

# **THE BRASS POUNDER**



**Newsletter of the Carolina Southern Division 12, Mid-Eastern Region,  
National Model Railroad Association**

**Volume 25 Number 10**

**October 2025**

## **Division Coming Events**

**Monthly Meeting  
October 11th**

**Northern Regional  
Recreation  
Center, 18121  
Old Statesville Road,  
Cornelius NC 28031  
starting at 10:30 am**

## **Superintendent's Corner**

**By Andrew Stitt**

As we are now officially into autumn, it's time (shortly) to put away all of the outdoor distractions and return to the train room! The Carolina Southern Division has some interesting activities coming up in the next several weeks I hope you will be interested in. We will be moving our regular meeting in October from the normal 3rd Saturday to the 2nd Saturday so as to accommodate those members who are planning on attending the 2025 MER convention. The October meeting will again be at the Northern Regional Recreation Center in Cornelius. Several of us will be hosting a discussion on various ways to stain wood. I think you will enjoy learning some different ways of doing this simple task.

Then, as noted elsewhere in the Brass Pounder and on our website, we begin the model railroad open houses for 4 consecutive Saturdays, starting on October 25th. I know that those of us who hosted as well as toured layouts in 2024 had a very good time. While it might not be easy to see all of the ones listed on a given Saturday, I encourage you to check out what might interest you. Descriptions and a registration form will be on our website starting October 1. The registration form is designed to provide each layout owner with an idea of how many visitors to expect, although you are not obligated to attend by registering.

Speaking again about layout visits, I'm fairly certain that those of us who are fortunate enough to have a home layout will tell you to expect that some things have changed (I hope for the better) since the last time you visited, so consider a return visit as a possibility. In my case, I have started building a second layout in some available space in the basement, so you might want to come and check it out. I would also like to encourage each of you to invite 5 model railroaders you know who are not members of CSD to come along. (I suspect we all know some who would fit this category.) Let them see what we are all about! Of course, it is the layout owner's prerogative to invite neighbors or out-of-town friends too!

So, I hope you are looking forward to an active modeling season ahead where we can share and learn from each other!

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## Editor's Notes

By Chad Barnette

Well hello again! It's been an interesting month so far. I celebrated my birthday recently and treated myself to something I've been wanting for quite a while: the new version of Train Sim World, called Train Sim World 6. That's one of the things I really enjoy playing during my downtime on my PlayStation 4. It not only entertains me but also sparks ideas and excitement when it comes to my modeling interests.

As for my own modeling progress, I've made a little headway this month, though I probably won't have a full article about it until next month. In the meantime, there's still plenty happening. As Andrew mentioned in his Superintendent's Corner article, it's time for those of us who will be hosting the November open houses to get our layouts in shape before visitors start to arrive. Uh oh—time to roll up the sleeves! My personal goal is to have my continuous running track fully ready to go before the first guests walk through the door.

To help keep me working down in the modeling room a bit longer, I added a new feature to the space. What's the addition, you ask? A television, of course! Yes, it's another distraction—haha—but at least it's the kind of distraction that keeps me in the room. I figure it will actually help me stay down there more consistently and, in the long run, lead to getting more done than I would otherwise. Plus, I enjoy putting on model railroad-related videos while I work, which always gives me a little extra motivation.

Looking ahead, I hope you'll share in my excitement for the coming months. There's a lot happening within the Carolina Southern Division, as well as throughout the surrounding area. For example, we've got an upcoming model railroad swap meet at the Newton Depot on November 1st. It should be a great event and a chance to connect with other hobbyists. While you're there, why not check out Wade's Train Town as well? It's always worth a visit!

Whatever you end up doing this October, I hope you make the most of it and enjoy your hobby to the fullest. Here's to progress, new distractions that somehow keep us focused, and the fun of sharing it all with others.

**Reminder! Signup for National Model Railroad Month layout visits [here!](#)**

## Division and Regional News

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### Wade's Train Town

#### Wade's Train Town – September Stats

Contributed by Ed Smith, MMR

**Open houses:** 4  
**Attendance:** 45  
**Volunteers:** Ed Smith (2), Chad Barnette, Tim Rust,  
Danny Poole

### The AP Report from the Plywood RR Desk

Contributed by Neal Anderson, MMR

This is a short intro to the AP Awards in Structures. To clear some doubt about wondering if you can ever get this AP, here's a new way of looking at it. First start with a kit from a box. Copy the parts from the kit to plastic or wood. That will give you two buildings to build.

Make notes on a piece of paper as you build on what you used for materials. You can take photos too. Add lots of details to both of the buildings. When you are done you will have one kit bashed building and the second one will be a scratch built building.

You can also build a bridge doing the same thing. If you do that you will have four structures built. Two that are scratch built and two that are kit bashed. Keeping this in mind, you would only have to build six structures. You will have a total of twelve Structures built. Only six need to get Merit awards. Just so you know that's what I'm doing now.

### 2025 CSD NMRA National Model Railroad Month Celebration

Contributed by Dave Thrams

Our second National Model Railroad Month celebration is a go and it will be another good one!! Eighteen layouts are scheduled to be open. Thank you to all the layout owners that

are opening your layout and homes to us. We had a great time last year, and I hear all the visitors were great, but I want to stress again to our visitors, the importance of respecting these layouts and homes we will be visiting.

The schedule is slightly different from last year. Our first open house Saturday is in October! October 25<sup>th</sup> will be the Northeast CLT area. This removes the weekend before Thanksgiving to not conflict with the holiday.

Layouts are open from 10am – 3pm, except on November 1<sup>st</sup>, the Cherryville Model RR Club will be open from 10 am – Noon and is annotated with \* on the schedule below.

**Registration begins October 1<sup>st</sup> and ends the Sunday before an open house.** To visit a layout, or many layouts, you need to register on the CSD website at [carolinasouthern.org](http://carolinasouthern.org). A day or two after registration ends, you'll receive the home addresses of the layouts and the layout owners will get a list with your name on it so they know who is visiting.

To help you plan your visits, see the layout list below and click on this link to take you to the CSD webpage at [CSD Member Layouts \(carolinasouthern.org\)](http://CSD Member Layouts (carolinasouthern.org)). This page shows CSD member layouts for us to view online anytime and not just for this event. Most of the layouts below are on the CSD website, but also, not all the layouts on the website are open for this event.

The registration page will list the open layouts and you can register for as many or as few you want to visit. Planning ahead seems crucial if you want to see multiple layouts in 5 hours. Thank goodness for GPS mapping!

**October 25: 10 am –3 pm Northeast CLT**

<u>Name</u>	<u>City</u>
Joe Skorch	Kannapolis
Andrew Stitt	New London
Marcus Neubacher	China Grove

**November 1 Hours: 10 am –3 pm (Southwest) Gaston County/West CLT area**

<u>Name</u>	<u>City</u>
Alan Hardee	Bessemer City
Dave Thrams	Stanley
Cherryville MRR Club* (10am -Noon)	Cherryville

**November 8: 10 am –3 pm Southeast CLT**

<u>Name</u>	<u>City</u>
Fred Miller	Charlotte
Dave Myers	Waxhaw

Dick Bronson	Waxhaw
Tim Rumph	Lancaster
Gordon Miller	Matthews
Chad Barnette	Fort Mill
Dylan Petro	Fort Mill

**November 15: 10 am –3 pm (Northwest) Hickory/Statesville**

<u>Name</u>	<u>City</u>
Seth Gartner	Charlotte
Neal Anderson	Statesville
Ed Smith	Taylorsville
Wades Train Town	Newton
John Short	Nebo

Have a great time visiting these layouts and their owners. Enjoy their efforts and please thank them for allowing us to view their labor of love.

## **Fun at the August CSD Monthly Meeting**

Contributed by Dave Thrans

Being involved in the Carolina Southern Division as an elected officer has been fun and challenging. Don't mis-understand, I have the easy job, I'm the Paymaster, I pay the bills this division has and we don't have many. So mostly I get to pay for the fun stuff we do. Someone, usually Andrew, our Superintendent, is the one looking for a place to hold our next monthly meeting. Sometimes we have to pay a fee to rent a meeting room for a few hours and I'm pretty sure Andrew negotiates as hard as he can because sometimes, we don't have to pay a fee. I have learned how challenging it can be to find a suitable place to hold a meeting, because I hear about the many places Andrew visits.

Each monthly meeting starts with the business session but Andrew has always had an informal modeling train related session after. He has held show-and-tell sessions, invited guest speakers, and even held meetings in far off places without a business session so we can do a train related activity together. If you get a chance, let him know how well he has done over the past several years.

For our August meeting, Joe Skorch volunteered to make his house and layout available for a meeting. Joe happens to have a basement large enough to host a meeting and then host two separate activities after the meeting. So in addition to hosting the meeting, he offered to



hold a class on scratch building turnouts using Fast Tracks turnout jigs. Ed Smith, MMR, and a couple other members volunteered to bring jigs and five modelers signed up to hand-build turnouts in Joe's basement that afternoon. I didn't participate in the turnout building portion but I think I also saw Neal Anderson, MMR, helping members build turnouts. Of course, Neal, our Achievement Program (AP) Chairman, talked to the turnout builders about doing paperwork to count this turnout towards an AP certificate. Neal even had some of the papers with him!

For the second activity, Joe opened his layout to the other members that were not building turnouts. Joe allowed me to be Dispatcher for the day so that a few members could run trains on his layout. For one of our members, this was his absolute first time running on a model railroad with switching operations in mind. For another operator, Neal had paperwork for him to get credit for the Chief Dispatcher AP certificate.

So, after Andrew conducted the business meeting, we broke out into our two sessions. Turnout building and operating Joe's layout. I think it was great fun for everyone who stayed after the business meeting.

I've included a few photos of the activities after the business meeting.



Before building turnouts using the Fast Tracks jigs, they watched some Fast Tracks videos on how to use the jigs and build turnouts.



Joe Skorch and Ed Smith, MMR, assisting the five members hand laying turnouts using the jigs.





Dylan Petro and Neal Andersom, MMR, (in forefront) spending some time together after lunch while the turnout builders getting back to the turnout building clinic.





Dick Bronson, Joe Pulsone, and Dylan Petro enjoy operating on Joe's layout. Joe uses JMRI to generate the switch lists for his layout operating sessions.



Joe Pulsone, Dylan Petro and Alan Hardee “working on the railroad”.

## Sign Making for The Uninitiated (me)

Contributed by Chad Barnette, Editor

On my journey to making better and more believable structures, I finally have arrived at the point where I need to push myself to make my own signs. To be clear, when I say make my own signs, I mostly mean to employ the tools at my disposal to design and make said signs. I am no calligrapher and my basic penmanship leaves a lot to be desired. So a printer it will be.

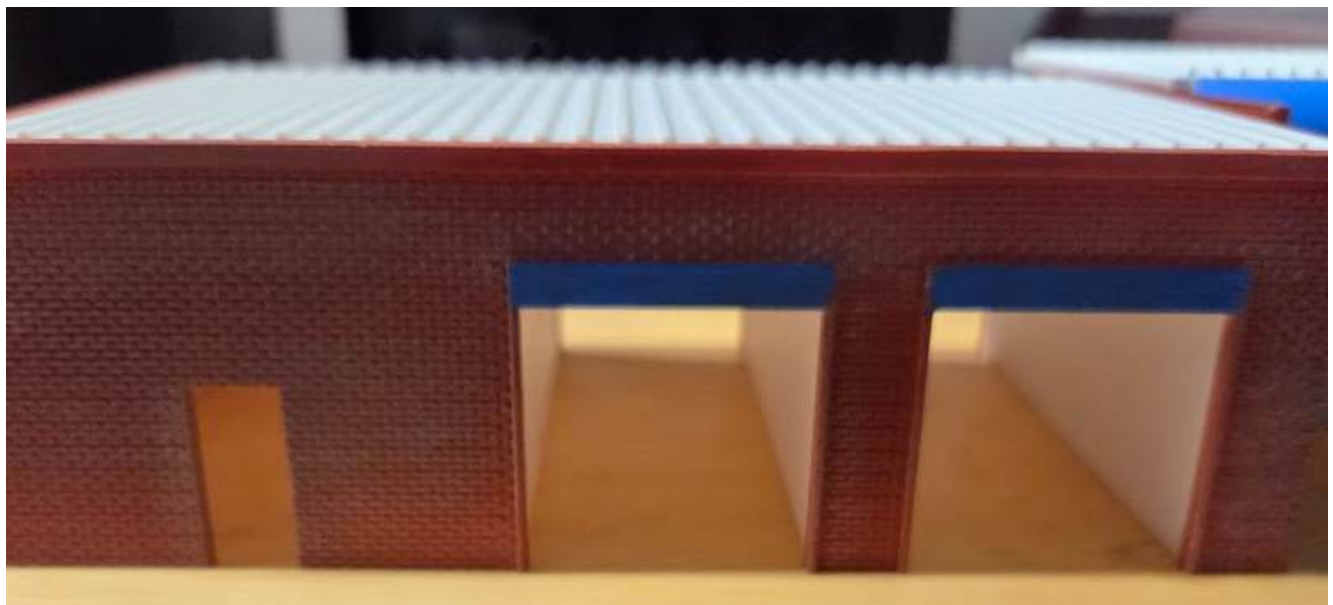
But first, let me familiarize you with the project at hand. It's kind of an interesting one - one I'm mostly glad I got into, but I'm also partly looking forward to completing it haha. Did you ever have any projects that fit that description? Here recently I find myself looking at the mostly completed structure thinking, “huh....it's missing a little something”. This structure in question is a car wash located on Broad Street in Mooresville, NC. The hometown of both my folks, I find myself gravitating towards Mooresville for inspiration on what to model next. Although there is no connection between my parents and this carwash, I just decided I liked



the looks of it and why not attempt to model it. Here is a quick photo of the part of the carwash I need a sign for.



The blue signs above the carwash are the ones I am working on at the moment. In my original design I made a “bump out” to accommodate the signage in my 3D design file. What I overlooked here is the proper size of the sign - I think I just made a quick spur of the minute decision when I was designing the entrances to the bay that was just way too shy of the height needed for the lettering. Here's what it looked like:



Since there is an existing bump out I decided to add a piece that would hang on to the existing piece - in essence the bump out would act as a cleat that would perfectly position the new piece. The other purpose for this additional piece is that I would be able to paint the piece separately, giving me extremely clean paint lines that I (and I would venture to say a lot of us) can not achieve just trying to paint the “built-in” bump out. I’m letting this be a lesson learned for me because the whole reason I make windows separately is because I want them painted on their own. Here is a look at the new piece.

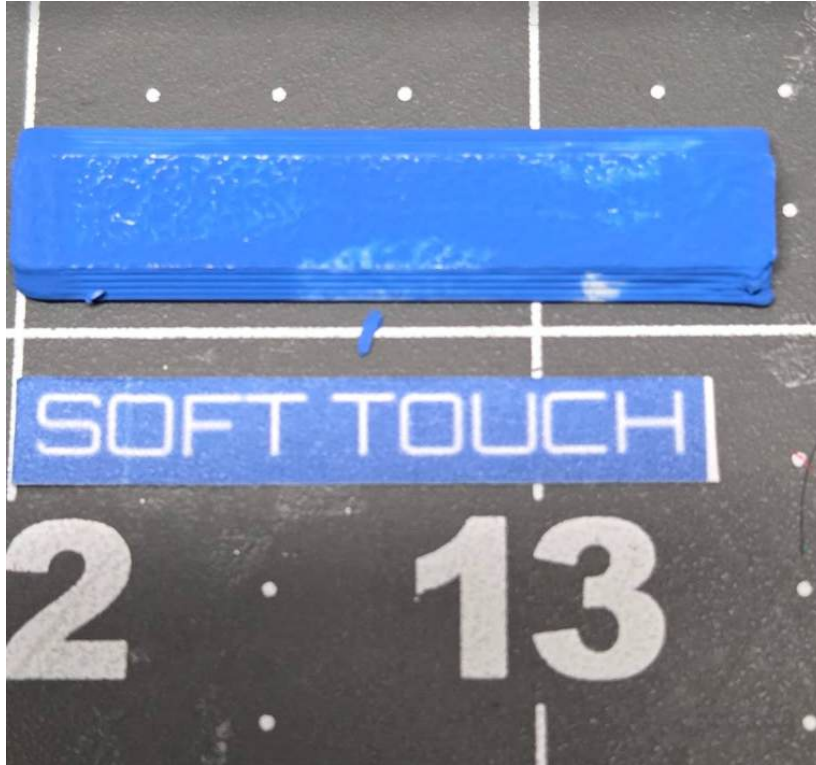


Now it was time to make the sign on my computer. Nothing too fancy - I would simply make a rectangle with the appropriate aspect ratio. I would try to match the color blue that I have already selected to paint with versus trying to match the blue in the picture digitally. I was pleased to find a program called Photopea that is fully online, has one little ad on the side, has most of the features of Photoshop, but is 100% free. Sold! After a little bit of finagling with the program, and a few questions on Google on how to do X, Y, and Z, I came up with the file I needed.

Now it's time to print. If you may be wondering about what I'm about to print this on I'll cut to the chase. I'm just going to use regular printer paper in this case - remember me being uninitiated and all? I do have some waterslide decal paper in my Amazon shopping cart as I have another sign that will require a transparent background. For now, regular paper it is. I print the file to the correct size, as confirmed by a quick caliper measurement. You can see



here the relative size of the bump out and the printed sign. Pictured is an earlier piece that has yet to be painted a second time.



Unfortunately I do not have pictures of the nicer version I did, but I have the final picture of what the carwash looks like with its sign hanging up.



For a first timer I feel pretty good about how this turned out. Although not perfect, I feel confident with some repetition I can get to where I want to be. I rather enjoyed this process after all was said and done. How about you? What signs could your structures benefit from?



# MODEL TRAIN SWAP MEET & EXHIBITION

BUY • SELL • TRADE • EXPLORE

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2025**

**10:00 AM—3:00 PM**

(Rain Date: Saturday, November 8, 2025)

**FREE ADMISSION!**

Model Trains (HO, N, O, G & more), Track, Scenery & Accessories

Explore the Newton Depot campus including museum, pavilion, & Model Railroad Center

#### SELLER INFO (Outside Location)

Space for 40 sellers

- This is an outdoor event in the parking lot and on the brick plaza.
- One 10' x 10' space allotted per seller at no cost.
- Sellers will need to bring their table(s) & chairs & may put up a 10 x 10 tent. **Must weight tent legs OR USE YOUR TRUNK**
- \*Email AJ to get a Seller Registration Form [ameadows@newtondepot.org](mailto:ameadows@newtondepot.org)

#### EXHIBITOR INFO (Inside Location)

Space for 20 exhibitors

- Each exhibitor will be allotted a 4 ft space to showcase a model train/module/small layout at no cost. (No sales in inside Exhibition Hall)
- Tables and chairs will be provided
- \*Email AJ to get an Exhibitor Registration Form [ameadows@newtondepot.org](mailto:ameadows@newtondepot.org)
- **\*Both registration forms also available at the Gift Shop in the Newton Depot Model Railroad Center**

THE NEWTON DEPOT

HOME OF THE SOUTHEASTERN NARROW GAUGE & SHORTLINE MUSEUM

1123 NORTH MAIN AVENUE, NEWTON, NC 28658

## Help Wanted

Contributed by Andrew Stitt, Superintendant

**CSD Program Chair** – The Division needs someone to take on the responsibility of arranging for programs to be scheduled and presented at Division meetings. This can be accomplished by doing the presentation themselves, getting a commitment from someone else to make the presentation, or arrange for presentations to be conducted remotely (via Zoom). When the presentation has been established, the who, what, when, where needs to be sent to the editor of the Brass Pounder and the webmaster prior to the meeting so they let the members know about the upcoming program.

**RMU Chair** – The Division conducts Railroad Model University (RMU) annually to provide all model railroaders within our area the opportunity to attend a day-long event featuring clinics on a wide range of model railroad topics. The chair is responsible for recruiting member and non member clinician presenters as well as setting the schedule for these presentations. The chair also coordinates with other Division members to enable them to secure a location for the event, schedule and promote the event, and assist with any registration or A/V issues.

Please contact me ([superintendent@carolinasouthern.org](mailto:superintendent@carolinasouthern.org)) if you have any questions or would like to volunteer.

**MER Business Manager** – Works with both the leadership team of the MER and the NMRA national office in Soddy Daisy to develop and distribute membership rosters to the various Divisions throughout the MER. Other duties as assigned.

Please contact Gary Brown ([vp@mer-nmra.com](mailto:vp@mer-nmra.com)) if you are interested and want to have more information.

**MER Editor for the Local** – Maintains and publishes the MER newsletter. The editor also assists those desiring to have their work published in the newsletter.

Please contact Greg Warth ([local-editor@mer-nmra.com](mailto:local-editor@mer-nmra.com)) if you are interested and would like to more have information.



# Ghost Train

Contributed by Andrew Stitt, Superintendent

When the train encounters a web in a tunnel this is what happens. A ghostly reminder to enjoy your layout during this spooky time of year!





# CSD Annual Picnic

Contributed by Andrew Stitt, Superintendent

The Carolina Southern Division recently held its annual picnic as planned. Several of the members who intended to attend were not able due to illness or unexpected family matters. So there was plenty of food for those who were able to attend. Future plans for the Division for the remainder of 2025 were discussed including plans for the meeting in October and home layout tours later that month. Much thanks to Joe Skorch and Alan Hardee for their efforts in providing the hamburgers and hot dogs!





***The Neuse River Valley Model Railroad Club***  
**41<sup>st</sup> Annual**  
**RALEIGH FALL TRAIN SHOW**

**November 8 - 9, 2025**

**Saturday 9 am – 5 pm**

**Sunday 10 am – 4 pm**

**Jim Graham Building**  
**NC State Fairgrounds**

**4285 Trinity Road, Raleigh, NC 27607**

**One of the largest train shows in the Southeast**

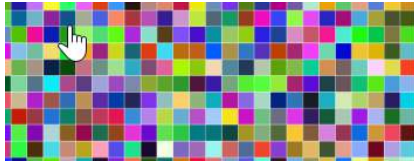
- ◆ **480+ vendor tables and model train memorabilia**
- ◆ **16 operating layouts G to Z, Lego, Thomas the Tank**
- ◆ **Craftsman's Showcase - Displays & Judging of craftsman built engines, rolling stock & structures**

**Admission: \$10 at the door covers both days**  
**Children 12 and under free with adult**



**[www.nrvclub.net](http://www.nrvclub.net)**  
**[NRV.Shows@gmail.com](mailto:NRV.Shows@gmail.com)**





## Digital Distractions

Following last month's feature on Liberty Farms Railway, I stumbled on the Mill Brook Railroad. Here's the description from their Youtube channel.

The Mill Brook Railroad is a 7-1/4" gauge freight hauler in Vermont. Follow along with the ups and downs of this cold climate minimal gauge railroad. Along the way, we'll visit other miniature railroads and do a lot of track maintenance.



Check out their channel [here](#)!

### Division Brass

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