

NMRA BULLETIN

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2024 NMRA National Convention Dates and National Train Show Reservations:
Long Beach, California August 4 - 11, 2024 (<https://surfliner2024.org/>)
Train Show Booth Reservations—Jenny Hendricks Registrar - P.O. Box 1328, Soddy Daisy, TN 37384-1328
423-892-2846 • ntsreg@nmra.org
• 2025 Novi, Michigan

rev 10/14/2023

ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

NMRA AP CERTIFICATE REPORT

DECEMBER 2023

GOLDEN SPIKE

Mid-Central Region

Kenneth Hanawalt, McMurray,
Pennsylvania

Mid-Eastern Region

Bob Hans, Middletown, New Jersey

Mid-West Region

David Casey, LaValle, Wisconsin
Joseph DeGroot, Two Rivers, Wisconsin
Robert Hanmer, Glenview, Illinois
Timothy Jones, Galesburg, Illinois
Andrew Kirby, Palatine, Illinois
Robert Perry, Avon, Indiana
Pedro Spicer, Indianapolis, Indiana

Pacific Southwest Region

Steve Cole, Seal Beach, California

Rocky Mountain Region

Mark Fuerstenberger, Colorado Springs,
Colorado

Southeastern Region

James Foley, Atlanta, Georgia

MASTER BUILDER - MOTIVE POWER

Lone Star Region

Pete Leach, Tomball, Texas

Mid-West Region

Phillip Burnside, Avon, Indiana

Niagara Frontier Region

Keith Stamper, Port Colborne, Ontario,
Canada

Pacific Northwest Region

Brian Ferris, Olympia, Washington

MASTER BUILDER - CARS

Niagara Frontier Region

Ronald Tobar, N. Tonawanda, New York

Pacific Northwest Region

William Fassett, Spokane, Washington

Rocky Mountain Region

Kevin Anderson, N. Salt Lake City, Utah

MASTER BUILDER - SCENERY

Pacific Southwest Region

Michael Guinn, Williams, Arizona

MODEL RAILROAD ENGINEER - ELECTRICAL

Lone Star Region

Steve Jackobs, Austin, Texas

Mid-Eastern Region

Michael Rossi, Pittsboro, North Carolina

Pacific Northwest Region

Greg Kujawa, Bozeman, Montana

Pacific Southwest Region

Michael Guinn, Williams, Arizona

World-wide Region

Ezequiel Duran, San Luis Potosi, Mexico

CHIEF DISPATCHER

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Mid-Central Region

Kenneth Hanawalt, McMurray,
Pennsylvania

Sunshine Region

Chip Pecere, Vero Beach, Florida

ASSOCIATION OFFICIAL

Mid-Eastern Region

Charles W. Rausch, MMR, Chapel Hill,
North Carolina

ASSOCIATION VOLUNTEER

Mid-Continent Region

Glenn Koproske, Fenton, Missouri

Pacific Northwest Region

Brian Arlt, Bremerton, Washington
Bill Braidic, Vaughn, Washington
George Fuchs, Hermiston, Oregon

MODEL RAILROAD AUTHOR

Mid-Central Region

Robert Kress, Fort Wright, Kentucky

North Central Region

Andrew Keeney, Dewitt, Michigan

Pacific Northwest Region

Ross Dando, Meridian, Idaho

Thousand Lakes Region

Thomas Boyd, Center City, Minnesota

MASTER MODEL RAILROADER®

MMR® #751, Brian Ferris, Olympia,
Washington

MMR® #752, Kevin Anderson, North Salt
Lake City, Utah

AP QUESTIONS: If you have questions
about the AP program or requirements,
start with your local or Region AP man-
ager. If you still have questions, contact
Frank Koch at achiev@nmra.org.

Not getting the bi-monthly NMRA eBULLETIN?

The new **NMRA eBulletin** comes out every other month near the 1st of the month. Either your SPAM filter is blocking it, or you need to update your email address with us. Have HQ update your address at: <http://www.nmra.org/customer-service-request>

RICHARD REMIARZ

EARNs

MASTER MODEL RAILROADER® #732

I have liked trains for as long as I can remember. I was born in Wolverhampton, England, but my family moved to the United States in November 1960, before my third birthday. My only memory of England is standing on a bridge with my grandma, watching the trains pass below. My mom says that was one of my favorite things to do.

After we arrived in the U.S., I remember my uncle taking us shopping and seeing all of the train displays set up in the department stores. All I wanted for Christmas that year was an electric train. Many years later, I found out that I had a small train layout in England that my dad and uncles ran while I watched, but that it had been left behind.

I didn't get an electric train that year; I got a plastic pull-train instead. I remember how disappointed I felt. I didn't understand then that my parents had arrived in the U.S. with two young children, two large steamer trunks with all their possessions, and \$1,000 to start a new life in America. The money had to be used to rent an apartment, buy furniture, get a used car, and support the family until my dad got a job and his first paycheck. There wasn't money available for luxuries like electric trains.

It didn't take long for my parents to get established in their new home, and I did receive an American Flyer train set while we still lived in that first apartment. In June 1963, we moved into a house my parents had purchased. My dad bought a 4x8-foot piece of plywood and painted it green. Now, I had a place to keep my American Flyer train set with its figure-8 track plan set up. I ran the train for hours, dreaming of the train layout I would have someday.

After a while, the American Flyer trains didn't seem realistic enough for me. I wanted to switch to HO-scale trains. I received an AHM train set for Christmas and sold my American Flyer train set to a friend who had additional American Flyer equipment. There are times I wish I'd kept that old American Flyer set. I bought the book "HO Railroad That Grows" and started building that layout. I created my freelanced railroad: the Northern Valley. Rolling stock was a bright orange color,



probably influenced by Great Northern's Omaha Orange, but also because I had a spray can of orange paint. Even then, I was building craftsman kits, modifying rolling stock, and scratchbuilding structures.

Like many modelers, I lost interest in trains in my high school years, when girls and cars were the focus. I sold the trains and an HO-scale slot car racing track to a younger man who wanted to get back into trains now that he was more established and had a place for them.

That might have been the end of my interest in trains, but two things happened in April 1978 that greatly impacted my future in model railroading. First, I got a part-time job in my junior year in the Mechanical Engineering department at the University of Minnesota, writing data analysis software. One of the graduate students with whom I shared an office was a model railroader and would bring *Model Railroader* magazines to the office. I started looking at the magazines. Next thing you know, I was going to a local hobby shop and bought some Silver Streak kits. I had kept my old hobby tools, so I started building freight cars between school and work. While at the hobby shop, I noticed a flyer on Charles Wood's upcoming Great Northern book, to be published by PFM. Since I grew up surrounded by the Great Northern, I placed a pre-order for the book. This book is what drove me to model the Great Northern.

Just as I started my new part-time job, I met my future wife, Jane. At the end of our first date, we were sitting on a swing they had in their backyard when I heard a train close by. I jumped up to see where it was. It was passing just a few houses down the street. I asked what railroad line it was. She didn't know, but the engines were orange. That let me know that it was the Milwaukee Road branch going through the neighborhood to the Ford Assembly Plant. She can't complain she wasn't warned about my obsession with trains.

As we continued dating, we sometimes went train-watching and took pictures of old rolling stock. Her uncle and aunt had a lake cabin near Richmond, Minnesota, and I was invited to go there with her family. There, I learned about the small towns in central Minnesota served by the Great Northern. The typical industries included grain elevators, lumber yards, oil and gas dealers, coal sheds, and creameries. In addition, this area is surrounded by granite quarries and granite-working facilities. I have spent the last 40 years modeling this portion of the Great Northern.

We married in 1980 and moved into an apartment with a den. In the 15 months we lived there, I built a small layout in the den. That layout was built in sections and moved into our first house — a townhome with a basement. The layout lasted only a few years until I could build a train room

and start my first layout based on the Great Northern in central Minnesota.

I joined the NMRA at the time but didn't really get involved. Money was tight (our mortgage was 12½ percent interest), and I had to drop my NMRA membership. I joined a local club, but it disbanded after a couple of years when it lost its space.

In 1988, we moved into a new house we had built, and I had an empty, new basement. It took several years to finish the basement, and the time was spent building rolling stock and planning my new layout, based on the Great Northern in central Minnesota. I decided to base the layout in 1956, a year before I was born. GN still ran steam in the area in 1956 and 1957.

We finished the basement at the beginning of May 1993, just a couple of weeks before our first daughter was born. I was going to graduate school part-time, and my job was managing international business. With a new baby, not much work was done on the layout for the first couple of years. Construction started in earnest around 1996, with the help of an old high-school friend and a model railroader co-worker. The Thousand Lakes Region convention was in Minneapolis in 1997. Going on the layout tours, I learned about the upcoming National Convention in the Twin Cities — Northstar '99. I also saw that many layouts on tour at the Region convention weren't completed much farther than mine. Without knowing what I was getting into, I volunteered to be on the layout tours for the convention. John Hotvet, MMR®, came by to see the layout. He was impressed with what he saw but wanted more work done on the layout before committing to include it in the tour. He wanted to come back in a year and ensure progress had been made. He also let the Layout Design Special Interest Group people know about the layout because he thought it would be good for the LDSIG tour.

With all this activity, I rejoined the NMRA in 1998 and have been a member ever since. I joined the LDSIG and Operations SIG (OPSIG) shortly afterward. I started attending local Twin Cities Division meetings and entered models in some of the monthly popular vote contests, where I met Joe Binish. We had similar interests and skills and were trading off who would win or finish second in the contests. I invited Joe to come over and see the layout in early 1999, and he brought a friend, Jon Bratt. After looking at the layout, they asked if they could come over

periodically and help. They were both local club members, but club politics were getting in the way. This was the start of our Monday Night round-robin group. Doug Complin joined us shortly afterward, and we worked hard to prepare the layout for Northstar '99. Over 400 people visited the layout during the convention between the regular tours and the LDSIG tour. I also volunteered to present a clinic on designing a layout based on prototype information. Many people I met due to the layout tours and clinic have become good friends I continue seeing at events nationwide.

The same day Joe Binish and Jon Bratt visited, Gary Freseman asked to stop by. Gary was one of the leaders in operations in the Twin Cities. He told me about MinnRail and asked if I was interested in operations and becoming a part of MinnRail. Of course, they would have to "test" the layout first to see if it operated well enough to be part of an operating weekend. The first session was not too long before Northstar '99. It must have gone well because I hosted two sessions in MinnRail 1999 that October.

For the next 20 years, I continued to work on the layout. The layout was designed to be built in phases. When the kids were young, they played under parts of the layout. In later years, another level was added in those sections. Over the years, I have given numerous clinics at various events and conventions. The layout took part in multiple layout tours and operating events. I was aware of the Achievement Program, but that was always something for the future. I decided I would try to become a Master Model Railroader® when I retired. I thought it would give me some goals to work toward.

I retired in 2019, leaving my position on August 1, and spending the remainder of the year working part-time, helping my successor. At the same time, the modeling editor for the Great Northern Railway Historical Society resigned, and I volunteered to take over the position.

My path to becoming a Master Model Railroader® was not the typical journey, spread out over the years. It actually happened much quicker than I expected. At the same time, my modeling efforts over the years and accompanying skills development are what led to the MMR®.

At the beginning of 2020, I started looking at the requirements for Master Model Railroader®. Then COVID hit. I had plenty of time at home to work on the

layout. I started upgrading the scenery and continued to build models. Looking at the various AP Awards requirements, I thought I could be close on some of the categories. However, with the shutdown, there was no way to have judges come over.

The model I had agreed to build for a friend finally got me moving toward my MMR®. Jerry Dziedzic had built several resin freight car kits for me over the years. In return, I wanted to do something for him, so I asked if I could build a structure for him. He sent me photos and information on the Susquehanna Sussex, New Jersey, depot. I spent months looking at the depot photos, trying to find windows and doors that were close. There wasn't anything available. Everything would have to be scratchbuilt to make an accurate model. I considered buying a laser cutter and decided this would be an excellent first project. I should have started on something simpler.

The laser cutter arrived in January 2021. This large piece of equipment arrived on a pallet on a semi-trailer. Once installed and set up, I began by trying to make the various doors and windows. By summer, I had developed enough skills with my new tool that the depot started looking like an actual structure. I completed the depot in early September. Later in the month, I would deliver the depot to Jerry in New Jersey, so I contacted John Hotvet and arranged to have him judge the depot for a Merit Award. John had been encouraging me to work on the MMR® program for years and was glad to help. On September 11, I went to John's house and had the depot judged. I learned a lot from John about AP Awards and judging that afternoon. The depot was awarded 97 points, and I had my first Merit Award. I was on my way!

I now started taking the program more seriously. Beginning with an article published in the Thousand Lakes Region newsletter in 1999, I realized I had more than enough work published to qualify for the Model Railroad Author award, especially with all the articles I had recently written for the GNRHS Modeler's Page. All I would need to do is document my efforts.

I also reviewed the Chief Dispatcher and Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical certificates. I had the required operating hours for the Chief Dispatcher award. However, I was missing some additional requirements, which forced me to develop a good schematic of my layout and additional documentation regarding operations. Truth be told, I should have created the

schematic and other documentation years ago. The operating crew is very thankful for the additional documentation.

The same schematic was used to document my wiring for the Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical award. I had all the required elements in place on my layout. They just weren't well-documented. There were notes and sketches spread across various locations. Completing the award forced me to document key aspects of my electrical system. The results have made it much easier to troubleshoot electrical issues. I was making progress while addressing shortcomings from the past at the same time.

With the upgraded scenery, I felt I could meet the requirements of Master Builder – Scenery. The only thing I added to the layout was finishing the wiring in a scene I had previously built that featured lighting for nighttime operations.

I asked to have judging done on my layout for additional Certificates, and John Hotvet and Dave Hamilton, both MMR[®]s, came to my layout in April 2022. By the end of the judging session, I was awarded the Golden Spike Award and had met the requirements for the Master Builder – Scenery, Chief Dispatcher, Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical, and Model Railroad Author awards. In addition, I had a super-detailed freight car judged for a merit award, which it received, and I had five additional structures judged for merit awards. I was now well on my way!

I used my laser cutter to help scratch-build the grain elevator for my model of Cold Spring, Minnesota. In addition, I took a serious look at the Master Builder – Prototype Models award, as suggested by both John and Dave. The town of Rockville, Minnesota, was entirely based on the prototype. Two of the structures in the town had already achieved merit awards. What I needed now was the additional elements. I superdetailed a brass model of the caboos that ran on the local through Rockville. It was an early brass import with few details. Added details included coupler lift bars, air hoses, marker lights, and the air brake plumbing and rods. I also super-detailed a brass steam engine and auxiliary water car to match No. 3135 as it appeared in 1956, the year I model. The Achievement Program was doing what it was supposed to, forcing me to improve my skills. By this point, I was much more comfortable working with brass components, including scratchbuilding accessories in brass.

In January 2023, John and Dave came over once again for judging. By the end of the session, I had met the requirements for Master Builder -Prototype Models and Master Builder – Structures. In addition, two more freight car models had achieved merit awards.

The 2023 Thousand Lakes Region Convention was being held in the Twin Cities in May. I had volunteered and was co-chair for the clinics at the convention. I thought receiving my MMR[®] award at the convention would be appropriate. Realizing the National office needed some time to process the awards, I knew I had to be done in March to get the award in May. However, we were leaving for Arizona in early February, so I had to have everything complete and judged at the beginning of February. January was spent frantically detailing a passenger car (I selected an express boxcar) and scratchbuilding four freight cars. I used the laser cutter to create the parts for my scratchbuilt cars — two gondolas and two flatcars — which also gave me the required number of different car types modeled. The freight cars were judged on February 1, and I met the requirements for Master Builder–Cars and Master Model Railroader[®].

The Achievement Program did what it was supposed to. It forced me to stretch and learn new skills. It got me more involved with the NMRA. I have been mentoring others along their path through the Achievement Program. I have also made new friends with people I met while helping run the Region convention.

I want to thank my wife Jane and my family for supporting the hobby over all these years. I want to thank John Hotvet, MMR[®], and Dave Hamilton, MMR[®], for their help and encouragement. I also want to thank my many friends in the hobby, especially our Monday Night round-robin group, for the help and encouragement. We have made each other better modelers by constantly raising the bar in our modeling efforts.

Certificates Earned Richard Remiarz, MMR[®] #732

Master Builder–Cars
Master Builder–Structures
Master Builder–Scenery
Master Builder–Prototype Models
Model Railroad Engineer–Electrical
Chief Dispatcher
Model Railroad Author

Improve your modeling with a few sheets of paper.

That's exactly what happens when you participate in the National Model Railroad Association's Achievement Program. One Merit Award here, another there, and pretty soon you're on your way to becoming a Master Model Railroader. All the while learning and having a ton of fun.

The Achievement Program is modelers helping modelers become better modelers and get the most out of their hobby. And it's yet another benefit of NMRA membership.



Visit www.nmra.org. Then improve your skills. And your hobby.

We make it even more fun.

www.nmra.org
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WARREN SMITH

EARNs

MASTER MODEL RAILROADER® #739

I started the hobby when I was 6 or 7 years old. My parents bought me a Tyco Pennsylvania F7 set. I had a 4x8 layout in the basement that lasted until high school when my dad decided to put a woodworking shop there. I kind of fell out of trains until I got stationed at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida in 1978. I found Angell's Hobby Shop in Fort Walton Beach. She had HO_{n3} equipment on sale. I bought my first narrow-gauge locomotive — a Westside K27 — which I still have. Once again, the hobby fell to the side as my son came along, as well as college classes and my shift work in the military at the FPS-85 radar.

In 1981, I was transferred to HG NORAD in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The train bug got me going again as I found a model shop in Manitou Springs. The shop had back issues of the *Narrow Gauge & Short Line Gazette* and an operating layout. In early 1982, the owner asked if I would be interested in chasing Union Pacific No. 3985 out of Cheyenne, Wyoming. That's the only time I ever chased a train. I joined a local group building a layout at the castle in Manitou Springs. I also discovered the best little train shop ever in a small garage called Lemle's Roundhouse. A person could not help but fall in love with trains.

I got out of the Air Force in 1984 and went to work on the Distant Early Warning Line (DEW Line) in Canada. I bought a group of car kits and took them with me, along with all the supplies I needed (you could drag a lot more stuff with you back then). I had plenty of time to work on the kits, so I didn't have to rush any of them. When I came home on vacation, I would visit Lemle's and buy more kits and a few locomotives. I left the DEW Line in 1987 and returned to school until I ran out of money and had to look for work. In 1989, I landed a job with Micron in Boise, Idaho. I looked up the local train shops and paid them all a visit. One had an ad from a modeler looking for anyone interested in building a layout. I met up with Bruce Oberleitner at the local bookstore. We joined a group of guys constructing a modular layout

in Ron Adcock's basement.

In 2000, I moved into the house I'm still in, in Meridian, Idaho. Bruce and I learned of a group getting together at a local pizza place on the 4th Saturday of the month. Around 2004, I started helping out at the train shows at the NMRA booth. I did this for five years before finally joining the NMRA in 2009. Sometime around this time, I put a model in for judging. It was a kit, but not a shake-the-box kind. Rather, it was a ROBB, Ltd. drop-bottom gondola. If you have ever built a ROBB kit, they make a scratchbuilt model look easy. The model scored about 60 points, and I was told no kit would ever get a merit award. This experience really turned me off the Achievement Program.

I continued to help out at the train shows and eventually became the secretary for the PNR 3rd Division. In 2012, I became the Superintendent of the 3rd Division — a position I held until just before our convention in 2013, when I had to step down for health issues. I continued to help out as much as I could. It was during this time I was talked into getting my Dispatcher certificate. That was the beginning of my 10-year journey to my MMR®.

I was elected to the secretary position again and stayed in that from 2014 to 2020. This service helped me earn my Volunteer certificate. I earned the Electrical certificate soon after that. It took me a few years to meet all the requirements for five additional certificates. By 2022/23, I was pretty much homebound due to a stroke. So, I worked on getting my scenery completed, the cars I needed, and the buildings required. Then, I tackled the building track items



for Civil. I am currently redoing all the electrical on my Kittanning & Crooked Creek Railroad, as well as helping build a friend's layout with four other modelers, two of whom are MMRs also: Bob Parrish and Andy Doll. The other two guys are also working on their MMRs; both have earned five certificates thus far.

Since I could not handle any club positions due to not driving, I started looking for something that did not require me to physically go places. I saw a request for volunteers for the Conformance & Inspection group. I sent my name in along with my background and was accepted.

All I can say to anyone looking to get their Master Model Railroader® is don't let the time frame stop you. It took me ten years (and a lot of headaches), but it was worth it.

Certificates Earned Warren Smith, MMR® #739

Chief Dispatcher
Model Railroad Engineer—Electrical
Model Railroad Engineer—Civil
Master Builder—Cars
Master Builder—Structures
Association Volunteer
Master Builder—Scenery

KEVIN ANDERSON

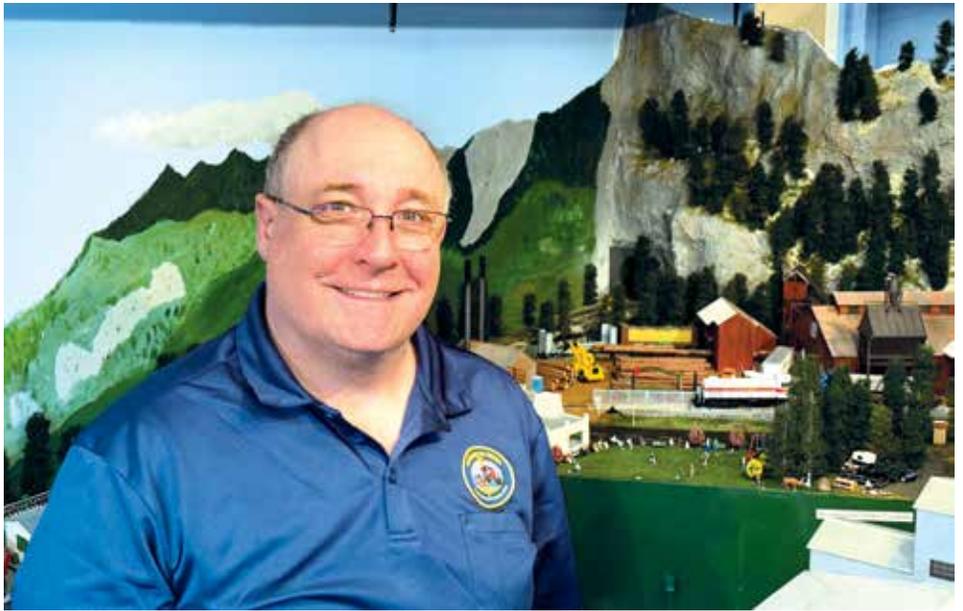
EARNs

MASTER MODEL RAILROADER® #752

What can I say? Let's start with "Never say never!" I guess I started into model railroading, like many others, in my youth. My father had built a small 5x10-foot HO-scale freelanced layout based on the 1930s. I remember spending time with him operating on this tiny point-to-point switching layout — my first taste of operations. It was simple: my dad would build a train and send it to me, where I would break it apart, build another, turn the power, and send it back to him. I would then switch out the industries on that side of the layout between trains. At this time (late 1970s/early 1980s), I also received my first Bachmann train set as a gift and soon had a loop of track on plywood for my own.

As I entered my teenage years, I didn't do much modeling, but my interest remained. In 1995, my father passed, and I inherited all his trains and layout. In 2003, my wife and I started to look to build a house, and did so in 2004. I started collecting supplies for a new layout based on my dad's. I drew up plans to add his layout into a new and expanded version. At this time, I learned about DCC, scrapped the idea of adding his layout, and designed a new one from scratch.

In 2011, the new layout was started, and that's when I first learned about the Achievement Program. I told myself, "I will never be that good." I then worked as a lone wolf over the next eight to nine



years, building an HO freelanced layout based on the Utah Railway.

In 2019, I joined the NMRA before the Salt Lake City, Utah, convention. I finally got a hold of the Division, and Jim Wanlass, MMR, stopped by while I was out of town and received a layout tour from my wife. Little did I know what this visit would start. I apparently had earned the Golden Spike award, and the following week, Jim and another Division member showed up and started AP evaluations. It was all a surprise that what I had built was that good. All I needed to do was finish the paperwork, which was all done before the convention. After attending the convention, I realized I was not alone, and my lone wolf days were over.

During the National Train Show, I realized I would need to develop something else to get the Structures certificate since

my layout was 85 percent complete with no more space for buildings. I followed the N-scale Free-moN guys around for three days. I asked questions and realized I wanted to do this. I earned five out of six merit awards in N-scale and one in HO-scale.

I was elected to the Division board of directors, where I quickly learned the ins and outs of the NMRA and built up my skills. I even changed scales again to earn the Cars certificate by going to HO-n3.

Now it's 2023, and beyond my wildest dreams, I earned the MMR. Again, never say never. It's been a journey for sure. I needed to step outside my comfort zone, learn new skills, and try different ideas and techniques, which enhanced and honed my current skills. I even joined the Grand Valley Model Railroad Club in Grand Junction, Colorado.

Future plans are to build a new HO/HO-n3 layout and continue building N-scale and HO-scale modules. My wife Bekki surprised me this year by joining the NMRA and wanting to build N-scale modules. I hope to pass the love of this hobby on to future grandchildren as well.

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Certificates Earned Kevin Anderson, MMR® #752

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Model Railroad Engineer—Civil
Master Builder—Structures
Model Railroad Author
Chief Dispatcher
Master Builder—Cars