



Steel City Coupler

Publication of the Steel City Division
Southeastern Region - NMRA



Vol 7, Issue 4

www.2017serconvention.com

April, 2017

www.scd-nmra.org

www.facebook.com/birminghammodelrailroading

Inside This Issue:

Editor John Stewart

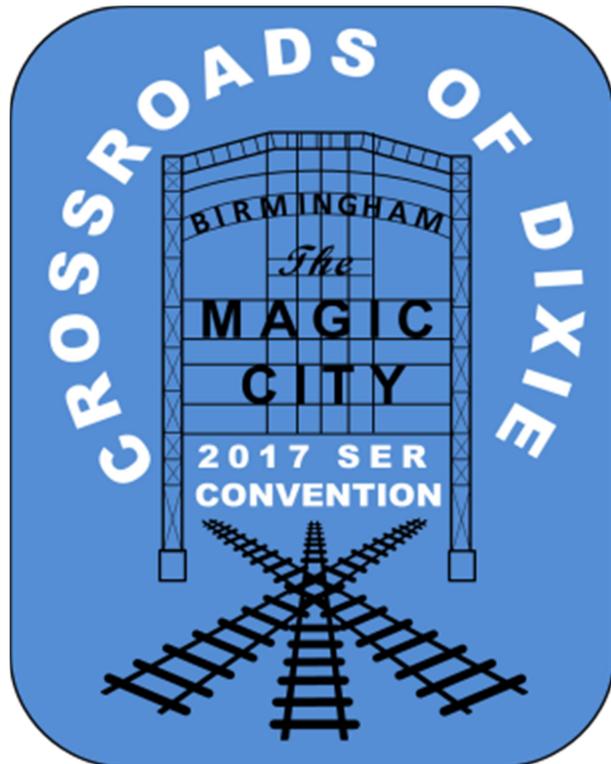
Contact: (lstew@bhamrails.info)

© The Steel City Division, SER-NMRA

The Steel City Coupler is published monthly at Birmingham, AL and distributed by email to members and friends of the Steel City Division, Southeastern Region, NMRA

From the Superintendent	2	News from the NMRA	15
2017 Convention	3	Steel City Virtual Swap Meet	16
Steel City Website	8	Club Directory & News	18
Opportunities for Clinicians	9		
What's on your Workbench?	7	About the NMRA & RailPass	22
Local Layouts for Convention	8	Notices	24
A Model RR Chronicle - Part 29	11	Timetable	29

www.2017SERConvention.com



Model Train Show



Fri & Sat, June 9th & 10th, 2017

Conventioneer "Early Bird" Access Friday 10 am—Noon

Public Show Access Friday 12 — 5pm & Saturday 9 am — 5 pm

\$6 per person, Kids under 13 free with adult

Birmingham, AL

Bessemer Civic Center

Exit 108, I-59/20

[Map: 1130 9th Ave SW, Bessemer, AL 35022]

15,000 ft² Vendors & Layouts

Sponsored by the Steel City Division, NMRA

In conjunction with the Southeastern Regional NMRA Convention

www.2017serconvention.com



From the Superintendent

John Stewart, Division Superintendent

Another month has slipped by and it is April 30, as I write this. Hope you got your taxes done and turned in timely.

Work continues on the Convention and things continue to fall into place. It is going to be a great convention especially if you join us.



Doing double duty as **Train Show** Chairman still consumes a lot of my time. I am pleased to say that I believe we are on track to have over 100 tables at the **Steel City Train Show**, to be held in conjunction with the **SER NMRA Convention, June 9 & 10, 2017, at the Bessemer Civic Center**. Vendors contact jstew@bhamrails.info and must submit a completed **agreement and check to confirm tables**.

Our **Spouses Program** is shaping up to include two outings as well as activities. As in years past this group will be based in the “South Room” located at the entrance to the Bessemer Civic Center.

I hear the **Clinic Schedule** is filling up. We have three tracks of clinics on a good range of topics. Jason Parham is our Clinic Chair and may be contacted at gmo1515@comcast.net. If you know of a good clinic or want to give one please contact Jason before the last slots are filled

There are spaces left for our two **Prototype Tours** – there may be a third tour available. Check the website regularly to keep track of what is going on and changes.

To keep current with all various Convention Developments, go to the convention website regularly:



www.2017SERConvention.com



Here you can see what is going on, **REGISTER ONLINE**, and learn about all the activities of the Convention and the Model Train Show. A special thanks to Steel City Division webmaster **Craig Gardner** for his GREAT work on the Convention Website.

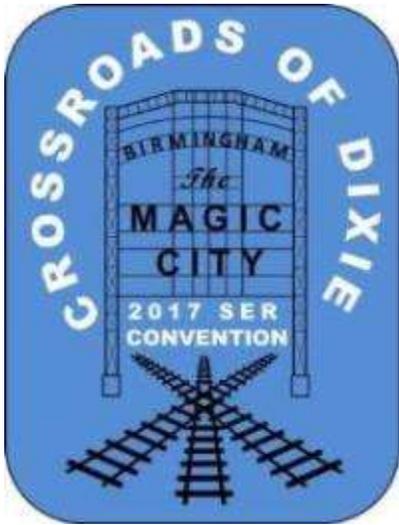
It is time to **REGISTER**, whether you are local or out of town.

Folks are signing up for Operating Sessions as well. You do need to be **REGISTERED** for the Convention in order to sign up for an Operating Session. And some changes are occurring, so check back and make sure you can work out your schedule; Malcolm Sokol is chair for Ops.

You also need to be **REGISTERED** to participate in the Layout Tours, which are going to be self-guided, as in years past. Note that some of the layouts may be visited on your way to or from the Convention from out of town. This is because the layouts are scattered over the entire Birmingham metro area. Layout owners may contact Tom Schultz at tschultz@medicalproptiestrust.com

Like Huntsville and Greenville we will have a “convention only” auction with donations from manufacturers. We are getting some nice donations and think the auction will be successful again. This will only be available to **REGISTERED** convention attendees.

So, What are you Waiting For? **REGISTER ONLINE** today! John



Crossroads of Dixie, 2017 SER Convention & Train Show, June 9 & 10

Each month we will keep you updated on convention activities. The best way to do that is to visit the convention website on a regular basis. Our webmaster is very good about updating with each new development. Here it is again, www.2017serconvention.com



Things are coming together for our Convention June 9th & 10th, 2017, to be held at the Bessemer Civic Center, located at Academy Drive Exit 108, I-20/59. This is 12 miles southwest of downtown Birmingham, along the interstate.

Our block of rooms at the **Best Western Plus at Exit 108, I-20/59** has **SOLD OUT**. You are encouraged to stay at any of the other motels at Academy Drive, Exit 108, I-20/59 and the Committee believes you can still find a good rate if you shop. Check the **WEBSITE** for a listing of motels at Exit 108 near the Bessemer Civic Center.



Our banquet will be a BBQ dinner provided by Full Moon BBQ of Birmingham. We think you will enjoy getting your fingers greasy with this meal, and the Committee feels that the price is right. We encourage spouses to take part in our planned activities – spouse registration includes the Banquet.



We have two tours scheduled: one that has been popular in the past is **Voestalpine Nortrak** plant in Birmingham. They make full size high speed turnouts and their equipment is in place all over the US. The parent company Voestalpine is an international operation serving the rail industry worldwide. This image is from the company's website.

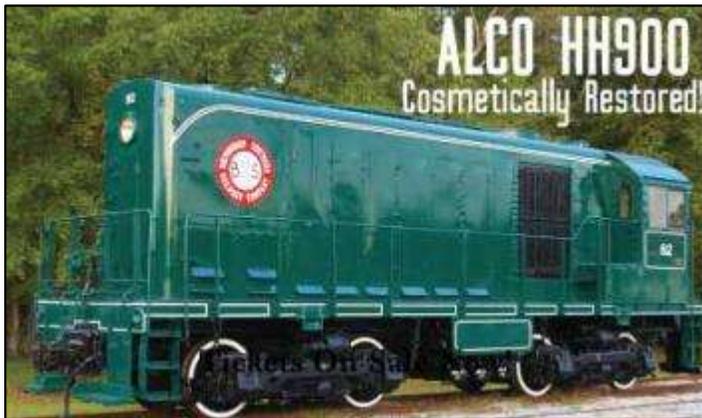


A second tour is **Transportation Services Inc.**, which is a railcar repair facility in Calera, AL. Their facility is interesting in that the site looks like a model railroad with an oval of track and spurs! The facility is located adjacent to the NS Main in Calera. They specialize in modern coal hopper repairs so this should be an interesting trip and tour.

And there are a number of places you can visit on your own including **Sloss Furnace National Historic Site**, which is a complete two blast furnace plant dating from 1886 although the current plant dates from 1929. This is the only full blast furnace plant that is available to walk through, up close and personal. If you want to see and learn about blast furnaces this is a “must see” on your trip to Birmingham.



The Heart of Dixie RR Museum is another “do-it-yourself” tour that is well worth your time. They have a large set of static display equipment as well as a 6 mile train ride. This ALCO HH900 is a recent addition to the museum’s static display equipment roster. In addition they have a very nice museum and a wonderful library of railroad books, videos and documents. An interesting item on



display is one of the **earliest CTC boards** in the United States implemented by TCI/USS at Birmingham when they opened the High Ore Line in 1925, from Red Mountain to the Fairfield Works.

The **Alabama Iron and Steel Museum at Tannehill State Park** is another very good museum about the iron and steel industry that built Birmingham with the help of the railroads. The museum features both indoor and outdoor displays that show and explain how iron and steel are made. In addition there is a large collection of hardware and production equipment used in Birmingham’s mills and



mines. Shown at right is an aerial view of the restored Tannehill Iron Works which was a civil war era blast furnace. Restored in the 1970's it actually produced iron again for several demonstrations.



There is the **Barber Motorsports Museum** which is a world class motorcycle museum that has to be seen to be believed. There are typically about 1000 motorcycles on display ranging from vintage to modern and "one of a kind". You can literally trace the lineage of icon brands like Indian or Harley Davidson from their early



models to present day. This collection is unequalled anywhere else in the world and if you ever liked, owned, rode or wanted a motorcycle, then you need to see this. Oh, and it's just down the road from Bass Pro Shops.



So, your committee is serious when we say that there is so much to do that you should *consider coming early and staying late*. Other attractions include **Alabama Splash Adventure Water Park** with its **Rampage Wooden Roller Coaster**, the **Birmingham Museum of Art**, which is expected to be on the Spouses Tour, the **Civil Rights Institute**, **Vulcan Park and Statue**, **McWane Science Center & Imax Theatre** and **Birmingham Barons Baseball**.



We look forward to having you in the Birmingham to enjoy the clinics, tours, restaurants, and our City.

See the next two pages for the best way to keep up with **Convention Plans and Activities**.

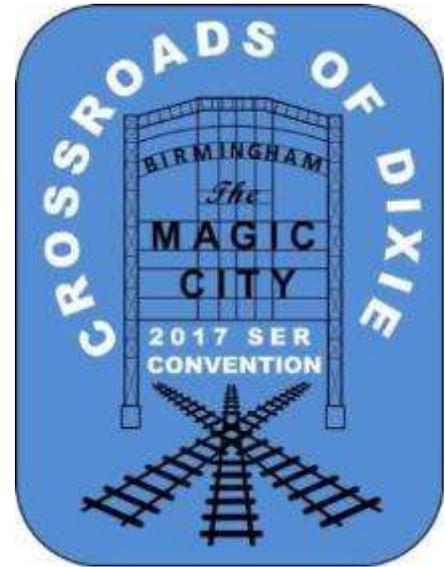


2017 Birmingham SER Convention & Train Show

Our 2017 SER Convention & Train Show will take place **June 9 & 10, 2017** (Friday & Saturday) at the **Bessemer Civic Center**, site of the successful 2004 and 2010 Conventions.

As you should know by now, our 2017 Convention Logo, shown at right, is based on an historical sign that existed in front of Birmingham's Terminal Station for many years. The "Crossroads of Dixie" theme and three-way crossed tracks are symbolic of the fact that so many railroads served Birmingham as it developed to be the industrial center of the southeast.

As we look forward to the 2017 SER Convention in Birmingham we hope that many will find a focal point of interest in Birmingham's rich railroad history, and will come to Birmingham to see how "their" favorite railroad helped to build the Magic City.



A sample of the proposed roadside signs to be used to advertise the Steel City Model Train Show

Train Show Vendors Contact: John Stewart

John's contact info is: jstew@bhamrails.info or call 205-901-3790 – If no answer leave message.



What's in Your Wallet (or on your refrigerator, or desk...)

The card above was passed out at the Huntsville Convention Banquet. If you weren't there, you may cut and fold this one out – good modelers should be able to do this easily... Can you?

It should be a reminder to go to the Convention Website regularly to check up on Convention developments, updates or additions.

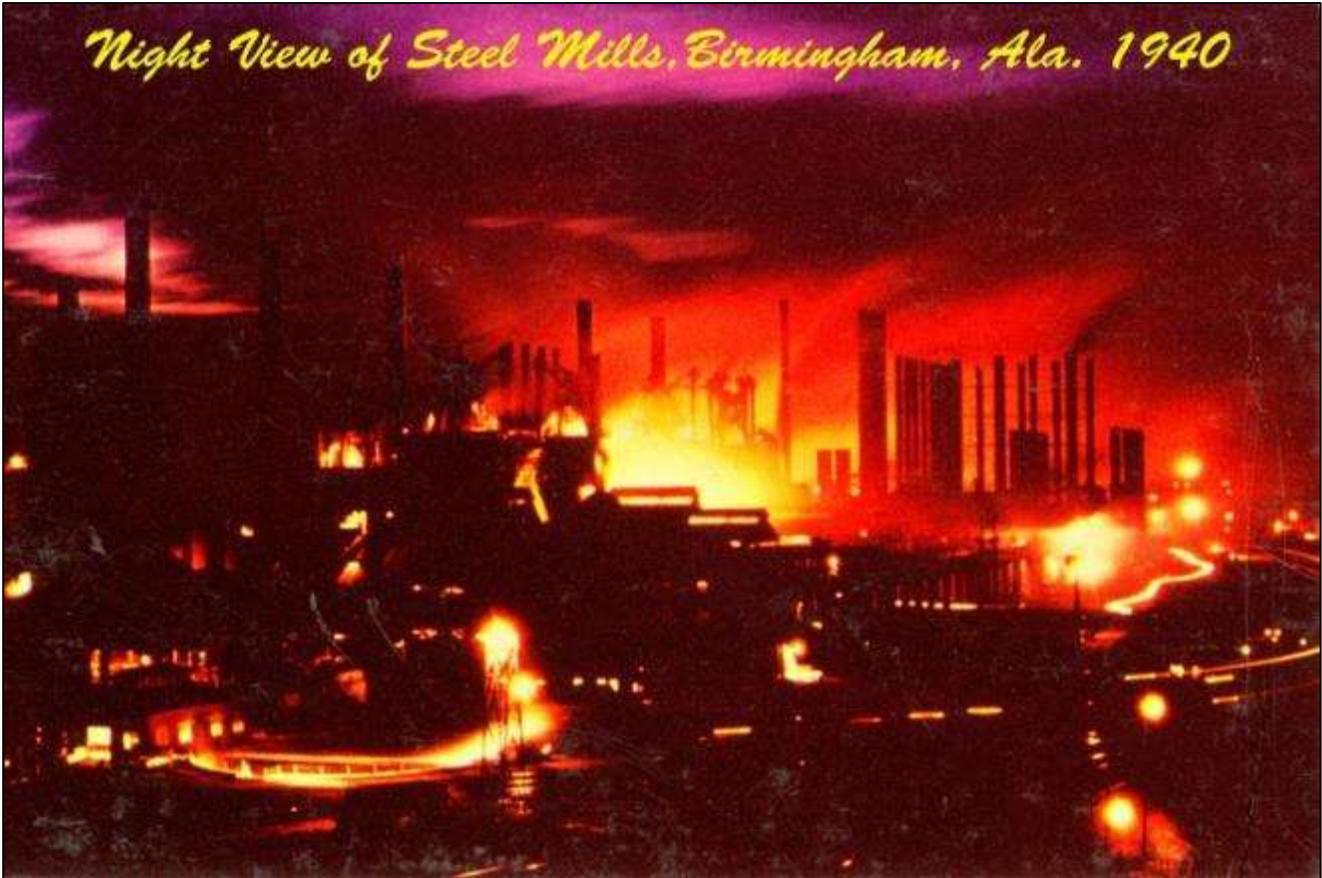
We're on Facebook!

We have a Facebook page – check it out!

www.facebook.com/2017serconvention

Steel City Division Web Site: www.scd-nmra.org

Special thanks to Division Member Craig Gardner for his work on keeping our new Division website up and current. We hope that the website will become a resource for all model railroaders in the Steel City Division area, and we hope it will be part of our outreach to gain new members in the Division.



Our webmaster Craig Gardner recently changed our header picture to this great view of Ensley Steel Works at Night. What an amazing view of Birmingham's Steel Making History. Thanks Craig!

We want the new website to be a resource, and a gateway to the Division as well as other model railroaders. YOU can help make this website the best that it may be – *what do you have to share?*

We hope that you will take time now to visit the new Division website and explore the content. *Then we want you to consider what you can contribute to the webmaster for additional valuable content of interest to your fellow model railroaders. Use the "Contact" feature to submit material to the webmaster.* You can also access back issues of the Coupler Newsletter as well as information and pictures on some of our member's layouts. Do you have an article to contribute, a clinic, or a good modeling "how-to"? Would you allow us to publish information about your layout or a key modeling effort that you have to share? Do you have a link to another website that you believe would be of value to other model railroaders? If you are a longtime member of our Division do you have some Division history or a good story to share about the Division activities?

Opportunities for Presentations & Clinicians

We are looking for persons to make presentations at our monthly Division meetings. Think we ought to have a certain type of program, or the programs could be better? Great – volunteer to give a clinic OR agree to be Asst. Superintendent who is responsible for getting our monthly programs. SIGN ON

You don't have to use a computer for slides, or have any slides at all. Show us how you do things, or a great new way you have learned to do some aspect of our great hobby. If you think that you would like to do a clinic but want some technical assistance, we can help you there as well.

What's on Your Workbench?

Send us information on what you are working on right now, and we'll share it with our readers. All we need is your notes and some good pictures of what you have as work in progress or recently completed. Or maybe you would like to review a new product or model that you have recently purchased.

If you would like to share info on your layout, an update, or a recent layout project, please send a summary write-up or notes and some good pictures. The Editor will be glad to assist with final copy if you feel that you are not a writer. If you don't feel that you can produce a finished set of comments, NO PROBLEM, just send your notes and a couple of decent pictures and your faithful Editor will take care of the rest. Send your modeling efforts comments and a few pictures to the Editor: jstew@bhamrails.info

(Your) Layouts for Birmingham's 2017 Convention

Articles Featuring Steel City's Model Railroads

Please do not hesitate to send us info on your layout because you think it isn't "good enough". If it is it is good enough for you it is fine for the rest of us. You get to select what to feature with your pictures and your write-up or notes. Remember: *Ac-centuate the positive and e-liminate the negative* like the song...

Local Layouts is a column which will feature reports on layouts located in the Steel City Division area. We have had layout tours in the past, but didn't always have great attendance. **If you would like to host a layout tour, send an invitation to the Editor jstew@bhamrails.info.**

Remember that the Regional Convention will provide **Layout Tours** for Convention Attendees. It is great to see some new layouts being built and hoped that these will be far enough along to be on the layout tours for our 2017 SER Convention in Birmingham.

Layout Open House Tours for 2017 SER Convention

Tom Schultz is the Chair for Layout Open House Tours for the 2017 Convention in Birmingham.



We have seen some of our fine layouts from years past taken down or at least become "out of circulation". But we still have some fine layouts which have served for past convention tours. Be thinking about **June 2017** as a target to have your layout on the **Birmingham Convention Tours**.

One of the things that has been done by other host cities is to *feature layouts for those traveling to and from the convention*. For example, layouts might be open on Thursday for those traveling and again (or alternately) on Sunday for those traveling home. We're planning to do this as well.

Please be thinking "outside the box" so that your layout will be able to be enjoyed by as many as possible for our 2017 Convention. Let us know about your layout for visits during our Convention.

Contact Tom Schultz if you are interested in having your layout on tour. svrr@charter.net

In the meantime, www.2017serconvention.com is featuring more and more of our Steel City Division layouts with a brief write-up and photos that should be available for visits.

Operating Layouts for 2017 SER Convention

Malcolm Sokol is the Chair for Operating Layouts during the 2017 SER Convention in Birmingham.

Malcolm has successfully coordinated 6 layouts for operation sessions. Some are located here in town and others are located "along the way" so that folks coming and going to/from the convention can plan an Ops Session as part of their trip.

You can find out about the Ops Sessions on the Convention website www.2017serconvention.com under the "Layouts" tab on the main menu at the top of the home page. Check it out.



Model Railroad Chronicle

With this column we continue an installment series following the construction of a new layout in the Steel City Division by one of our members: Steel City Division Secretary, John Pate.

John Pate's L&N Birmingham Division/S&NA Subdivision-1970's

Part 29 (That's 29 MONTHS, folks! A lot of progress has been made and you got to watch...)

Layout Summary and Recap for Reference

The layout will represent the Birmingham area in the 1970's and focus on Boyles Yard and Birmingham industry for an operations oriented layout based on the L&N prototype. We have talked at length about the design concept as well as the operations concept. The railroad is "designed for operations".

As noted, the concept of the layout provides for traffic coming to and from Birmingham on the L&N Main between Montgomery and Decatur and on to Nashville. It will include through trains and local jobs & switchers working to and from L&N's Boyles Yard next to Tarrant, AL. John settled on a two level layout concept with staging on a lower level and Boyles Yard on the upper level. A total of 8 Industrial Districts will be located on both levels (4 each) to reflect the Districts in the prototype schematics used in layout planning.

Summarizing the proposed railroad operations includes:

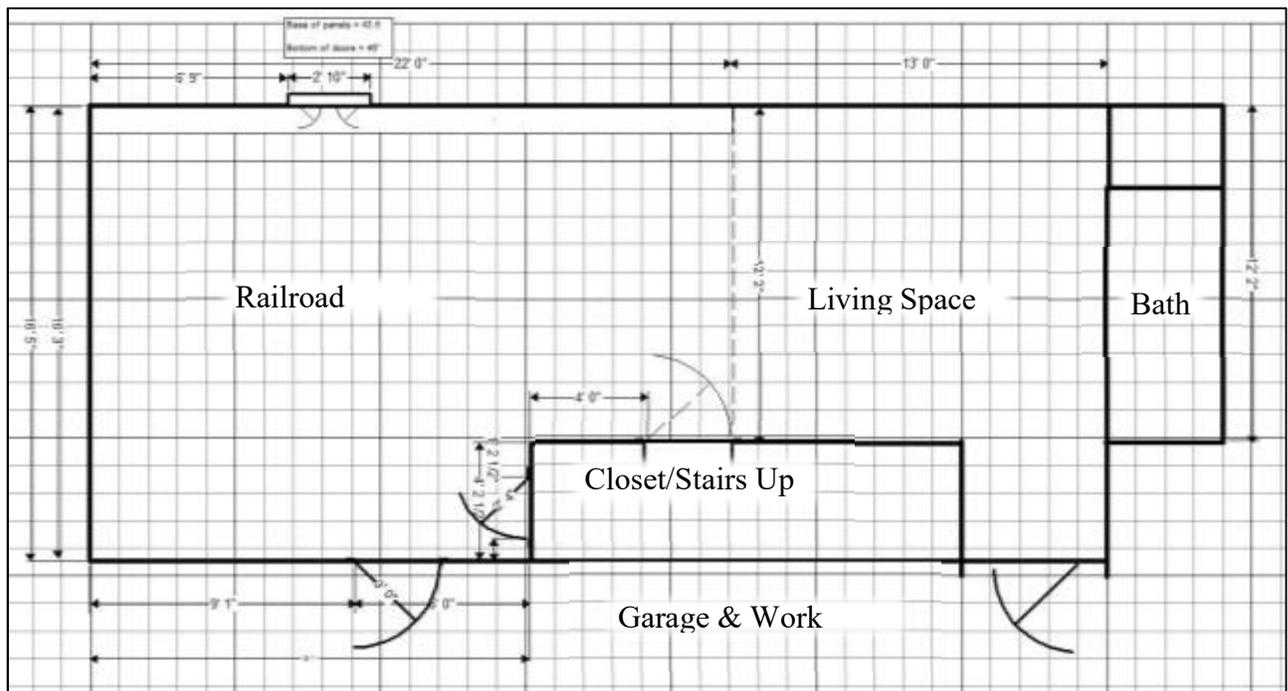
- Through freights come from out of town, go through Boyles Yard -- set out & pickup cuts of cars
- Turn freights that go to a specific locale but do not do switching
- Local switch jobs that originate in Boyles Yard, and then take cars to local industries
- A number of local industrial districts to switch.

The floor plan and layout are included below as a reference.

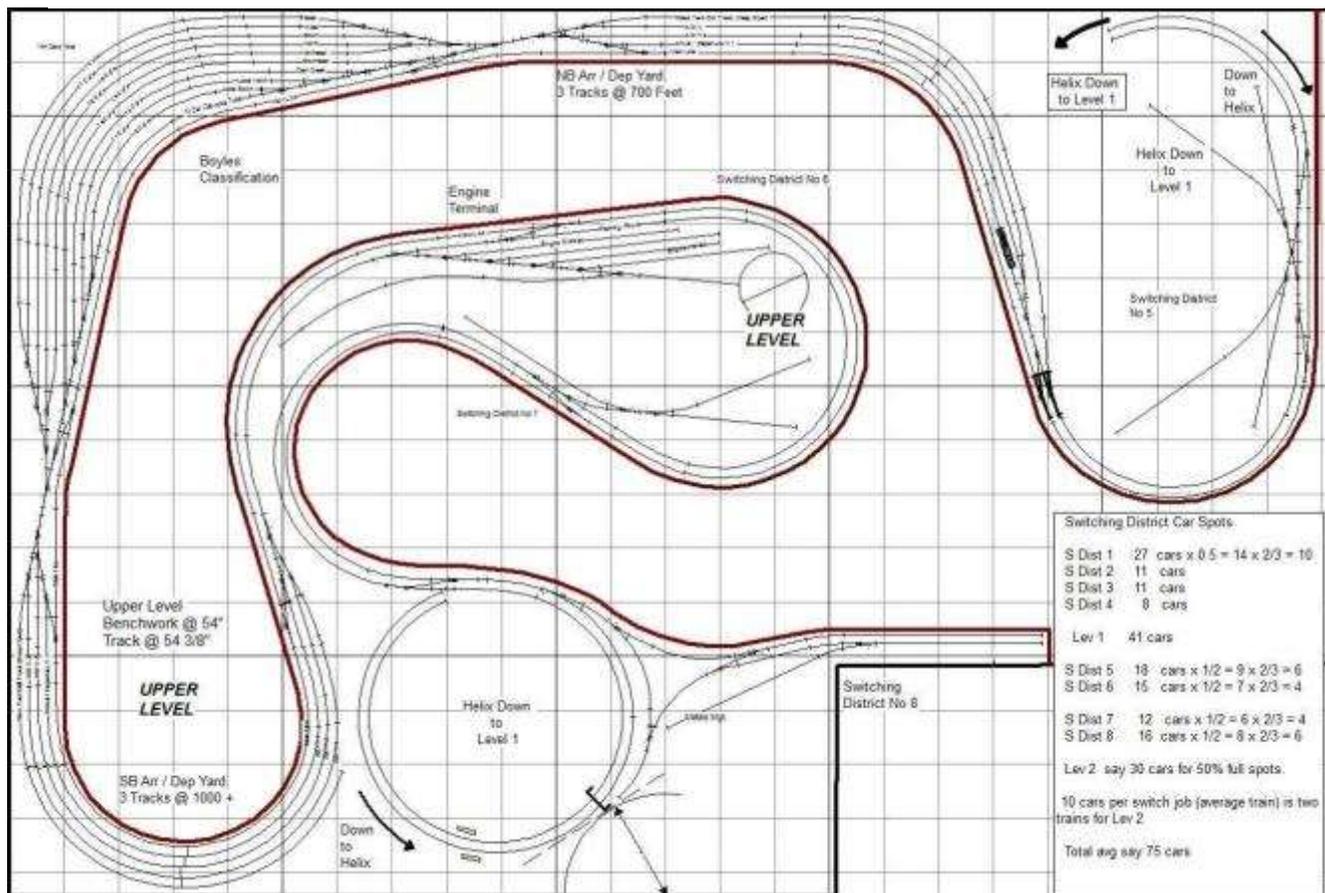
Construction Progress

As noted previously the construction of the layout includes 4 basic components or type of benchwork:

- Shelf-on-the-wall
- L-Girder
- Helix
- Peninsulas



Floor plan and track plan for the new L&N layout underway by Division member and Secretary John Pate. We plan to include these views each month so readers can maintain a frame of reference for the layout. Here the upper level is shown to go with this month's discussion.



This installment will show you some progress pictures of the last sections of the layout to be built: the central peninsula and the “south” helix. These are located in the center and lower center of the track plan on the previous page. The image below shows the peninsula with backdrop underway.



The next image shows the peninsula and the adjacent “south” helix underway. One of the key parts of the peninsula construction, all the “turnback” curves areas has been to minimize the structural supports of the upper level interfering with the lower level. Each of the areas in these curve locations will feature small switching districts to add to the operational enjoyment of the layout.





One of the hardest parts of designing and building a helix seems to be the transition to and from the helix to the adjacent benchwork. A typically helix will have a constant gradient throughout, but there must be transitions of grade to and from the adjacent track. This image shows the riser blocks attached to the “helix table”. The “helix table” provides the foundation of the helix, is part of the basic benchwork and enables these transitions to occur beneath and above the actual helix structure.



This image shows a good overall view of the helix under construction with the bottom transition in place to transition from the adjacent grade to the helix grade. Note again the variable height risers starting near top center and continuing around counterclockwise to the maximum height about 2 o'clock. At that location the actual helix begins, crossing over the transition/entrance roadbed. And once the helix begins the vertical spacers are constant height. In the approach that is shown here, the vertical spacers are simply 1 x 4 material on edge, providing a constant vertical spacing of 3 ½” – 3 inches clearance and ½” for the track and cork roadbed. This method and radius of 30 inches gives a helix grade of about 2.1% which works well with diesels. This gradient might be a challenge for some steam engines unless they had traction tires and/or helpers.

This operations oriented layout is a work in progress as we approach the SER Convention, Crossroads of Dixie, in Birmingham June 9 & 10th, 2017. The S&NA Sub of the L&N will be available to Convention Registrants on the layout tours if you want to visit in per person.

For more information see the Convention website www.2017SERConvention.com . Y'all Come!

Gift of NMRA Membership to Members of Armed Forces

The Southeastern Region of the National Model Railroad Association is offering PAID full introductory memberships to individuals serving in this country's Armed Forces and to US Military Veterans. This opportunity has been made possible through the generosity of Piedmont Division member Ed Delattre and his wife Alice.

Memberships are available to individuals serving this country's Armed Forces and to US Military Veterans residing in the boundaries of the Southeastern Region. As an introductory membership, it is not available to current or former members of the NMRA.

If you want to take advantage of this offer, **contact your local Division Superintendent**. Additional information is available on the Home Page of the SER website www.ser-nmra.org . If you are a current NMRA member and know someone who may be interested, please have them contact your local Division Superintendent.

News from the NMRA

Register for the *NEW* NMRA Website (*Have **YOU** done this yet???*)

Have you registered on the **new** NMRA Web Site yet?

If you want to "Member Only" content on the NMRA website, then you will need to access the NMRA.org website as a "member". This will require you to register if you haven't already done so.

The **completely rewritten** NMRA web site (www.nmra.org) has "members only" items that are only available if you have logged into the site with your **new** member account.

While there is much to see on the site for non-members, NMRA members who are logged in have access to **NMRA Data Sheets**, past editions of the *NMRA eBulletin* and the *NMRA Bulletin*, the **President's Car** column and many other items that may be of interest to you.

There is also a page that shows you information that is currently held in your NMRA Membership record, with a button to send an email to the staff with any corrections you wish to make. However, you cannot make any changes on the web site; the information is "view only."

If you have not yet registered for your *NEW* account, some things to keep in mind:

1) No other NMRA logins or passwords will work on the new site - meaning, your Company Store account information, the account you may have created several years ago on the old NMRA web site, or any other NMRA login you may have will not be recognized on the new site. **You must create a new account.**

2) In order to create your new account, **the email address you wish to use for the account must match the one in your membership record** in the NRMA database. If this is not so, please contact the NMRA office and update your email address.

3) The registration process will send an email to the address we have in your membership record that provides a one-time login. You need to **make sure that your email system does not send the password email to your junk folder or trash!**

Once you have logged into the site with your new account, please change your password to one you can remember - you can always change it later.

[Ben Sevier, NMRA IT Manager](#)

Our Latest SER Fund-Raising Car Kit



No layout can have enough of these cars!

The Southeastern Region of the NMRA is proud to announce the availability of a limited number of Accurail HO scale ACF 4650 cu. ft. covered hopper kits custom decorated for the SER. The car built date is 5/68 and is lettered for Engelhard.

The car, offered in one road number, is injected-molded plastic featuring plastic wheelsets, Accumate couplers and separate brake detail. Orders of two or more cars includes a free easy-to-install replacement decal set, twelve numbers in all.

Cars available at \$23 each plus shipping \$6.00 for one car.

Shipping: Two cars \$7.00; Three or Four cars \$8.00.

COST BREAK - when ordering four or more cars only \$20 per car plus shipping of \$8.00. Orders of more than four cars add an additional \$1.00 per car for shipping.

Check or money order payable to:
SER-NMRA c/o Randall Watson SER Car Project
730 Morning Creek Lane
Suwanee, Ga 30024

For additional information contact Region Car Chair Randall Watson at: randallwatson1@bellsouth.net

Steel City Virtual Swap Meet

For Sale or other arrangements...

- Rock Castings, rock castings and MORE rock castings; did I say **ROCK CASTINGS?**

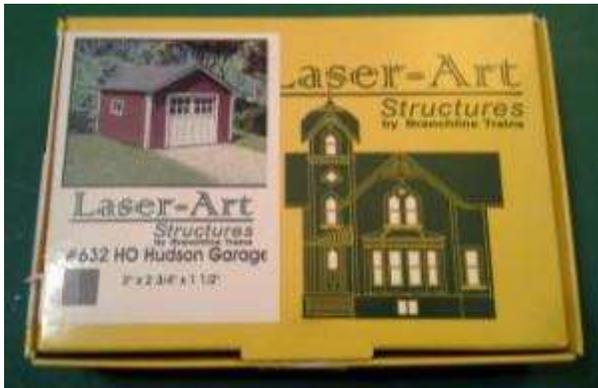


Excellent rock castings some without stain and some with first coat stain.

Looking for “just the right rock” to “rock your miniature world”? See “Rock Bottom” Bob for deals! These precast plaster rocks were made by local modelers, Jim Thorington, Jim Gibson and Bob. They can be yours. Castings include various sizes, some with a first stain, many to choose from and not a lot of duplicates. Pick and make offer.

Contact **Rockin’ Bob Beaty**, MMR at 205-987-2385 or rabeaty@bellsouth.net

For Sale:



Laser-Art by Branchline – HO Scale
Hudson Garage - #632 - laser cut wood - \$15



Depot - Walthers Clarksville Depot kit
Built w/ no modifications. - **\$20 HO Scale**

Contact Craig Gardner 979-2666 or by email jcgard@bellsouth.net

Steel City Virtual Swap Meet SELLS Stuff!

Help Others Obtain Merit Awards toward AP Structures

I'm currently putting together a web page with nice photos of "scratch built models that have earned a "merit award" in the NMRA AP program.

The idea is simply to inspire and encourage others to become involved in the AP Program. When I first started in the program, there were very few pictures to be found online so I thought I'd start this page to help motivate others to get involved. It will also give modelers a place to show off their talents and creativity. The only requirements are:

- A) The model be "scratch built" and earned a merit award in any NMRA region/division.
- B) Anywhere from one to four quality photos.
- C) The model name, e.g. "John Doe Flour Mill"
- D) A short 2-3 sentence description of the model but you don't need to explain the "build".
- E) Categories included are: Cars, Structures, Motive Power, and Prototype Models

Anyone interested can email w/photos as attachments to Steve at blueoxtrains@bellsouth.net
If you want to visit the Steve's website and see how the images will be displayed, follow this link:
<http://store.blueoxtrains.com/scratch-built-models/>

Steve Funsten



425 Market Place
Roswell GA 30075
blueoxtrains@bellsouth.net

Cell - 404-312-6467
Fax - 770-993-4911
www.blueoxtrains.com

Club Directory & News

News from Steel City Area Model RR Clubs

Birmingham model railroaders have a great history of club activities. Since the NMRA's Steel City Division is not a model railroad club, per se, the Division benefits from the work of each of the Birmingham area model railroad clubs. In fact, many Steel City Division members are members of the local clubs and vice versa. The Coupler provides space for the clubs to tell prospective members about themselves and to provide readers with news of club activities. If you are interested in a model railroad club, learn about the local groups below, and make contact. You'll be glad you did.

The Wrecking Crew MRRC (Philip Griffith Correspondent)

The **Wrecking Crew** (<http://wreckingcrewbham.com/>) is a model railroad club formed by 27 local modelers to enjoy and promote the hobby of model railroading. It is a diverse group with varied backgrounds, including an architect, retired military, commercial photographer, communications professionals, engineers and even a professional chef.

The Wrecking Crew is a 100% NMRA model railroad club. This means NMRA membership is a requirement to join the club. Being a 100% club has distinct advantages as the National organization provides certain benefits to 100% clubs.

The Wrecking Crew meets in the basement of McWane Center downtown – see website for information. One of their major activities each year is to host the McWane Science Center's Magic of Model Trains.

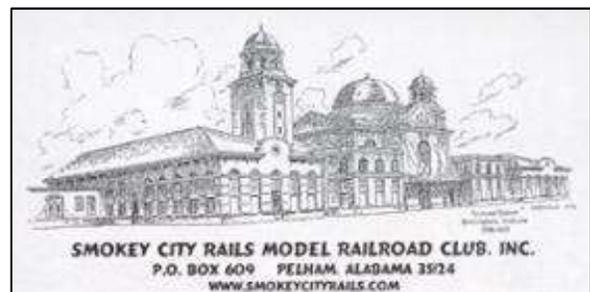


The Smokey City Rails MRRC

(Richard Horton Correspondent)

(<http://www.smokeycityrails.com/>)

The Smokey City Rails Model Railroad Club is a dedicated group of model railroaders from the greater Birmingham metropolitan area whose members have joined together to enjoy what we think is the greatest hobby in the world – model railroading. We have members of many ages and experience and try to not only encourage model railroading throughout the Southeast, but to personally encourage each other as we grow in our knowledge of the multitude of crafts involved in model railroading. Twice a year we sponsor model railroad trade shows at local venues in the Birmingham, AL area. Additionally, we display our portable 16'x38' layout at various festivals and shows throughout the Southeast. Smokey City Rails meets weekly at the home of a member – see website for more information.



Club Directory & News

The Birmingham N Scale Modular Club

The Birmingham N Scale Modular Club

The Birmingham N Scale Modular Club (BNSMC) is a diverse group of people working together to bring N-Scale to the public and to raise awareness of N-Scale as a viable hobby. We are currently basing our modular designs on the BendTrack standard and the T-Trak standard. Anyone interested in joining the group should watch for notice of the monthly T-Trak meeting to attend and gain more information.



<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bnsmc/>

Black Warrior Model Railroad Association (Correspondent needed)

The former GM&O railway station was acquired by the City of Northport in 1995. Under the auspices of the Northport Historic Preservation Commission and the Black Warrior Model Railroad Association in 1999 the structure opened as a model railroad museum. Admission is free Saturdays from 10:00 - 1:00.

For more information, visit the station's Facebook Page (<https://www.facebook.com/NorthportDepot>)

Coosa Valley Model Railroad Association (Correspondent needed)



The CVMRRA layout at Gadsden features industry and scenes from the Gadsden area including the Gulf States steel mill. Right, April 18, 2015 Coosa Valley Train Show at the Gadsden Civic Center.



The CVMRRA operates two model railroad layouts. The HO scale layout is one of the largest in the United States and is on permanent display on the second floor of the Mary G. Hardin Cultural Arts Center in Gadsden, Alabama. The N scale layout is portable and is displayed at train shows and exhibitions throughout the year. Coosa Valley sponsors train shows in Gadsden at the Civic Center. Their N Scale modular layout will be featured at the Steel City Model Train Show, June 9 & 10, 2017.

The Coosa Valley MRA is located in the NMRA's Mid-South Division just outside the Steel City Division's boundary. The organization's great layout and good work in the hobby as well as the proximity of Gadsden to Birmingham are a great reason to include them in the Coupler's Club News section. (<http://coosavalleymodelrailroad.com/>)

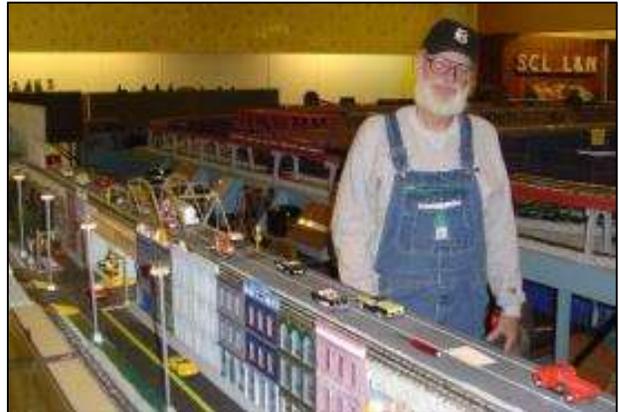
Club Directory & News

Magic City Railroad Club

(Charlton McArthur, Correspondent)

The **Magic City Railroad Club** is a model railroading club founded in 1989 by Alvin Kesler. He and fellow modelers began building a portable O-scale train layout divided into 2-foot by 4-foot modular sections, which they assembled at various model train shows in the Southeast. The club has had permanent layouts at West Lake Mall in Bessemer and at the Vestavia Hills City Center in the last 20 plus years. Currently the club is understood to be seeking a new permanent home

The club currently helps to sponsor a Train Show with the Smokey City Rails Club a couple of times each year. The Magic City Railroad Club supports the National Model Railroad Association.



Magic City layout at the West Lake Mall some years ago with the late Tex Hawley. We miss you Tex!

Steel City Shifters Operations Group

The Steel City Shifters Operating Group is not a formal club, but a group that meets on a monthly basis to operate trains on the **Birmingham District Model RR**. The BDMRR is a steam era layout that represents the heavy industry of the Birmingham District between about 1925 and 1955. The layout is steel mill themed and includes red ore mines, coal mines, quarry, coke plant and, of course, the steel works. Way freights handle interchange between the L&N and 9 other railroads and passenger trains are run through Birmingham's L&N Station. Operation is performed using JMRI train manifests and switch lists; we use a Dispatcher and walkie-talkies for communication. Contact [Editor Stewart](#) for more information and visit www.bhamrails.info for info on the layout – click on the model railroad logo on the webpage. **Visitors are welcome.**



Heart of Dixie RR Museum (Correspondent needed)

The Heart of Dixie Railroad Museum is the official railroad museum of the state of Alabama! We're located just south of Birmingham in Calera, Alabama. Our museum features operating standard gauge and narrow gauge trains, two restored depots, an indoor collection of railroad artifacts and memorabilia, and an outdoor collection of railroad cars, locomotives, and cabooses.

The museum is dedicated to the preservation, restoration, and operation of historically significant railway equipment. Our exhibits, operating railroads, and educational programs function as both a unique means of tourism and recreation, and also a way to preserve the rich history of Alabama and our nation.

We hope you'll visit us to ride a train, look at our museum collection, and learn more about Alabama's railroad history. Please [contact us](#) if you have any questions. We'll see you at the depot!



Club Directory & News

Central of Alabama RR (Joe Mashburn Correspondent)

The Central of Alabama is located in the SER's Dixie Division in Prattville, AL. In the late 1960's a group started the Central Alabama Model RR Club in **Prattville, AL**. Wilbur Miller had a model shop in his basement and a separate club building was constructed by club members in his back yard in 1969; trains were running in the early 70's.



It has been over a year since the Board of Directors decided to tear down the layout and start over to achieve better access and better operations. A lot of progress has been made since then. Be watching for pictures of the new Central of Alabama rising from the ruins of the old one dating from 1969.

Please contact Phil Hutchinson H 334-272-1923 C 334-324-1614 or Joe Mashburn H 334-491-8177 C 251-363-8508 if you would like more information or want to lend a hand.

Railway & Locomotive Historical Society, Mid-South Chapter

The Railway & Locomotive Historical Society, Inc., founded in 1921, is the oldest organization in North America devoted to railroad history, and among the first anywhere to pursue formal studies in the history of technology. The Society promotes research and encourages preservation of documentation and photography of business history, finance, labor history, and biography as well as technology.

In the Birmingham area, the Mid-South Chapter is affiliated with the National organization. Membership is required in the National organization in order to join a local Chapter.



The Mid-South Chapter of the R&LHS meets at the historic Leeds Depot in Leeds Alabama. Chapter meetings are held bi-monthly and typically have a short business meeting and a presentation on an interesting rail history or related topic.

Learn more about The Mid-South Chapter on their website http://rlhs.org/Chapters/mid_south.shtml

About The NMRA and the Southeastern Division

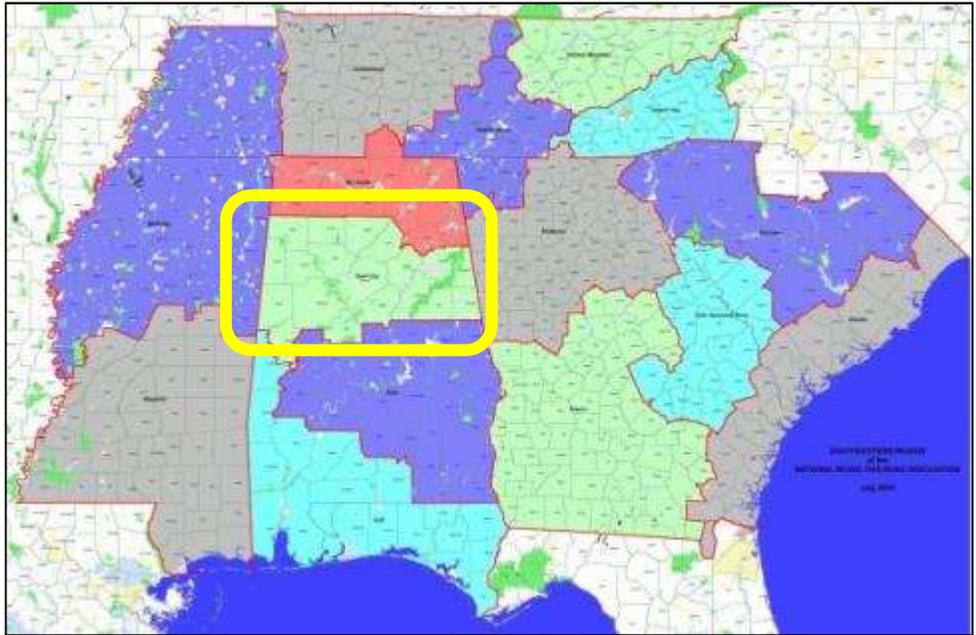
The **National Model Railroad Association (NMRA)** was founded in 1935 to provide standards, education and fellowship for the model railroad community. Today the organization is international.

In the United States the NMRA is divided into 15 geographical **Regions** plus other regions in Canada, Great Britain and Australasia. There are additional NMRA organizations in other foreign countries.

The **Regions** are further divided into **Divisions** based on county boundaries. When you join the NMRA national organization you are automatically a member of the appropriate geographical Region as well as Division.

The **Steel City Division** is located in the **Southeastern Region (SER)**, which includes 15 Divisions shown on the map.

Our **Steel City Division** includes 19 counties across central Alabama, from the Georgia state line to the Mississippi state line. We are bordered on the north by the Mid-South Division and on the south by the Dixie Division. Southern Alabama and the western panhandle of Florida are served by the Gulf Division.



The Steel City Division (SCD) has over 100 members who represent a very diverse group of modelers from all walks of life. SCD publishes this newsletter and holds monthly meetings.

- You can learn more about the **NMRA** at the national website: www.nmra.org
- The **Southeastern Region (SER)** of the NMRA has a website: www.ser-nmra.org. The site has information about the 15 Divisions in the SER of the NMRA, and the SouthErneR Newsletter
- The **Steel City Division (SCD)** of the SER of the NMRA has a website: www.scd-nmra.org as well as the 2017 SER Convention website: www.2017SERConvention.com

Join the NMRA

The NMRA has a great “trial” membership called the **Rail Pass**. The Rail Pass enables you to join the NMRA as a first time member for ***6 months for only \$10***, gaining access to all member features except voting including ***6 issues of the great NMRA magazine***. The Rail Pass is also available to those who have been away from the organization for over two years and would like to revisit membership.



Introducing the best deal in model railroading



- Experience the fellowship and fun of getting modeling help and discussing the hobby with other member in your area
- Receive reduced rates on special insurance for your layout or collection
- Get admission to local model railroad meetings and events
- Receive 6 monthly issues of *NMRA Magazine*
- Have access to standards information and data sheets
- Have access to one of the world's largest railroad libraries...which includes over 100,000 prototype photos, 6,000 books, and over 50,000 modeling, prototype and historical society magazines.
- Be a part of programs like "Modeling With The Masters," Pike Registry, Estate Counseling, contests, clinics, the Achievement Program and more!

Visit www.nmra.org to see what you're missing!

\$9.95

*Rail Pass offer is for **NEW MEMBERS** and those who have **NOT** been NMRA member for **TWO YEARS OR MORE**. Individuals can join at Rail Pass rates **ONLY ONCE**; membership renewal will be at the regular membership rate. Rail Pass members can attend conventions and participate in contests, but cannot vote or hold office.



Sign me up!

Fill out this form and include your payment.
U.S.: Send \$9.95 (U.S.) to NMRA-Rail Pass Membership, P.O. Box 1328, Soddy Daisy, TN 37384-1328
Canada: Send \$9.95 (Cdn) to NMRA-Canadian Rail Pass Membership, Registrar NMRA Canada 9-6975 Meadowvale Town Centre Cir Suite 405 Mississauga, ON L5N 2V7

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Date of Birth ____ / ____ / ____

Credit Card # _____

Expiration Date ____ / ____ *Security Code _____

Also available in Canada!

Rail Pass Membership

(Please Print Clearly!)

* (This number is needed to process your application)

Model Train Show



Fri & Sat, June 9th & 10th, 2017

Conventioneer "Early Bird" Access Friday 10 am—Noon

Public Show Access Friday 12 — 5pm & Saturday 9 am — 5 pm

\$6 per person, Kids under 13 free with adult

Birmingham, AL

Bessemer Civic Center

Exit 108, I-59/20

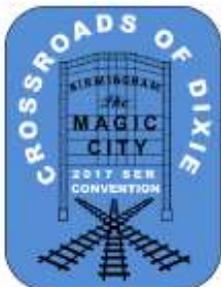
[Map: 1130 9th Ave SW, Bessemer, AL 35022]

15,000 ft² Vendors & Layouts

Sponsored by the Steel City Division, NMRA

In conjunction with the Southeastern Regional NMRA Convention

www.2017serconvention.com



Great New Book(s)

“Great Temple of Travel”

“A Pictorial History of Birmingham Terminal Station”

And

“Birmingham Rails”

“The Last Golden Era”

The website for the books and ordering is www.magiccityrails.com

The image displays two book covers side-by-side on a dark background. The left cover is for 'Great Temple of Travel' and features a photograph of Birmingham Terminal Station. The right cover is for 'Birmingham Rails' and features a photograph of two trains. Both covers have a 'Learn More' button at the bottom.

Special Website Pricing!

**GREAT TEMPLE
of TRAVEL**

*A Pictorial History of
Birmingham Terminal Station
1909 - 1969*

BY MARVIN CLEMONS
WITH A FOREWORD BY LYLE KEY

Learn More

New Digital Edition!

BIRMINGHAM RAILS
The Last Golden Era
FROM WORLD WAR II TO AMTRAK

Digital Edition

BY MARVIN CLEMONS & LYLE KEY
WITH A FOREWORD BY FRANK E. ANDREY

Learn More

**SMOKEY CITY RAILS MODEL RAILROAD CLUB, INC.
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA**

26th TRAIN SHOW & SALE



**SATURDAY
MAY 20, 2017
9 AM TO 4 PM**

****NEW LOCATION****

(see map on back)

**HELENA SPORTS COMPLEX
110 SPORTS COMPLEX DRIVE
HELENA, AL 35080**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION
BY MAIL: SMOKEY CITY RAILS
P.O. BOX 609
PELHAM, AL 35124**

**BY EMAIL: mims9006@bellsouth.net
BY PHONE: 205-587-1338 Jackie Mims
WEBSITE: www.smokeycityrails.com
FACEBOOK: Smokey City Rails Model
Railroad Club**

OPERATING LAYOUTS

DOOR PRIZES



**ADMISSION
\$6.00**

**CHILDREN 8-12.....\$2.00
CHILDREN UNDER 8.....FREE**



Aiken South Carolina Operations Day

Saturday, July 15, 2017

9AM to 5PM

**Six hours of operations on two model railroads:
N Scale 20 by 30 foot New York, Ontario & Western
HO Scale 36 by 78 foot Baltimore & Ohio**

**Museum Display Layout Available
HO Diorama at the Aiken Train Station**

Cookout Lunch (hot dogs, hamburgers, no cost)



Aiken Museum Display



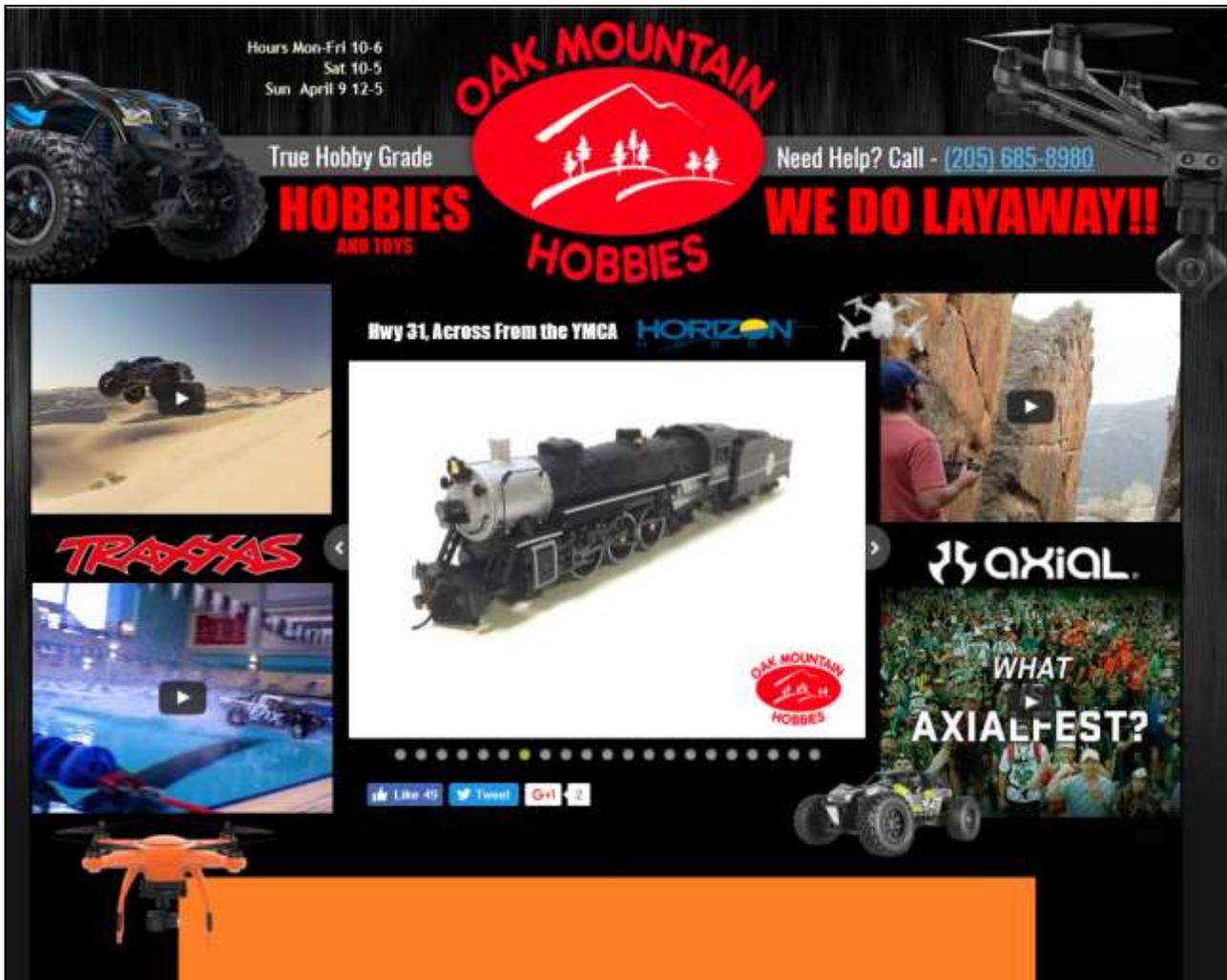
N Scale Layout Op Session

To register to attend, please contact: prevette@atlanticbb.net

Schedule:

9AM to Noon – Burnt Hills and Big Flats, 356 Ashley Ct Graniteville SC
Noon – 2PM – Cookout Lunch (or lunch on your own) and proceed to next layout
Optional – view Aiken Museum Display Layout (closes at 2PM)
2PM – 5PM – Operations on Don Barnes' Baltimore and Ohio

Maps will be provided, see www.bhbf.weebly.com for layout details



When you're attending the 2017 SER Convention, visit **Oak Mountain Hobby Shop**. Oak Mountain features model railroading, planes, drones and vehicles.

Mike and Christine Cole give a 10% NMRA Discount on many items in their Model Railroad inventory.

Visit them online: www.oakmountainhobbies.com

Visit them in person: **2641 Pelham Parkway (US 31), Pelham, AL 35124. (This is near Exit 246, I-65 South, just a half hour from the Bessemer Civic Center, Exit 108, I-59/20)**

Timetable (Send your organization's event news to the [Editor](#))

Local

SER 2017 Convention &

Train Show

“Crossroads of Dixie”

Birmingham, AL

June 9 & 10, 2017

www.2017serconvention.com

Smoky City Model Train Show

Helena Sports Complex

May 20, 2017

<http://smokeycityrails.com/>

Regional / National

NMRA National Convention

July 30th – August 6th, 2017

Orlando, FL

www.nmra.org

Aiken, SC

Operations Day

July 15, 2017

(See Above Page)

Bluff City Division

Layout Open House

Saturday, May 13, 2017

Noon to 5 pm

Azo Mfg. Building, 2nd Floor

4445 Malone Rd,

Memphis, TN 38118

Steel City Division Upcoming Meetings:

Steel City Meetings are held monthly except December or as otherwise noted.

**There is no May Division meeting scheduled at this time.
The Steel City Division needs an Asst. Superintendent to
serve as Program Chairman.**

Program Chairman Needed!