

**Volume 24/25 – 1**

**September 2024**



smdnmra.org

## **From the Desk of the Superintendent:**

**By Bob Johnson**

By this time I am sure you have realized that we were not able to schedule a summer activity for the Division. Several options were under consideration but none of them worked out. That failure notwithstanding, it is time to get back into our regular monthly meetings. The first of the program year will be held on Sunday, 08 September.

This coming program year will be a pivotal year for the Division. You are probably tired of hearing this from me but if we do not get more people stepping up to manage the Division and host meetings it may be necessary to declare the Division inactive as of the end of the June, 2025.

This will be my third year as Division Superintendent, and I have already announced that I will not take a fourth year. Our current Clerk (secretary), Alex Polimeni has been serving in various positions for over 8 years and I am sure he would like a break also. In addition to the officer positions there are a number of other supporting officials, named by an incoming Superintendent, that need to be filled. None of these positions require a great deal time or effort but they are all important.

Finally, we need hosts for our monthly meetings. Last year it was a struggle to find hosts for the eight meetings that were held. Several of the meetings held last year were repeat locations from the previous year. Generally, we would prefer to have a minimum of two years between visits to any given layout and ideally, we would like to see a three year break.

The first two meetings of this year (2024 / 2025) are two year repeats and as of this writing we do not have any volunteers to host any additional meetings.

## **September Meeting:**

The monthly meeting of the South Mountain Division (SMD) will be held at 2:00 PM on Sunday, 08 September at the home of Rich Randall in Gettysburg, PA. Rich models the Milwaukee Road in O scale and has chosen to focus on the town of Avery, ID.

Email [southmountaindiv@gmail.com](mailto:southmountaindiv@gmail.com) and we will provide the street address. -Ed.  
*continued on next page...*

# WHEEL REPORT

SOUTH MOUNTAIN DIVISION - NMRA

smdnmra.org

*September Meeting, cont.*

## **About Rich's Avery Division Point**

The Milwaukee Road Avery Division Point  
Approximately 40' x 34' O Scale Model Railroad

This standard gauge (O5w) model railroad under construction will attempt to portray the Milwaukee Road prototype equipment and operation at Avery, Idaho on or about September 1973. The overall layout is a single track, dogbone with passing sidings. The center of the model is the Avery yard, much compressed, but laid out generally like the prototype. Models of several of the prototype buildings are nearly complete, to capture the essence of the area.

Traveling east from Avery, the 2.5% climb up the Bitterroot Mountains to Montana is simulated in the model with a grade up to the ceiling (partially, and unfortunately, with a helix), through a 3-track passing siding, and terminating in a 3-track return loop. Only a few tunnels, and one large steel viaduct will be modeled to represent the dozen + on the prototype. This line was electrified at 3300 volts DC from Avery to Harlowton, MT, and the model will eventually reflect this, but at much lower voltage. The wire has to go up last on the model.

Traveling west from Avery, the Idaho and eastern Washington area is simulated in the model with a flat run of track with a 3-track passing siding, and ending in the other 3-track return loop. There is provision for a takeoff here to a 5-track storage yard below the layout, via a helix – installed but not yet operational.

The layout main line is operational using NCE DCC, with scenery started in several places. There are five “industrial” sites under development where local trains (called “patrols” on the Milwaukee) will switch cars. Additional features planned for completion someday are:

- Expansion of “Idaho” 3-track passing siding, and Montana return loop to 5-tracks each.
- Incorporation of an interurban line, analogous to the prototype Spokane and Inland Railway (S&IR), that ran in the area until the 50's. This will be an excuse for a trolley museum with all kinds of electric railway equipment for display, and for railfan excursions. The line will also interchange freight with the MILW main, using vintage electric locomotives.
- Incorporation of a narrow gauge line, analogous to the Milwaukee owned Chicago, Bellevue, Cascade, and Western RR, that ran in Iowa. This admittedly will be out of place and time. This line will bring ore to trans-load into MILW hoppers.

*continued on next page...*

# WHEEL REPORT

SOUTH MOUNTAIN DIVISION - NMRA

[smdnmra.org](http://smdnmra.org)

*September Meeting, cont.*

- Incorporation of a quarry line. A branch line to run from Avery East Yard to a distant Gypsum Plant. Much modeler's license is exercised here to include typical
- Milwaukee Road branch line customers from a half dozen different prototype branches in the West.
- Prototype time and place will be stretched often with equipment that ran in a different era or never ran in the west. Examples are the famous Milwaukee Road Hiawatha steam engines and passenger trains. (Not totally unreasonable – Remember the “Chessie Steam Specials”?)

It is anticipated that one day the railroad will be operationally interesting, featuring through freights, through and local passenger trains, power changes at Avery, patrols switching at five modest industrial sites and the branch line, and blocking of cars at Avery. My intention is to have enough staging to permit an operating session to be conducted without returning trains through the scenes.

## **Mid-Eastern Region Convention Planning:**

We have been officially asked to host the 2027 MER convention. The membership voted at the May 2024 meeting to accept this invitation (assuming we are still an active Division). Under the current convention protocols the MER handles a significant portion of the work involved. I would like to form a small (3 to 4 people) exploratory committee to investigate available facilities, possible prototype tour activities, etc. If you would like to participate in this endeavor please contact me at [southmountaindiv@gmail.com](mailto:southmountaindiv@gmail.com) as soon as possible.

## **Wheel Report Feature Articles:**

As previously noted, Alex Polimeni is now working with Division membership (and others) to develop feature articles, layout photo tours, written clinics, etc. to supplement the basic Wheel Report announcements. Please consider reaching out to him at [southmountaindiv@gmail.com](mailto:southmountaindiv@gmail.com) to provide content.

# WHEEL REPORT **SMD**

SOUTH MOUNTAIN DIVISION - NMRA

smdnmra.org

## Reminder:

SMD membership meetings are always the 2nd Sunday of the month at 2PM. The only exceptions are for April, when the Mini-Con replaces our business meeting, and in May, which will take place one week later, on the 3rd Sunday.

We have had some issues with finding hosts for meetings this year. Please consider hosting a meeting sometime during the 2024 - 2025 program year. If you would like to host, please let me know. We try to avoid back-to-back repeat visits so if you have never hosted, or it has been a year or so since you did, give it a thought.

## Renew On Line:

You can renew your NMRA membership on line at the following link;

<https://www.nmra.org/store/membership>

Remember that your national membership automatically includes membership in both the Mid-East Region and the South Mountain Division and you will receive the NMRA Bulletin electronically on a regular basis. Membership is a requirement for insurance purposes but guests can attend one or two meetings without joining. There is also a trial membership category available at a reduced cost (see link above).

## SMD Officers and Officials:

Superintendent: Bob Johnson

Clerk: Alex Polimeni

Paymaster: Ray Price

Webmaster/Digital Assets Manager: Tom Fedor

Wheel Report Editor: Bob Johnson

Contributing Wheel Report Editor: Alex Polimeni

Division Achievement Program Coordinator: Jane Clarke

Mini-Con Coordinator: Grant Berry

