

National Model Railroad Association

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Achievement Program

Master Builder - Scenery

The intent of this category is for you to demonstrate "the prototypical rendering of scenic effects from the ground up." The type of scenery that you choose to model is entirely up to you. An urban landscape involves just as much scenery (if not more) as a mountain or desert landscape.

Contact your [Regional AP Manager](#) if you have a question about which category a particular model would fall into.

To Qualify for the Master Builder - Scenery Certificate:

1. Construct a completed section of a model railroad of at least sixty square feet in O scale, or forty-five square feet in S scale, or thirty-two square feet in HO scale, or eighteen square feet in N scale or other scales in proportional relationship to HO scale. This completed section must contain the necessary scenic elements of [Terrain](#), [Structures](#), [Background](#), [Lighting](#), and [Realism/Conformity](#) as combined to achieve a realistic effect using applicable NMRA standards. in that particular model railroad scene. The intent of this category is the prototypical rendering of the scenic elements from the ground up.

It is not necessary to qualify for this certificate by constructing a single section of layout. You can construct several different scenes (such as modules), each of which must be at least eight square feet and of Merit Award quality. Note that modules which earn 87-1/2 or more points using the NMRA's Module contest judging sheet do **NOT** automatically earn a Merit Award. They must earn 87 1/2 points using the AP Scenery judging sheet since the judging criteria are different, unlike the judging in other modeling areas.

Outdoor (garden) railways may qualify for the Master Builder - Scenery certificate. However, the modeler must show that they have worked to create a miniature railroad, not just run some track through the flower beds. For example, bridges should be modeled after prototype bridges (just as they are in other scales), not just track running across a plank.

The definitions of the various elements (which may be combined to comprise the setting for the model railroad) shall be:

A. **Terrain (35 pts)**

The ground and all natural features such as rocks, water, trees, hills and depressions, as well as man made features such as railroad roadbed, cuts, fills, drainage ditches, embankments, streets and roads, etc.

Also remember different types of vegetation and the effects of weather and of animals. Remember the detail on streets and roads, whether in urban or rural areas: sewers / storm drains, man-hole covers, shoulders, drainage ditches, cracks, patches, road wear marks, oil stains, and tire ruts in dirt roads.

Make the transitions between different types of terrain as smooth as possible. Avoid glaring inconsistencies, such as a New England Farm house surrounded by palm trees. If you are going to have different scenes on your layout, use backdrop dividers or other vision blockers to separate them.

B. Structures (20 pts)

Structures are considered from the standpoint of prototypical suitability, placement, and appearance as scenic effects - NOT as to construction (which is covered under Master Builder - Structures). This includes bridges, trestles, and culverts, buildings and all other types of structures (towers, power lines, signs, fences, retaining walls, etc.), track and right-of-way features such as turnout controls, signaling structures, crossing gates and shanties, turntables and other service structures, etc.

These are but a few examples - additional features are encouraged. Also remember that structures should be *in* the ground, not sitting on top of it. Make sure that the appearance of your structures is consistent with your scenery. At the very least, weather it enough to take the "out of the box plastic shine" off of it. Switch machines, if not under the table, should be well disguised (this is one detail that will cause your application to be returned if it is not done). Remember details such as lights over the doors of commercial buildings.

C. Background (25 pts)

Treatment of the wall, backdrop, and/or ceiling to realistically depict depth, distance, horizon, and sky.

This doesn't mean that you have to have a photographic or landscape artist quality background. Your background should continue the 'illusion of reality' that you are trying to create with your scenery. The background should match the scenery, and the transition where the two of them meet is smooth and/or hidden. One good question to ask yourself is: Is there enough good background to allow a photo to be taken without showing other parts of the room? If a wall is the backdrop, make sure that the texture is appropriate, as well as the color (a concrete block wall painted sky-blue, still looks like a concrete block wall!)

D. Lighting (20 pts)

Illumination effects from three aspects:

- a) railroad cars, signals, etc.
- b) buildings, streets, and roads, etc.
- c) overall lighting effects - day and/or night.

An entirely daylight scene is acceptable. This lighting information must be included in the material prepared for Section 4 below.

Note that a fully day lit scene is perfectly acceptable (although you may get more points for a scene that allows you to show off more lighting elements). However, even in a day lit scene, there may be evidence of lighting - even if it is not operational (non-illuminated street lights, for example.)
Also note that not every scene will contain all of these elements. If the scene you are modeling is in the middle of the desert, there may not be any buildings or streets there to light!

E. Realism / Conformity (25 pts)

In the other four judging areas, the judges evaluate what you were trying to do - what you remembered to include in your scene. In this one, they evaluate how well you did what you were trying to do.

Your entire layout does not have to be completed to be judged - just enough to meet the minimum space requirements given above. However, the areas which are not to be judged should be blocked off (visually) from those that are.

2. Prepare a set of photographs (video tape presentation is acceptable) and a written description clearly describing the intended setting of the model railroad and the scenic details including towns or cities in the area being judged.

These photos don't have to be professional quality - that isn't what is being judged. However, there should be at least one over-all picture of the layout, and pictures of all the parts which are being judged. Each picture should have an accompanying description.

3. Prepare a description of the materials and methods of construction used in creating various features of Terrain, Background, and Lighting.

These can be simple statements - nothing elaborate is required.

4. Attach one copy of materials in Sections 2 & 3 to the Statement of Qualification (SOQ) for use by the judges in determining the effectiveness of the craftsmanship displayed by the member requesting certification.
5. Earn a Merit Award of at least 87.5 points on the section of layout being judged.
6. Submit a completed Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) including the attachments for Sections 2 & 3 and the signed merit judging forms and/or copies of the Merit Award certificates from Section 5.

Further Information

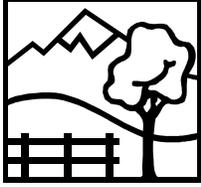
Contact National Achievement Program General Manager, Paul Richardson, MMR achiev@hq.nmra.org, or your Region or Division Achievement Program Manager for more information.

Forms available for this category:

- [SOQ Form: \(PDF\)](#)
- [Record and Validation form: \(PDF\)](#)
- [Judging Form: \(PDF\)](#)

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**ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM
MASTER BUILDER SCENERY
STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS FORM
May 2006**

page 1 of 2

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

Street: _____ City: _____ State/Prov: _____

ZIP/PC: _____ Country: _____ NMRA Region: _____

Date Submitted: _____ E-Mail: _____ Phone: _____

To qualify for this certificate you must:

1. Construct a completed section of a model railroad of at least sixty square feet in O scale, or forty-five square feet in S scale, or thirty-two square feet in HO scale, or eighteen square feet in N scale or other scales in proportional relationship to HO scale. This completed section must contain the necessary scenic elements of terrain, structures, background, lighting, and realism/conformity as combined to achieve a realistic effect using applicable NMRA standards. in that particular model railroad scene. The intent of this category is the prototypical rendering of the scenic elements from the ground up. The definitions of the various elements (which may be combined to comprise the setting for the model railroad) shall be:

TERRAIN - The ground and all natural features such as rocks, water, trees, hills and depressions, as well as manmade features such as the railroad roadbed, cuts, fills, drainage ditches, embankments, streets and roads.

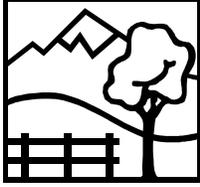
STRUCTURES - Structures are considered from the standpoint of prototypical suitability, placement and appearance as scenic elements. (The quality of construction is covered under the Master Builder Structures category). Structures include: bridges, trestles, culverts, buildings and all other types of structures (towers, power lines, signs, fences, etc.), track and right-of-way appurtenances (such as turnout controls, signaling structures, crossing gates and shanties etc.), turntables and other service structures. The items described above are a few examples and additional features are encouraged.

BACKGROUND - Treatment of wall, backdrop or ceiling to realistically depict depth and distance, horizon and sky.

LIGHTING - Illumination effects from three aspects: railroad cars and signals, etc.; buildings, streets and roads, etc.; overall lighting effects - day and/or night. An entirely daylight scene is acceptable. This lighting information must be included in the material prepared for Section 4 below.

REALISM/CONFORMITY - General overall impression that the scene is a believable, miniature representation of prototype railroad.

2. Prepare a set of photographs and a written description clearly describing the intended setting of the model railroad and the scenic details including towns or cities in the area being judged.
3. Prepare a description of the materials and methods of construction used in creating various features of terrain, background, and lighting.
4. Attach one copy of materials in Sections 2 & 3 to the SOQ for use by the judges in determining the effectiveness of the craftsmanship displayed by the member requesting certification.
5. Earn a Merit Award of at least 87.5 points on the section of layout being judged.



**ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM
 MASTER BUILDER SCENERY
 STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS FORM
 May 2006**

6. Submit a completed Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) including the attachments for Sections 2 & 3 and the signed Merit Judging forms from Section 5.

SECTION 1

- OVERALL AREA REQUIREMENT MET
- TERRAIN
- STRUCTURES
- BACKGROUND
- LIGHTING
- REALISM/CONFORMITY

SECTION 2

- SET OF PHOTOGRAPHS OR VIDEO TAPE
- WRITTEN DESCRIPTION

SECTION 3

- WRITTEN DESCRIPTION

SECTION 4

- COPY OF MATERIALS IN SECTION 2 FOR JUDGES USE
- COPY OF MATERIALS IN SECTION 3 FOR JUDGES USE

SECTION 5

- MERIT AWARD OF AT LEAST 87.5 POINTS

Member's Statement and Agreement:

I certify that I have completed all of the requirements for this Certificate of Achievement as listed above and that I will agree to assist other members in this subject whenever possible, whether or not they are participants in the Achievement Program.

NAME: _____ SIGNATURE: _____ Date: _____

Certification of Regional Achievement Program Chair

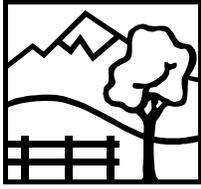
As the NMRA Regional Achievement Program Chair of the _____, I certify that I have examined this SOQ and, having compared it to the stated requirements for this certificate, I am satisfied that the stated requirements have been met.

NAME: _____ SIGNATURE: _____ Date: _____

Region Cert #: _____

Approval by AP National Executive Vice Chair

NAME: _____ SIGNATURE: _____ Date: _____



ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM MASTER BUILDER SCENERY RECORD AND VALIDATION FORM May 2006

PLEASE ATTACH THIS FORM TO A COMPLETED STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS (SOQ) FORM.

Member's Name: _____

NMRA #: _____

Date Submitted: _____

Region: _____

To qualify for this certificate you must:

1. Construct a completed section of a model railroad of at least sixty square feet in O scale, or forty-five square feet in S scale, or thirty-two square feet in HO scale, or eighteen square feet in N scale or other scales in proportional relationship to HO scale. This completed section must contain the necessary scenic elements of terrain, structures, background, lighting, and realism/conformity as combined to achieve a realistic effect using applicable NMRA standards. in that particular model railroad scene. The intent of this category is the prototypical rendering of the scenic elements from the ground up. The definitions of the various elements (which may be combined to comprise the setting for the model railroad) shall be:

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STRUCTURES - Structures are considered from the standpoint of prototypical suitability, placement and appearance as scenic elements. (The quality of construction is covered under the Master Builder Structures category). Structures include: bridges, trestles, culverts, buildings and all other types of structures (towers, power lines, signs, fences, etc.), track and right-of-way appurtenances (such as turnout controls, signaling structures, crossing gates and shanties etc.), turntables and other service structures. The items described above are a few examples and additional features are encouraged.

BACKGROUND - Treatment of wall, backdrop or ceiling to realistically depict depth and distance, horizon and sky.

LIGHTING - Illumination effects from three aspects: railroad cars and signals, etc.; buildings, streets and roads, etc.; overall lighting effects - day and/or night. An entirely daylight scene is acceptable. This lighting information must be included in the material prepared for Section 4 below.

REALISM/CONFORMITY - General overall impression that the scene is a believable, miniature representation of prototype railroad.

2. Prepare a set of photographs and a written description clearly describing the intended setting of the model railroad and the scenic details including towns or cities in the area being judged.
3. Prepare a description of the materials and methods of construction used in creating various features of terrain, background, and lighting.
4. Attach one copy of materials in Sections 2 & 3 to the SOQ for use by the judges in determining the effectiveness of the craftsmanship displayed by the member requesting certification.
5. Earn a Merit Award of at least 87.5 points on the section of layout being judged.
6. Submit a completed Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) including the attachments for Sections 2 & 3 and the signed Merit Judging forms from Section 5.

SECTION 1

- OVERALL AREA REQUIREMENT MET
- TERRAIN
- STRUCTURES
- BACKGROUND
- LIGHTING
- REALISM/CONFORMITY

SECTION 2

- SET OF PHOTOGRAPHS OR VIDEO TAPE
- WRITTEN DESCRIPTION

SECTION 3

- WRITTEN DESCRIPTION

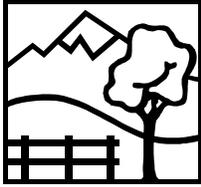
SECTION 4

- COPY OF MATERIALS IN SECTION 2 FOR JUDGES USE
- COPY OF MATERIALS IN SECTION 3 FOR JUDGES USE

SECTION 5

- MERIT AWARD OF AT LEAST 87.5 POINTS

Verified By: _____ REGION: _____ DATE: _____



ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM MASTER BUILDER SCENERY JUDGING FORM May 2006

PLEASE ATTACH THIS FORM TO A COMPLETED STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS (SOQ) FORM.

Member's Name: _____

NMRA #: _____

Date Submitted: _____

Region: _____

The undersigned judges certify that the scenic area of model railroad, built by the above named NMRA member, has been personally examined by two or more judges appointed by the Region AP Chair, meets all applicable NMRA Standards, has earned a minimum score of 87.5 points and has been awarded a Merit Award.

MERIT AWARD SCORING SCHEDULE

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	POINTS	SCORE
TERRAIN	The ground and all natural features such as rocks, water, trees, hills and depressions, as well as manmade features such as the railroad roadbed, cuts, fills, drainage ditches, embankments, streets and roads.	0-35	
STRUCTURES	Structures are considered from the standpoint of prototypical suitability, placement and appearance as scenic elements. (The quality of construction is covered under the Master Builder Structures category). Structures include: bridges, trestles, culverts, buildings and all other types of structures (towers, power lines, signs, fences, etc.), track and right-of-way appurtenances (such as turnout controls, signaling structures, crossing gates and shanties etc.), turntables and other service structures.	0-20	
BACKGROUND	Treatment of wall, backdrop or ceiling to realistically depict depth and distance, horizon and sky.	0-25	
LIGHTING	Illumination effects from three aspects: railroad cars and signals, etc.; buildings, streets and roads, etc.; overall lighting effects - day and/or night. An entirely daylight scene is acceptable.	0-20	
REALISM/ CONFORMITY	General overall impression that the scene is a believable, miniature representation of prototype railroad.	0-25	
		Total	

JUDGE'S NAME	SIGNATURE	NMRA #

REGIONAL AP CHAIR: _____ REGION: _____ DATE: _____