

**NMRA**



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## **THE BRASS POUNDER**

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

### **Superintendent's Corner**

By Chad Barnette

**Division Coming  
Events**

**No meeting this month**

**Enjoy your June!**

Hey everybody. Happy June - we're heading into the hot summer months. Hopefully that means our projects are heating up and getting checked off one by one. Personally I've recently made some progress on trackwork on my HO layout that I'm pleased to have going again. What about you?

We had a great time setting up shop (ha!) at the Historic Spencer Shops Train Show in May. The show did not disappoint and there were tons of items to purchase, layouts to view, speeders to ride in, and food to eat. Thanks to our volunteers for manning the table and representing our division so well, I really appreciate it,

For this month we were planning to have a clinic on switch building hosted by Joe Skorch, but that has been moved to a future month, date to-be-announced. We will take the month off for June and enjoy getting ramped up for summertime.

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# Editor's Notes

By Chad Barnette

Lately I've been intrigued to learn more about the Brightline West project. It will be the first rail line in the United States designed to meet true high-speed rail standards, with trains capable of reaching speeds of nearly 200 mph—not the 110–125 mph service that is often labeled as "high speed" in this country. The 218-mile all-electric route will connect Las Vegas with Southern California, primarily following the Interstate 15 corridor, and is expected to make the trip in just over two hours.

What fascinates me is the sheer scale of the project. The line will include stations in Las Vegas, Rancho Cucamonga, Apple Valley, and Hesperia, along with maintenance facilities and miles of new dedicated high-speed rail infrastructure. Construction officially broke ground in April 2024, and crews have already completed extensive surveying, geotechnical investigations, utility work, and route planning along the corridor. Major construction activities continue to expand across both Nevada and California as the project moves toward full buildout.

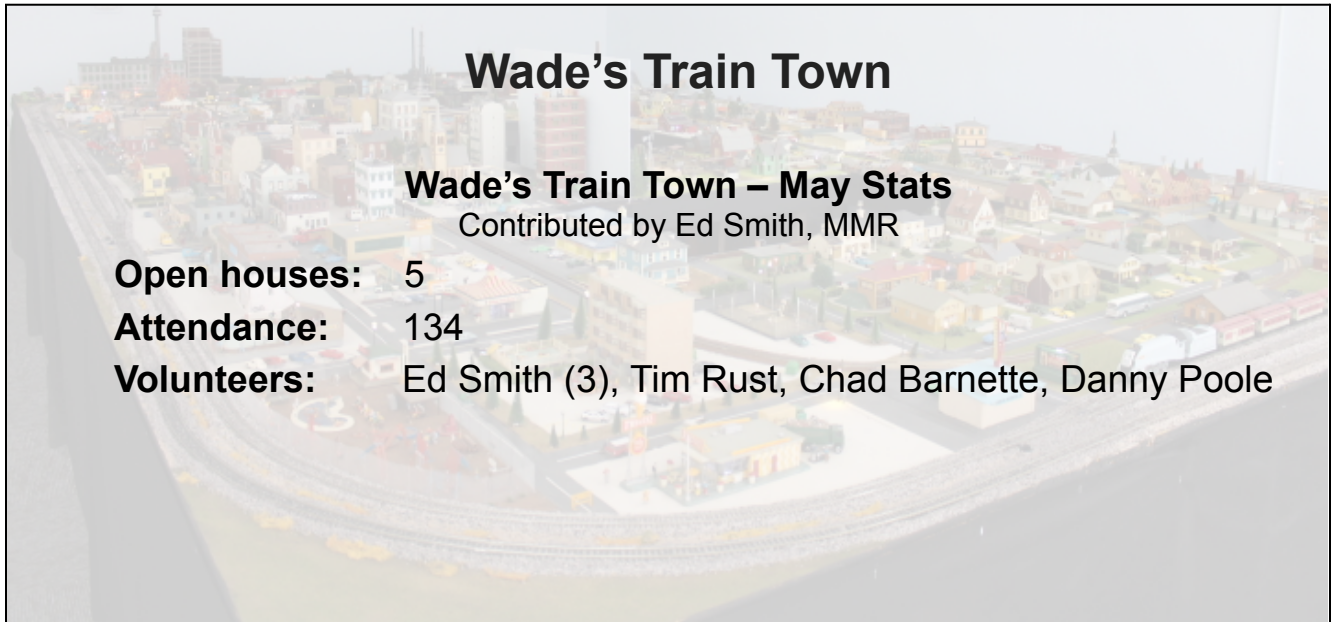
There are still challenges ahead, particularly rising construction costs and ongoing financing efforts, and the expected opening date has slipped to 2029. Even so, it is exciting to watch one of the most ambitious passenger rail projects in modern American history begin to take shape. For railroad enthusiasts, seeing actual high-speed rail infrastructure being built in the United States is something many of us have waited decades to witness.



Click the link to email me  
articles & ideas:

[editor@carolinasouthern.org](mailto:editor@carolinasouthern.org)

## Division and Regional News



### Wade's Train Town

#### Wade's Train Town – May Stats

Contributed by Ed Smith, MMR

**Open houses:** 5  
**Attendance:** 134  
**Volunteers:** Ed Smith (3), Tim Rust, Chad Barnette, Danny Poole

## AP Updates from the Plywood RR Desk

Contributed by Neal Anderson, MMR



### June Rail Movements

Dave Chance was handed his Merit award at the NCTM.

Dick Bronson's paperwork on Chief Dispatcher has been turned into the MER.

Jim Thomas paperwork on Chief Dispatcher has been turned into the MER.

Richard Shulby Took the class on Chief Dispatcher and needs to fill out the SOQ.

If you need more help just contact me.

Dylan Petro received his Merit Award for his Scenery at the NCTM. Sent his AP to the MER.

P.S. I have been working with the WTVI PBS crew at the house on running trains at the

KK&L Railroad.

## **Historic Spencer Shops Train Show 2026**

Contributed by Chad Barnette

Members of the Carolina Southern Division were proud to represent the division at the Historic Spencer Shops Train Show held May 16–17, 2026, at the North Carolina Transportation Museum in Spencer, North Carolina. Located approximately one hour east of Newton, the museum provided an outstanding setting for one of the region's premier railroad events.

The Carolina Southern Division staffed an information table throughout the weekend, sharing information about the division, the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA), and the many opportunities available to model railroad enthusiasts throughout the Carolinas. The display allowed visitors to learn more about local activities, clinics, operating sessions, contests, and fellowship opportunities available through the division.

The two-day event offered something for railroad fans of all ages. Visitors enjoyed dozens of model train and railroad collectible vendors, operating model railroad layouts in multiple scales, museum exhibits featuring historic locomotives and railroad equipment, passenger train rides around the museum's 60-acre site, and railroad motor car rides provided by the Red Springs & Northern organization.

The Historic Spencer Shops Train Show is especially fitting because it is held on the grounds of the former Southern Railway Spencer Shops, one of the most important railroad repair facilities in the southeastern United States. Construction of the shops began in 1896 and the complex quickly became a major maintenance and overhaul center for Southern Railway locomotives and rolling stock. Named after Southern Railway president Samuel Spencer, the facility employed thousands of workers during its peak years and played a vital role in rail transportation throughout the region.

As railroads transitioned from steam to diesel power, the need for the massive repair complex gradually declined. The shops were eventually closed in the late 1970s, but the site was preserved and transformed into what is now the North Carolina Transportation Museum. Today, visitors can still explore the historic roundhouse, turntable, and many original shop buildings while learning about North Carolina's rich transportation heritage.

The Carolina Southern Division appreciates everyone who stopped by our table during the show. Events such as the Historic Spencer Shops Train Show provide an excellent opportunity to introduce new people to the hobby and to share the benefits of NMRA membership with model railroaders across the region.

## **Help (Still) Wanted**

Contributed by Chad Barnette

**CSD Program Chair** – Responsible for arranging programs for Division meetings. This may include presenting a program, recruiting a presenter, or coordinating a remote (Zoom) presentation. Once confirmed, program details (who, what, when, and where) must be provided to the *Brass Pounder* editor and webmaster so members can be notified before the meeting.

**RMU Chair** – Oversees the Division’s annual Railroad Model University (RMU), a day-long clinic event for model railroaders. Responsibilities include recruiting presenters, creating the clinic schedule, coordinating the venue, promoting the event, and assisting with registration and A/V needs.

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

## Time for a Layout Expansion

Contributed by Joe Skorch

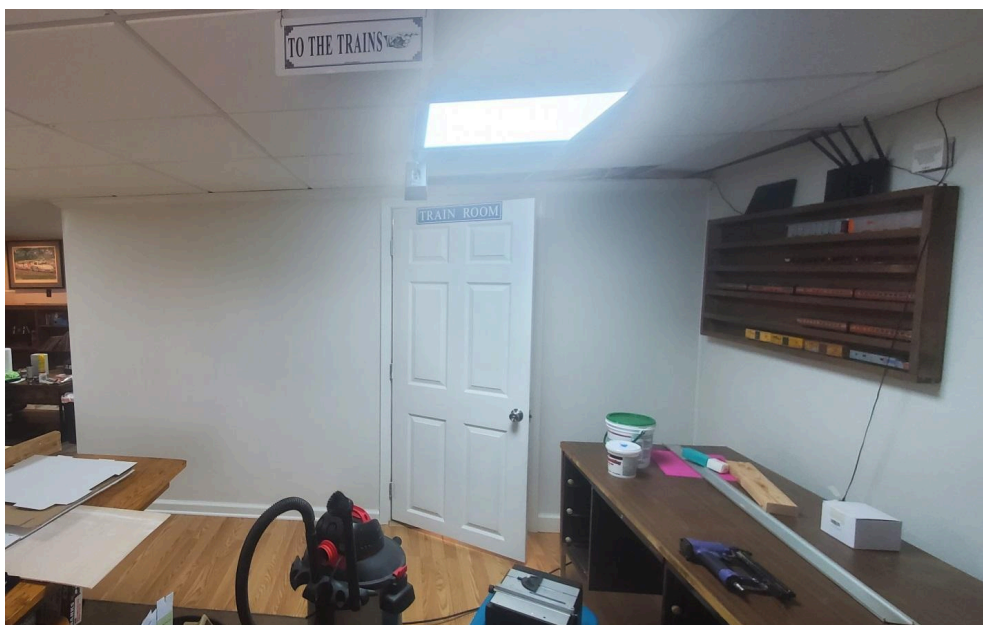
After a lot of consideration about layout expansion I finally decided to do it. Things to consider were how and where. I have been hosting weekday operations for several years and thanks to JMRI no two sessions were ever alike. There was always one problem with the layout and that was congestion in one area of the layout stemming from one major town above another one. I had tried many different methods to ease the congestion from timetable manipulation to elimination of through trains, but the end result always wound up being the same.



**Example of Congestion in Guadalupe with Watsonville overhead.**

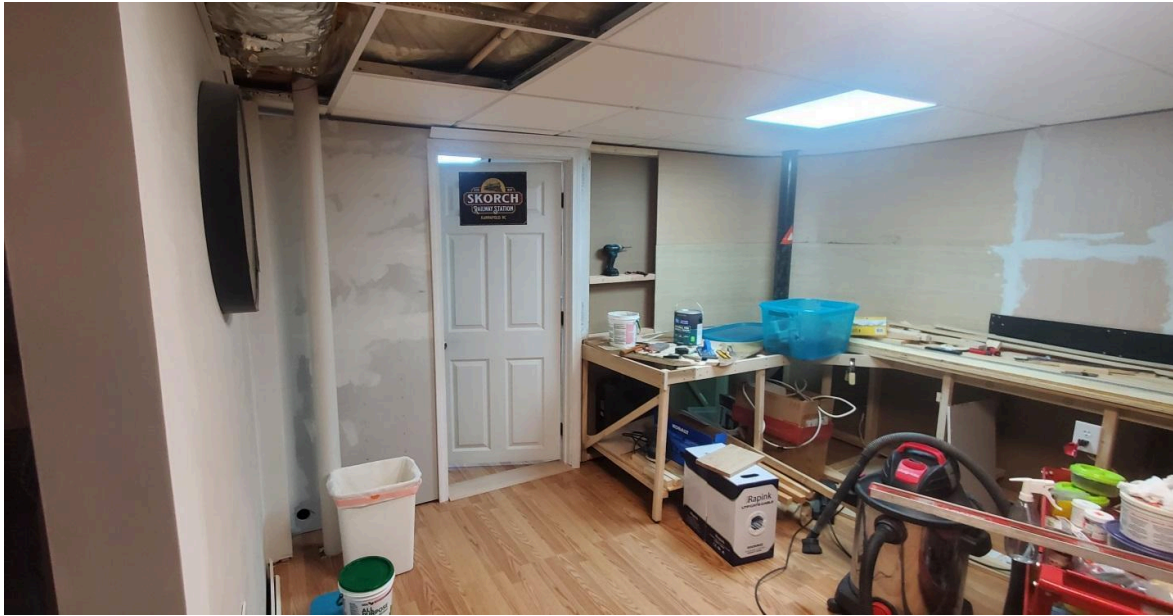
After months of thought and with a not so gentle prodding by the operating crew a decision was made to expand into the unused part of the basement. The major obstacle was the curiosity of cats and how to keep them out. The only viable solution was to build another room connecting to the existing room. I wanted it to feel like an extension of the existing room but still have a suitable space for the crew to relax. I also wanted to remove the stub yards and have a through staging area along with being able to run passenger service using the stations already in place plus the addition of one as a final destination.

The demolition is taking longer than I anticipated but it is okay as there is no rush and I keep changing my plans as I see how this room is laying out. I have tried to use my Anyrail program but it really is too soon to come up with anything definitive. I have decided to plod along finishing the room and then I will start laying a plan out on the floor.



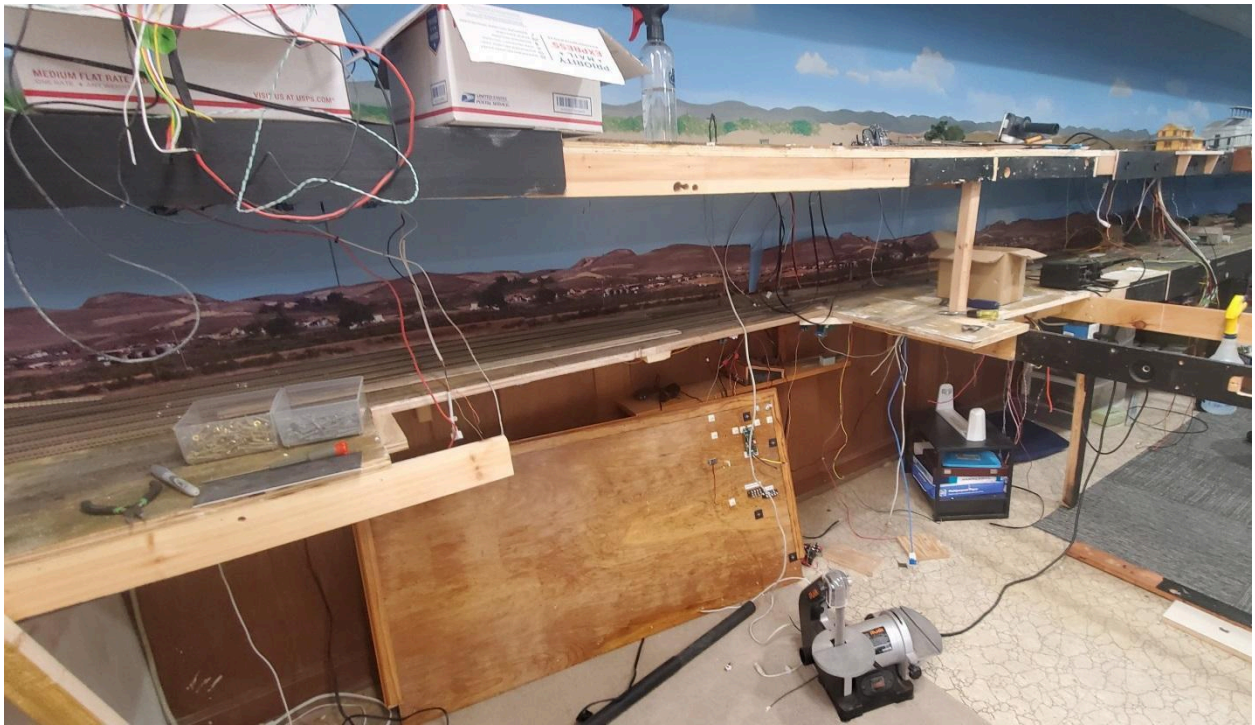
The new room from looking from the basement entrance

I also need to decide on whether to wrap around the corner or tunnel through the wall, in typical Southern Pacific fashion. I know what they did. I guess that will wait until I start laying it out on the floor so I can see the options in real time.

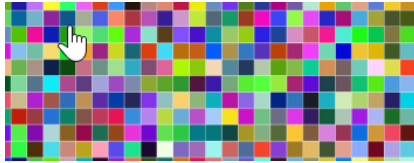


### Getting ready for interior paint

I have started removing the track and sub roadbed which reminds me of one of those California disaster movies.



More to come as progress continues.



## Digital Distractions

The Model Railroad Show. The name sounds so ubiquitous, it's surprising we didn't have a show with this name yet. But alas here it is. Their page description reads:

Welcome to The Model Railroad Show your destination for everything model railroading! Whether you're into N scale, HO scale, or anything in between, this channel is packed with layout tours, tips and tricks, DCC how-tos, scenery techniques, kitbashing tutorials, product reviews, and more



The Model Railroad Show

Check their page [here!](#)

### Division Brass

<b><u>Superintendent</u></b>	Chad Barnette	<a href="mailto:superintendent@carolinasouthern.org">superintendent@carolinasouthern.org</a>
<b><u>Asst. Superintendent</u></b>	Richard Shulby	<a href="mailto:assistsuper@carolinasouthern.org">assistsuper@carolinasouthern.org</a>
<b><u>Clerk</u></b>	David Myers	<a href="mailto:clerk@carolinasouthern.org">clerk@carolinasouthern.org</a>
<b><u>Paymaster</u></b>	Tim Rumph	<a href="mailto:Paymaster@carolinasouthern.org">Paymaster@carolinasouthern.org</a>
<b><u>Director 2028</u></b>	Alan Hardee	<a href="mailto:director1@carolinasouthern.org">director1@carolinasouthern.org</a>
<b><u>Director 2029</u></b>	Joe Skorch	<a href="mailto:director2@carolinasouthern.org">director2@carolinasouthern.org</a>
<b><u>Director 2027</u></b>	Ed Smith, MMR	<a href="mailto:director3@carolinasouthern.org">director3@carolinasouthern.org</a>
<b><u>AP Chairman</u></b>	Neal Anderson, MMR	<a href="mailto:Apchair@carolinasouthern.org">Apchair@carolinasouthern.org</a>
<b><u>Webmaster</u></b>	Joe Skorch	<a href="mailto:Webmaster@carolinasouthern.org">Webmaster@carolinasouthern.org</a>
<b><u>Newsletter Editor</u></b>	Chad Barnette	<a href="mailto:editor@carolinasouthern.org">editor@carolinasouthern.org</a>
<b><u>Program Chair</u></b>	Still Looking!	<a href="mailto:program@carolinasouthern.org">program@carolinasouthern.org</a>
<b><u>RMU Chair</u></b>	Alan Hardee	<a href="mailto:RMUchair@carolinasouthern.org">RMUchair@carolinasouthern.org</a>