

Revised June 28th, 2016
Southeastern Region
National Model Railroad Association
Strategic Plan

VISION

Using all assets available, the Southeastern Region of the NMRA will be the premier support resource of choice to its members for the enjoyment of the hobby of model railroading in the South East. At the same time, use the hobby of model railroading to enrich the people in our community and increase the hobby's exposure.

MISSION

The Region's resources shall be developed and used to provide its membership with the tools, talent, techniques and support to advance and encourage their modeling skills within the hobby. The Board of Directors will use the available financial resources of the Region to support model railroading initiatives at the Division level and enrich our own selves by exposing as many people as possible to the joy of model railroading.

OBJECTIVES

Provide support to its membership for the following key areas of responsibility:

Improve internal and external Communications: using the SouthEneR newsletter, info-net and internet web-page and chat groups.

Provide Education Opportunities: using the NMRA Achievement Program, Professional Clinician presentations, Scouting Merit Badge program, and Member Aid.

Increase Recognition of Member Skills: by encouraging participation in contests and NMRA events, Recognition Awards for Personal Achievement.

Establish Skill Development programs: with a mentoring program, using Clinics at the Division and Region level, modeling techniques and solutions from Member Aid and Edu-Train.

Intensify the Promotion of the Hobby: developing Community Awareness programs to highlight the hobby, local events (Mini-Meets), layout visits, open houses and public clinics. Division Development and support to the Superintendents.

Actively Address Membership growth: with support to Divisions, clubs and individual outreach.

Ensure continued Fiscal Responsibility: using financial assets wisely, provide for support of above stated major objectives, and support to smaller divisions. Use resources to support Model Railroad related community objectives.

GOALS

Communication:

- Increase the subscriptions to the SouthEneR by 10% each fiscal year
- Increase the effectiveness of the electronic communications tools with additional information pages and Services. Add on-line clinics, streaming video of layouts located within the SER's territory. (*Webmaster Chairman*)
- Redefine the content and format of the newsletter to provide more member support and how-to articles. (*Editor Chairman*)

- Utilizing a mail-out surveys to members find out:
 - Viability of said members receiving electronic version of the Southerner vs the print copy.
 - Inquire to Life Members of unknown status about continued interest. We need to know 1) are they still alive, 2) do they still live at that address, 3) are they still interested in retaining active memberships.
 - Survey shall be the distributed responsibility of the Membership Chairman along with any committee appointed by he or the SER President to assist with this task.
 - Surveys shall be distributed by December 2016 (present results either in Winter 2017 or June SER BoD meeting)

Membership Education & Skill Development Program

- Increase Region participation in the Achievement Program by 10% with AP introductory hand out material, including a Golden Spike Award application form, at any Region member's layout open house. Earning a Golden Spike Award is an incentive/motivator encouraging participation in the AP. Applicable information is available for down loading and printing at NMRA National's web site (www.nmra.org). (*Education and Achievement Program Chairmen*)
- At Region conventions, dedicate an annual clinic devoted to an overview of the AP (or one of its categories) presented by an MMR. Dependent on frequency of Division meetings, this can also be implemented annually at the Division level. It is recommended that such a clinic be presented at the 2017 SER Convention. (*Education and Achievement Program Chairmen*)
- Introduce a "Train In' Camp" clinic at Region conventions. A 3 hour, modest extra-fare (if required) hands-on make-and-take camp similar to National Convention "Modeling with the Masters" clinics. MMR instructor credentials not required. Topics vary from year to year. It is recommended that such a clinic be presented by the 2017 SER Convention. (*Education and Achievement Program Chairmen*)
- Increase region-wide support of the Boy Scouts of America Merit Badge program. Expand the support beyond the Piedmont and Steel City Divisions, increase total Model Railroading Merit Badges awarded by 20%. This may include dedicating one clinic at Region conventions to marketing the BSA Railroad Merit Badge program and what requirements must be met by its counsellors. (*Boy Scout Merit Badge Chairman*)
- Increase participation in NMRA and Special Region Contest events by 20% by 2020. (*Achievement Program Chairman*)
- Provide better understanding of contest standards and procedures. Communication should be done through a written column in The Southerner and/or clinic to be presented at regional conventions/mini-meets. (*Achievement Program Chairman*)
- Develop a cadre of trained and qualified judges. (*Achievement Program Chairman*)

- Provide membership with award criteria for Region Specific Awards to be placed on the Southeastern Region’s website by end of 2016. (*Joint venture of Achievement Program, Education, Contests, Honors & Awards, and Webmaster Chairmen*)
- Investigate the “mobile friendliness” of the SER’s website on smartphones and tablet devices in order to serve as a quick communication link to the SER web site and to NMRA National’s allowing instant access to Region events, programs and updates. (*Webmaster Chairman*)
- Develop a Region-wide Mentoring Program, aligning skilled and knowledgeable members with individuals seeking skill improvement. Establish the program in the Divisions and encourage Superintendents to include updates on such activities in their reports to the BoD and *The Southerner*. (*Division Superintendents and Education Chairmen*).
- Develop an interactive Member Aid program using available internet assets. Member Aid Chairman provides program introduction and description for publication in the SouthEneR. Encourage the use of Member Aid resources in all Divisions. (*Member Aid Chairman*)
- Develop a Region Clinic Library on DVD/CD. (*Education Chairman*)
- Develop a volunteer cadre of clinicians that can visit Divisions on request for presentations and clinics.

Hobby Promotion within the Region

- Increase active participation at the Division. (*Division Superintendents should be encouraged to include updates on such activities, as suggested below, in their reports to the BoD and The Southerner beginning in 2017*)
 - Challenge each Division to develop a promotion strategy (if not already established) and encourage regular reports at Regional BOD Meetings to share progress and discuss effectiveness of various techniques that can be applied in other locations within the SER.
 - Generate increased local interest in the hobby with open houses, public events and “train shows” sponsored by the Division and supported by Region assets (personnel and financial).
- Increase the knowledge and understanding of the role and purpose of the NMRA and the SER with Public Service Announcements in conjunction with local events. (*Division Superintendents should be encouraged to include updates on such activities, as suggested below, in their reports to the BoD and The Southerner beginning in 2017*)
 - Coordinate Model Railroad event/support with local historical and prototype activities.
 - Use social media in addition to other advertising mediums to promote local events.
 - Local libraries often accept old magazines. Try donating magazines in exchange Model Railroad/NMRA display space in November during “Model Railroad Month.”
 - Set up and man a NMRA membership table at all public events. If Division budgets allow, have a Division banner made and display it

- hanging from a simple PVC pipe and rail support frame at member recruitment and information tables at train shows, swap meets, etc.
- 3 inch diameter pin-on buttons imprinted “Ask me about Model Railroading” can be purchased for \$75-\$80 for 100 pieces. Worn by members at train shows, swap meets, etc., they’re great conversation starters leading into how NMRA membership provides additional hobby help, education and enjoyment.
 - Youth outreach: Placement of model railroad items such as dioramas, Thomas, or wooden locomotives on a string in children’s hospital wards. Also, Divisional leadership should work towards expanding the availability of the Railroading Merit Badge to all divisions.
 - Senior outreach: Building and donating dioramas that remind seniors of the town where they grew up.
 - Veterans and wounded warriors outreach: Provide portable layouts for therapy and enjoyment.
 - Community in general: Protect and present an area’s local history and our heritage thru model railroads. What city hall or local museum would not be more attractive with a model of the railroad depot that most likely is the reason the town was established in the first place? Prime examples of such exhibits include the layout at the Bessemer AL Hall of History; the Coosa Valley Model Railroad Club’s layout in downtown Gadsden, AL; Aiken Railroad Depot Museum in Aiken, SC. The key is to have something in a visible location available to the public.

Membership growth

Several suggestions to help acquire a 10% increase NMRA-SER members. Most are achievable at little if any cost to either Region or Division. Items 1-5 are motivated by a simple, tangible exchange of “you do this and we’ll give you that.” (*Education Chairman, Division Superintendents, and their officers*)

1. Encourage existing members to sponsor a non-member. One-on-one is \$10 for a Rail Pass. Get five to chip in and you can either buy 5 Rail Passes, or a full, one year membership with change for coffee left over. Reward your sponsor(s) with a free Region or Division patch, pin, mug T-shirt, any inexpensive one item in your store.
2. Reward any member signing up a new member with a free item as in # 1.
3. Welcome a new member by letter (in person if possible). Include a free SER patch and designate a member living nearby as an orientation “docent.”
4. Solicit local hobby shops to run periodic contests. “Best of Show” wins a full, one year membership (or one year renewal) paid for by the SER. A win-win for contestant & hobby shop.
5. At local hobby shops, display prominently alongside NMRA-SER handout materials, an 8 ½ x 11 inch standing sign stating the SER offers a free first time NMRA membership to all current or past U.S. Military Service personnel.

6. Increase Region support of Division with recruiting aids and materials from National. Provide funding (upon request and based on Division membership roles) to support recruiting and membership drive efforts.
7. Distribute NMRA brochures with your Division's contact information to libraries, rotaries, YMCA, barber shops, beauty salons (for moms), doctors & dentist offices, tire shops, quick lube centers, general aviation pilot lounges, etc. In other words, anywhere adults are likely to wait, but always ask for permission when leaving marketing material. NMRA HQ will supply free brochures just for the asking.
8. Volunteer Region Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) visit divisions, and organized clubs. Region Officers visit at least two Divisions annually.
9. Region SMEs present clinics at Division meetings:
10. Encourage and promote NMRA membership with Rail Pass info, Membership info and Benefits info.

Fiscal Responsibility and Solvency (*shall be the ultimate responsibility of the SER Treasurer, except where noted*)

- Maintain the organization's 501-C3 status. (Short Term)
- Use Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) to maintain all financial records (Short Term)
- Invest assets wisely to ensure growth
- Maintain an adequate cash balance and regulated cash flow
- Establish committee to investigate cost savings measures for Regional expenses
- Experiment with smaller production run sizes for special edition model runs in order to encourage faster turnover keep membership interest with more frequent "fresh" offerings. (*Region Cars Chairman, 2018, or upon development of next special edition car project*)

CONCLUSION – FOCUS

- The Officers and Board of Directors of the SE Region of the NMRA have a responsibility to the Region membership to manage the Region's resources and assets for the enjoyment of the hobby of model railroading. To wit, they are tasked with fiscal management, membership development and growth, education and recognition of member achievements. As the custodians of the Region objectives, they are held accountable to the membership. This strategic plan is to provide a road map and a timetable for the achievement of the Region's stated goals. It shall be a score card for successes and a benchmark for future endeavors.
- A strategic plan must adhere to the Vision and Mission statements while focusing its efforts on accomplishment of the organization's Objectives in a three-phased timeline.
- **Long range goals** are designed to accomplish the supported goal over a finite period, usually 3-5 years.
- **Mid-range goals** define reasonable actions to support an objective within a year of their activation.

- **Short term goals** identify immediate actions that will address goal results that can be achieved within a specified period under 12 months.
- The Region President's task is to ensure that the focus is sharp and the organization achieves what is promised to provide to the membership.