



The Yardmaster

Southwestern Michigan Division



January 2026
 Website: <https://div9.ncnmra.org>

Division Nine Mission Statement

Our mission is to foster a welcoming community for model railroad enthusiasts of all ages and skill levels. We strive to share knowledge, inspire creativity, and promote the enjoyment of model railroading through collaboration, education, and hands-on activities. Together, we celebrate the rich history and artistry of railroading while building lasting friendships and memories.

Non-Train Related Holidays & Special January 2026

Jan 1st New Years Day
 Jan 19th Martin Luther King Day



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Editor's Comments

Our new mission statement is now displayed above for your reference. Please review it thoroughly and share any feedback you may have.

WOW – the results from the donation matching program has far exceeded anything we could have imagined. Member contributions so far are approximately \$1,450, plus the matching on the first \$500 results in a total of \$1,950 to the Division Nine treasury. Thanks to everyone that contributed.

Board Meeting Update – there were several important decisions at the board meeting last night, which are highlighted on the next page. The minutes from this meeting will be published in the February edition.

"Blast from the Past" article this month, was written by Dave Vinci for the October 2020 Yardmaster Newsletter, focuses on Signs for the Layout.



Division 9 Board Members

Position	Board Member	Email address
Superintendent	Garry Johnson	elecsprk@gmail.com
Assistant Superintendent	Open	
Paymaster	Bob Lawrence	robertlawrence44@msn.com
Scribe	Greg Marvin	grmarvin@comcast.net
Newsletter Editor	Alan Bau	alanwbau@gmail.com
Website Manager	Tony Vacha	CKRHandler@aol.com
Trustee	Doug Van Meter	vanmeterda@gmail.com



Upcoming Division Nine Membership Meetings & Events:

Meetings & Events	Date	Location	Presenter & Topic
Membership Meeting & Christmas Party	January 17 th	Kalamazoo Bridge Club	Mark Tomlonson – RPO Cars & Railroad Post Office Operations
Membership Meeting	February 21 st	Kalamazoo Bridge Club	Modeling Challenge & Skip Luyk
Membership Meeting	March 21 st	Kalamazoo Bridge Club	Rich Mahaney – TBD
TBD	April 18 th		
TBD	May 16 th		
TBD	June 20 th		
TBD	July 18 th	Local Layout Tours – Tentative	
TBD	August 21 st	Family Picnic - Tentative	
Annual Meeting	September 19 th	Kalamazoo Bridge Club	
TBD	October 17 th		
TBD	November 21 st		

January Board Actions. The January Newsletter was delayed a few days in order to include any major decisions from the board during the January 4th board meeting. There were several decisions listed below that impact all of our members.

- To encourage participation in the February Modeling Challenge, the board approved giving \$10 Gift Cards to each member that submits an entry to help cover modeling costs.
- The board approved increasing the number of door prizes for the Christmas Party to be held during the January Membership Meeting.
- A decision was made to temporarily suspend on-line viewing of membership meetings, until such time as interest indicates there is a need.
- After a review of the upcoming board and membership meeting dates the following changes are being made, effective in 2026.
 - **Board Meeting Date Changes**
 - April meeting is changed from April 5th to Sunday April 12th to avoid a conflict with the Easter Holiday.
 - July meeting was scheduled for July 5th but is being changed to July 12th to avoid a conflict with the July 4th holiday weekend.
 - **Membership Meeting Changes**
 - Discussion was also brought up about cancelling December meeting. We could hold a holiday meeting/party in either November or January. It was decided that December was just too busy of a month to squeeze in an event meeting.
 - We would like to extend our meeting schedule to include July and August. July could be layout tours, August a family picnic event or vice versa. This schedule would allow us to keep in touch with everyone for an 11-month period with just missing December. The board is in favor of this.
 - The board decided to no longer meet in December as it is a very busy month and suitable meeting locations are difficult to find.
 - Meetings will be held in July & August. We are considering reserving one of these months for Local Area Train Layouts and the other month for a Family Picnic.
- **New Recruiting Program**

General discussion was held about gaining new members. We talked about the national level goals and what we could do within our division. It was discussed that we would contact potential members with an invitation to join our meetings, if they were interested in joining our group and the NMRA, we would purchase a RAILPASS membership for them. The cost is only \$19.95 each and would be good for nine months.

All Membership meetings held at the Kalamazoo Bridge Club start at 9:30AM, but coffee & donuts are available at 9:00AM.



Remember all board meetings start at 7:00 PM. Location varies between board member houses in April, July & October and the Kalamazoo Bridge Club in January.



**The link to the Train Show List is displayed below:
[The Train Show List - Hobby and Train Event Clearinghouse](#)**



NMRA Rail Pass

Want to "test drive" the NMRA for a little while?

Sign up for our [9-month Rail Pass trial membership](#) for only \$19.95! This Includes 9 months of the *Digital NMRA Magazine*.

The Rail Pass offer is good in the U.S. only and is for new members and those who have not been NMRA members for two years or more. Individuals can join at the Rail Pass rate only once. Rail Pass members can attend conventions and participate in contests, but cannot hold office or vote in NMRA events. Membership will renew at the regular membership rate.

A recent decision by the Division Nine Board offers to pay the \$19.95 for new members.

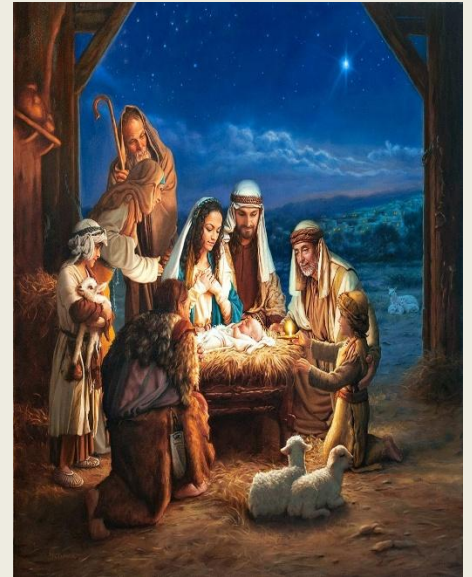


Achievement Program

Do you have any interest in the NMRA-NCR Achievement Program. If you want more information or have any specific questions, contact our Division 9 Achievement Program Coordinator - Dorman Wilson N8YNW@Charter.net.

Merry Belated Christmas

We are having our first annual Christmas Party during our January Membership Meeting, **spouses invited**, on **January 17th** at the Kalamazoo Bridge Club.



Kindly let us know if you'll be attending by **January 10th** to help us plan how many Gift Bags to prepare. You're welcome to bring along a dessert or appetizer to share with everyone.



Gift Bags for everyone!!!!



Door Prizes & 50/50 Raffle

Meeting Agenda

Donuts, Coffee & Other Treats	9:00 AM
Brief Business Meeting	9:30 AM
Games & 50/50 Raffle	9:45 AM
Guest Speaker – Mark Tomlonson	10:15 AM
Open Forum	11:15 AM

WOW

Donation Matching Program \$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$

AMAZING

An anonymous donor has generously offered to match contributions from our members, dollar for dollar, up to a maximum of \$500. Funds raised through this initiative will enable the organization to pursue several enhancements, including:

- Recruiting additional members
- Encouraging greater participation in group activities such as Christmas parties, family picnics, and other special events
- Introducing incentive programs for events like the Re-Purpose Modeling Challenge
- Upgrading audio/visual equipment
- And more



As this opportunity may not be repeated, we encourage all members to support this matching program. Timely donations will help us maximize the benefit of this generous offer, and every contribution is impactful. Thank you for your continued support.

If you would like to make a donation or pledge, please submit it to our Paymaster, Bob Lawrence, at any upcoming meeting, or mail a check directly to him.

Current Status of Donations and Pledges

Month	Donations & Pledges	Total To-Date
Oct	\$50	\$50
Nov	\$50	\$100
Dec	\$1,350	\$1,450



Modeling Challenge Updates

Time is running out!

Division 9 Is Hosting A Modeling Challenge For Its Members!

February 21, 2026 is approaching fast. Now is the time for everyone to get their models completed and ready to display at our first ever "Division 9 Modeling Challenge". **At the January Board Meeting, the Board decided to offer a \$10 incentive to each person who submits an entry, as a way to help cover supply costs and related expenses.**

Modeling Challenge Incentive Program

To provide a little incentive for members to participate in the Division Nine Modeling Challenge, everyone that enters a display will have their name entered into a drawing. At the end of the day one name will be drawn with the winner receiving a **\$50.00** Gift Certificate for Hobby Recycling in Grand Rapids.

Remember to be eligible to win the \$50 Gift Certificate, all you need to do is submit an entry for the modeling challenge.

The date for the Modeling Challenge has been set for the Membership Meeting scheduled for February 21, 2026.

This modeling challenge is very simple. Select a model railroad car or cars from your collection (or purchase cars at a future train sale or by some other method) so that you can create a scene with it, in its new use and life.

This can be a railroad car in any scale and any type of railroad car. The key part of the modeling challenge is the railroad car is now being used in a different use, as compared to its original purchased use.

It should be built on a display that is one foot by one foot up to two feet by two feet. Foam or wood or something else is your choice for the display base.

There are no rules for this modeling challenge, only recommendations.

1. Base size for the display, so it can be shown at a Division 9 meeting at the Kalamazoo Bridge Club.
 - 2, Any scale of railroad car can be used. More than one railroad car can be used in the display.
 3. The railroad car(s) in the display are in a new use as to what it was originally purchased for.
 4. Type of railroad car chosen, can be any type. Caboose, open hopper, covered hopper, box car, refrigerator car, passenger car, flat car, stock car, intermodal well car, engine (steam or diesel), tank car (low pressure or high pressure or cryogenic), as examples.
 5. Photos of examples - real railroad car examples and model railroad cars examples will be in the Division 9 newsletters through December 2025.
 6. Be creative and use your imagination! Nothing is unacceptable!
 7. Electrical lighting and electricity can be used in the display.
 8. You can enter more than one display in the challenge.
 9. There will be no judging of the displays, just the sound of "oohs and aaahs" when people look at the displays!
 10. Maybe you can find a permanent home or place on your layout for your car(s) on your layout to get more use out of your display ideas.
 11. Again, have fun! Be creative, use your imagination! If you look around in the real world, railroad cars are found in all kinds of "second uses or lives".
- Watch for further announcements as to exhibition dates. Examples of 2nd use lives appear on the next few pages.

Thanks for participating! Rich Mahaney

The June and July/August, & November Yardmaster issues contain ideas that may be useful for consideration.

Layout of the Month – Greg Stonerock

Layout Photos – provided by Greg Stonerock

The photos on the next few pages are from Greg Stonerock’s layout. It is our goal to include photos from members’ layouts in future editions. If you want to include photos from your layout, please send them along with a short narrative to Alan Bau at alanwbau@gmail.com.

Comments about Greg’s Layout.

The fence I scratch built for the Sunrise Feed Mill. I used hardware cloth for the chain link part.

The next project recently finished is a “Jason Jensen trains structure. “Millers Tools”. It was a limited-edition kit. Mine was number 26 of 180. It was the 1st kit of his I did but won’t be the last as it was a lot of fun putting it together.

Greg Stonerock

Sun Rise Mill



Miller Tools – Jason Jensen Limited Edition Kit













**NORTH CENTRAL REGION, DIVISION 4
Grand Rails 2026
3-day convention**

Open to ALL model railroaders! You do NOT have to be An NMRA member to attend!

BASIC NMRA MEMBER REGISTRATION (PRIOR TO SEPT 1, 2026)	\$60.00
BASIC NON NMRA REGISTRATION (PRIOR TO SEPT 1, 2026)	\$80.00
YOUTH RATE (17 AND UNDER W/PARENT OR GUARDIAN)	\$5.00
YOUTH 18-25	\$20.00

There will be layout tours, railroad operating sessions, clinics, railroad displays, and more!

**OCTOBER 8-9-10, 2026
HOWARD MILLER COMMUNITY CENTER
14 SOUTH CHURCH STREET
ZEELAND, MI 49464**

CHECK THE DIVISION 4 WEBSITE FOR UPDATES AND REGISTRATION INFORMATION

www.grandrailsdiv4.com

Save the dates AND come join us for some great days of model railroading, learning and fun!

**Sponsored by
NMRA, NORTH CENTRAL REGION**



The New York Central is coming to Kalamazoo

The New York Central Railroad System Historical Society is hosting their 2026 annual convention in Kalamazoo, MI between May 14 and 17, 2026. The headquarters hotel is the Marriott Delta Hotel on the west side of Kalamazoo, just off US 131. Besides the standard activities of a railroad convention, they are planning a train ride from Pleasant Lake, IN to Coldwater, MI on Saturday May 16th. They are allowing non-NYCSHS people to register and sign up for the convention train ride and lunch to help increase the attendance at the convention and to help fill the train. More information, registration and pricing will be available at the NYCSHS website.

For more information click on the links below:

[**New York Central System Historical Society**](#)

[**NYCSHS 2026 Annual | NYCS Historical Society**](#)

The following note sent to Rich Mahaney provides more up-to-date information affecting non-members.

Rich, the NYCSHS Board has removed the requirement to be a Society member to attend the convention. Please advise your members.

Our present thinking is to bus riders from Kalamazoo to Pleasant Lake, board there and ride up to Hillsdale for lunch at the brewing company. We'd still appreciate your review if convenient.

Thanks

Alex Schneider President

For Sale Items



Do you have an excess inventory of cars, supplies, etc. which are just taking up space and most likely will never be used? You can list these items here and try to sell them, so you can buy more train stuff.

To list your for-sale items here, send your list of items along with a picture if one is available, a description of your item(s) along with your asking price and contact information. Send your information to alanwbau@gmail.com.

The items on pages 16-19 are offered by Greg Marvin



This locomotive new in the original box, never been opened. Asking Price is \$75

The Legendary E8/9

Among the most noteworthy locomotives of the post-war era, perhaps the most popular is the EMD E8/E9. Manufactured from 1949 to 1963 and designed primarily for high speed passenger service, these engines have been called "the standard bearer of America's passenger trains."

Lilo-Like's PROTO 2000 series has captured the beauty and elegance of these locomotives with exceptional prototypical fidelity. Take a good look at her model and note such features as: authentic passenger or freight style pilot; standard EMD horizontal grill or vertical Fair Air grill; one or two steam generators; and single or dual headlights.

Like its prototype, the PROTO 2000 model is a uniquely powerful performer and features the Guinness World record-breaking motor powered by Lilo-Like in 1980. Another example of the engineering excellence which distinguishes this locomotive is spring set wheel trucks, an innovative new feature which enhances all wheel traction and electrical pick up.

The PROTO 2000 E8/E9 will include powered A units with two members each of the following roads: Atlantic Coast Line; Chicago, Burlington & Quincy; Delaware, Lackawanna & Western; Erie; Florida East Coast; Illinois Central; Kansas City Southern; Louisville & Nashville; Milwaukee Road; Missouri Pacific; New York Central; Pennsylvania; Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac; Rock Island; Santa Fe; St. Louis-San Francisco; Southern; Southern Pacific; Union Pacific; and Wabash. EMD Demonstrator and Underwood will also be offered.

Detailed Accuracy:
Working flagstaff. Windshield opens. See-dots surge and screening on whitestones. Batches. Photo-etched stainless steel side grills. See-dots (on grills with visible blades). Operating Mars light, where applicable.

Exceptional Performance:
DC motor with superior anastropic magnets. 5-pole skew wrotal stator with low amp draw. Heavy cast-iron chassis for maximum traction effort. Spring action trucks with enhanced 12-wheel electrical pick up. Steered heavy offset bearings. Dual machined flywheels. Frame mounted universal coupler pockets.

Outstanding Realism:
Detailed valv interior with crew. Each model accurately replicates a specific prototype unit. Laser-printed panel schemes and decoration. Working doors. Over 170 detail parts.

NEW IN BOX
NEVER OPENED
\$75.00

Any interest in the items on this page and the next two pages , make an offer!

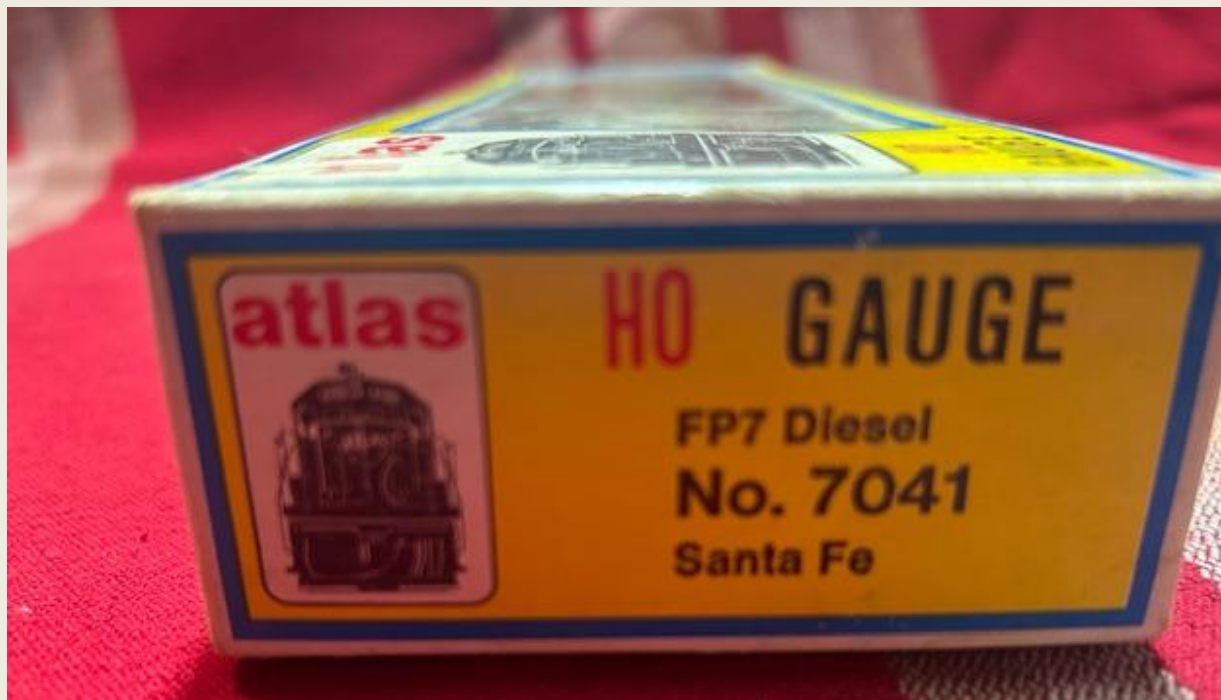
I have a whole set of B&O passenger cars.

The Mantua and Atlas engines are basically new old stock-never used.
Thanks again.

Greg Marvin, Sr.







Convenient Store with Gas Pumps & Car Wash



The item pictured here is offered by Greg Stonerock.

It is the Walther's Cornerstone Convenient Store", with Double gas station pumps (one for cars and one taller for Semi-Trucks) along with a car wash. New kit sells for \$79. Greg is asking \$20.

If you would like to buy these items contact Greg at 269-364-4090.

The following items on this and the next page are offered for sale by Dave Landis from Division 2.

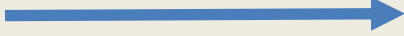
Contact Information

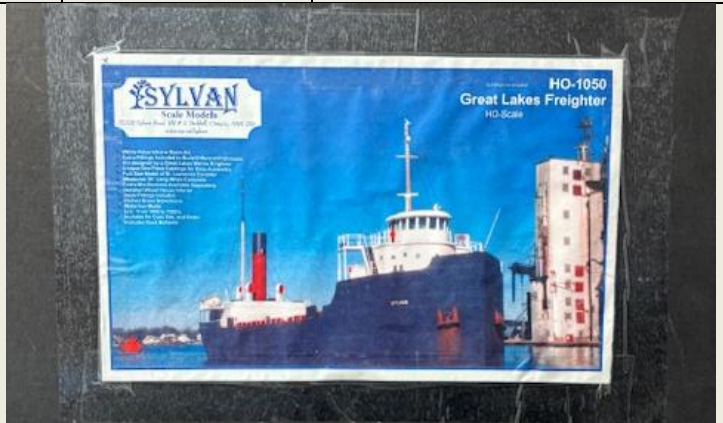
Dave Landis
anydaysailor@hotmail.com
 810-845-4959
 2959 Crown Pointe Dr
 Traverse City Mi
 49685


Prices and shipping costs may be negotiable and buying multiple items may also result in lowering prices.

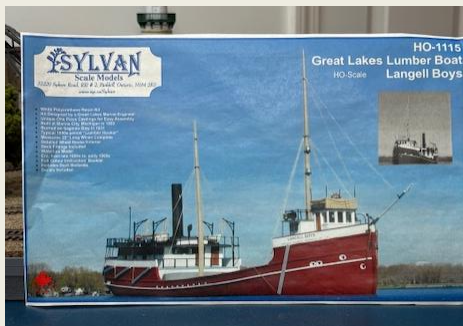
Current Price	Kit Desc.	Kit Number	Manufacturer	Walther's Catalog/Internet Price
\$100	Ore Dock	933-3065	Walthers	\$144
\$75	Single track bascule bridge with motor	933-3070	Walthers	\$90 to \$171 +shipping
\$50	Railroad tug	933-3153	Walthers	\$70
\$20	Prairie star elevator – See picture on next page.	933-2927	Walthers	\$35

\$50	Prairie star milling	933-2914	Walthers	\$65
\$45	City Station	933-2904	Walthers	\$60
\$70	Union Station	933-3094	Walthers	\$90
	Farmer's Co-op	933-3036	Walthers	\$45
\$65	Pier & traveling crane	933-3067	Walthers	\$85
\$45	Rail way Express (REA)	933-3095	Walthers	\$55
460	Bridge Crane	933-2906	Walthers	\$75
\$210	Great Lakes ore boat	HO 1050	Sylvan	\$295
\$140	Langell Boys lumber boat	HO 1115	Sylvan	\$232 + shipping
\$225	Hulett Unloader	933-2966	Walters	\$549 + shipping (Note: this is a discontinued item.)

Sylvan HO 1050 
 Sylvan freighter is 250-260 ft in length as built from kit. 36 inches long.



Sylvan HO 1115 
 Sylvan lumber boat is 160-165 ft in length. As built from kit. 22 inches long.



Walthers 933-2927
 Prairie Star Elevator



Blast from the Past

(This months article appeared in the October 2020 Edition of the Division 9 Yardmaster Newsletter)

Signs for the Layout By **David J. Vinci** My layout is in excess of 30 years old and so I've been at the "lets add detail" stage for quite a while. But ever since I saw the work of John Allen, I learned the value of the tiny details. And then along came George Sellios with Fine Scale Mineatures and his model railroad the Franklin and South Manchester (If you haven't seen it, here's a link to a YouTube video:

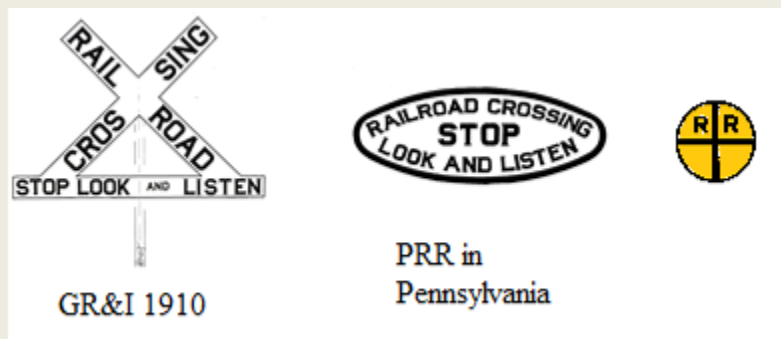
<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=george+sellios+videos&docid=608044370084170044&mid=7374C954419E8A4929657374C954419E8A492965&view=detail&FORM=VIRE>

You owe it to yourself to take a close look at his work). When the fine scale kits first came on the market, I was intimidated by the price but I discovered that building one of these will teach you how to build better models. It will also teach you how to scratchbuild as well. So, I began including some details pretty much with the first structures. Over time, the modeling has improved and so has the realism.

And that brings us to this article. Signs are an integral part of the world and adding them helps you tell the story your layout is presenting. If you are into operations, you really need to have every industry that functions as a car destination labeled so your visiting operators can find them. That goes for the towns along the line too. There are lots of different kinds of signage, here are a few examples:

Railroad crossing signs:

Traffic signs are really era dependent so the best way to get the right ones is to do an on-line search by years. I model the 1920s so here's a sample of what I found:



These are modern:



Bill Boards are fun and can really help identify the time period you are modeling:

These are 1928 Model A Fords:

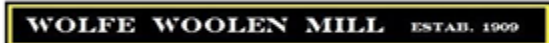
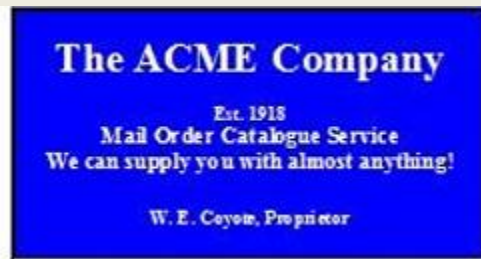


The one below is for 1924 Model T Fords Page 8 of Railroad crossing signs:



Industrial Signs:

These two I created using Word for industries on my model railroad



Be careful with re-creating signage for your model railroad for actual companies as there are copywrite issues to contend with. For instance, don't create signs and then distribute them to others with or without remuneration unless you have permission from the owner. There are lots of images in the public domain for you to use.



Collecting images off the internet is a hobby all its own for some folks.

Here are some of the signs on my layout



Below is a close-up of the Cherry Street Warehouse loading dock.



Here is the local watering hole with Beer advertising on the outside wall.

The scrapyard in town has various posters on the fence as well as the Company name plus informational signs on the truck scale building.





This Cheese and Sandbag Coffee company has its identifying signage plus a

Remember license plates for your vehicles. I model Pennsylvania in the 1920s so here are what HO scale plates are like:

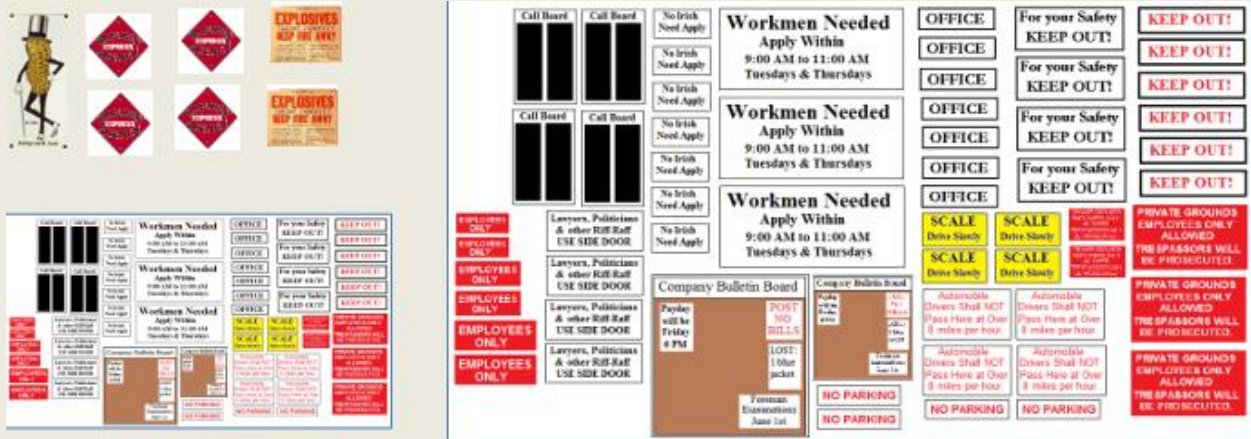


Yeah, they are tiny but readable if you print them on the highest level (600-1200dpi).

Here are some signs you can print and use on your layout, Most are sized for HO scale and others you can re-size to fit your needs:



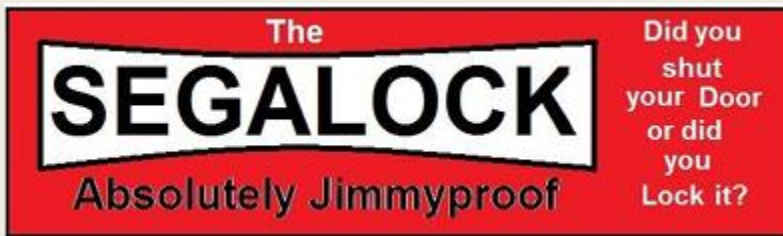
These oil company signs (above), are sized to fit HO scale oil drums.



These signs are used on businesses. They are printed in HO scale and in a larger size so you can read them. You can make these easily in Paint or other graphics program. They are easily re-sized to your scale in Word and then print them with a color printer, cut them out, and glue them in place.



And a few more billboards



Rich's Travels



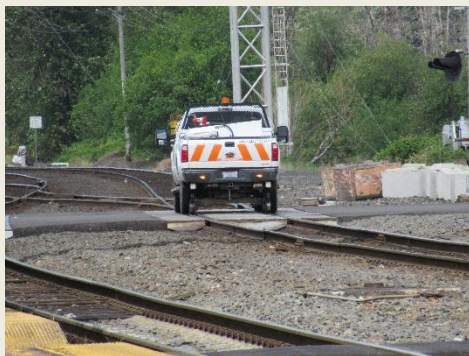
All the photos in Rich's Travels were taken by Rich Mahaney. Our many thanks go out to Rich for his many contributions to the Yardmaster Newsletter and to the NCR and Division9

I was on my way home to Gobles from Holland and saw lots of tank car movement at the Hamilton Ag Facility. So, I turned in to get a couple of photos and then went down to the river level below the trestle to get the train on the bridge, north of the ag facility. It looks like the West MI Railroad maybe starting a trans loading operation involving tank cars either at Hamilton or north at their transload spur at Fillmore. They load greases and oils at their transload yard in Hartford for recycling from trucks.



Rich's trip to WA

When I went to WA in May 2025 to teach in Pasco, WA at the NMRA PNR Convention, I ended up spending a few hours one day after the convention watching north bound and south bound trains at Centralia, WA. There is a beautiful old train station there and BNSF, UP, and various types of Amtrak trains passing. BUSY PLACE! Sit back and enjoy!



Beautiful train station both inside and outside





A working train passing by.



South Bound UP
Cryogenic tank car





Spare engines near the station.

WA is famous for its garbage trains that move garbage from the big cities to landfills in other places in the state using intermodal containers.





oil spill pads under engines,
(something to model)





Amtrak engine on the rear. I think I saw three different styles/brands of passenger trains pass in my couple of hours at the station.





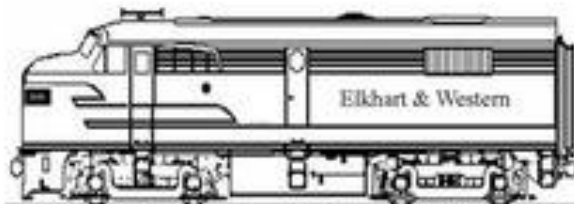
BNSF train north bound - coal train



21st Annual
TRAIN SHOW

Presented by
The Elkhart Model Railroad Club

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SATURDAY

MARCH 21st, 2026
10:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. (E.D.T.)
Claywood Event Center
13924 N 1100 W (County Line Rd.)
Nappanee, Indiana 46550



Operating layouts
150 vendor tables, all scales
Admission \$5.00
Ages 12 & under free with paid adult



For show & club information visit
www.emrrc.com
Or see us on Facebook
For vendor information contact
Ken Prager 574-300-5151/call or text
Email: trainshow@emrrc.com



Wrap-up

We extend our appreciation to Greg Stonerock for serving as the inaugural feature in our new "Layout of the Month" section. All members are encouraged to submit photographs accompanied by a brief description of their layouts for consideration.

We invite members to submit news, updates on railroad events, upcoming train shows, or information about community gatherings related to railroading for consideration in future newsletters. Member contributions are essential to ensuring our community remains well-informed and actively engaged.

The Christmas Party will take place during the January Membership Meeting on January 17th. Feel free to bring your spouse, enjoy some fun activities, and you might even win a door prize. Please let us know if you'll be attending by January 10th.

Do you have any thoughts on the new section "Blast from the Past"?

Typically, I aim to publish the Yardmaster Newsletter one or two days prior to the beginning of each month. However, in months when a board meeting occurs within a few days of the start of the new month, the newsletter will be released one or two days after the meeting to ensure timely and comprehensive updates for our readers.

We value input on a range of topics and encourage your participation at the upcoming meeting. If you are unable to attend but wish to share suggestions or ideas, please feel free to contact any board member via email, text, or phone.

Alan Bau

Division Nine Newsletter Editor

alanwbau@gmail.com

Happy New Year