy, but will show them as an Additional Insured for the event by way of the Certificate of Insurance. Coverage is automatic for all NMRA officially sponsored events in the U.S. and Canada, but each request for specific Certificate(s) of Insurance costs \$50.

Again, please use the **APPLICATION FORM** to request Certificates from Headquarters.

Co-Sponsored Events

If events are co-sponsored, the name of the NMRA Region, Division, 100% NMRA Club, or NMRA SIG must appear as the sponsor on all publicity, flyers, signage, etc. It must be pointed out to the other sponsor(s), particularly if they are non-NMRA entities, that our policy might not cover 100% of the liability should a claim occur. Division of liability is a gray area, subject to interpretation at the time of a claim, and cannot be predicted in a final and clear-cut fashion.

In order for an event to be an official event, the Division or Region, whichever is the sponsoring entity, must approve the event by whatever process is required or has evolved by custom. For instance, a Division might require a vote of the entire membership in order for an event such as an annual train show to be officially sponsored. On the other hand, some Divisions might normally approve an event by a vote of the officers and/or directors. It is important to follow whatever laws, requirements of organizing documents, or customs exist in your case for approving all events.

Please understand that in the event of a claim, if it is discovered that the NMRA Sponsoring Group is treating as group members persons who are not NMRA members, or if the NMRA group is keeping a double set of membership books, the claim will not be covered due to breach of contract. In the event of such membership fraud, all parties concerned may find that they bear personal liability, and would have to turn to their own insurance for coverage if available.

Our coverage might extend to non-NMRA members who are invited to participate in the event(s), but if they are directly sued as a result of an incident that occurs during the event, we cannot predict the course that lawsuits will take. Due to the unpredictability of such claims, we would advise non-NMRA entities and/or non-members participating in events to be sure to that their personal liability insurance coverage is adequate.

The policy that has been discussed above is a *General Liability Policy* and is not an *Auto Liability Policy*. The NMRA Policy has Auto Liability Coverage *only* for Hired and Non-Owned Autos (rentals) that national staff and/or officers may be required to rent during travel. This coverage does not extend to buses, railfan trips, etc., nor does it apply to vehicles rented or hired for any purpose by Regions, Divisions, 100% NMRA Clubs, or NMRA SIGs.

How Much Is Covered?

If a meeting site or landlord requests a Certificate of Insurance for an event, the certificate will show our standard \$1,000,000 per occurrence, \$2,000,000 aggregate Liability Coverage. If your group needs additional coverage, that coverage is not available through our policy, but should be available on the open market.

We review our coverage needs annually, and we, along with our agent, feel we are currently carrying the correct amount of Liability Insurance Coverage for the exposure of our operations. It should be noted, however, that if a claim or claims exceed the maximum in any one year or one occurrence, the assets of the NMRA could be at risk.

Our liability policy does not cover buildings, equipment, supplies, etc. These are covered for the HQ Administrative Department, the Kalmbach Memorial Library, and the Howell Day Museum under the Property section of the Peerless policy. Very little property insurance coverage extends beyond the Headquarters building. Contest and display model room coverage will be explained later in this memo.

100% NMRA Club Liability Insurance Coverage:

We are pleased that Peerless Insurance will continue to offer the NMRA Liability Policy to cover certified 100% NMRA Clubs. This coverage continues to represent a huge savings advantage for our 100% Clubs. It now probably costs a Club around \$1,000 annually to acquire such coverage on its own, but each Club can be covered under the NMRA policy for a **\$50 annual administrative fee** (not a premium).

In order to obtain the coverage, each interested 100% NMRA Club must contact the HQ Administrative Department (Jenny Hendricks) to provide the necessary exposure details (i.e., club name, address, and building site information). Upon approval and payment of the administrative fee, the 100% NMRA Club will be added to the policy.

The policy also covers "Fire Legal Liability" with a sublimit of \$100,000. Club landlords frequently require this coverage. There is not a separate premium charge for each

individual 100% Club, but rather there is a group rate figured in as part of the overall NMRA liability premium on an annual basis.

Any 100% NMRA Club should also provide information on all entities needing Certificates of Insurance at the time that it notifies the Administrative Department of its request for coverage. No additional fees will be charged for certificates unless the Certificate of Insurance holders change or additional Certificates are required within the policy period, in which case an **additional \$50 administrative fee** will be charged for issuing the new Certificate(s) of Insurance.

NMRA Special Interest Groups:

The Peerless Insurance Co. Liability Policy also extends coverage for events sponsored by NMRA Special Interest Groups. Since many SIGs have members who do not belong to the NMRA, we require that these events be co-sponsored by the National, a Region, or a Division. If site-specific certificates are needed, HQ will charge a \$50 administrative fee. All requests for coverage must be sent to Jenny Hendricks, NMRA CAO. Also, please refer to Legal Counsel Robert Amsler's comments under *Signing Legal Contracts and Sponsoring NMRA-Sponsored Events* below.

Property Insurance for Clubs:

Property Insurance for equipment, models and layouts is available for 100% NMRA Clubs, as well as for non-100% NMRA Clubs that purchase a Sustaining Membership in the NMRA. The insurance product is available through the J. A. Bash Co. of Pittsburgh and is separate from the overall NMRA Corporation Property Insurance Program. This is the same program that we make available to all members. Building insurance is not available through this program; however, J. A. Bash will be able to assist any 100% Club that needs to pursue building insurance. Requests for any of these coverages should be processed through Jenny Hendricks – do not contact J.A. Bash directly.

Model Contest and Display Room Coverage:

The NMRA Insurance Policy with Peerless Insurance (Standard Marine Policy Form) covers model contest and display room models that are in our (NMRA's) care, custody, and control. Regions and Divisions do not have to make special application to receive coverage of models, photos, or artwork in model contest and display rooms at conventions – coverage is automatic. We do expect Regions and Divisions to cover the \$250 deductible in the event there is a claim. The maximum coverage is \$100,000. **It is important to be sure that each entrant completes the "value of entry" box on the contest entry forms so that we will have a good idea of the value of the article if a loss occurs.**

Dishonesty Coverage:

The Commercial Crime Coverage section of the Peerless Insurance Policy extends "Dishonesty" Coverage to National Officers, Directors, Department Heads,

Headquarters Staff, and Region Treasurers. Any Region involved in a loss will be expected to cover the \$1,000 deductible. This coverage is available only to our Regions in the U.S. and Canada.

Questions About Insurance Coverage:

Please direct any questions to Jenny Hendricks, NMRA Chief Administrative Officer, at **(423) 892-2846** or via e-mail at **nmrahq@nmra.org**.

Again, do not place calls directly to our insurance agent or insurance carrier. We have agreed to work with them through our administrative staff only.

I (Mike Brestel) am also available to answer questions via e-mail or phone. My contact information can be found in the masthead of the *NMRA Magazine/NMRA Bulletin*.

Thanks for your continued cooperation with this program.

Signing Legal Contracts and NMRA-Sponsored Events

We are increasingly answering questions about what has to occur for an event to be considered sponsored or co-sponsored in the eyes of the insurance company. A sponsored event is an event of a Division or Region approved by whatever approval process exists. A co-sponsored event is one in which the NMRA, through a Region or Division, agrees to sponsor an event with a non-NMRA entity. The NMRA wishes to affirm such activities because of the benefit that accrues to both organizations. In order to be co-sponsored, NMRA Regions and Divisions must approve the event by whatever procedure is established for the approval of events. If there is no procedure, one should be established in writing. The Region or Division must be a true co-sponsor of the event, sharing in the risk and proceeds of the event, and not merely named in order to bring the event within the scope of the insurance. If the partnership is in name only, there is a significant likelihood that the insurance company would refuse to defend and indemnify anyone involved in the event. Items to consider in creating the co-sponsored event include: (1) the number of hours contributed by the NMRA Region or Division membership and the hours contributed by the non-NMRA entity's membership; (2) the division of risk and proceeds if the event fails or succeeds; (3) the name of the NMRA and other entity must both be prominently displayed on all advertising and signage; and (4) whether both organizations sign the contracts or other documents. This is not an exhaustive list; these items are merely an illustration.

*Finally, the NMRA sponsoring entity must sign the contract on behalf of its own organization. **In no event is anyone at the Region or Division level to sign a contract and have the sponsoring organization listed as the National Model Railroad Association, or the NMRA Inc.** Instead, the contract should list the actual, legal name of the sponsoring Region or Division, for example, the XYZ Region or the ABC Division. The person signing the contract should be an officer of the sponsoring*

Division or Region, whichever is appropriate, and should be so designated.

Claim Information:

*All possible claim incidents need to be reported as soon as possible following the event and/or date of the incident to CAO Jenny Hendricks at Headquarters. We will then review the report and pass it on to Peerless Insurance for investigation. It is very important that as much detail as possible about the claim and claimant be described in the information that you provide Jenny. If possible, take photos of incident area (not of the claimant), showing physical details that relate to the claimant's story. The **CLAIM FORM** is available at http://www.nmra.org/sites/default/files/claim_form.pdf.*

– Robert Amsler, NMRA Legal Counsel

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1) Are individual NMRA members covered by the NMRA Liability Insurance Policy?

Yes, individual members are covered by the policy when they are engaged in specific NMRA business (e.g. conducting a clinic or presentation for outside group(s), or hosting a convention layout tour).

2) My Division has persons it regards and treats as “members” who are not NMRA members – are they covered?

No. Divisions cannot have members who are not NMRA members, and a person must be a member of the NMRA to be protected by our coverage. Non-NMRA guests at meetings, convention, shows, etc., are not personally covered against liability by our policy, but the events they attend as guests are covered by the policy. Non-members would only be at risk if they would be specifically named in a claim action. The NMRA would endeavor to have coverage apply as broadly as possible in these situations, but there are no guarantees – the insurance company will, of course, be looking to limit its liability.

In addition, all Regions and Divisions have been instructed that they cannot grant membership status to persons who are not National NMRA members. Certainly, we continue to encourage guests to attend many of our functions (National, Region, Division, 100% NMRA Clubs, SIG's) to the extent permitted within our Guest Policy, but the guests must be made to understand that attendance at NMRA events, no matter how frequent, does not automatically make them members, and does not guarantee they are covered by the insurance. In fact, granting Region or Division membership status to non-NMRA members will likely result in cancellation of the group's coverage, leaving officers and members personally liable for any claims.

3) *My Division has always had members and guests who don't belong to the NMRA. We like it that way. Many of these people are personal friends of ours. Why is this anyone's business but our own?*

This question keeps coming up, so let's be very direct here: **If your Division allows permanent visitors to participate actively in Division activities as if they were NMRA members, you risk losing insurance coverage for any event where that abuse of membership can be demonstrated.** You could be personally on the hook for thousands of dollars – or more – in damages to the injured person and to the public facility to which you represented that you had insurance.

As an NMRA officer or member, your personal assets are being protected by our liability insurance. Without that insurance, all the officers, and even the members, of a Division (or Region) are **personally** responsible for paying damages in case of an injury. **That means your house, your bank account, your assets are on the line.** You know that most insurance adjusters are on the lookout for reasons to deny claims. If there's a claim, you can be sure it *will* be investigated. Member fraud is a breach of the insurance agreement, and is an easy-to-find and easy-to support reason for denying a claim. One of the first things the insurance investigators will ask HQ for is a membership roster of the NMRA group in question. All the insurance company needs to find out is, "Hey, this Division is letting non-members participate as if they were members."

Keeping clean, honest membership records isn't something that National came up with to complicate your life or take away your fun. This is what our insurance provider has demanded in return for selling us our policy. It's part of what we all pay for peace of mind and protection of our personal assets. **If your Division is trying to run a game on the NMRA or on our insurance company, the company will find out – and your negligence and dishonesty could mean that everyone in your Division, and even everyone in the entire NMRA, loses this huge, huge benefit.**

4) *Can coverage be extended to a home layout tour where the host is a non-NMRA member?*

No, unless the non-member purchases an NMRA membership, or one is purchased for him or her. We recommend that non-members be encouraged to join the NMRA prior to the event. A one-time six-month RailPass membership is available, to those who are eligible, for \$9.95. Or non-members can be encouraged to join for the full annual fee while the event underwrites \$9.95 of the full amount.

5) *Are show vendors and module layout operators covered by the NMRA policy at a Region or Division event?*

Yes, as sponsor of the event, the NMRA's policy would be the primary insurance policy applied to a claim arising out of the event operations. However, individual groups, vendors, and layout operators could also be named in an action. While the NMRA policy would be primary, these other groups, etc. also should be made aware of the risk and should have their own coverage. This is a gray area, and we cannot guarantee the

outcome of any legal proceeding. There is certainly a higher risk for non-NMRA members or groups if they are specifically found negligent in a claim action.

6) Does the NMRA Policy cover car and van rentals?

Yes, but only for NMRA employees and national executives. Employees and national executives should refuse rental car company insurance at the time they sign rental agreement contract(s). If your Region or Division needs to rent buses, vans, or cars for event transportation, they are not covered by our national policy. Specific coverage should be purchased or arranged through the rental company.

7) Can a non-100% NMRA Club purchase Model Insurance?

Yes, a non-100% Club can become a Sustaining Member of the NMRA and apply to J. A. Bash for coverage.

8) Can a non-100% NMRA Club purchase Liability Coverage through National?

No, a Club must be 100% NMRA to qualify for NMRA Liability Coverage. They can, however, contact J. A. Bash to purchase a separate Liability Policy.

9) Can more than one certificate be requested for a \$50 administrative fee?

Yes, each time you send a request to HQ, a \$50 fee will be assessed. A single request can include multiple certificate requests for a number of events (monthly Division meetings, etc.). You save money if you request all your certificates at one time.

10) Where do I report a possible claim resulting from an event or activity?

Inform Jenny Hendricks at HQ (423-892-2846, email nmrahq@nmra.org) as soon as possible and she will notify our agent. Do not call our agent directly.

11) One of our event site providers has asked for a copy of our insurance policy. Can we get a copy?

No. We do not provide copies of our policy to any outside organization, but we will discuss any and all issues upon request. Please let us know if you encounter a site's risk manager or official who needs additional information about the NMRA coverages.

12) Can individual members be covered for liability if they periodically open their layouts for non-National/Region/Division sponsored events?

No. Our Liability Coverage is designed to protect the National Organization, and its Regions and Divisions. Member coverage for home layout visits only applies at the time layouts are opened for NMRA-sponsored convention tours or specific Region or Division events. Layout owners need to make sure their personal liability coverage is adequate if they are opening their homes to non-NMRA tours.

13) Can non-members attend Division and Regional meets?

Yes, but they cannot participate in NMRA contests or receive benefits of membership without being a member.

The **official policy** of the NMRA is that non-members ("guests") are allowed to visit a Division or Region meeting three times over the course of a lifetime to get a sampling of what goes on at those activities. The NMRA Board of Directors has determined that three visits are enough to give a non-member a good idea of the benefits of NMRA membership.

After three visits, the non-member must either join the NMRA, or the must be asked not to return to the Division or Region meeting or members' event. If a former member allows his or her membership to lapse but continues to show up at Division or Region events, then he or she cannot be permitted to hang around, taking advantage of old friendships to receive benefits that are intended only for members. If they are not willing to join, these individuals must be asked to leave.

As part of determining the cost and extent of our insurance coverage, our insurer wants to know who our members are and how many members we have. Should a claim occur, having allowed non-members and former members to become "permanent guests" could severely jeopardize not only the offending Division or Region's insurance coverage, including coverage for their officers, but also the coverage of the entire NMRA.

14) Are non-members allowed to participate in NMRA-run auctions and raffles?

No. Participation in Division- or Region-run auctions and raffles is a benefit of NMRA membership that cannot be extended to non-members. In addition to the insurance questions raised by non-member participation, there are also tax consequences resulting from non-member participation in these activities.

If you have read this memo and still have other questions, please call or email NMRA HQ at 423-892-2846 or nmrahq@nmra.org, or email Mike Brestel, NMRA Insurance Coordinator, at mbrestel@zoomtown.com.



NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION, Inc.

EVENT INSURANCE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & ELECTION FORM

I, _____, on my own behalf or on behalf of _____, do sign and acknowledge the contents of this information form concerning event liability insurance and NMRA membership benefits with regard to the clinics, tours or other events, which are part of the program hosted or co---hosted by _____

_____ for its _____ during _____, 20 through _____, 20 .

I understand that the National Model Railroad Association, Inc. (NMRA) maintains insurance to cover a loss at an event sponsored by the NMRA or any of its recognized Regions, Divisions, or 100% NMRA Clubs, or co-sponsored by the NMRA or any of its recognized Regions or Divisions. I understand that this insurance extends coverage to NMRA members who host clinics, layout tours, or other events at their home or their 100% NMRA club as an excess insurer.

I have been advised and I understand that the NMRA event liability insurance discussed above will not extend coverage to non-members who host clinics, layout tours, or other events at their home or club if there is a loss at the home or club. I further understand that the NMRA event liability insurance is one of many benefits of NMRA membership, including fellowship, support of standards and conformance of products, education, participation in NMRA programs at all levels of the NMRA, and receipt of the *NMRA Magazine*, as well as numerous others.

I hereby knowingly elect to host the clinic, layout tour, or other event at my home or club without becoming a member of the NMRA, and rejecting all of the benefits of membership including the event liability insurance coverage. I further warrant that I have the authority to sign this document on behalf of the club noted above, if appropriate.

_____Name

_____Title of Club Officer/Director

_____Date



About the insurance waiver for non-members

March 15, 2015

The NMRA liability insurance program is designed to provide coverage to NMRA organizations (such as Regions and Divisions), NMRA-affiliated organizations (such as 100% NMRA clubs and NMRA SIGs), and NMRA members during NMRA-sponsored events. The program is not intended to provide liability coverage to non-NMRA members or their property.

From time to time, an NMRA-affiliated group may wish to hold an event, such as a meeting or a layout tour, at the home of a non-member. **If a loss were to occur in such a location, the NMRA insurance will not be available to protect that non-member.**

For this reason, the NMRA strongly recommends that NMRA event-organizing groups purchase memberships for each non-member whose home will be visited during an NMRA-sponsored event. If the NMRA-related group is unwilling to make this purchase, then the non-member should be offered the opportunity to purchase his/her own membership, and should be informed of the risk involved if a loss occurs on his/her property. In addition, **a record should be kept** that the non-member was informed of the risks he/she has assumed by declining to purchase a membership.

The form **Event Waiver of NMRA Insurance** clearly explains for a non-member the risk he/she will undertake if a person were to be injured on his/her property during an NMRA Region- or Division-sponsored or co-sponsored event. The form also makes it clear that membership in the NMRA, either through a six-month RailPass membership (for qualifying individuals) or through other membership avenues, will not only extend the insurance to his/her property but also provide the person with all the benefits of NMRA membership.

If a non-member still declines to join the NMRA, we strongly encourage each Region, Division, or other sponsoring organization to have the Event Waiver form signed by any non-member on whose property an event will occur. In this way, the person acknowledges that he/she has been informed and is aware of the potential risks he/she is assuming and that he/she chooses not to be an NMRA member and take advantage of all of the benefits of membership, including the liability insurance coverage for his/her property.

The NMRA also recommends that these signed waiver forms be kept on file by the NMRA event-organizing group, along with contracts and other documents related to the event.

For questions, see http://www.nmra.org/membership/insurance/liability_insurance.html.

Mike Brestel
Coordinator
At-Large World-Wide District Director
Past President

Robert J. Amsler, Jr., General Counsel Insurance

Registration

A major convention responsibility is setting up efficient registration procedures including staffing the registration desk during the convention. One individual needs to be appointed the Convention Registrar. Whenever fees are collected from registrants and visitors, it is the responsibility of the Registrar to be in charge. As registrations are received, a notice to the member that it was received should be sent (e-mail works well), and a master list with e-mail addresses begun. Attendees appreciate updates as the convention draws closer, don't be shy about sending them updates.

When registration goes smoothly people perceive a well-organized event and are generally more relaxed and friendly with each other. If things do not go smoothly in this process, the convention loses its luster. Appendix C is a sample registration form.

The Division needs to be sure that there are enough volunteers to man the registration desk and area who are well versed in the convention program, the surrounding area, who like to meet and greet the public and who have been rehearsed. The other members of the Division need to understand that this is a critical element of the convention and that the individuals working it are in charge—i.e. do not give “off the cuff” answers to questions involving the convention. When questions arise during a convention, and they always do—even with the best planning—knowing where to direct the question for a quick resolution will save time and boost morale. If possible, with the advent of cell phones, the registration desk needs to be able to reach the Convention Director, Treasurer, and Coordinator of Activities quickly. To ensure key members can contact each other readily, compiling and sharing a list of names, titles or responsibilities, and cell phone numbers is recommended.

The registration packets need to be assembled in advance. Name badges need to be prepared in advance for pre-registered participants to speed up the activity at the registration desk. There needs to be a “reasonably large” master schedule board posted in the registration area. A second board with a map of the local area marked with prominent locations involved in the convention along with visitor sites recommended for those individuals looking for other activities.

Another recommendation is to obtain another room or area at the convention site that can serve as a hospitality area for folks to meet and greet each other. It does not have to be elaborate, but one amenity that always seems to be appreciated is a coffee pot and cups in that area.

The week of the convention, convene a Division Meeting at the convention site, inviting everyone who will be supporting the convention to be present. It is recommended that the Division publish a roster of supporting individuals with the activities and times that they will be

supporting the convention. This meeting will give the supporting members one last chance to point out problems and solve these issues before the convention convenes. At this meeting, actually walk through the convention site; the registration process and handouts; discuss the convention agenda, including viewing the clinic rooms, contest room, and general meeting site; the transportation that will support the convention; request and answer any all questions and concerns amongst the membership concerning the convention. THIS IS THE LAST OPPORTUNITY TO ENSURE THAT THE DIVISION MEMBERSHIP IS “ALL ON THE SAME PAGE” SO THAT THE DIVISION’S BEST FOOT WILL BE FORWARD AND THE HOST COMMUNITY WILL BE PROUD TO HAVE HAD YOU HOLD A CONVENTION THERE.

Appendix A The United States and Canadian requirements for crossing the border and returning.

Appendix B Sample Solicitation Letter

Appendix C Sample Registration Form

APPENDIX A

EXIT AND ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

UNITED STATES and CANADA

United States:

Per the Consulate General of the United States, Toronto, Canada

United States law requires U.S. citizens to enter and depart the United States documented as United States citizens. Improperly documented U.S. citizens may be barred or delayed considerably at a port of entry. Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) requires all travelers, U.S. citizens and others, to hold a valid passport or other approved travel document for air, land and water entry. (See WHTI website for details).

Canada:

Per the Canadian Border Services Agency

If you are a United States citizen, ensure you carry proof of citizenship such as a passport, birth certificate, a certificate of citizenship or naturalization, a U.S. Permanent Resident Card, or a Certificate of Indian Status along with photo identification.

For modes of entry, we recommend you carry a valid passport for all travel abroad, including visits to Canada from the United States. A passport may be required by your airline or alternative transportation authority, as it is the only universally-accepted identification document.

Citizens and permanent residents of the United States who are members of the NEXUS or FAST programs may present their membership cards to the CBSA as proof of identity and as documents that denote citizenship, when arriving by land or marine modes only.

All visitors arriving or transiting through the United States are encouraged to visit www.cpb.gov for information concerning the U.S. Hemisphere Travel Initiative, and the requirements to enter or return to the United States.

APPENDIX B



March 7, 2012

Trucks N Stuff
P.O. Box 422
Blountville, TN 37617

Good Morning,

The Dakota Southeastern Division, Thousand Lakes Region of the NMRA is hosting the annual TLR Region Convention in Sioux Falls, South Dakota May 18-20, 2012. The title theme is "Rails to the Rocks." Emphasis during the convention is centered on the rock quarrying industry prevalent in Eastern South Dakota and the railroad support to that industry.

The Thousand Lakes Region promotes the model railroading hobby in the North Central United States and in its neighbor to the North in central Canada. Its membership has hobbyists in all scales from Z to O. The past several years have witnessed the closing of many of the hobby shops that supported the model railroading hobby in this vast area leaving modelers to finding suppliers primarily on the internet and through the various publications covering the hobby. The DSED would like to offer your firm the opportunity to have a presence at this convention through the donation of products from your firm, and catalogues and literature concerning your product lines that can be made available to convention attendees.

The TLR has traditionally conducts a "Chinese Auction" to determine the winners of the products donated to the convention. Proceeds from that auction are used to fund the Region and Division activities. We would appreciate the donation of model railroading items such as: rolling stock, model vehicles, train sets, locomotives, buildings, scenery materials and/or publications concerning the hobby. Full credit for your support will be given in the form of publicity at the convention, as well as a 2012 Supporters Poster displayed with the DSED layout at the convention.

Again, we thank you for your support to the model railroading hobby, and would surely be grateful for your continued support through a donation to this convention. If you chose to take advantage of this opportunity, the donation and literature need to arrive at the address listed below on or before _____ . If you have questions concerning this, my e-mail address is:

Convention Director

Mailing Address:

**RAILS TO THE ROCKS
SIOUX FALLS, SOUTH DAKOTA
MAY 18-20, 2012**

**Sponsored by the Dakota Southeastern
Division of the TLR**

**Held at the Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan
Society - Jerstad Retreat Center**

5800 W 57th Street

Sioux Falls, SD 57108

1-605-362-3100 (Room Reservations – Lorie Grau)

Note: You must be a member of the National Model Railroad Association to attend. Membership will be checked!

Spouses or significant others need not be NMRA members to attend the Friday Social and Saturday night banquet meals and non-rail events.

If you have ever received an NMRA 'RailPass' membership to attend a previous TLR convention, you cannot use that again. You must sign up for full NMRA membership to attend again this year.

A 6-month 'RailPass' membership is available for new members for \$10. See below.

Name _____ NMRA # (Required) _____
 Spouse/Guest Name _____ NMRA Membership Expiration Date _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State/Province _____ Zip/Postal Code _____
 Phone () _____ Email _____

By providing your email address and signature you are authorizing the DSED to send convention information to you via email

EVENTS AND PRICING:	Price	Total
Early-bird Member Basic Registration (Postmarked before May 1st 2012) Includes all clinics, rail tours, Friday and Saturday lunches, Friday dinner and social, Saturday banquet and Sunday breakfast. Meals included when attending rail events. Save \$10!	\$105	
Spouse or Guest Early-bird Registration (Postmarked before May 1st 2012) Includes all clinics, rail tours, Friday and Saturday lunches, Friday dinner and social, Saturday banquet and Sunday breakfast. Meals included when attending rail events. Save \$10!	\$105	
Registrations postmarked May 1st 2012 or later	\$115	
Friday Dinner / Social and Saturday Banquet only	\$35	
6-month RailPass NMRA Membership for non-NMRA members	\$10	
If first time attendee check here: _____	Total	

LET US KNOW WHICH EVENTS YOU ARE PLANNING ON ATTENDING:									
	Member		Spouse			Member		Spouse	
FRIDAY EVENTS	Y	N	Y	N	SATURDAY EVENTS	Y	N	Y	N
(non-rail) EROS Tour - 9:00 am All must have photo ID/Passport (Can)					Midwest Rail Repair Tour – walking required - 9:30 am				
Quarry and Trans-loading Facility Tours - 11:30 am					(non-rail) Sertoma Butterfly House & Aquarium – 10:00 am				
(non-rail) St Joseph Cathedral Tour / SculptureWalk - 12:30 pm					Dakota & Iowa Train Ride*– Caboose (bench seats)-1 pm				
Friday Dinner - 6:00 pm					Saturday Banquet – 6:30 pm				

List any special dietary or personal needs (we will do our best to accommodate):	
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MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO DAKOTA SOUTHEASTERN DIVISION (DSED):	
Mail completed form and payment to:	Please direct any questions to:

Mike Kaufman, Treasurer	Jay Manning, Convention Chairman
400 Jesse James Circle	7100 W Stoney Creek Street
Garretson, SD 57030	Sioux Falls, SD 57106
	chessie@mindspring.com / 1-804-712-8056

Signature: _____

Note: Registration form should fit on one page. In the process of saving the work form into a PDF it was enlarged.