



# The Daylight Observation

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## Daylight Director's Message:

By Walter Mizuno, Daylight Division Director

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Hello everyone and welcome to another year! I hope that everyone received their fill of train- related items over the holidays.

As we start the new year, we are already planning to have other recruitment activities beginning with the GEHAMS

train show on March 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> at the Kern County Fairgrounds. (See page 13 of this newsletter.)

Did you know that this is the 32<sup>nd</sup> year for the train show in the Daylight Division! Daylight Division members will be operating a Timesaver layout and sharing ways to get more enjoyment from the hobby. We've still got space for more members to join us and share their experiences.



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## Observation Schedule

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Articles Due</u>
Winter (Jan-Feb-Mar)	December 10
Spring (Apr-May-Jun)	March 10
Summer (Jul-Aug-Sep)	June 10
Fall (Oct-Nov-Dec)	September 10

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Early in November, we held our latest meeting and hosted some model railroad clinics at Dave and Sandy Theis's meeting room. Both new and long-time members attended the event where we held several clinics and welcomed new members. Here is a photo montage of the day's activities.



Figure 1: Steve Lowe (left) shows the art of precision ballasting—proving that the right technique can turn ordinary track into a realistic model.

Figure 2: New member and professional railroader Mike Harris (standing, left) shares real-world track-laying tips.



Figure 3: Cole Rodriguez (left) and Mike Harris dive into the finer points of trackwork. Cole's enthusiasm was contagious—exactly the spirit we love seeing at our clinics!



Figure 4: *Just some of the tools that turn good track into great track. A reminder that craftsmanship—and a well-stocked toolbox—go a long way in this hobby.*



Figure 3: *Clinic host Dave Theis shows how versatile foam insulation can be for layout building. From mountains to valleys, foam makes dreams (and scenery) take shape.*



Figure 4: *Neil Fernbaugh in the foreground and Sylvia Pethoud partially hidden, team up to bring our first Timesaver layout to life. Nothing beats seeing a switching puzzle come together for the first time.*





Figure 5: Robert Pethoud teaches his grandson the magic of building conifer trees from simple furnace filter material—proof that great scenery doesn't require great expense.



Figure 6: Joshua Pethoud (standing beside Robert, mastered tree-making so quickly that he soon became one of the day's instructors. That's the power of hands-on learning—and youthful enthusiasm!

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Figure 7: *A perfect moment: Robert and Joshua enjoying quality time together at the clinic event. Family, fun, and modeling—what better combination could there be?*



So that wraps up this quarter's report—and what a quarter it has been. Our November event was a tremendous success, thanks to the energy, generosity, and enthusiasm of the members who stepped forward to teach, build, demonstrate, and welcome newcomers. A heartfelt thank-you to **Dave and Sandy Theis** for hosting the event, and to **Steve Lowe, Doug Wagner, Robert and Sylvia Pethoud, Mike Harris, and Neil Fernbaugh** for planning, preparing, and making the day come to life. Your involvement not only made the event memorable but also showcased the spirit that defines the Daylight Division: **sharing skills, supporting one another, and celebrating the joy of the hobby together.**

Looking ahead, we have even more opportunities for every member—new, longtime, returning, or re-engaging—to jump in and make a difference. We are still looking for volunteers to help with demonstrations and recruitment at the GEHAMS Train Show the first weekend in March. Even a few hours of your time can spark excitement in a visitor, guide someone curious about the hobby, or inspire a future NMRA member. And honestly—**who doesn't enjoy a good train show?**

The momentum doesn't stop there. Thanks to the enthusiastic feedback from our November clinic, we are planning a **Timesaver-construction clinic in Bakersfield in mid-May**. This event will give members in the southern part of the division an easier opportunity to take part, share their talents, and help us reach modelers who may be discovering the NMRA for the very first time. The Bakersfield Train Show will also be a key outreach event—another way to grow our membership and strengthen connections across *all* areas of the division.

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We are also committed to hosting similar events throughout the entire Daylight Division. But we can only do that if we hear from you. **Unless members ask for something, suggest an idea, or express a need, we simply won't know.** Every recent activity—from November's event to the coming Timesaver event—began because members spoke up and shared what they wanted. Please continue to tell me what interests you so we can plan events that benefit everyone.

As always, I welcome your ideas, talents, and interests. Whether you enjoy teaching, learning, building, operating, troubleshooting, or simply encouraging others, there is a place for you in our upcoming activities. **Every contribution—even the smallest—adds value to our division and helps us offer meaningful experiences across our entire region.**

High green, everyone!  
*Walter*



## Daylight Membership by County

<u>County</u>	<u># Members</u>
San Luis Obispo County	20
Fresno County	16
Santa Barbara County	15
Kern County	13
Tulare County	11
Merced County	4
Madera County	3
<u>Mariposa County</u>	<u>1</u>
Total Members	83

## Daylight Division Membership Gauge

November 30, 2015	130
November 30, 2024	84
December 31, 2024	87
January 31, 2025	89
February 28, 2025	86
March 31, 2025	89
April 30, 2025	86
May 31, 2025	86
June 30, 2025	84
July 31, 2025	85
August 31, 2025	87
September 30, 2025	83
October 31, 2025	85
November 30, 2025	83

## Welcome Aboard!

### Daylight Division's Newest Members

<u>Member</u>	<u>City/State</u>	<u>Date Joined</u>
Bob Montonye	Visalia CA	10/3/2025



## ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

What is the AP?

By Dave Grenier



So, what exactly is the Achievement Program? From the introduction on the NMRA website, we can read “In simple terms, the Achievement Program (AP) is a guide to help you on your journey through the world of model railroading. The AP also provides incentive to learn and master the many crafts and skills necessary in the hobby of model railroading. With the completion of each category, you will be issued a certificate acknowledging your achievement.”

“The AP requirements are a set of standards, but they can also serve as a set of guideposts for those who are new, near-new, and not-so-new to the hobby. Not because they lead to some sort of official pat-on-the-back, but because they are a source of ideas for projects that can help us learn to become better modelers.”

“Briefly, the AP is a system of requirements for demonstrating a superior level of skill in various aspects of our hobby. It covers not only building various types of models, but also building other things, which are important to the hobby, such as scenery, structures, track work, and wiring. It also recognizes service to the hobby and the NMRA, which are important as well. The Achievement Program is also a personal commitment to share one's knowledge with others and to encourage them as they also make the AP journey.”

There are eleven different AP categories in which a certificate can be awarded. The requirements for each category are beyond the scope of this article but are described in detail on the NMRA website ([nmra.org/categories](https://www.nmra.org/categories)). The eleven categories are grouped into four areas, as shown below:

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## **Model Railroad Equipment**

Master Builder – Motive Power

Master Builder – Cars

## **Settings**

Master Builder – Structures

Master Builder – Scenery

Master Builder – Prototype Models

## **Engineering and Operation**

Model Railroad Engineer – Civil

Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical

Chief Dispatcher

## **Service to the Hobby**

Association Official

Association Volunteer

Model Railroad Author

Although there are eleven different AP categories, a member only needs to meet the requirements for seven categories, with at least one from each of the four areas, to qualify for the eventual, and ultimate goal of Master Model Railroader (MMR).

This may seem daunting to you, but please don't get discouraged. There is also a "starter" award for those modelers that are new to the AP, the Golden Spike Award. We'll go over the Golden Spike Award in the next installment of the series.

For more information on the Achievement Program, visit the NMRA website at [nmra.org/education/achievement-program](http://nmra.org/education/achievement-program) or contact the Daylight Division Achievement Program Chair, Dave Grenier, [grenida@pacbell.net](mailto:grenida@pacbell.net).

Next: Golden Spike Award





## Modern Rail Served Industries:

International Paper Co., Exeter, CA

**Dave Theis, Daylight Division**



Last year I had the opportunity to attend the NMRA's Pacific Coast Region Layout Design and Operations weekend which was held in Sacramento, CA. As is typical of this annual event, one of Saturdays activities included a number of clinics which covered a variety of topics in model railroading. One of the clinics that I really enjoyed was a presentation by Linton Von Beroldingen who highlighted several rail served agricultural industries in Northern California which could possibly become the basis for prototypical operations on a model train layout.

As a model railroader I was certainly intrigued by the approach Linton presented and how this process could help me create more realistic operations on my layout. However, as someone who is also an avid railfan, what really excited me was the idea of exploring the real-life operations of some of my local railroads and investigating the history of the industries that they served and the details of how they were using rail service to support their operations.

Already being familiar with the area and some of the local rail served industries, I decided to start by checking out a company that I had driven by on many occasions where I had regularly observed about half a dozen or so boxcars sitting on a siding next to their building. The company, International Paper in Exeter, CA, turned out to be a goldmine of information and they were extremely helpful in discussing how rail service was a vital component in the manufacturing process of their products.

Based on several Interviews with John Tiner, a Sales Manager with the company, I was able to find out that International Paper is a global corporation with several hundred locations throughout the U.S. and abroad. Historically, International Paper has been around for over 125 years, however the bulk packaging container plant in Exeter had only been in operation since 2001 (when it was acquired from Weyerhaeuser).

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*International Paper, Exeter, CA.*

The primary products manufactured at the Exeter plant included cardboard boxes and the heavy duty bulk corrugated bins that are commonly used by the agricultural industry for the storage and display of large sized food products (watermelons, pumpkins, etc.) or bulk quantities of other food related items (nuts, rice, etc.) that are commonly found in the produce section of grocery stores. This particular plant distributed products throughout most of the Western states (including Hawaii) and internationally to both Canada and Mexico. While the Exeter plant utilizes trucking services to deliver their final product, the raw materials and bulk rolls of stock paper used to make their products are all delivered to them via rail service.

According to John, rail service for the delivery of their raw products was the preferred method of delivery based on the extreme weight of the bulk paper rolls (2-3 tons each), the size of the bulk roll stock, (a roll could be 7ft high with a 7-8ft diameter), the immense volume of raw materials they required for the manufacturing process, and the lower cost of shipping. He added that it was not uncommon for them to receive up to three drops a week with between 10-13 rail cars. Depending on the size of the roll stock, this could mean between 195 to 300 rolls of bulk paper per week were delivered to their facility.

Rail service to the plant is currently provided by the San Joaquin Valley Railroad, a Class 2 Railroad with over 400 miles of track operating in the Central Valley. Deliveries to the plant, which might originate from plants in Orange, TX, Springfield, OR, or Valiant, OK, would be placed on a 1,200 foot siding located on the South side of the facility. While the siding could easily accommodate the 10-13 rail cars that would normally be delivered, the unloading dock for the rail cars could only accommodate up to four cars at a time. It was also interesting to learn that the

the rail cars used in the delivery of the bulk paper rolls were very purposeful and unique for this type of industry. In order to accommodate the weight, size, and total number of rolls required, the rail cars used for transport were 50 foot Hi-Cubed Boxcars with exterior posts and plug style doors. The additional height of the interior would allow for the height of the larger rolls and the plug doors would create a tighter seal that helped to regulate the interior humidity and temperature better than standard sliding doors.



*Rail siding at International Paper with 50 ft. HI-Cube Boxcars ready for pickup.*

Having established the background on the company and their use of rail service, I began to turn my attention to the details of how the facility was laid out. Again, John was a tremendous resource and provided a wealth of information on this topic. The International Paper Bulk Packaging Plant in Exeter is a 300,000 sq. ft. “L” shaped facility comprised of three connected buildings of varying size and height. As seen in the arial view from Google Maps, the attached two-story metal buildings are rectangular in shape with covered entryways at the entrances on the North side.

In addition to the main buildings, the Exeter plant has a very large parking and storage area on the North side of the facility which accommodates the many trucks and the trailers used for the loading and delivery of their final products and for storage of bulk materials. Since the plant operates around the clock, the property is very well lit with solar powered light poles observed throughout the area. In addition to the solar lights, a large solar field is located on the Northwest corner of the property which helps to offset the energy needs that are common with such a large operation.



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*Arial view of the International Paper Exeter Container Plant (Google Maps).*



While all of this is interesting to someone who loves railfanning and enjoys learning about how the industry operates, you may be wondering what all of this information has to do with model railroading and how it may be helpful to you in running operations on your layout. Here are my thoughts. 1. The International Paper Bulk Packaging Plant represents a realistic modern industry with a siding that can easily be scaled or modeled and could be just the ticket for adding realism and prototypical operations to your layout. 2. As an international company this type of plant would be a fit for multiple regions and on layouts that represent a number of geographical locations throughout the United States. 3. Paper companies have been in existence for over a hundred years, and with minor adjustments to the style of the building and construction materials used, modelers can represent this type of industry regardless of the time period that they are modeling. 4. The frequency of deliveries and pickups for this industry would align itself very well with layouts that focus on prototypical operations. 5. While scratch building the facility is certainly an option, modelers are able to purchase a variety of warehouse building kits or scenery items (Such as the Walthers kits) that would be perfect for use in recreating the facility. And 6. Manufacturers like Athearn, Roundhouse, and Exactrail offer a pretty good selection of the HO Scale 50 foot High Cubed boxcars like the ones used by this industry at a very reasonable price.

I would like to thank Linton Von Beroldingen for the inspiration he provided on conducting research and John Tiner for his willingness to share details about their company and for putting up with the many questions about how they use rail service to support their business. I really learned a lot while doing this research and without them this article would not have been possible. Well, that's about it. I hope you found this article helpful, and I look forward to presenting future articles on other modern rail served industries that I come across in the Central Valley area.



# BAKERSFIELD







Kern County Fairgrounds, 1142 South 'P' Street,  
Bakersfield, CA 93307

Saturday, March 7, 2026 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM  
Sunday, March 8, 2026 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

# MODEL TRAIN SHOW

**Adult \$10.00 (Good For Both Days Of The Show)**  
**Kids ages 12 and under FREE when with a paying adult**  
**\$5.00 Parking**

-  Enjoy 20,000 square feet of model railroading
-  100+ Tables Of Trains For Sale
-  Operating Model Railroad Displays
-  Free Test Track - Test Run Your Purchased Locomotives at the GEHAMS Table

-  Hourly Door Prizes
-  Drawing for \$100 VISA Debit Card (extra cost for drawing tickets)
-  Semper Fries Gourmet Fries and Funnel Cakes

Hosted by the  
Golden Empire Historical And Modeling Society  
Bakersfield, California  
[www.gehams.club](http://www.gehams.club)



Scan here for most up-to-date show information



Show Information:  
(661) 496-9514  
[kevin4strings@gmail.com](mailto:kevin4strings@gmail.com)

## Operating Layouts On Display Include:

-  Thompson (LEGO) 8' x 12'
-  Group 160 (N scale) 20' x 28'
-  Free-Mo (HO scale) 46' x 58'
-  OC Nginers (N scale) 24' x 24'
-  SoCal S Gaugers (S scale)  
30' x 30'
-  OC Module Railroaders  
(HO scale) 24' x 36'
-  Birkbeck (G scale) 20' x 20'



**EXTRA  
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**APRIL 30 - MAY 3**

**PCR Convention: Extra 2026 North**  
April 30 – May 3, 2026

[DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Sonoma  
Wine Country, One Doubletree,  
Rohnert Park, CA 94928, USA](#)

More details: [pcrnmra.net](http://pcrnmra.net)

**PCR Layout Design & Operations  
Weekend Meet**

January 31 – February 1, 2026

[South Bay Historical Railroad,  
Caltrain Station, 1005 Railroad Ave,  
Santa Clara, CA 95050, USA](#)

**Great Train Show**

February 21 – 22, 2026

[Solano County Fairgrounds, 900 Fairgrounds Dr, Vallejo, CA 94589, USA](#)

Join the PCR at the Great Train show in Vallejo on February 21&22, 2026. We are looking for volunteers to help man the booth. Get free admission and help the PCR recruit new members.

You can sign up to work a shift at the show using this link:

<https://forms.gle/uDppiPxYTV5b6G2f9>

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For all the latest details please visit our website: <https://bayldops.com/2026/index.html>

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**Bakersfield Model Train Show**

March 7 – 8, 2026

Kern County Fairgrounds, 1142 South 'P' Street, Bakersfield, CA

\$5.00 parking fee, \$10.00 adult admission, kids 12 and under free with adult

Hosted by Golden Empire Historical and Modeling Society, [www.gehams.club](http://www.gehams.club)

More information from [kevin4strings@gmail.com](mailto:kevin4strings@gmail.com) or (661) 496-9514

**Weekly Events:**

Every Sunday 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM and Thursday 5:00 to 8:00 PM / Eastern Sierra Railroad Society (HO, N) / 520 South Richmond Road, Ridgecrest, CA 93555 / [Facebook](#) page or call Gary Gearhart, (760) 269-5762

Every Friday 7:30 – 9:30 PM / [Tri-City Society of Model Engineers](#) (HO, N) Niles Plaza, Fremont, CA / Stanley Keiser, e-mail: [sbkeiser@juno.com](mailto:sbkeiser@juno.com) or 510-791-1504

Every Tuesday & Thursday 7:00 PM / [Roseville Roundhouse Model Railroad Club](#) (HO) Roseville, CA / George Carter, e-mail: [Geo Claire Carter@msn.com](mailto:Geo_Claire_Carter@msn.com)

Every Tuesday & Thursday 7:00 PM / [Golden Empire Historical and Modeling Society](#) (HO, N) Bakersfield, CA / Doug Wagner, e-mail: [carldw@aol.com](mailto:carldw@aol.com) or 661-589-0391 / Club phone 661-325-5820

Every Thursday 6:15 PM / Thursday Nite Boomers (all) / San Luis Obispo County, CA / Terry N. Taylor, e-mail: [terryntaylor@charter.net](mailto:terryntaylor@charter.net) or 805-595-9535

Every Saturday 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM / Fresno Model Railroad Club (HO, N) 1321 Betty Lane, Selma, CA / Mailing Address: PO Box 181, Selma, CA 93662

Every Saturday 9:00 AM to Noon / Belmont Model Railroad Club (HO) 1719 E. Belmont Avenue, Fresno, CA / [Facebook](#) page. Info: (559) 289-5549.

Every Tuesday 7:30 PM / [South Coast Society of Model Engineers](#) (Z, N, HO, O, G, Steam, Trolley, Diesel) Round robin meetings weekly at members' homes. Santa Barbara, CA / Contact: Bruce Morden, e-mail: [bdmorden@sbceo.org](mailto:bdmorden@sbceo.org)

## Monthly Events:

Second Wednesday 7:30 PM / [Golden Empire Historical and Modeling Society](#) (HO&N)

Bakersfield, CA / Doug Wagner, e-mail: [carldw@aol.com](mailto:carldw@aol.com) or 661-589-0391 / Club phone: 661-325-5820

Second Saturday 10:00 AM / [Tehachapi Loop RR Club](#) / Tehachapi, CA / Tom O'Brien, e-mail: [threerail@earthlink.net](mailto:threerail@earthlink.net) 661-822-1546

Third Monday 7:00 PM / [San Luis Obispo Model Railroad Association](#) (all) Oceano Depot, CA / Dennis Pearson, e-mail: [info@slomra.org](mailto:info@slomra.org) or 805-929-3062

Third Tuesday 7:00 PM / Visalia Electric Model Railroad & Historical Society / Meets at Ryan's Place Restaurant, 3103 South Mooney Blvd, Visalia, CA / Cecil Eppler, e-mail: [cecil\\_eppler@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cecil_eppler@sbcglobal.net)

Fourth Wednesday 7:00 PM / Coast Toy Train Club / Wood Glen Hall, 3010 Foothill Rd (at Alamar), Santa Barbara, CA / Lots of collecting in S, O, and Standard gauges. / Contact: Ken Kelley, e-mail: [kenatttr@thirdrail.com](mailto:kenatttr@thirdrail.com)

Irregular / Central California Operators Group (all) / varies / Steve Hayes, e-mail: [hayeswp@hotmail.com](mailto:hayeswp@hotmail.com) 209-536-1847



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