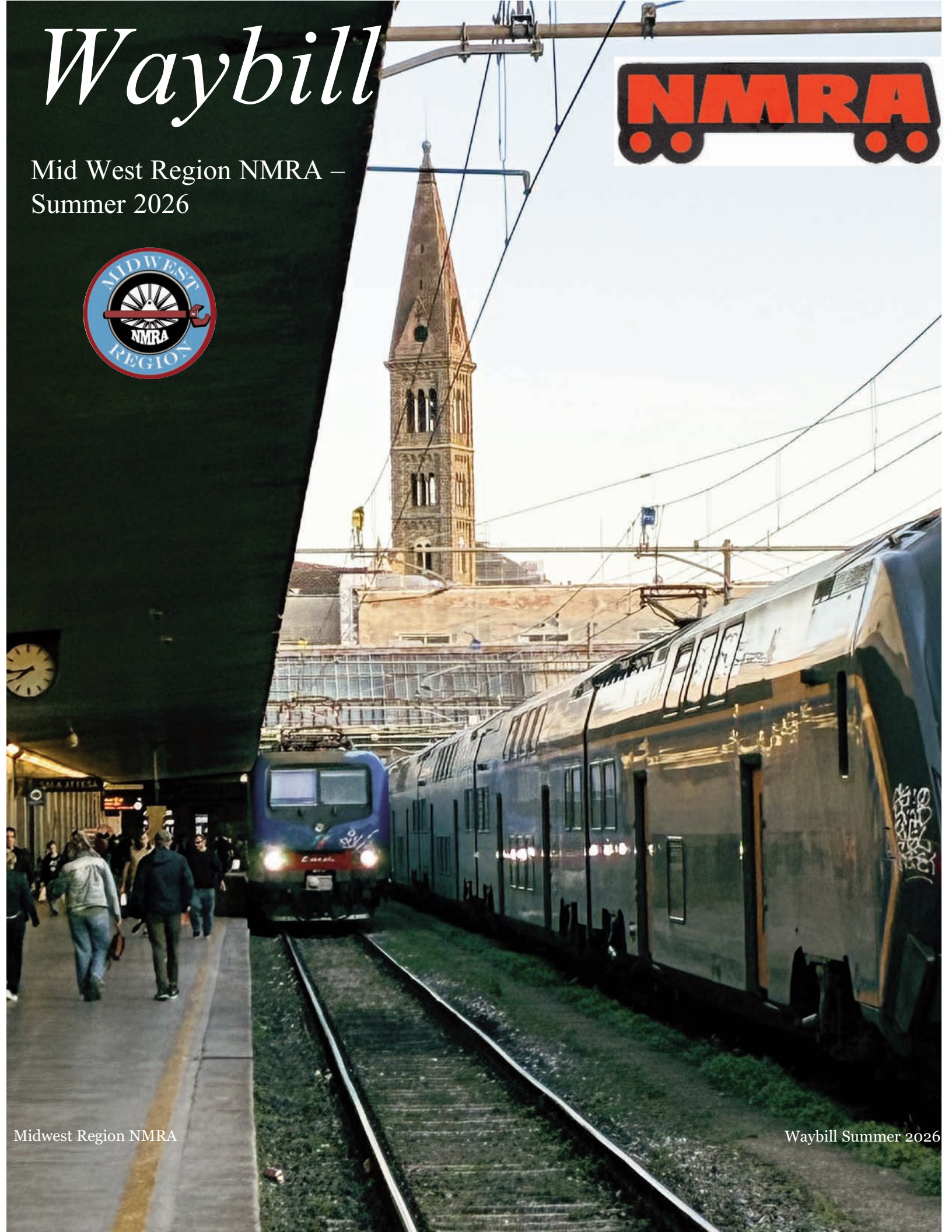


Waybill

Mid West Region NMRA –
Summer 2026



The *WAYBILL*

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Editor's Musings

With the approval of the executive officers, I am happy to announce that the following were elected in the last election for Director-at-Large positions:

Rich Hoker-Fox Valley Division
James Marciniak-Dupage Division
John Poray-Central Indiana Division
John Schaffer-South Central Wi. Div.

Remember- We have our 2027 election cycle for President, Vice President and three DALs beginning soon.

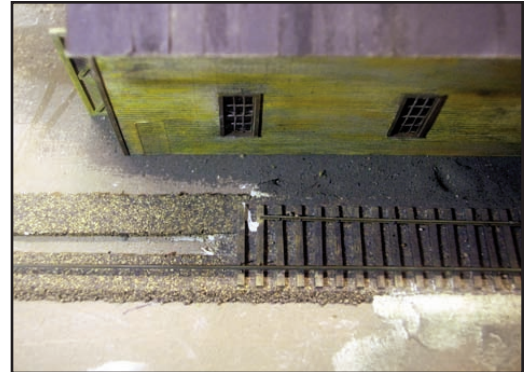
Some excerpts from the May 2, 2026 MWR board meeting. There will be a 2027 MWR convention. Dan Banks presented a proposal and asked for comments. It looks like it will be in CID territory. One of the possibilities is the Carmel, Indiana library. The board discussed meals and lodging.

NMRA 2027 convention. Dan banks, Eric Smith and chairman John Poray are looking at securing the NMRA National Convention in 2029.

They are putting a proposal together to submit to National, who signs the contracts and gives the final approval so the region has no risk. Already 1,300 people have signed up for Chattanooga, which is more than double the size of *IndyJunction* in 2022.

The first step was to get volunteers and they were able to get 60 in 48 hours, so there is a lot of support in the Region.

The Frugal Modeler is back with an interesting article on roadbed. I use HO scale cork roadbed on my mainline and N scale on my branch lines, although some track is hand-laid directly on homasote. To get the proper width with N scale roadbed, I cut the beveled edge off on side and place it in the middle, as seen below. I use DAP Spackling Paste to feather out



the edges from the cork, as most sidings have little or no profile. I apply it with a small putty knife. I like it because it has a long working time. Once it dries, it can be painted, and it will not crumble like plaster if chipped.



ON THE COVER

Trains in the Florence, Italy station, Santa Maria Novella in the background. See more on page 11-12. All photos by David Leider.

President's Report (John's Junction) John Coy MMR president, MWR 730

Spring has Sprung! The Easter Bunny came! Has the Easter Bunny ever brought trains to you?

There is a tremendous amount of activity going on in the National Model Railroad Association as usual! We have picked up several new members. There has never been a better time to be a member!

Which leads me to my "ASK SOMEONE" that I've written about several times before. The most effective means that I personally have discovered to gain members is to ask someone one on one. And, if by chance that person lives in your world to mentor and support them, and help them to be informed about upcoming events.

Currently, Bob Perry, Dan Banks and I are working with two virtually brand new members in Evansville, Indiana (The second largest city in population in Indiana) in hopes of growing the Evansville membership; including areas in western Kentucky.

As usual, I start with my constant reminder that I have put into each one of my articles since May 2025, If you are contacted via email or text supposedly by me, or any other Board Member, asking you for money, gift cards, electronic transfer of funds, etc., there is a 100% chance it is fraudulent scheme. This is a common occurrence and not just for the MWR / NMRA.

New NMRA Logo Released! AP program undergoing updates and revisions thanks to Ray Persing, national AP Chairman.

Next, I want to congratulate Jan Burnside who was appointed and then formally approved by the Board as the MWR Secretary. We are investigating obtaining Directors and Officers insurance to protect board members from potential legal issues in regard to MWR operations.

Since the last Waybill, there have been a multitude of events all around the Region with more coming up. For those of you on social media, please be sure to look up and "like" other divisions in our region. There are two great reasons for doing that. First, you will know what's going on. Second, you might learn of a great idea for your division.

The region has held two Regional events thusfar. A visit to the Linden Railroad Museum in



Linden, Indiana and also I set-up and coordinated a 90th anniversary celebration of the NMRA on Labor Day 2025.

The tentative plans for 2026 are to arrange a time and place to see the Big Boy as it crosses the county to the east! In addition, MWR Vice-President Bob Perry and I will be planning future Regional events in 2026. The Rochelle Railroad Park in north central Illinois will very likely be one of the events.

There will NOT be a MWR convention in 2026. This is due to the fact that the national convention is in Chattanooga, TN, which is the NMRA's "home turf" and within driving distance from the Midwest Region.

However, MWR Convention Coordinator Dan Banks and I have been discussing possibilities for a 2027 MWR Convention. The national convention will be in the Pacific Northwest and therefore, we will not be "stepping on anyone's toes."

At our meeting in May 2026, first Saturday, via Zoom, I will be bringing up the election in 2027, and to begin to reach out to possible candidates. I was pleased that members from the other divisions, other than the Central Indiana Division, stepped up in the 2026 election.

My opinion is that it is much better to have the board's representation spread out all over the Region vs. the vast majority of the board belonging to one division. All of our needs and experiences are different.

The vote on this came with the MWR

Election ballot early 2026. The MWR Election had 4 Director at Large positions "open" for May of 2026.

Congratulations to incoming DALs: Rich Hoker, James Marciniak, John Schaffer, and John Poray! Thank you for serving: Precilla Roderick, Dave Mashino and Ron Johnson!

Please note that the Midwest Region is planning to put on a Regional Convention in Carmel, Indiana, in 2027. We are in the preliminary stages. Daniel Banks is our Chairman for the Regional Convention and I am his assistant.

Further, it is looking as if Indianapolis will be hosting the 2029 National Convention. This isn't a done deal, but all indications at the moment of this writing lead to that assumption. Stand by for absolute confirmation. John Poray is the Chairman for the National Convention, IF it happens. Eric Smith, CID Supt., Daniel Banks, immediate past CID Supt., and I are John Poray's assistants.

CHECK OUT THE BIG BOY SCHEDULE AS IT IS CROSSING THE MWR IN JUNE AND JULY.

Last word: Register for the National Convention in 2026 before it's too late! That happened to multiple Members in 2025.

The next MWR BoD meeting will be held via the on-line Zoom application on Saturday, November 14 2026 at 10:00 am EDT. The meeting log-in credentials will be distributed by email to the BoD members approximately 1 week before the meeting. If you wish to participate as a guest, please contact the MWR Webmaster at: mwr.nmra.webmaster@gmail.com with your request.

Region News

Midwest Region Achievement Program Report

by Jim Landwehr- MWR AP Manager

I am happy to report that there has been a lot of activity from our members. They continue to take part in the Achievement Program all over the Midwest Region.

The following members received awards:

John Leow	Volunteer	Marquette, MI
John Dramm	Golden Spike	Waunakee, WI
John Dramm	Author	Waunakee, WI
Mark Willmering	Scenery	Wauwatosa, WI
Keith Kohlmann	Structure	Racine, WI
Keith Kohlmann	Prototype	Racine, WI
Keith Kohlmann	Author	Racine, WI
Keith Kohlmann	Scenery	Racine, WI

As always, work with your division Achievement Program Manager first, and if there is a problem, feel free to contact me.

Thanks,
Jim

The Frugal Modeler By Dave Nelson

Laying track is my teaching topic at the Wisconsin South Eastern (WISE) Division's annual "train school" and this year I used Walther's new HO foam roadbed product. Why? In 2025 several of my "pupils" complained that the traditional cork roadbed I used was increasingly hard to find, particularly Midwest Products roadbed (a proprietary mix of ground cork and ground rubber). I knew nothing of this shortage because my train school tutorials had been drawing on a supply of used cork roadbed and flex track I'd purchased long ago from a friend who had to quickly dismantle a rather large new layout. A quick look at some online model railroad forums supported this information about a shortage. (I was also out of the loop about how expensive these basic materials had gotten.) This Frugal Modeler article is,

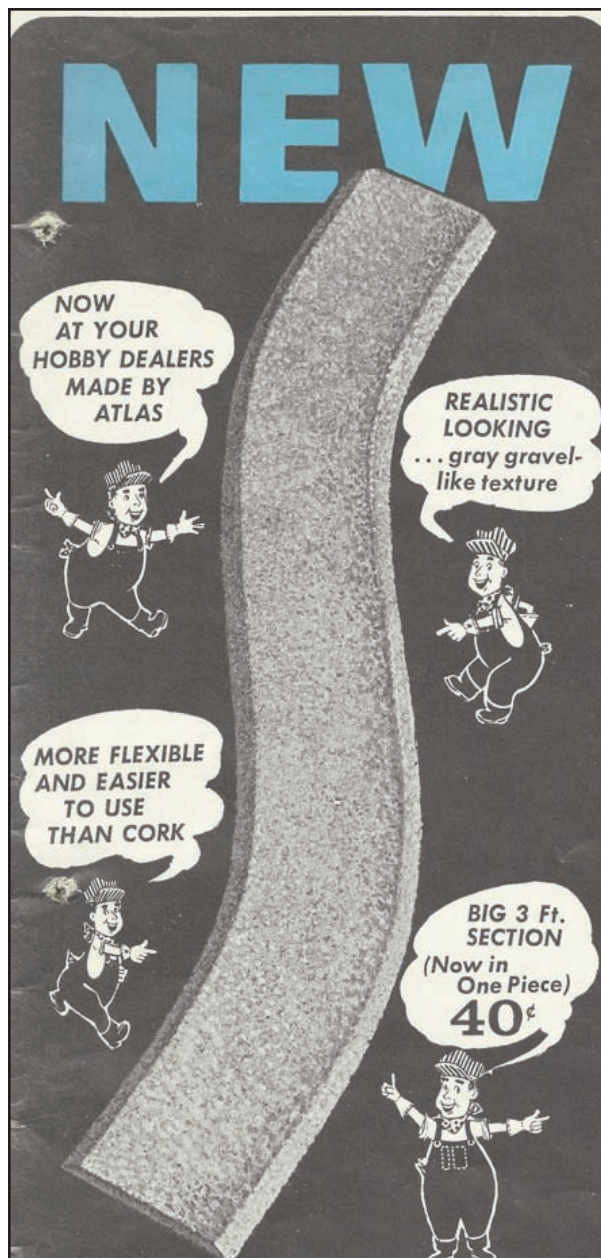
therefore, something of a report on my experiences with and opinions about this new Walthers foam roadbed (Woodland Scenics has long sold foam roadbed and at this year's "Mad City" train show in Madison I met, and got a free sample from yet another foam roadbed source, an Ebay seller known as "sparks00033").

<http://www.ebay.com/sch/sparks00033/m.html>

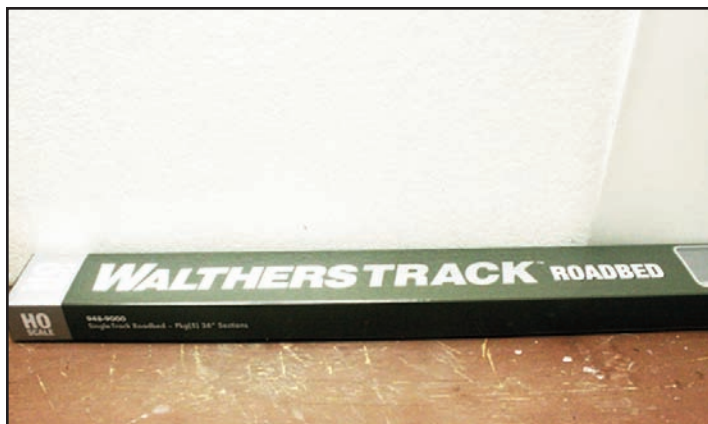
Shortages of cork --

Not just roadbed but wine bottle stoppers and other uses -- are nothing new; cork is prone to shortages since only certain trees in certain parts of the world produce it and those trees produce cork slowly. One cork roadbed shortage came in the early-1960s and to enlarge my first layout I needed to purchase Atlas's then-new one-piece roadbed made entirely of ground rubber. It was very flexible -- Atlas was still selling plenty of 15" radius snap-track back then -- and it stayed in the Atlas catalog for decades. Nonetheless, I switched back to cork once it became available again.

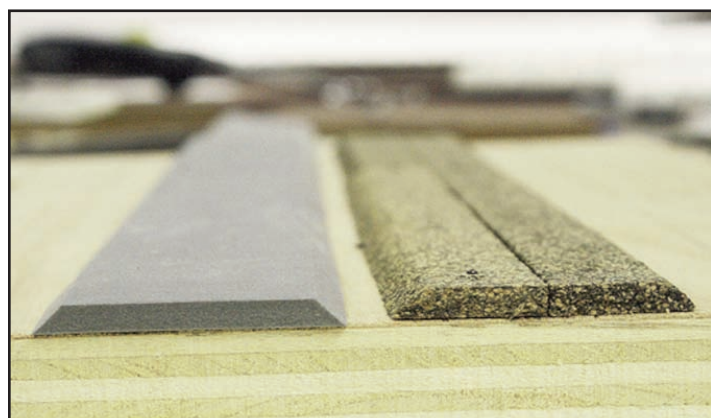
The Walthers foam roadbed, which comes in a package of five 36" sections, has its pluses and minuses, as with any product. The mere fact of easy availability is a plus. It has a very smooth top surface, so the light sanding often needed with cork is eliminated. It cuts with ordinary scissors, making it easy to fabricate roadbed for turnouts or crossings. Each piece is extremely uniform and while dimensionally it's not precisely identical with cork, maybe because it's made to metric dimensions while the cork is in inches, it is close enough that the two roadbeds could be used together. Sound deadening seems good, although nailing down track through the roadbed to



Atlas add circa 1964.



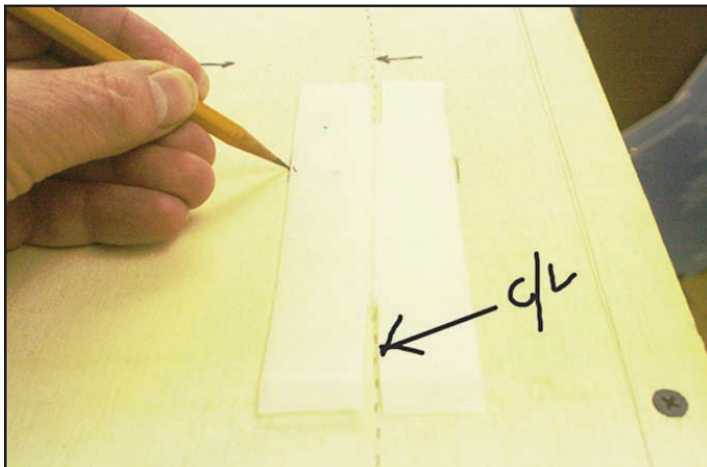
Walthers new foam roadbed.



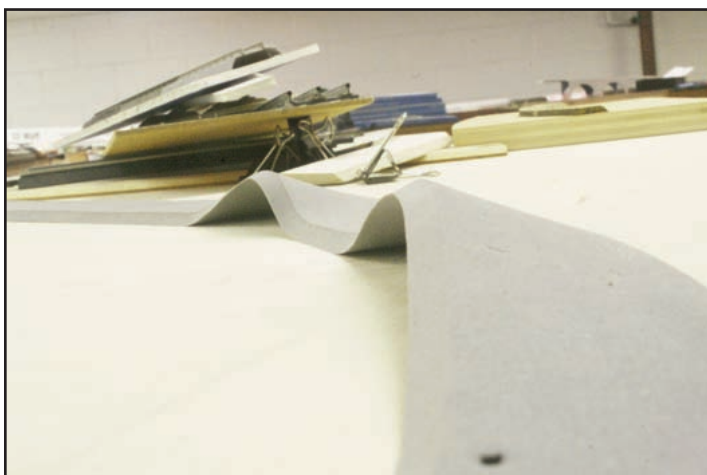
Walthers foam roadbed compared to cork.

the underlying plywood tends to negate the sound deadening. The light gray color is not unlike the color of homasote: unrealistic but neutral. Obviously, as a plastic it reacts poorly to solvent based paints and adhesives, but I don't use solvents around plastic-tie track anyway.

The negatives in my reaction relate to the



Centerline and edge jig fashioned from a milk jug.



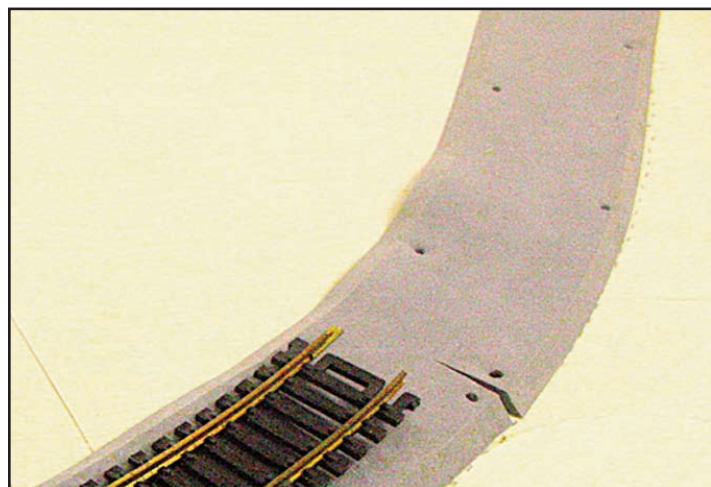
"Puckering" effect on Walthers roadbed.

things I like best about working with cork roadbed. I draw the centerline of my track plan (including easement curves) on the benchwork or the subroadbed. The two-piece nature of cork roadbed is perfect for this. As it comes cork roadbed has vertical edges but there is a lengthwise 45 degree slit and when pulled apart, the vertical edges are now lined up with the centerline. On curves, I nail down the inside curve piece -- the tighter bend -- first. Cork is dense enough that nails can be several inches apart. When

fastening the second piece alongside the first, I push the piece tightly against the one already nailed down and I place the nails exactly across from the nails in the first piece. This allows even tight curves and S curves, while minimizing the number of nails needed. I have never found it necessary to pre-soak even very old (30+ years) cork roadbed to make it flexible enough to curve, although it is true my layout curves are broad ones.

Because the Walthers product is one piece, I made a simple jig of translucent "milk jug" plastic with slots to reveal the centerline and the outer edges match the width of the foam roadbed. It is a bit tedious, but I can follow the marked centerline and pencil in where the edges of the foam roadbed go. And that's when the problems started. Trying to nail down the Walthers roadbed on a curve, no matter how many nails I used the roadbed would pucker and ruffle. It was like playing Whack-a-Mole. True I was trying to follow a tight 18" radius curve marked on my train school prop benchwork, but I had the same problem with a larger curve, and 18" radius curves are still being used. Following some online advice, I tried cutting slits into the edges but with limited effect. Cork has the heft and density to naturally lie flat with just a few nails; not so the foam product which is airy and light. I would be using a considerable number of nails if I used the Walthers roadbed as it comes. I have successfully laid cork roadbed with adhesive caulk (temporarily pinned on curves until the caulk sets) but have yet to try that with the foam roadbed. I have a feeling it would be a challenge and with caulk you really get just once chance to get it right.

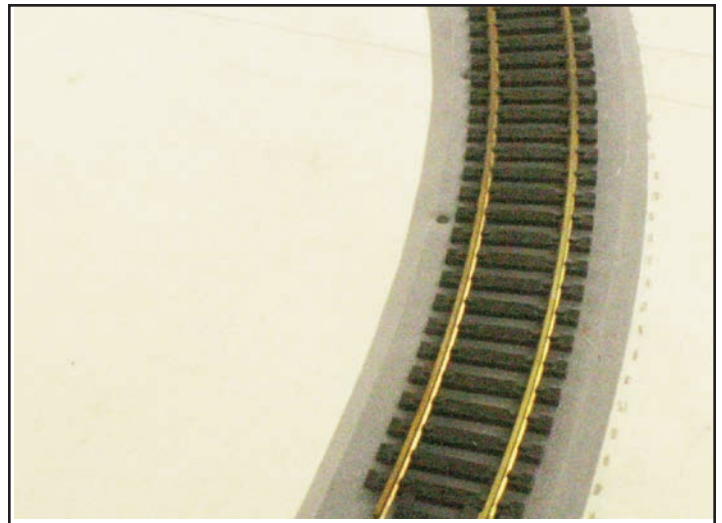
After my rather disappointing train school



Even slitting the edges of foam did not prevent a pucker.



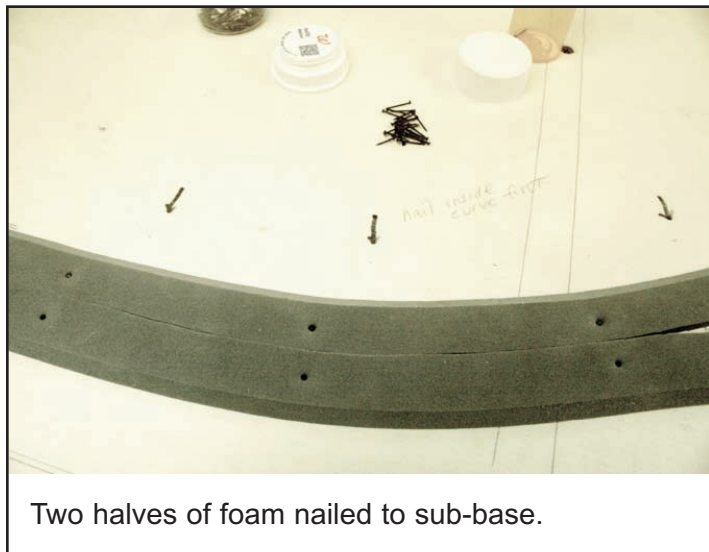
A half piece of foam roadbed cut down the middle and nailed.



Snap Track placed on Walthers roadbed prior to nailing.

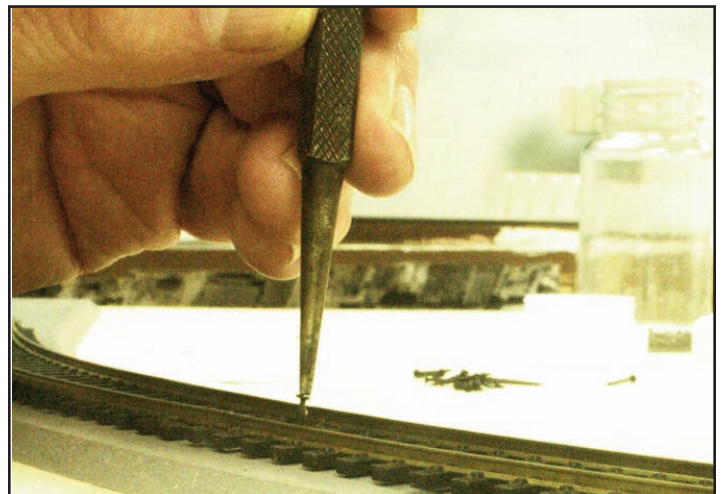
demos of the Walthers foam roadbed I decided to experiment. Using a metal yardstick to follow centerline points I drew on the bottom of the roadbed, I used scissors to cut an entire 36" piece down the middle into two equal pieces, which resemble the two pieces of cork roadbed. I then nailed them down following a centerline on the benchwork, fastening both pieces just as I would cork roadbed, and the problems of puckering edges went away. You'd probably use more nails due to the lesser density and weight of the product, but when I use the Walthers foam roadbed at next year's train school, this is how I'll lay it.

Another difference between form and cork is



Two halves of foam nailed to sub-base.

to paper thinness with your fingers. If you are nailing track on foam roadbed there is a greater danger of hammering the nail down so far that the tie gets bent down into the foam. That has the effect of pulling the rails together and narrowing the gauge. This mistake is possible with cork, too (one reason why I use adhesive caulk, not nails, to lay track), but I think it is even more likely with foam. One feature common to cork and foam roadbed: the 45-degree beveled edges



Carefully nailing the track on the roadbed.

worth mentioning. Cork is flexible but firm; it does not compress much, while foam can be squeezed almost

do not replicate the real "angle of repose" of ballast and trackside drainage ditches, but it is easy enough to just use more ballast to smooth out the angle to a correct profile. Again, foam roadbed with ballasted track is more easily pushed down; if it is, in theory the bonded ballast could crack or flake off.

Dave Nelson

OUR SOUTHWESTERN AREA MEMBERS Midwest Region / Central Indiana Division

by John Robert Coy MMR 730

Photos by Sam Dickenson

Far away, tucked away in the southwest area of our Midwest Region (MWR), Central Indiana Division (CID), is Evansville, Indiana, population in 2026 estimated to be: 114,404. Evansville is the third largest city in Indiana! The broader Evansville metropolitan area serves as a regional hub with a population exceeding 300,000!

It is interesting to note that Evansville, Indiana is approximately in the 150 to 160 mile range from: Indianapolis, Louisville, Nashville and St. Louis. It is the “center” point between these major cities.

It is very sad and extremely disappointing to report is that there is virtually no National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) activity. It is unknown who, how, and when the boundaries of the CID were created/determined. For those of you who may not be aware, the southern boundary of the MWR/CID extends to a western portion of the Kentucky/Tennessee border.



It makes absolutely no sense to me that the CID Division extends to a northern border of Tennessee! I admit, the alternatives aren't all that

great.

I'm estimating that there are approximately twenty NMRA Members in the broader Evansville metropolitan area; including those Members spread far apart in the western half of Kentucky.

I have long felt sorry for the Members in our southwest area because they are not in close proximity to CID activities; as we are, who live in a 60-mile perimeter around Indianapolis.

About one year ago at the beginning of my first term as MWR President, I reached out via email to the southwest Members asking them to join us; especially on Zoom meetings and asking them if there was anything we could do to improve their NMRA experience.

I also had been coordinating with CID Superintendent Dan Banks and NMRA Central District Direct Fred Soward to see what could be done to help and encourage our southwest Members.

Fast forward to 2026, I was contacted by Sam Dickenson of Evansville. Sam produces a Podcast and wanted to do a program involving the benefits of being an NMRA Member. I agreed to do it and requested that CID Superintendent Dan Banks be allowed to participate. Sam informed me that his friend, William Rauli, who I met at the World's Greatest Hobby Show in Indianapolis was also interested.

Long story short, Sam and William have both joined the NMRA and are currently the only two NMRA Members who live in Evansville. Both Sam

and William have a great desire to improve and expand the NMRA's presence in Evansville and general vicinity.

I informed Sam and William that they would have to be the catalyst and "boots on the ground" people to make the NMRA presence and experience in the Evansville area grow.

William and Sam have both very recently attended the CID booth at the Indiana State Fairgrounds in February 2026 and also the CID Modelers Meet in Carmel in April of 2026. They both are very serious and interested in building the NMRA's outreach in the southwestern area, as am I.

On Saturday, May 9th, 2026, CID Membership Chairman, Michael Roderick went to Evansville to promote the NMRA at a train show that is held at the Evansville Armory in May each year.

In addition, I, John Coy, President of the MWR and Dr. Robert J. Perry, MWR Vice-President went to this show to assist Michael promote the NMRA. Upon our arrival that day, the three of us met with Sam and William, who both volunteered and assisted us in promoting the NMRA.

William's and Sam's efforts paid off as I was approached by a couple, who asked for advice. The advice requested involved the male of the couple who was interested in the hobby, but had no experience and didn't know where to start.

The answer was simple: "Join the NMRA." And with that, I introduced this couple to William! I told this man that asking for advice and information about the hobby online is fine, however, there is no substitute for having someone right there physically with you, who can demonstrate to you in person tips, tricks and techniques.

The broader Evansville metropolitan area has a population of what is estimated to be 300,000. There has got to be a HUGE number of potential future NMRA members. I have suggested to Sam and

William about getting a portable layout(s) and setting up at local libraries in an effort to build the area's membership and activities.

Most certainly there are model railroaders there who could share their passion for the hobby and get together to share information. They could do lunches, dinners, operating sessions, tour one another's layouts, help each other with projects and questions, etc. Another great benefit in joining the NMRA is having all of the resources and support offered, including regional and national events.

I am pleased and excited to have William and Sam as Members! I'm also grateful that it is their hope, wish and desire to create a greater NMRA presence in, near and around our southwestern area.

Ultimately, I hope to see Evansville become a "hub" of activity that becomes either a sub-Division of the CID or potentially its very own stand-alone Division.

The potential is there! The population is there. There was a huge number of people at that armory train show in Evansville. I hope that we may come up with a brilliant plan and create an NMRA event in Evansville; so we may host and directly promote all of the happenings and benefits of NMRA membership.

Here is more to the story from Eric Peterson

Will (William) and Sam visited my layout after the April Modelers Meet in Carmel. I enjoyed their visit and enthusiasm about the hobby and the NMRA. Will asked about the two O Scale 2 Rail layout sections under the layout that did not fit in my layout configuration after we moved to Carmel. He was wondering about the cost. I said "Zero, they are looking for a home."

Monday May Fourth Will drove up to my house from Bloomington after an operating session at Trevor's and picked up the two layout sections. I have displayed these sections once at a CID train show and operated some locomotives using my Sprog and a laptop. There is some bridge work to do on the bridges but that will not take long. Will also now has a short section with turnout ties that can be the start of an additional section for a tail track. Total length of the sections is 11' and the additional tail track can be extended as needed. I have the code 125 frog and switch point set as well as some more rail I found after he left that I will get to them. Happy to have a home for these layout sections built in 1986+/-.
All Great Fun,

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And more from Mike Roderick, Membership Chairman, Central Indiana Division:
This was a great trip and fun time in Evansville. I plan on going back in November and will see about June in Madisonville, KY to represent the CID and the NMRA. Kevin runs a great show and is willing to help us out in getting presence in our area as long as he has a show in our Division. This is a win for all parties involved.

Later Mike Hirvela MWR DAL, added:
I read your note about the SW corner of the CID and ideas to promote the organization therein. BUT you forgot one thing. there is a model railroad manufacturer in Evanston: RIX PRODUCTS
President: Rick Rideout
Phone 812- 426-1749 Fax 812-423-3174
3747 Hogue Rd. Evansville In. 47712
rixproducts@gmail.com
Since 1980

I believe they are still there and could be a valuable resource as well. Worth checking out.

Size Matters! Portable or Movable? **by John Robert Coy MMR 730**

Very recently, there have been a huge number of questions with respect to what materials to use to construct model railroad bench-work. One question routinely brought up is the thickness of the plywood and dimensions of the frame boards. The majority of suggestions and recommendations make my back and knees begin to hurt just thinking about it!

My story with bench-work began in my bedroom in the early 1970s. Most people were using 1-inch plywood and/or homasote. Either is heavy. I decided (bad decision) to use 1/4-inch plywood; placed on top of TV trays for layout number 1. It was lighter in weight, easier to manage, but a terrible decision.

Fast forward about twenty years later, I became a Member of the Yellowstone Valley Railway (Modular) club in Billings, Montana. This was a HUGE modular setup! The corner sections were killers! These were all so heavy! It took at least two strong men to carry these corner sections. It was not fun.

I think whoever(s) planned the construction of the corner sections was a sadist or planned to land a

helicopter on them. It has been over thirty years since I carried a corner section and the thought of doing that until this very day puts me in pain immediately.

In 2018, for a number of reasons, I joined the NMRA. (I digress here. I should have joined in the early 1970s.) For too many years, I have missed going out into the public and operating a model train layout. It is fun to meet others and many of these people that you meet are not or have not been exposed to the hobby.

My first idea and thought was how I would construct a portable layout to display at the many Central Indiana Division train shows/displays.

I take no credit for this brilliant idea. FOAM had already become popular. And with good reason, it is much, much easier and lighter to manage than a plywood sheet.

My very first portable layout was a duplication of John Allen's famous Timesaver, EXCEPT mine was constructed in O gauge (3-rail) with Gargraves track and Ross Custom Switches.

Due to my perceptions involving the weight of O scale equipment, I elected to use two-inch thick foam. I also used 1 by 4s for the framing. This layout has appeared in the NMRA Magazine, including a picture with me holding it. It weighed a whopping 16 pounds!

I was very pleased with my creation as one person could easily carry this layout, BUT it was OVERKILL!!! I didn't need anything close to 2-inch thick foam.

There is a HUGE difference between a layout being portable and movable. Portable means it is ridiculously easy to move by yourself and one could even take a walk around the block with a layout in hand. Movable means it is a pain in the Gluteus Maximus (bootie) and you dread the thought of moving it, but it is possible, with assistance, inconvenience and pain.

Yes, my Timesaver is great! Easy to move, BUT the price of foam has SOARED due to its popularity!!! And, I learned over time that the 2-inch thickness of my foam was completely OVERKILL. 1-inch thick foam is way more than sufficient.

Fast forward to 2025/26 and my latest two portable layouts builds. One of those is in G gauge. Yes! A stand-alone, single piece, complete G gauge layout featuring Thomas and Friends! The layout is eight feet long and 4.5 feet wide.

That thing must weigh a million pounds!,

right? I admit that I cut-down my framing material to 1 by 2s. Yes, really! G gauge on 1 by 2s. The topping is half-inch foam. The framing is on 16" centers. It works! It has been moved and run many times.

I admit to straining my middle and index fingers (Two fingers only) as I lifted this G gauge portable layout to place it wherever I want it to go. This assembly weighs approximately 21 pounds. I will admit that due to its overall size, it is convenient to have one person on each end, but one person can easily lift and walk with this layout in hand.

In addition, instead of using glue for the G track, I used 1/8 inch diameter toggle bolts. Obviously, the use of these toggle bolts somewhat increased the weight of the layout, but it provided the means to easily remove the track and turnouts, or make whatever changes, easily.

NOTE: This lightweight bench-work construction method does NOT have to be restricted to portable layouts. A home layout could be constructed in the same manner. Think about it! When the day comes you move you could be moving lightweight sections of your home layout to your new residence.

An 8 by 4 one-half inch thick sheet of plywood weighs about 35 pounds. An 8 by 4 one-half inch

thick sheet of foam weighs about 5 pounds. You won't need help moving foam. YOU can save a lot of money by stopping constructing unnecessarily heavy layouts that people could dance on top of and also killing yourself in trying to carry these heavy materials.

With G gauge track, O gauge track, and S gauge track (old style track), You may use 1/8 inch toggle bolts to secure the track-work in place vs glue on foam. I personally prefer this option as it makes changing track-work easier.

With S scale ties, HO gauge and smaller, 1/8 toggle bolts are too large and one would have to use the white glue method of securing roadbed and track-work, but the lighter weight construction method described here would be a very good option.

The average person moves every three to five years. It is likely you may move several times in your life. Consider how easy and convenient it would be to take your layout with you, because it would be framed using 1-inch thick foam on top of 1 by 2 frame boards. It works for G! It can work for the smaller scales as well.

Food for thought! John Coy

My European Vacation By David Leider MMR

I just returned from Europe two weeks before writing this. We (my wife and I, brother Dan and his wife) had been planning this for over a year. We visited the major cities in northern Italy before taking a Mediterranean cruise out of Livorno. Of course we traveled by train from city to city. Everyone has heard of how wonderful the European Railway system is and, although I have been to Europe many times, it keeps getting better.

All of our tickets were purchased online before we left. And there were options between cities. Several different companies operate trains between the same cities, so depending on how much of a hurry you are in, you can choose your train. We opted for high-speed and used Italo.

When you enter the station, you find your train number and track. You already have your car reserved, so you look at the monitors along the track to see where your car number will stop. Throw your luggage aboard, find your seat and you are all set.



Commuter train at the Porta Nuova depot in Verona. Nearly 77,000 people pass through Verona daily.



Typical Italo trainset at the Porta Nuova depot in Verona. They ran push-pull, an engine is at each end.



Mak G2000BB freight locomotive at the Porta Nuova depot in Verona. Built by Vosloh in Kiel, Germany.



I was surprised to see several vintage streetcars in Milan along with more modern ones



Siemens freight engine at the Ferrara depot. It is owned by Duetsche Bahn, the German railroad.



Commuter train at the Porta Nuova depot in Verona. It is on the line between Milan and Venice.



Switch engine at the Livorno depot. Being a seaport, traffic is heavy. It says Mercitalia Shunting & Terminal,

David Leider