# Northeastern Region, NMRA
# BOARD of DIRECTORS MEETING
# MINUTES
# 03/29/26

Meeting conducted over Internet via Zoom.

**Present:**

| Officers | | Directors | | NER Staff & Guests | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| President: | Ed O'Rourke | Northern: | Tom Oxnard | Coupler editor: | Bill Rutherford |
| Vice President: | | Eastern: | Mike Tylick | Webmaster: | Jim Seroskie<br>Rick Mazzola |
| Secretary: | Jeff Paston | Western: | | AP Chair: | |
| Treasurer: | Bill Rutherford | Southern: | | | |
| | | | | Office Manager: | Fergus Francey |
| | | Central NY: | Drew James | | |
| Past President: | | Eastern Canada: | Steve McMullin | Communications: | David Start |
| | | Garden State: | David Start | | Chuck Diljak |
| | | Green Mt.: | | | |
| | | HUB: | Peter Watson | NER-RPI Team Leader | Stan Ames |
| | | Hudson Valley: | Henry Kramer | | |
| | | Hudson-Berkshire: | | | |
| | | Lakeshores: | Ed O'Connell | | |
| | | Little Rhody: | | | |
| | | Metro-North: | Rick Abramson | | |
| | | Nutmeg: | Art Dutra | | |
| | | Seacoast: | John McHugh | | |
| | | Southern Tier: | | | |
| | | Sunrise Trail: | Dennis DeAngelis | | |

Not represented: Past President John Doehring; VP Dave Insley; Office Manager Erich Whitney; Directors Ed Olszewski (Western) and Mark Moritz (Southern); Jim Homoki (GSD), Artie Krass (HBD) Sue Osberg (LRD)

**1. Meeting call to order: 7:23** pm EDT by President O'Rourke

**A.** Additional agenda items? Approval of the agenda.

**B.** Approval of Previous Minutes:

i. 01/11/26 minutes: Motion to approve by Tom Oxnard, seconded by Ed O'Connell. Carried

**2. STANDARD REPORTS**

**A. President's Report**

i. Full report ATTACHED

ii. Status of NMRA North Central Region noted

iii. Discussion of IRS requirements for US divisions

iv. NMRA branding. President O'Rourke said Chuck Diljak offered to assist divisions with adding the new NMRA branding to their logos. He said that National is offering $250 to produce new banners incorporating new look. He noted National would like new NMRA images in place by April.

v. Just after BOD meeting, President O'Rourke received word that Bob Davidson from the CNY Division has agreed to serve as the NER's NMRA Brand Ambassador. Bob designed a new logo and banner for the Division and said he would be happy to work with divisions in the NER to implement the new NMRA branding.

a. Bob has been an NMRA member for more than 30 years, and recently retired from an exhibit design and fabrication company he owned.

**B. Vice President's Report**

i. Full report ATTACHED

ii. VP Dave Insley reminded BOD of the need for nominations for annual Spate Award.

iii. President O'Rourke also noted request for nominees for NMRA president's award for Division services

**C. Treasurer's Report**

i. Full report ATTACHED

ii. 2026-27 NER budget

iii. Motion to approve Treasurer's report made by Art Dutra, and seconded by Rick Abramson. Carried

**D. Secretary's Report**

**E. NER Convention Committee Report** – Dave Insley

i. Full report ATTACHED

ii. It was noted that there should be some communication from NER convention committee soon regarding registration –starting about Apr. 1.

iii. National Convention (Empire State Express) ATTACHED

a. Chair Drew James reported that National entered into contract with Hyatt. Hotel is holding room prices at $169/night

**F. Achievement Program Report** – Bill Brown

**G. Coupler Editor's Report**

i Bill Rutherford stated that current issue is at printer--- It will be 30 pages thanks to support from Bar Mills and others

ii. Always looking for articles

iii. Bill said Coupler now operating in the black thanks to subsidies from supporters

**H. Communications**

i. Full report ATTACHED

**I. Webmaster's Report** – Jim Seroskie

Updated from shared account to individual account

**J. Office Manager Report**

**3. OLD BUSINESS**

A.. Volunteers to fill positions

i. Need to identify volunteers for previously announced positions of Assistant Communications Chair, Model Contest Chair.

B. RPI layout disposal

i. Stan Ames submitted ATTACHED report about NER's assistance in disposing of RPI NEB&W layout.

**4. NEW BUSINESS**

A. NMRA initiative for 2035 Will talk more in July meetings

B. NMRA branding

C. NER joining with RPI to license LCC technology

i. Stan Ames submitted proposal ATTACHED

ii. See ATTACHMENT 5C. Because NER cannot make cash grants to the RPI student group without jeopardizing their status, it is moved that the NER will facilitate the purchase of DCC/LCC and/or other needed equipment as the club builds its new layout. The NER appoints Stan Ames of the HUB Division and Doug Dederick of the Hudson-Berkshire Division, as NER liaisons to the RPI student group. Motion by Ed O'Connell, seconded by Drew James. Carried.

**5. AREA DIRECTOR REPORTS**

**A. Western**

**B. Northern**

**C. Eastern**

**D. Southern**

**6. DIVISION DIRECTOR REPORTS**

**A. Central NY**

i. Full report ATTACHED

**B. Eastern Canada**

i. ECD President Greg Williams is seriously ill.

ii. Go Fundme link to help Greg's family in ATTACHMENT below.

iii. Steve McMullin substituting for Greg. Steve reported that ECD leadership met briefly with Greg. Activities are planned to keep the Division active during the extremely difficult situation due to Greg's health.

**C. Garden State**

i. Full report ATTACHED

**D. Green Mountain**

**E. HUB**

**F. Hudson-Berkshire**

**G. Hudson Valley**

**H. Lakeshores**

i. Full report ATTACHED

**I. Little Rhody**

**J. Metro-North**

Rick Abramson noted that he attended Nutmeg Division meeting and was very impressed with its format.

**J. Nutmeg**

i. Full report ATTACHED

**K. Seacoast**

i. Full report ATTACHED

**L. Southern Tier**

**M. Sunrise Trail**

**7. Scheduled next meeting:** July 12, 2026, at 7:15 pm EDT/8:15 pm ADT

**8. Meeting adjournment** **8:15 pm EDT.** Moved by Ed O'Connell. Carried.

**ATTACHMENT 1**

# President's Report

March 29, 2026

## Positives:

- 2026 NER Convention in Southbridge, MA, hosted by HUB, Nutmeg and Little Rhody Divisions., October 15 – 18, 2026.
- 2027 NER Convention in Green Mountain Division in spring 2027.
- NERX was very successful.
- The NER has stepped in to facilitate the disposal of the RPI Club layout. Most of the items have been disposed of, still some items listed on eBay. Report included.
- Region logo has been updated. Status of Divisions? Assistance available and financial support if needed to produce new banners, etc.
- NER now has a Google account through the NMRA. Will be used for future meetings and possibly data management.

## Challenges:

- NMRA has asked each Region to name a "Brand Ambassador" to assist in integrating the new NMRA brand. Just after BOD meeting, President O'Rourke received word that Bob Davidson from the CNY Division has agreed to serve as the NER's NMRA Brand Ambassador.
- Dave Insley would like to identify a successor in the convention chair role, who can work with Dave and begin work on 2029 and beyond.
- Region officers terms expire in 2027. Need to identify candidates for President, VP, and Area Directors. I will not be a candidate.
- Steve McMullin is standing in for Greg Williams as ECD Superintendent. Greg is facing serious health issues.

## Ongoing

Oswego and Jefferson counties in upstate NY remain a concern.
Southern Tier Division has not been able to get a leadership structure in place.
Investigate possibility of forming new divisions with smaller geographic areas in the above counties, similar to WNY Division in NFR.

**ATTACHMENT 2**

NER Vice President Report

29-March 2026

**Spate Award**

Note to all Division Superintendents that nominations need to come from you for any deserving nominee. Please submit them along with a write-up by July 1, 2026. Description of the award is below.

You can find the complete nomination write-ups along with the past winners in the following document:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1xvrI8knIQWK1SOJEhZw1XHBX2BMXyYUiENVb_R9Sveg/edit?usp=sharing

For a description of the Spate Award, please review this document:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cu7CBmUgF34SPJmRImvmDezrLpZy1H3p/view?usp=sharing

**Springfield**

Thanks to all that helped in Springfield. We had a good show even though we packed it in early on Sunday.

**ATTACHMENT 3**

# NER Convention Committee Report -- Dave Insley

29-March 2026

**Current Highlights**

●2026 NERx Is in the books
●2026 Convention – October 15-18, 2026
●2027 Convention –April 29-May 2, 2027
●2029 and Beyond and time for new leadership

**Meetings**
Last meeting was held January 5, 2026.

**2026 NERx is a Wrap**
Four evenings of content included:

- 8 Clinics
- 8 Layout Tours
- 4 Roundtable Discussions
- 12 Tips and Tricks
- 15 Model Submissions from 10 members

Viewership was solid (as measured in 20 minute increments starting 20 minutes after start).

| | Average | Maximum | Minimum |
|---|---|---|---|
| Monday | 137 | 151 | 102 |
| Tuesday | 142 | 157 | 87 |
| Wednesday | 90 | 131 | 37 |
| Thursday | 135 | 168 | 97 |

We had 7 sponsors, each giving two lucky viewers a $50 gift certificate. Thanks for miniprints, Inter-Action Hobbies, Tony's Train Exchange, Mine Mount Models, ITLA Scale Models, Scale Sound Systems, and Iowa Scaled Engineering for their support.

**2026 Eyes on the NER (Southbridge, MA)**

Registration is expected to open on April 1st. The team is looking to pull together information for the website.

**2027 Green Mountain**
Planning is progressing.

**2029 and Beyond and time for new leadership**

Working with a member in the Southern Tier Division to explore a possible 2029 Convention in Binghampton NY.

2026 will be the 10th year for the current Convention Chair. Therefore, it is time to identify a replacement that can be in place by 2027 so we can have a transition period. Please let Dave know who we can reach out to for this important role.

**ATTACHMENT 4**

# Empire State Express 2028 National Convention Committee Report

**Submitted March 21st, 2026 by Drew James, Chair**

I am pleased to report that there has been significant progress in several areas of the convention since my last report in January.

Most importantly, **National has entered into a contract (3/27/26) with the convention hotel**, the Hyatt Regency. The Hyatt provided an updated proposal in which they held to the same pricing which was in their long since expired bid. It is our understanding that negotiations between National and the hotel are complete and National is expecting to receive an updated contract from the Hyatt which they expect to be able to sign.

The decision was made by National with our concurrence to not enter into a contract with the Wyndham hotel for their ball room space. This space was intended to be used for "Craftsman Corner". The view was that the space was costly and unlikely to be recouped from the sale of vender tables and special activity fees and the convention would be better served by keeping the overall cost down. We still expect to have room blocks at the Wyndham and the adjacent Hilton Garden Inn as there are not enough rooms for the convention at the Hyatt alone.

The train show issue is also resolved. This winter we worked with the Genesee Society of Model Engineers (GSME) to provide a proposal to National to host a train show in conjunction with the convention. This proposal has been accepted. GSME will have full financial responsibility and control of the show. Rather than being branded as the "National Train Show" it will likely be called the "Empire State Express Train Show". As is traditional, the show will be open to conventional goers only for an hour Saturday morning. Many thanks to NMRA and GSME member Mike Pyszczek for pushing this forward.

Chuck Diljak kicked off meetings with those layout owners whose layouts we have identified as candidates to be featured in one of the various publications leading up to the convention. We have had a highly positive response from the owners and several articles have already been initiated. The goal is to have several articles ready to be published as soon as the 2027 convention ends. Several members volunteered to help with photos as necessary. We have been in contact with the editors of RMC and MR as well as Cynthia from the NMRA Magazine. All have expressed support for the convention.

There has also been good progress made in other areas. For example, the Non-Rail committee has met with Visit Rochester which is helping them get quotes for several activities – such as a tour to Niagara Falls. Andy MacVie been working through our approach to sell convention merchandise – it will likely be a combination of pre-order and in person sales.

At this point, the most important open issue is getting a contract in place between the NER and National. I believe that we are not the only officially approved convention to not have a contract which means that the other conventions are more urgent.

**ATTACHMENT 5A**

## RPI – NEB&W Status Report

**March 24, 2026**

Our onsite activity in Troy, NY dealing with distributing pieces of the layout was completed in mid-February. We started with 77 sections of the layout. In the end 4 sections of the layout were cut up: 1 fiddle yard section, 1 very damaged section, and 2 sections where the buildings were saved leaving only a flat tops with little track.

I would like to personally thank Dave Insley, Cheryl Insley, Deb Ames, Greg Whittle, Doug Dederick and Tom Amrine for all the vast amount of work they put into this effort.

While we still have to verify final accounting, to date we have earned $24,248.54 after expenses, shipping and fees. Of this $9,862.70 goes to the NER, $5,965.35 remains in the fund allocated to the Students for Electronics and other layout supplies (from sales of their DCC equipment), $1,271.50 went to the HUB division for show sales, $4,695.44 went to the Amherst RR society for their support in Springfield, and an additional $2,453.55 went to the HBD for its work on this effort. In addition to the direct financial support, equipment, structures, and rolling stock went to the NER Convention raffle, Hub, HBD, and divisions that helped out in Springfield.

To Date we have also distributed NEB&W lettered equipment to over 44 RPI alumni, staff and society members.

While the main activity is complete, we still have a few items to wrap up. In April, after our garden railroad's first ops session, Greg Whittle will bring any remaining NEB&W lettered rolling stock back to the RPI Society for further distribution, and hopefully at the same time complete our distribution of NEB&W lettered locomotives as well.

In addition we still have some remaining DCC equipment listed on EBay which is slowly selling.

Going forward both Doug Dederick and I have gone through the RPI security check to be formal mentors to the society. Doug will be handling in person activities and I will work with the society to purchase items they desire for their new N scale model railroad. The funds we will use for this activity are the funds raised from the sale of their DCC items used on the HO scale NEB&W layout we distributed.

Stan Ames
NMRA-NER NEB&W Team leader
https://nernmra.org/nebw/
617 803 7626

**ATTACHMENT 5B**

# LCC automation Software Proposal for the NER BOD to consider.

Electronics used to control our model railroads continue to evolve. As advances in technology filter down more advanced solutions, which before were cost prohibitive, can now be achieved.

When we initiated the DCC effort in 1992 the goal was to standardize the control of model railroads. While we were successful at the track level users who wanted to include some form of automation were often stuck using the products produced by their system manufacturer. Later LCC emerged as way to improve layout control, but its use often required the use of two non-connected systems, DCC for track commands and LCC for layout control.

That is now beginning to change as LCC and DCC are now beginning to be integrated and used as a single system. The emergence of LCC based RailCom detectors, LCC Based WIFI decoders, and multiple manufacturers building interchangeable LCC based handhelds ushers in the next generation of model railroad control.

One product lacking in this evolution is an easy-to- use layout automation software package that can integrate everything together.

The purpose of this proposal is to jumpstart this effort.

Through our partnership with RPI we have been selling the DCC equipment used on the old NEB&W and putting it into a fund to be used to purchase new state of the art electronics for their new LCC/DCC system that we purchased for them.

Currently they have just begun to construct their new layout. Once they have trains running on this new layout they will need a fully integrated LCC/DCC software package.
The best software package currently on the market is one called iTrain. While iTrain has the control features needed they do not currently have an LCC interface which is needed to communicate to RPI's layout's control protocol.

The intent of this proposal is for the NER team to trade LCC hardware and expertise for an iTrain license or licenses.

Our proposal is for the NER RPI team to purchase and send LCC hardware to the iTrain staff and in return we will receive a license, which we will give to the RPI model railroad society once the software is fully integrated.
In the end this effort will cost the NER nothing as the cost of the needed LCC hardware is nearly identical to the cost of the license which we need to purchase anyway.

Working with the iTrain team also allows us to prove to iTrain staff the value of a closer relationship with the NMRA, which hopefully will result in some form of NMRA member discount for future licenses.

Stan Ames
NMRA-NER NEB&W Team leader
https://nernmra.org/nebw/
617 803 7626

**ATTACHMENT 5C**

# Re: NER management and dispersal of RPI DCC/LCC equipment

As proposed by Stan Ames

As part of the process of disposing of the RPI/NEB&W layout, it was agreed that the NER would undertake the sale of the clubs obsolete DCC system and assist the students in procuring a state-of-the-art system for their new layout. This effort has resulted in approximately $7000.00 in revenue which is currently held in the NER treasury. (These funds are in addition to the profit from sale and disposal of other parts of the layout.)

Because we are unable to make cash grants to the student group without jeopardizing their status and funding from the school, it has been determined that the NER will facilitate the purchase of DCC/LCC and/or other needed equipment as the club builds its new layout. The NER appoints Stan Ames of the HUB Division and Doug Dederick of the Hudson-Berkshire Division, both having been vetted and approved by RPI administration, as NER liaisons to the student group. They will advise and assist the students and forward requests for purchases to the NER President and Treasurer for approval and payment until such time as the funds are depleted.

These funds will be held in a separate line of the NER budget and reported to the NER Board as the funds are spent.

**ATTACHMENT 6**

**TREASURER'S REPORT** – Bill Rutherford

# NER 2025-2026 Anticipated Transactions

Below is our anticipated position as of 06/30/2026 based on current Net operating revenue, anticipated income and anticipated expenses.

Deposit: $3,919.38 – NER 50% split of 2025 Convention

Deposit: $1,220.00 – Second dues rebate from NMRA (currently late)

Coupler account: deduct $1,149.02 from current revenue as that will be going to pay for the printing of the next issue of the Coupler in early April. For budgeting purposes consider the

Coupler account a $0 although I do anticipate it generating a little income for the 2025/2026 fiscal year.

Expense, Communication (Wordpress Tools): $168.00

Expense, Communication (NER Domain Fees): $21.99 Expense, Communication (Divisions still to be renewed): $87.96

Current position: $17,204.25 (Includes $15,907.92 RPI)

Anticipated Income: $5,139.38

Deduct Coupler Account $(1,149.02)

Anticipated Expenses: $(277.95)

Anticipated Position 06/20: $20,916.66

# FY 2025 / 2026 BUDGET

| Income | Budget | Actual | % | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| NMRA Dues Rebate | $2,600.00 | $1,220.00 | | | |
| Donations | $200.00 | $471.59 | | | |
| Region Income / Convention | $1,825.00 | | | | $3,919.38 |
| Revenue from The Coupler | $0.00 | $1,149.02 | | | |
| Spate Award | $65.00 | $65.00 | | | |
| RPI Revenue | $0.00 | $22,102.99 | | | |
| Total Revenue | $4,690.00 | $25,008.60 | | | |
| | | | | | |
| **Expenses** | **Budget** | **Actual** | **%** | | |
| **PROGRAM EXPENSES** | $1,215.00 | $342.22 | | | |
| NMRA Dues Rebate Distribution | $0.00 | | | | |
| Acheivement Program | $650.00 | $166.87 | | | |
| Membership Development Grant | $500.00 | $100.00 | | | |
| Spate Award | $65.00 | $75.35 | | | |
| | | | | | |
| **COUPLER EXPENSES** | $389.55 | $0.00 | | | |
| Expenses from The Coupler | $389.55 | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| **BUSINESS EXPENSES** | $82.00 | $73.91 | | | |
| Presidents Awards | $50.00 | | | | |
| Legal Expenses | $32.00 | $0.00 | | | |
| Office Expenses | $0.00 | $73.91 | | | |
| | | | | | |
| **RPI Expenses** | $0.00 | $6,195.07 | | | |
| Expenses | | $6,195.07 | | | |
| | | | | | |
| **COMMUNICATION EXPENSES** | $1,443.98 | $1,193.15 | | | |
| Constant Contact | $442.40 | $502.60 | | | |
| Web Hosting Expense | $600.00 | $567.00 | | | |
| Region Domain Fees | $22.00 | $0.00 | | | |
| NERx Domain Fees | $13.58 | $13.60 | | | |
| Division Domain Fees | $198.00 | $109.95 | | | |
| WordPress Tools | $168.00 | $0.00 | | | |
| Total Expenses | $3,130.53 | $7,804.35 | | | |
| | | | | | |
| **Net Operating Revenue / Expense** | $1,559.47 | $17,204.25 | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Note: Web Hosting was renewed for two years in February 2025 | | | | | |

# FY 2026 / 2027 BUDGET

| Income | Budget | Actual | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| NMRA Dues Rebate | $2,600.00 | $0.00 | |
| Donations | $200.00 | | |
| Region Income / Convention | $1,825.00 | | |
| Profit from The Coupler | $0.00 | | |
| Spate Award | $65.00 | | |
| RPI Revenue | | $0.00 | |
| Total Revenue | $4,690.00 | $0.00 | |
| | | | |
| **Expenses** | **Budget** | **Actual** | **%** |
| **PROGRAM EXPENSES** | $1,215.00 | $0.00 | |
| NMRA Dues Rebate Distribution | $0.00 | | |
| Acheivement Program | $650.00 | $0.00 | |
| Membership Development Grant | $500.00 | $0.00 | |
| Spate Award | $65.00 | | |
| | | | |
| **COUPLER EXPENSES** | $389.55 | $0.00 | |
| Expenses from The Coupler | $389.55 | | |
| | | | |
| **BUSINESS EXPENSES** | $82.00 | $0.00 | |
| Presidents Awards | $50.00 | | |
| Legal Expenses | $32.00 | $0.00 | |
| Office Expenses | $0.00 | $0.00 | |
| | | | |
| **RPI Expenses** | | $0.00 | |
| Expenses | | $0.00 | |
| | | | |
| **COMMUNICATION EXPENSES** | $2,028.18 | $0.00 | |
| Constant Contact | $502.60 | $0.00 | |
| Web Hosting Expense | $1,134.00 | $0.00 | |
| Region Domain Fees | $22.00 | $0.00 | |
| NERx Domain Fees | $13.58 | $0.00 | |
| Division Domain Fees | $198.00 | $0.00 | |
| WordPress Tools | $158.00 | $0.00 | |
| Total Expenses | $3,714.73 | $0.00 | |
| | | | |
| **Net Operating Revenue / Expense** | $975.27 | $0.00 | |

**ATTACHMENT 7**

Board of Director's Meeting, March 29, 2026

# Communications Report – Constant Contact

Submitted by Chuck Diljak and David Start

**Transition to David Start**
The transition of the NER News emails and the maintenance of the contacts in Constant Contact have been completed. David managed the membership updates from the February membership reports without any assistance.

**Constant Contact Account Managers**
Constant Contact limited our plan to 5 users. However, I noticed after upgrading our plan to include surveys, it says we only have a maximum of 3. However, it is still currently allowing the 5 active accounts to remain after the upgrade.

| Account | Type | Active/ Inactive | Purpose |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bill Rutherford | Account Owner | Active | This is the main account for our plan, since the Constant Contact invoices are paid through here. |
| David Start | Account Manager | Active | To build and send NER News emails.<br>To maintain the contacts. |
| Chuck Diljak | Account Manager | Inactive | Due to the limitation of the number of users, Chuck uses Bill's account. |
| Dave Insley | Account Manager | Active | Used for the 2026 NER Convention emails |
| Artier Krass | Account Manager | Active | Used for the 2027 NER Convention emails |
| Andy Estep | Account Manager | Active | Used for the NERx emails |
| Will Everitt | Account Manager | Inactive | Was used for the 2025 NER Convention. He could be removed, but Will is a good Constant Contact user who could be made Active in the future if he wants a role. |
| Sue Osberg | Account Manager | Inactive | Sue was set up for the role of 2026 NER Convention emails. With her current situation, she is unable to take this on. Leaving her on in case she ever wants to resume her role. |

**Constant Contact E-Mail Open Rate**
Starting February 2nd, 2026, Constant Contact made some changes to improve the accuracy of Opens and Open Rate data. Starting on that day, Open Rates are calculated with confirmed opens only, excluding proxy opens from services like Apple's Mail Privacy Protection program. As a result, there may be a decrease in open rates — but this reflects a more accurate view of real customer engagement. By excluding privacy-generated activity, the metrics are more reliable and actionable.

**Constant Contact Surveys**
In 2025, NERx used the NMRA's Survey Monkey license to create registration forms for NERx's sponsored drawings. Since then, the NMRA did not renew its license and are using Google Forms, instead.

Initially, registration forms were created for the 2026 NERx sponsor drawings using Google Forms. However, it was discovered that since we are collecting email addresses, anyone entering the drawing needs to have a Google account to use this form. We felt that would reduce the participation in the drawings.

Constant Contact has a survey tool. However, it was not included in our plan. Upgrading our plan to include it increased our monthly cost by approximately $9, from $43.40/month to $52.50/month. This was approved by Ed O'Rourke. And, it worked extremely well during NERx. It was used in a very basic form for NERx. It could be used for other purposes, but an exploration of how robust it is will need to be done.

We can always go back to our original Constant Contact plan, also.

**Email history since the last NER Board of Directors meeting**

- Andy Estep and Chuck worked on the NERx emails, David worked on the NER News, Welcome, and Reminder emails.
- The lowest performing emails based on the open rates were the last four NERx emails because they were not automatically resent to non-openers, as they are time sensitive. When they are resent, it usually results in at least 10% more opens.
- The top performing links by total clicks:
  - The YouTube website for NERx livestreams, the last NER Coupler issue, after being posted to the website, and the NERx website.
- 19 emails sent:
  - 10 NERx emails. New this year was sending additional emails each day of NERx (4), highlighting the evening activities.
  - 3 NER News emails.
  - 3 Renewal Reminder email
  - 3 Welcome to the NMRA email

| Time Sent ↓ | Campaign Name | Sends | Opens | Clicks | Bounces | Unsubscribes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Thu, Mar 19, 2026, 6:00 AM | NERX 2026 - Mar 19 | 2,175 | 1,096<br>51% | 90<br>4% | 40<br>2% | 1<br>1% |
| Wed, Mar 18, 2026, 6:00 AM | NERX 2026 - Mar 18 | 2,179 | 1,095<br>51% | 95<br>4% | 40<br>2% | 3<br>1% |
| Tue, Mar 17, 2026, 6:00 AM | NERX 2026 - Mar 17 | 2,179 | 1,117<br>52% | 136<br>6% | 40<br>2% | 0<br>0% |
| Mon, Mar 16, 2026, 6:00 AM | NERX 2026 - Mar 16 | 2,182 | 1,240<br>58% | 153<br>7% | 40<br>2% | 2<br>1% |
| Fri, Mar 13, 2026, 7:00 PM | NERX 2026 - 06 | 2,182 | 1,301<br>61% | 83<br>4% | 44<br>2% | 1<br>1% |
| Tue, Mar 10, 2026, 11:20 PM | Welcome 2026-03 | 5 | 5<br>100% | 0<br>0% | 0<br>0% | 0<br>0% |
| Tue, Mar 10, 2026, 11:20 PM | Renewal Reminder 2026-03 | 57 | 35<br>66% | 5<br>9% | 4<br>7% | 0<br>0% |
| Tue, Mar 3, 2026, 6:00 AM | NERX 2026 - 05 | 2,178 | 1,455<br>68% | 88<br>4% | 43<br>2% | 2<br>1% |
| Thu, Feb 26, 2026, 6:00 AM | NER News - April 2026 | 2,179 | 1,424<br>67% | 40<br>2% | 45<br>2% | 1<br>1% |
| Tue, Feb 24, 2026, 6:00 AM | NERX 2026 - 04 | 2,180 | 1,460<br>68% | 51<br>2% | 46<br>2% | 0<br>0% |
| Tue, Feb 17, 2026, 6:00 AM | NERX 2026 - 03 | 2,182 | 1,489<br>70% | 73<br>3% | 45<br>2% | 1<br>1% |
| Thu, Feb 5, 2026, 6:00 AM | NERX 2026 - 02 | 2,185 | 1,098<br>51% | 77<br>4% | 42<br>2% | 2<br>1% |
| Wed, Feb 4, 2026, 10:16 PM | Renewal Reminder 2026-02 | 46 | 31<br>67% | 7<br>15% | 0<br>0% | 0<br>0% |
| Wed, Feb 4, 2026, 10:15 PM | Welcome 2026-02 | 11 | 9<br>82% | 4<br>36% | 0<br>0% | 0<br>0% |
| Tue, Jan 20, 2026, 6:00 AM | NERX 2026 - 01 | 2,171 | 1,533<br>72% | 77<br>4% | 42<br>2% | 1<br>1% |
| Mon, Jan 12, 2026, 8:30 AM | NER News - Jan 2026 - Test | 1 | 1<br>100% | 0<br>0% | 0<br>0% | 0<br>0% |
| Mon, Jan 12, 2026, 6:00 AM | NER News - Jan 2026 | 2,172 | 1,489<br>70% | 289<br>14% | 44<br>2% | 1<br>1% |
| Fri, Jan 9, 2026, 10:29 PM | Renewal Reminder 2026-01 | 46 | 36<br>78% | 13<br>28% | 0<br>0% | 0<br>0% |
| Fri, Jan 9, 2026, 10:28 PM | Welcome 2026-01 | 14 | 14<br>100% | 6<br>43% | 0<br>0% | 0<br>0% |

**ATTACHMENT 8**

# CENTRAL NEW YORK DIVISION Report

Submitted March 23, 2026 by Drew James, CNY Superintendent

In January, the division held its annual banquet. It was well attended with 50 members and their guests. This was the highest attendance in recent memory. For the program, Ed Olszewski shared his pictures and provided a travelogue of his recent trip riding the Indian Pacific across Australia.

Our annual meeting was held in Chittenango. Prior to the meeting Charlie Albee opened his layout for viewing by members. At the meeting we reviewed the state of the division using Vision 2035 as guidance. We believe that we are doing most things well but identified a couple areas where we could improve. At the meeting the following officers were elected:

Superintendent: Drew James

Assistant Superintendent: Walter Haner

Chief Clerk: Tom Lynch

Paymaster: Paul Blust

Two of the officers are serving for the first time. In addition, we have brought new members onto our board.

In March the division met at the beautiful Union Station in Utica and was given a tour of the station as well as some of the cars owned by the Adirondack Railroad. Many thanks to Roger Beiswinger for organizing the event.

Our annual operations weekend, “Ops ‘Till Drop” is nearly full. It will be held April 18th-19th.

**ATTACHMENT 9**

# EASTERN CANADA DIVISION

Submitted by Steve McMullin

As you may be aware, our ECD president, Greg Williams, has had a very difficult winter. In January, he was diagnosed with stage 4 pancreatic cancer, which had already spread to other organs. His health has been deteriorating since that time.

I am writing to you as Vice President of the ECD to let you know that at this time Greg is not able to continue serving on the NER board, or to function as ECD president, and he has agreed for me to take over his responsibilities until our division's next election of officers. I have agreed to step up do so. Greg is a very dear friend (and a former graduate student of mine as well) so you can imagine this whole situation is not an easy one for me or for the other members of our ECD executive committee.

Additionally, there is a go fund me account for Greg is any of you care to donate. We can't share this "Officially", but I have suggested it be posted to the NER FaceBook page. Any of you are also free to share it as you may wish.

A member of Greg's parish has set up a GoFundMe account to help Greg and his wife Barb Verner Williams with the significant extra financial burden they are facing.

Here is the link for anyone interested in donating:
https://www.gofundme.com/f/reverend-greg-williams-in-his-fight-against-stage-4-cancer

**ATTACHMENT 10**

# Hudson Valley Division Q1 2026 Report

March 29, 2026

**Program:**
This quarter we held one member meeting per month, each in a different county. In addition, all meetings were Zoomed. Meeting attendance has significantly picked up. We are now seeing over 40% member participation with many members bring interesting “show and tell” items. Meeting topics were “Working with LEDs”, “Getting on-track for NMRA Master Model Railroad (MMR) Author Certificate” and a hands-on clinic on weathering rolling stock. Finally, we also had several tables at the Kingston Model Train Show. Our display included a Timesaver module and a presentation on our past events highlighting many member’s constructed buildings, rolling stock and layouts.

**Membership:**
As of the last roster report (February 2026), in the prior three months we have lost three members. However, on the bright side, we have seen several new prospects at our meetings. Hopefully these prospects will become members.

**Finances:**
Although our finances are stable, we still need to be frugal with our spending. Our main source of income is the purchase of donated items and cash donations at our monthly meetings.

**AP:**
We continue to see no movement in this area. At our February meeting one of our members gave a presentation titled “Getting on-track for NMRA Master Model Railroad (MMR) Author Certificate”. This presentation was well received and I believe it spurred several members to write and submit articles for our March Newsletter.

**Communications:**
Our website continues to be active and our bi-monthly newsletter has expanded in size. Our March Newsletter was 15 pages long with several new authors.

Concerning “Vision 2035”: Our Division has settled on our preferred colors of a blue logo on a tan background (like the one on this report). Our actual logo will have to be tweaked a bit to comply with the new standard. One of our members is working on making the necessary adjustments and will create a vector graphic file.

Henry Kramer
Superintendent
Hudson Valley Division of the NMRA

**ATTACHMENT 11**

# LAKESHORES DIVISION

**Quarterly Report to the Northeastern Region – 2026 Q1**

As of the end of February, the Lakeshores Division had 105 active members with dues up to date. March's records are expected shortly after first of April in time for our next virtual EC on Wednesday, April 8th. Our financial status is strong with a bank balance of $6,742.62 and $25 in petty cash. The executive committee met virtually each month, minutes are available upon request.

Our Round Robin Operating Sessions continue to be popular visiting a different layout in the division. Sessions were held in January and March, but not in February, to prepare for our inaugural RocRPM weekend. There were more requests than slots for the next session in April, that the host offered to have a second session in the morning to accommodate everyone.

Saturday, February 7th, was our annual 3D3Rx virtual meet of the Lakeshores (NER), WNY (NFR), and Div12 (MCR). Each division was responsible for presenting a clinic during the event. Since we started doing this a few years ago, it has increased in popularity. This year there were 40 viewers simultaneously, an increase each year.

The inaugural RochesterRPM weekend on February 21-22 was very successful with 102 attendees. Several Division members offered clinics or learning tables during the event and there were both a 30+ module HO Free-Mo layout open for ops and an N scale T-Trak layout on four tables with 40-50 single equivalent modules. Later in the event, a few attempted some mini-ops on the T-Trak layout with some degree of success, so it will be developed for future events. There was a severe storm warning east of Rochester on Sunday that many bugged out early to beat the storm. There were many favorable comments by RPM vets and the two local hobby shops that offered discounts with the RocRPM nametag reported increased business. The custom imprinted lanyards we had produced were a big hit that the convention registrar inquired where we got them. Next year's event will be February 20-21 at the same location.

Ron Stacy and Nancy DeRycke hosted a Last Run of the Rondemont & West Shore open house in preparation for dismantling the layout to put the house up for sale later this spring. About two dozen division members and friends attended the event. NER President Ed O'Rourke visited and read and presented a proclamation naming February 28, 2026 Rondemont & West Shore Day. A smaller version of the R&WS is planned for a spare room in their new residence. A few days later, a video of Ron's layout was shot for presentation during the 2027 NERx and a local TV station interviewed Ron & Nancy for eventual broadcast when they found out a storied 25-year-old layout was coming down.

The Division staffed a recruiting booth at the Greater Rochester Train Fest (formerly the Great Batavia Train Show) on Sunday March 1st at the Dome Arena. A handful of interested people have been added to our mailing list for invitation to upcoming events.

Bill Rutherford interviewed Ed O'Connell, chief of the Ops Squad, for a feature article in an upcoming issue of the Coupler. A relatively new division member has requested the squad's response as he wants to invite others over to operate his DC layout that he's previously run solo. Two different Ops Squad stickers have been produced, one to promote our services and the other is a limited edition to report that we responded to a request and services were rendered.

The Division has published two issues of our bi-monthly newsletter, *Lakeshores Limited*, this year. The next issue is being created and is due for release just before May 1. Past issues are archived on our website. A Discord server initially established for executive committee communication has been made available to all Division members as a secondary means of communication since there is a low percentage of message openings sent through MailChimp.

Four members of the Lakeshores Division were featured during the recent NERx event as a layout tour, clinician, model showcase submitter, roundtable participant, evening host, or as committee members.

Our first in-person meet this year will be a joint meet with the CNY Division in Geneva on Saturday, March 16th. It is hoped to invite attendees from the inactive Southern Tier Division too. We also have the first of our Donuts On The Deck freeform meets scheduled for June and are looking to schedule a train-watching picnic and swap meet in July or August.

An expanded Op Around The Clock weekend is scheduled for September 18-19 with some new layouts and a potential return of another this year. Invitations are expected to be sent out in mid-July to those on the mailing list. A link to request an invitation is on our website.

The custom run of Lakeshores boxcars we commissioned last spring is almost sold out. Only three remain. Send an e-mail if you want one before they're sold out. $30 + $10 postage.

The Lakeshores Division's 65th anniversary occurs in 2027, might there be another special run car to commemorate the event? Stay tuned and find out. There's always something shaking in the Lakeshores Division. Follow our website www.LakeshoresNMRA.org and Facebook page www.facebook.com/LakeshoresNMRA.

Respectfully submitted March 22, 2026.
Ed O'Connell
Superintendent & Ops Chair

**ATTACHMENT 12**

# NUTMEG DIVISION

## 2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

81 people that attended in 2024 also attended in 2025 at least one time. 9 others that attended in 2024 did not attend in 2025.

36 new people attended in 2025 (2 virtually). 14 of those people did not actually attend the meeting but assisted the layout host in presenting their layouts to the Nutmeg Division.

We were scheduled to have our February meeting / event in the southwestern part of our division which was originally scheduled for February 14, 2026, (Valentines Day), but it was changed to February 21, 2026.

Due to the extreme weather conditions we had been experiencing, we have also decided to move the February 21, 2026, meeting to our main location at the Wethersfield Police Department's Community Room.

This central location would minimize travel distance for most of our members. We will return to our rotating meeting location when the weather improves and will resume with the western southwestern portion of the Division. This hopefully will be the June 13, 2026, meeting.

With the February 21, 2026, meeting / event we will also tried a new format for this meeting / event. We did not have any actual clinics.

## February's NEW "Winter Show and Shine" Event

This was an informal "Show and Tell" event was in the spirit of a railroad prototype modeler's (RPM) meeting. We asked the members to bring in a model or two, rail fanning photos, electronics projects, railroad historical artifacts, etc. Anything that they thought would be of interest to their fellow members.

They would sit at a table, grab a coffee and donut, and let members come over and talk to them, and they could also move around the room and converse with other presenters as well.

The topics were unlimited. Anything rail related was just fine.

Members love to see works in progress to learn how people construct their models. Also, do you have a project that is stalled? Bring it to the event and explain what is holding you back from completing the project. The collective experience of our members will probably give you multiple ways to get your project back on track towards completion.

Many subjects were discussed at the same time rather than just maybe two that only a few people were interested in.

This would eliminate the stress of formally speaking to a group, you're just having conversations with fellow train enthusiasts over coffee and donuts. This also gives our regular clinic presenters a break and lets them enjoy everyone's modeling and rail fanning, too.

We had 22 people physically in attendance and we also had (1) Hudson Valley NMRA member in virtual attendance. 2 new NMRA members, 1 Metro-North NMRA member and 1 additional person in attendance for the first time. The meeting was a great success and more than likely we will do it again in the future.

We also had a free door prize raffle of an HO Scale boxcar from Accurail provided by Mike Wheeler.

## Future General Event Meeting Dates:

April 11, 2026, Wethersfield Police Department, this will also be our annual meeting and voting for a director position. It will be the end of Art Dutra’s second term as Director.

At this meeting we will have one full length clinic and possibly 3 mini clinics, details are still being developed.

June 13, 2026, Western / Southwestern portion of our division location TBD.

August 8, 2026, Wethersfield Police Department

October 10, 2026, Northern portion of Our Division location TBD

December 12, 2026, Wethersfield Police Department and our annual Holiday Party.

These meetings / events will be in person and virtual via Free Conference Call.
https://join.freeconferencecall.com/nutmegdivnmra

The Nutmeg Division has purchased new audio-visual equipment to better serve the membership. We have been testing the system under actual conditions and have noted that some additional equipment is required to properly serve the membership.

We are in the process of procuring those items as additional funds have been approved by Nutmeg BOD to purchase those items which should be at about $300.00.

The current account balance for the Nutmeg Division is approximately $10,352.00.

Ronald J. Pelletier
nmranutmegmembership@comcast.net
Communication Manager / Membership Promotion Manager / Newsletter Editor

**ATTACHMENT 13**

# Seacoast Division Report

The Seacoast Division continues to move forward and currently has 145 members.

## Updated Website

An ad hoc committee consisting of Peter McKinney, Jim Seroski, Will Everitt, Joe Martin and John McHugh have been redesigning the division website to make it more dynamic and user friendly. The division realizes the importance of online presence to retain members and attract new members. We hope to have the website running sometime in April.

## Seacoast BOD Meeting

The Seacoast Division held a BOD meeting via Zoom on February 19,2026. The Board appointed the following to fill the following roles – the officers were elected in January.

* President – John McHugh, MMR
• Vice President – Joe Martin
• Treasurer – Jim Seroskie
• Secretary – Will Everitt
• AP Chairman – Tom Oxnard, MMR
• Associate AP Chairman – Peter McKenney
• Membership Chairman – Bruce Campbell
• Deputy Membership Chairman – Paul Lessard
• Webmaster – Jim Seroskie
• Switch Tower Editor – Geoff Anthony
• Faulter Fund Chairman – Tage Erickson
• Maine Registered Agent – Tage Erickson
• Activities Coordinator – Tom Oxnard, MMR
• Publicity Chairman – Joe Martin
• Historian – Jack Lutz

The Board discussed the new requirements for the official division logo. Jim Seroskie suggested a simple design of two lines with the NMRA on top and a smaller Seacoast Division on the second line. This design was adopted along with our unofficial logo which will only be used internally.

Jim Seroskie gave an update on the new website. The Board approved an idea to ask the membership to volunteer to staff the various train shows that the division attends. This idea hopefully will help with staffing, but also could be an easy way for members to get involved.

Tom Oxnard volunteered to host the summer cookout on August 8. Last year the Division held its first cookout at Peter McKinney's house and was a rousing success. The next event is scheduled for July 25 in Auburn, ME. The BoD recognized the need to discuss the new division standards and will hold a special meeting on March 26 to review the standards. Lastly, Jim Seroskie gave the Treasurer's Report.

## Spring Event

The spring event will be held on April 11, 2026 at the Stratham, NH fire station. Three clinics, social time and a show and tell time is planned. After the meeting Mike Grahame will open his layout for a tour.

John McHugh MMR
Seacoast Division President and Director