

SUSQUEHANNA SIDETRACKS



An official Publication of the Susquehanna Division 11
Mid-Eastern Region of the NMRA



**SUPERINTENDENT'S
DESK**



SUSQUEHANNA
DIVISION

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From the Superintendent's Desk

I was a bit disappointed that we had so few division members log in for our April 13 division Zoom meeting. We held it on a Monday, so if that day of the week is inconvenient for you, please let me know. For those in attendance, Chris Kier gave us some information on the DCC installation clinic he will be giving at our May 16 division meet at Zion Lutheran Church in Dauphin, Pennsylvania. I will be giving a hands-on clinic on weathering without an airbrush. I use powdered pastel chalks and Doc O'Brien's weathering powders from Micro-Mark. If you want to try your hand at weathering, please bring a piece of rolling stock. There will be other hands-on clinics as well.

Oh yes, be sure to bring your railroad related items for our free raffle.

Keep in mind that on August 15, we will be heading to the East Broad Top Railroad. You can find full details here: <https://susquehannanmra.org/ebt-event/> and in Barry Schmitt's article starting on page 6.

While I continue to work on my railroad, I ran into a bit of a problem; I don't have any photos of the house that was opposite the passenger station. In a case of "my railroad, my rules," I'm building a model of the house I grew up in.

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Slow



Division Officer Elections

This being an even-numbered year, it's once again time for elections for our three Division Officer positions. The three officers are: Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent and Chief Clerk (Secretary–Treasurer). Dean has agreed to run again for the Chief Clerk position. Two of our board members have agreed to run for the other two positions. David Ellis will run for the Superintendent position and Jim Mattern will run for the Assistant Superintendent position. While we had no other folks come forward, we will include a write-in slot for all three positions on the ballot. Instructions for voting and the ballot are on the next page. **Ballots are due by May 31.**

Election results will be published in the July/August *Susquehanna Sidetracks*. The newly elected officers will take office effective July 1, 2026.

Ballot — Officer Election 2026

Superintendent:

David Ellis

Write-in: _____

Assistant Superintendent:

Jim Mattern

Write-in: _____

Chief Clerk:

Dean Johnson

Write-in: _____

To vote, copy the above ballot, paste it into an email, and mark your choices. Alternately, just write and send an email to Dean Johnson at treasurer@susquehannanmra.org with your vote. **Please vote by May 31, 2026.**

Please seriously consider joining the leadership of your division. We need a “bench” to fill in positions and/or take charge of smaller tasks as committee heads. With board members moving into officer positions, we will be looking for members to fill in. Our annual programs are developed under the leadership of your Board of Directors (BoD) and all Division policies are approved by your BoD. Therefore, this is your opportunity to get involved in deciding the future direction of your NMRA Division. Please give me a call or send me an email if you have questions about the elections or our BoD operations at (717) 469-1047 or super@susquehannanmra.org.

Alan Mende

Recent Susquehanna Division Meetings

The officers and directors meet regularly on Zoom to discuss the “business” of the division, make decisions, and engage in planning. Any member is welcome to join us and/or bring up agenda items for the board. You can contact any of us (email addresses are provided on the “Second Section” page) with questions, agenda items, or the link to the next BoD meeting.

The Board of Directors met a couple of times in March and earlier this week. Typically we meet on Zoom on a Monday evening. We continue to fine tune the details of our event schedule for the year, a blend of gathering in person as well as online meetings on Zoom. We are hoping that by planning some hands-on activities at a few of our in-person venues and a special meetup at the East Broad Top Railroad this summer we might gain more participation from our membership. In addition to planning for membership meetings and activities for our division, we also were preparing for this year’s officer election. The ballot for the election is on page 3, **be sure you vote by May 31**. With several of our board members running for election, we need some folks to replace them on the board. Please consider being willing to step up to fill a vacant spot on your division’s leadership team!



We have participated in two membership meetings since the last newsletter was published. On February 28 we met in a joint meeting with the Philadelphia Division. We had ten members travel to that meeting. On April 13, we had a gathering on Zoom that was more of a get-together than a formal meeting. Again, it was around ten members, but we got to hear from many about what they have been working on. Topics ranged from using magnets to index a manual turntable, through scratch building gondolas, to weathering techniques used on a recently completed South River Modelworks building (Bragdon Powders, Pan Pastels, and AK Interactive Weathering Pencils). In the informal format, it appeared easier to convince folks to share what they would like to see as future clinic topics. Several scenery topics listed included super trees, wire armature trees, and static grass. Also some logging topics were mentioned: sawmills and switchbacks.

Second Section

Susquehanna Sidetracks

Official Newsletter of the Susquehanna Division 11
Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA

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Director: Jim Mattern jmattern@susquehannanmra.org
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David Ellis editor@susquehannanmra.org



National Model Railroad Association

<https://www.nmra.org/>

Mid-Eastern Region

<https://mer-nmra.com/>

Susquehanna Division

<https://susquehannanmra.org/>

Note From the New Editor

As the new editor, I see at least two purposes of our newsletter. First of all, dissemination of information will be a major goal; both about upcoming events and what is going on with the division. A second goal, that I need help with, is helping model railroaders move forward with building or improving their railroads. I will be asking for contributions from you to help with those goals.

Whether you know of an upcoming event that may be of interest to division members or you have an idea for a model railroading related article, the first step is to contact me at editor@susquehannanmra.org. In general, if you would like to contribute an article, attach the text to an email in Word (.doc or .docx) with minimal formatting. Attach any photos or illustrations in jpeg format separately. Please make sure that the photos are yours or used with permission and credited.

David Ellis

All Aboard America's Most Authentic Industrial Heritage Site



Article and photos by Barry Schmitt

Logo from EBT

EAST BROAD TOP (EBT) RAILROAD AUGUST 15 EVENT

Mark your calendar today and plan to join us on Saturday, August 15, 2026, for the division's fourth behind-the-scenes inside look at the continuing rebuild of the East Broad Top Railroad. EBT is an official National Historic Landmark and the only surviving three-foot gauge common carrier railroad east of the Rocky Mountains. EBT and the Rockhill Trolley Museum are located across the tracks from each other in Rockhill

Furnace, Pennsylvania. The Bricktown Model Railroaders Association, a 100% NMRA Model Railroad Club, is located just eleven miles to the north in Mount Union, Pennsylvania. The Orbisonia (EBT) station is open between 10:00 AM and 5:00 PM.

Much has happened since our previous visits in June 2014, July 2021, and the October 2023 Altoona MER Convention bus trip. This link to the [May/June 2021 Sidetracks](#) includes the article "East Broad Top Railroad Update" on pages 15-17 by EBT historian extraordinaire and Susquehanna Division member Lee Rainey. Since then, the railroad has accomplished a lot:

- opened the south rail line to just outside of Pogue;
- finished an extensive rehab of the post-and-beam machine shop, locomotive roundhouse, car repair facility, and carpenter shops;
- recently received two custom made coaches that will be operational during our upcoming event;
- and added a wye runaround at Colgate Grove that permits the locomotive operating cab forward throughout the roundtrip.

In short—lots of hard work, investments, and a dedicated team effort that is well worth a visit!

EVENT SCHEDULING CONSIDERATIONS

This all-day event is located in the scenic mountains of Huntington County, Pennsylvania, positioned near our most distant southwestern division corner. That presents a variety of driving times for our widely dispersed membership that significantly impacted building this event program. For example, our northeastern members would face a three to four hour drive both to and from the event. Also impacting this event is the addition in the schedule of the new south train ride. Additionally, August 15, being the last weekend before school starts, could easily set their 2026 weekend attendance record. And lastly, we also realized selecting that late summer date could offer a excellent opportunity for our members to combine the event with a two or three-day weekend mini vacation that encompasses other nearby national railroad sites and/or visiting the Raystown Lake Region.

So, before going into the details of the member scheduling process, below is a summary of the latest August 15 happenings in the EBT area.

EBT RAILROAD ACTIVITIES

- Open 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- Address: 421 Meadow St, Rockhill Furnace, Pennsylvania
- The Orbisonia (EBT) depot has restrooms, is handicapped accessible, and food trucks will be located behind the depot
- Guided tours of historic Machine Shop and Roundhouse.
- North roundtrip steam-powered train to Colgate Grove with new wye-runaround that permits locomotive forward operations in both directions
- New roundtrip steam powered train south that currently ends just short of Pogue until PennDOT approval for construction of a replacement steel bridge over the Aughwick Creek shown here



Old Aughwick Bridge Holding Up “March To Saltillo”



- Passenger cars are wheelchair accessible, but have no restrooms
- Active new brush and tree clearing, roadbed rebuilding, and rail and tie installation ongoing beyond Pogue in pursuit of current “March to Saltillo” goal

Workers Repairing Rebuilt Saltillo Station

- Friends of the EBT (FEBT) Robertsdale Museum and Archives will be open:
 - Drive yourself activity
 - No charge - donations appreciated
 - Address: 570 South Main St, Robertsdale, Pennsylvania
 - A 17-mile scenic 30-minute drive from Rockhill Furnace
 - Long term EBT coal mine destination to their formerly served coal mines

Former Robertsdale Engine Shed Ruins - Will Be Rebuilt



BRICKTOWN MODEL RAILROAD CLUB

- Open 9:00 – 5:00 PM
- Address: 300 West Small St, Mount Union, Pennsylvania, 11-miles north of Rockhill
- No charge – donations enthusiastically accepted
- One of few nationwide All NMRA model railroad clubs
- HO/HOn3 30'x70' layout under construction in rehabbed 1924 freight house
- Depicts PRR from Horseshoe Curve to Mount Union and EBT trackage from there to Robertsdale coal fields
- Handicapped accessible—can accommodate visitors with disabilities.



ROCKHILL TROLLEY MUSEUM



Two of 25 Classic Museum Trolleys

Photo from RTM

- Open 11:00 AM - 5:00 PM
- Address: 430 Meadow St, Rockhill, Pennsylvania – directly across tracks from EBT depot
- Trolley departures: 11:15 AM, 12:30 PM, 1:45 PM, 3:00 PM, and 4:15 PM
- Adults \$12 all day ticket, children (2–12) \$10, children 1 and under free

- Purchase tickets online at: <https://rockhilltrolley.org> or as a walkup
- Car barn shop tour included in trolley ride ticket
- Trolley rides typically 35-40 minutes and car barn tour 15-20 minutes
- Vintage trolleys are not handicapped accessible; however, arrangements can be made by contacting the museum prior to visit so they can make efforts to accommodate needs.

EBT SCHEDULE AND PAYMENT PROCESS

The first step in building the EBT part of your schedule is selecting which of the below offered activities you want to visit within their August 15 operating schedules:

- Shop and Roundhouse tours – 10:15 AM, 11:45 AM, 1:15 PM, and 2:45PM.
- North steam rides: 10:30 AM, 12:00 PM, and 1:30 PM.
- South steam ride: 3:00 PM only.

Also, consider the operating schedules of the Bricktown Model Railroad Club and Rockhill Trolley Museum if they are part of your desired visit. And remember, while the trolley museum is a short walk across the tracks from the EBT depot, the Bricktown Model Railroad Club is about a 30-minute drive north to Mount Union.

Now that you have established your EBT event schedule it's time to deep-dive into the EBT website to purchase your tickets for each activity. This is not the most user friendly website; here is one approach suggested by the editor to begin your quest:

At the (<https://eastbroadtop.com>) website, *click* on the RIDE tab on the navigation bar. It may take a few seconds to load. Scroll past the "Experience History" section to explore the various train excursions, individual guided tours, and combo tickets. Once you have made your choice, use the **Book Now** button(s) to choose August 15 and your desired class or type of train car if doing a train ride.

ROCK HILL TROLLEY MUSEUM SCHEDULE AND PAYMENT PROCESS

Purchasing trolley ride tickets online is a very straightforward and easy process. Simply open their <https://rockhilltrolley.org> website, select August 15 at **Book Online**, then select your desired departure time, then the **Plan Your Experience**, and end at **Book and Pay**. Like EBT, tickets are nonrefundable. They have an extensive collection of 25 historic trolleys. Touring their car barn repair facility is included in the ticket price and schedule. A great group of dedicated volunteers maintain and operate their heritage fleet.

MAKE IT A MINI-VACATION

All indications portend August 15 to be a very busy day in the Rockhill Furnace area so early purchase of tickets seems prudent. And consider adding other nearby railroad and recreational offerings that would make for a very enjoyable family mini vacation. Below are three nearby Mount Union and Huntington considerations:

LODGING AND OTHER ATTRACTIONS

- River Golf Lodge, 66 Front Drive, Mount Union, Pennsylvania along the Juniata River. Four miles to Bricktown Model Railroad Club and fourteen miles to the EBT. Website: <https://rivergolfodge.com>
- Comfort Inn, 100 S 4th St., Huntington, Pennsylvania. Twelve miles to Bricktown Model Railroad Club and twenty-three miles to EBT, and short walk to Huntington Amtrak Station with daily Amtrak service and heavy Norfolk Southern freight operations
- Marriott Fairfield Inn & Suites, 9970 Shaner Blvd, Huntington, Pennsylvania. Fourteen miles to Bricktown Model Railroad Club and twenty-five miles to Rockhill

Raystown Lake: A short thirty minute drive to Pennsylvania's largest lake that offers swimming, fishing, houseboat rentals, boat launches, and extensive hiking trails.

Altoona Area:

- Less than an hour's drive from Rockhill and Mount Union area
- Altoona Railroaders Memorial Museum
- Six great train watching spots: Horseshoe Curve, Gallitzin Tunnels, Cassandra Railroad Overlook, Cresson Railroad Park, Amtrak Station, Allegheny Portage Railroad National Historic Site

Cumberland, Maryland: A one and a half to two hour drive to Cumberland, Maryland, where you can ride No. 1309 roundtrip to Frostburg behind the largest operating steam locomotive in the country and visit the C&O National Historical Park.

LET'S MAKE THIS A GREAT SUSQUEHANNA DIVISION GATHERING

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING Y'ALL AT THE EBT ON AUGUST 15!

Contact the event planners:

- Dean Johnson, treasurer@susquehanna.org
- Barry Schmitt, sbschmitt@susquehanna.org

Modeling Pages:

Building a HO-Scale F7A Diesel Locomotive Consist

Article and photos by Jerry Lauchle, MMR #618



The two F7As making up this consist are both kits from Intermountain Railway Co. The kits purchased were #44096 F7A (phase I) Shell Kit w/Freight Pilot & Farr Grill and #49999 Regal Line F Unit Drive w/Single Headlight. I used Nginerring LEDs for the number boards and headlights. A LocSound decoder and speaker were installed in each unit. A friend of mine has a LocSound programmer and he programmed the decoders.



The decoder and speaker installation is seen in this photograph. Note the added seats, fireman, and engineer. Also note that the sanding pipes are secured to the frame and not the trucks as some modelers prefer to do.

I super-detailed the models with parts purchased from various sources. I made use of the many photographs published in *The Keystone*, Vol. 37 & 38, published by the Pennsylvania Railroad Technical and Historical Society, P.O.B. 712, Altoona, PA, 16603-0712. I used the middle photograph of the typical 1951-52 on page 29 as a guide for the detailing of these HO-scale models.

Details not included in the kits were added to both units as follows:

1. Rooftop telephone antennas are 0.020" brass wire supported by Bowser brass stanchions. The holes bored in the roof for the stanchions needed to be spaced very accurately. I made a jig to rest the shells against under the drill press to assure that the antennas would be parallel to the sides of the locomotives.

2. Rooftop air cooling coils are white metal castings from Details West. The pipes needed to be added to the coils before attaching the assembly to the roof. Holes were drilled in the roof for the coil support brackets and for the two pipes.
3. Windshield wipers were provided in the kits, but they were plastic; I preferred to use the more detailed brass wipers sold by CalScale.
4. Rear coupler draft gears are white metal castings from Details West.
5. Rear door and nose lift lugs are white metal castings from Details West.
6. Sanding pipes behind the rear trucks are white metal from Details West.
7. Cab interior sun visors are white metal castings from Details West.
8. Rear door MU and field box is a white metal casting from Details West. Note that PRR did not have MU boxes on the nose of their F units.
9. Roof horns and interior seats are brass from CalScale.
10. Engineers and firemen are plastic from LaBelle.
11. Rubber air hoses on both front and rear are from High-Tech Details.
12. Brass hoses on both sides of the rear are from CalScale.
13. Nose ladder grab irons and those above the windshields are from CalScale. A drilling jig was made from styrene with properly spaced holes for the grab irons and then held against the shells for drilling the #77 holes.
14. Nose ladder steps located below the shells are cast white metal from Details West.

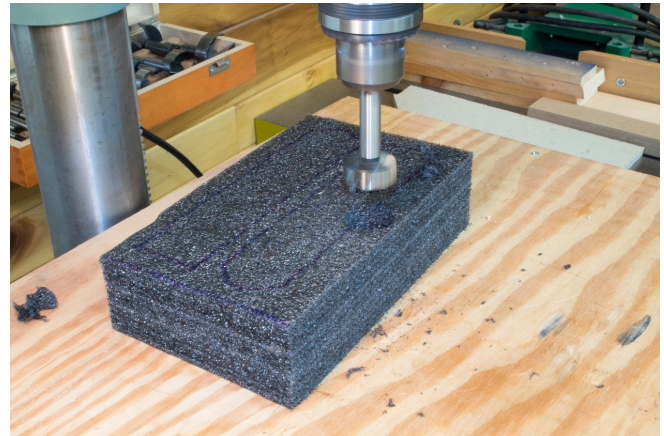
I airbrushed the shells with Badger “Pennsy Green” paint and the power trucks with Floquil “Grimy Black.” The Microscale PRR decals were applied to the shells after first prepping the surfaces with gloss lacquer. The dry transfer numbers on the number boards were applied last. The windshield wiper paths were done as follows: I cut semicircles from blue painter’s tape using a flat washer as a guide. I then placed these on three of the windshields with their center point aligned with the windshield wipers’ axles. I then sprayed Floquil “Dust” over the roofs and windshields. That was followed by a coat of flat lacquer. Upon removing the painter’s tape, the windshields appear to have no dust in the wipers’ paths. The fourth windshield on #1950 has a damaged wiper from a fallen tree branch, so it is completely covered with dust.

I weathered the locomotives with airbrushed grime, dry-brushed rust, weathered black acrylic paint, and various shades of powdered pastels.



I used a cardboard box lined with Kaizen Foam™ to store these two models. Kaizen Foam™ is purchased from FastCap (www.fastcap.com). It is produced in 1/8" thick layers that are weakly bonded together forming 2' x 4' sheets of thicknesses 7/8", 1-1/8", and 2-1/4". Kaizen Foam™ is designed to organize tools in drawers and on shelves. It peels away in layers, helping to create a perfect fit around a tool, or in the subject case, a train model. I used

a bandsaw with rip fence to cut 2-1/4" foam to fit in the box. After tracing the model with a blue Sharpie pen, I cut the foam with a variable-length wallpaper knife and peeled out the 1/8" layers. In some cases, you may want to include finger spaces in the foam next to the model to help in getting a grip on the model to remove it. The finger spaces can be created using a knife, but I find that a Forstner bit in a drill press makes a very clean opening; see the following photographs.



These F7A models were two of the three required models evaluated for my Master Builder — Motive Power certificate for the NMRA Achievement Program (AP) in 2018. Both received a score of 95.

Modeling Pages:

Resources From Our Webpages

One of the Susquehanna Division's website resources is a [Presentation Library](#). This webpage contains PDFs of the slideshows or handouts from presentations given during our membership meetings. The presenters have given us permission to post these items, but these materials remain under their copyright. Our library is intended to be an ongoing resource for modelers. At this point it contains information from ten presentations on a variety of subjects. Check it out! You may find something of interest to you, whether you are just starting out in model railroading or you want to try something new. If you don't find what you are looking for, let one of the leadership team know, and we will add it to our list of presentations to develop.

Upcoming Events

BIG BOY NO. 4014 IS COMING TO PENNSYLVANIA:

Union Pacific No. 4014 East Coast Schedule

Big Boy Reunion at Steamtown

SUSQUEHANNA DIVISION:

May 16, 2026: In-person membership meeting at 9:00 a.m. at the Zion Lutheran Church in Dauphin, Pennsylvania, located at the corner of Allegheny and Swatara Streets. We will have our regular State of the Division, Modeler's Showcase, and Free Raffle segments. We plan to have presentations, demonstrations, and hands-on stations focusing on DCC installation basics and non airbrush rolling stock weathering techniques. *Bring an inexpensive piece of rolling stock to try out a new approach or two.*

August 15, 2026: Save this date for a full day East Broad Top outing. This looks to be a great event with lots of different possibilities including shop tours, steam rides, and more. Details are at:

EAST BROAD TOP RAILROAD EVENT

September 19, 2026: In-person membership meeting at 9:00 a.m. at the Good Hope Fire Company in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania. One of the clinics under development will be hands-on with improving your soldering skills as a goal.

November, 2026: Virtual layout visit on Zoom. This is in the planning stages, but we are going to try to tour an outstanding railroad from "the far north of the division" live during our online meeting.

NMRA CONVENTIONS:

July 27 - August 2, 2026: NMRA National Convention in Chattanooga, Tennessee

SCENIC CITY EXPRESS

October 15 - 18, 2026: NMRA MER Convention in Virginia Beach, Virginia

TRACKS TO TIDEWATER



Editor’s Thoughts

Many people bring up the question, “What is the value in the NMRA?” Sometimes it is questioning the cost of the membership, which for some is a real concern. Sometimes it is more a question of, “What’s in it for me?” My inner voice response is to paraphrase President Kennedy’s “ask not” quote—“. . .ask not what [the NMRA] can do for you, ask what you can do for the [NMRA].”

Today, I will suggest one answer to the financial value of NMRA membership. Explore the NMRA Partners program. I scanned this list of “Partners” who offer discounts to NMRA members from a recent NMRA magazine. If you are registered on the NMRA website and go to the [Partnership Program](#) page, the discount codes, amounts, and processes of all the “Partners” are listed. Skim the list, I suspect that you use some of their products. Next time, use the discount and earn back part of the cost of your membership.



NMRA Partners

NMRA members can log into <https://www.nmra.org/partnerships> for links to all our partners who offer fantastic discounts!



18Ten Designs Bespoke Rail CatzPaw Innovations CB Train Junction Clever Models LLC Coastmans Scenic Products Composite Designs, Inc. Conowingo Models Dark Sky Modules Daylight Sales Deepwoods Software Deluxe Materials Diorama Hobbies DVL Design, LLC Dwarvin Enterprises East Coast Circuits East Plains Weathering Co. Enterprise & National Car Rental Evan Designs EZ Tronic Freight Studios Fusion Scale Graphics Gatorfoam Golden Spike Hobbies	Great Decals! Green Frog Productions Highways and Byways Model Railroad Graphics Hot Wire Foam Factory Ipswich Hobbies ITLA Scale Models K.I.S.S. Method Inc. Klawndyke LaBelle Woodworking Co. LARC Products Leavin' A Mark Engraving Lineside Details Logic Rail Tech MAC Rail, LLC. Marker Tree Creations Micro-Mark Mid-South Hobbies Mine Mount Models, LLC Miniprints Mississippi Agriculture & Forestry Museum Model Train Catalogue Modelers Decals & Paint Model Rectifier Corp (MRC)	Motrak Models MrTrain.com Mudd Creek Models New Creations Victorian Railroad Buildings Nick & Nora Designs Northlandz NScaleWorks Old Depot Gallery Old West Scenery Precision Model Railroad RailroadKits & MicroLumina R.Duck Locomotive Works R & J Details RRR-CirKits Scale Model Plans Scale Railroad Models Scenery Solutions Showcase Miniatures T-TRAK by Denniston Team Track Models The Model Railroad Benchwork Store The N Scale Architect The Old Depot Gallery	The N Scale Architect The Old Depot Gallery Third & Townsend Models Tichy Train Group Touch of the Brush Model Weathering Train Installations LLC Train Show, Inc. TrainTastic Trainmasters TV / Model Railroad Hobbyist Store Trainz TSG Multimedia UGears USA Airbrush Supply/ Badger Airbrush Wallace Locomotive Works White Rose Hobbies WiFi Model Railroad LLC Yelton Models New Partners shown in Red
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