



## **NMRA Achievement Program – Virtual Judging & Evaluation**

Pacific Coast Region of the NMRA is pleased to announce that it is offering virtual judging and evaluation of models and other items that members have prepared to meet goals or requirements of the Achievement Program.

PCR members Frank Markovich, Jack Burgess, Earl Girbovan, and Chris Palermo recently met online to explore and define a virtual judging and evaluation program. If you wish to have a model or other item judged or evaluated on a virtual, remote basis using online media, or if you need help with forms or documentation for a model or AP Certificate, please contact any of us. For information on AP categories and award requirements, please visit the NMRA website at <https://www.nmra.org/education/achievement-program>.

### **Evaluations and Judging Available Now**

Judging is available now for many Certificates. In general, the format is for you to prepare the documentation as you would normally for a contest entry or Statement of Qualifications and then add photos or a video showing the details. Judging will be done by reviewing the supplied materials. You may be asked to do a video call to clarify some items. Details by category are below.

**Golden Spike Award.** The Golden Spike Award is an introductory award in the AP and almost anyone who has built a layout, or a set of modules, will qualify for this award. From a high level, what you need to qualify is to display six items of rolling stock, show the completion of sections of model railroad setting, show completion of three different kinds of trackwork, and electrical operation. If you've completed these things, PCR wants you to attain this award and looks at submissions with a view toward approval and not criticism. Once you have verified that you have met the requirements, here's how to arrange review:

- Prepare a summary of your items that satisfy the requirements. This can be in an outline form.
- Using the summary as a script, create a cell phone video showing each of the items. Use good lighting, try to use a steady hand, tripod, or unipod, and pause at key features. After recording, check that everything is reasonably visible.
- Post the video on YouTube or other location that the judges can view it.
- Submit a PDF of the paperwork (Statement of Qualifications) to the judges.
- The judges will review the paperwork, watch the video, and assuming all the requirements have been met, sign the Golden Spike Award form and return it to you.
- PCR has already awarded a Golden Spike Award that was submitted in this manner, with video, and judged remotely. You can get one too!

### **For Categories that lead to a Master Model Railroader® Designation**

#### **Master Builder – Cars**

In addition to the contest paperwork, prepare a sufficient number of color photographs to show the features of the model and the details.

- The photos can be taken with a smartphone camera. Ensure there is enough light to produce a good, focused image.
- Use uncluttered background; some modelers set up a curved sheet of posterboard, pieces of foam core board, a dropcloth or bedsheet.
- When these items are ready, contact the AP Chair of your Division by phone or e-mail to arrange submission. Photos can be emailed or transferred using a cloud storage system. Your AP Chair and/or judges in your Division will review the submission and return a completed judging form to you.

### **Master Builder - Structures**

In addition to the contest paperwork, prepare a sufficient number of color photographs to show the features of the model and the details.

- See the notes on photos, and the submission procedure, described above for Cars.

### **Master Builder - Scenery**

In addition to the Statement of Qualifications paperwork, prepare a video of the scenery to be judged, and upload the video to a location where judges can view it.

- As with the Golden Spike award, a written outline and narration, or notes, describing the scenery and the features would be very helpful for the judges. For example, if a particular scenic detail is notable, make written notes about it, so it's not missed when the video is viewed.
- Be sure the video is well lit, uses steady camera shots, and clearly shows important features.
- See the notes on image quality, and the submission procedure, described above for Cars.

### **Model Railroad Engineer - Civil**

In addition to the Statement of Qualifications form, the requirements call for being able to run a locomotive through the trackwork.

- To demonstrate this, prepare a video of the trackwork submitted, such that the number of feet of track can be verified. and also show in the video a locomotive running through the scratchbuilt trackwork. Note that it's not necessary for the locomotive to run through ALL of the trackwork, only the scratchbuilt items.
- This demonstration also can be done using a video conference call (such as Zoom, Facetime, Google Meet or other) with advance arrangements. Contact your Division's AP Chair.
- Be sure the video is well lit, uses steady camera shots, and clearly shows important features.
- See the notes on images, and the submission procedure, described above for Cars.

### **Model Railroad Engineer - Electrical –**

In addition to the Statement of Qualifications form and associated paperwork, prepare photos sufficient to document the items you are demonstrating.

- A demonstration also can be done using a video conference call (such as Zoom, Facetime, Google Meet or other) with advance arrangements. Contact your Division's AP Chair.
- See the notes on images, and the submission procedure, described above for Cars.

**Chief Dispatcher**  
**Association Volunteer**  
**Association Official**  
**Model Railroad Author**

These certificates mainly require proper documentation. You can prepare it in a word processor or in a PDF, and submit it remotely for validation. (Several PCR members completed several of these certificates this way.) We would be happy to help with advice on getting any of these awards, paperwork and validation.

**Master Builder - Prototype Models**  
**Master Builder – Motive Power**

These categories are not available for virtual judging at this time. If you want to submit something in one of these categories, please contact your Division's AP Chair or one of the people above for submittal instructions.

**Let's Get Started!**

Spending a lot of time at home right now? Now is a great time to complete those modeling projects that have been marinating in a corner of the workbench, or to get recognition for models, scenes or layout elements that you completed long ago.

**Who to Contact**

For submissions, evaluation and judging

Coast Division submissions – Earl Girbovan, [egirbovan@netzero.com](mailto:egirbovan@netzero.com) or Tel. 650-248-9255

Daylight Division submissions – Dave Grenier, [grenida@pacbell.net](mailto:grenida@pacbell.net) or Tel. 408-431-8989

Redwood Empire Division submissions – Giuseppe Aymar, MMR, [Giuseaymar@aol.com](mailto:Giuseaymar@aol.com) or Tel. 707-291-0701

Sierra Division submissions – Dave Bayless, [davebayl@pacbell.net](mailto:davebayl@pacbell.net) or Tel. 530-613-5784

General questions on virtual submissions and judging

Frank Markovich, MMR, [frank@frankmarkovich.com](mailto:frank@frankmarkovich.com) or Tel. 408-505-2727

Chris Palermo, PCR President, [cjpalermo1964@gmail.com](mailto:cjpalermo1964@gmail.com) or Tel. 650-208-3150

General questions on the Achievement Program

Jack Burgess, [jack@yosemitevalleyrr.com](mailto:jack@yosemitevalleyrr.com)