

National Model Railroad Association

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Achievement Program

Golden Spike Award

The Golden Spike is the easiest, and for many people, the first AP award that they earn. It is designed to demonstrate familiarity with different areas of the hobby, rather than expertise in a particular area. So take a look at the requirements - you may find that you have met most, or all of them already.

Here's the [Golden Spike Award Application Form](#) . Use it as a checklist, you may surprise yourself.

1. Rolling Stock (Motive Power & Cars)

- Display six (6) units of rolling stock (Scratchbuilt, craftsman, or detailed commercial kits).

Notice that the requirement is to "display" them. Nowhere does it say that they must earn a minimum number of points in judging - just that they must be displayed. (In the monthly contests at your division meetings, for example. Even having them set out on your layout, or a table in your basement counts as "display").

These models need to show a little more effort than a "shake the box" kit. For example, by itself a freight car kit straight out of the box, is not enough to qualify. However, by painting and decaling it, adding a little detailing, perhaps some weathering, etc., you'll have a qualifying model in no time!

2. Model Railroad Setting (Structures & Scenery)

- Construct a minimum of eight (8) square feet of layout.

Again, there is no requirement about how good or how elaborate your layout must be - just that you must "construct" it. On the other hand, you may have trouble convincing someone that a loop of track nailed to a piece of green painted wood constitutes a "layout" . . . How much is 8 square feet of layout? Well, a typical module is 4 feet by 2 feet, and would easily satisfy this requirement.

- Construct five (5) structures (scratchbuilt, craftsman, or detailed and commercial kits). These structures may be separate, or one or more of them may be part of a single scene.

The same comments apply here about the type of kits. The idea is to show that you can do more than glue a simple plastic kit together. Painting or weathering are good things to consider. Remember that "structures" aren't just buildings. Things like bridges and trestles also fall into this category.

3. Engineering (Civil & Electrical)

- Three (3) types of trackage are required (turnout, crossing, etc.). All must be properly ballasted and installed on proper roadbed. Commercial trackage may be used.

This requirement sounds a lot harder than it is. First, notice that last sentence about commercial

trackage; you don't have to hand-lay anything - you can just install a store bought turnout. "Types of trackage" can be just about anything: turnouts, crossings, and grade elevation (a change in elevation of the track) are all examples of "types of trackage". Also, note that the three types DO NOT have to be different. For example, just having three simple turnouts will qualify. The "proper roadbed" requirement can be met by laying the track on a raised roadbed, (such as cork) and ballasting it. The purpose of this requirement is to show that you understand roadbed profile, drainage, etc.

- All installed trackage must be properly wired so that two trains can be operated simultaneously (Double-track main, single-track main with sidings, block or command control, etc.).

This requirement can also be easier than it sounds. Notice the option for a single track main with sidings. This means that as long as you can cut power to the sidings individually, you can run one train, park it on a siding while you run another, then park it and run the first again. This meets the requirement.

- Provide one additional electrical feature such as powered turnouts, signaling, turnout indication, lighted buildings, etc.

Don't read more into this than is there. A powered turnout can be something as simple as an Atlas turnout with a switch machine. Think in terms of anything that runs off the 'Accessories' terminals of a power pack and you 're half way there.

One other thing to remember: Not all of these requirements need to be met on the same layout (or piece of layout). They don't even need to be met in the same scale! If you want to build G scale rolling stock, an N scale Model Railroad setting, and an HO scale layout for trackage and wiring, go ahead.

Also, the Golden Spike, as well as the other parts of the AP have a certain amount of flexibility. For example, suppose you and your (friend / spouse / child) work together on all your projects, but do twice the required amount (12+ units of rolling stock, 16+ square feet of layout, 10+ structures, etc.). You can both be considered, as long as you can show that you have each demonstrated the required skills.

Further Information

Contact National Achievement Program General Manager, Paul Richardson, MMR achiev@hq.nmra.org, or your [Region or Division Achievement Program Manager](#) for more information.

Forms available for this award:

- [Application Form: \(PDF\)](#)

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ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM GOLDEN SPIKE AWARD APPLICATION FORM May 2006

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS APPLICATION FORM AND SEND TO YOUR REGIONAL OR DIVISIONAL AP CHAIR

Member's Name: _____ NMRA#: _____ EXP: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

State/Prov: _____ Country: _____ Postal Code: _____

Date Submitted: _____ Region: _____

The Golden Spike Award will be awarded to any NMRA member who has completed the Qualifications Checklist, obtained the necessary signatures and who does not hold MMR status. It will be administered by the regional and divisional AP Chairs. AP regulations and definitions apply for scratchbuilding and detailing. To qualify for the award the member must complete the following checklist; obtain the signature of the divisional AP Chair or another NMRA member designated by the divisional Chair. The divisional Chair will submit the signed form to the regional AP Chair who will issue the Golden Spike Award certificate.

QUALIFICATIONS CHECKLIST:

1. Rolling Stock (Motive Power & Cars):

Display six units of rolling stock either scratchbuilt, craftsman kits or detailed commercial kits.

2. Model Railroad Setting (Structures & Scenery)

Construct a minimum of eight square feet of layout including scenery.

Construct five structures either scratchbuilt, craftsman kits or detailed commercial kits. If a module has less than five structures, additional structures separate from the scene may be presented.

3. Engineering (Civil & Electrical)

Three types of trackage required (e.g. turnout, crossing, crossover, etc.). All must be properly ballasted and installed on proper roadbed. Commercial trackage may be used.

All installed trackage must be properly wired so that two trains can be operated simultaneously (e.g. double track main, single track main with sidings, and block or command control).

Provide one additional electrical feature such as power operated turnouts, signaling, turnout indication, lighted buildings, etc.

Witness: _____ Name: _____ NMRA #: _____

Regional AP Chair: _____ Region: _____