

2018 *Cincinnati Express* MCR Convention Final Report

Wow, the *Cincinnati Express* has left the station. We had fun hosting this big convention and from the feedback we've received our guests loved it as well. We're very proud of Cincinnati Division 7, our city and our area's layouts. We could not wait to share them with everyone.

When we started planning this convention over 3 years prior we hoped for 220 registrants, maybe 250, and had a wild idea of 300. We ended up with an incredible 365 registrants from 19 states, including 90 spouses (the MCR average is about 50) and 13 children. We've since surveyed attendees to try to determine why we had such great attendance. We expected there could be many reasons, including great planning/design, great layouts/attractions, great team, great hotel, relatively low registration fee, great publicity/transparency and great execution. Look through the following sections to see what we discovered.

Our guests were treated to 67 amazing layouts (35 published), 10 bus tours, 52 clinics, 150 guest operator positions (across 19 layouts), layout open houses and op sessions all 4 days and a wonderful hotel. 117 attended the special EnterTRAINment Junction event and 167 came to our Saturday night reception and banquet. It was wonderful to see all the hard work pay off for our leaders and volunteers. We planned to exactly break even on this event. Due to the huge turnout, current estimates indicate we may net a surplus of several thousand dollars.

Charlie Getz (President), Pete Magoun (Incoming President), Gerry Leone (Vice President), Frank Koch (Chief Financial Officer), Mike Brestel (At Large World-Wide Director), Bill Neale (Central District Director), Don Phillips (Publication Manager), and Christina Ganzer-Zambri (Marketing Consultant) all participated from the NMRA Headquarters Team.

Hal Miller, Editor of Model Railroader, Lou Sassi, Contributing Editor of Model Railroader and Gerry Leone, also a Video Publications Host for Model Railroader, made wonderful presentations as our featured clinicians. Gerry also kept us all in stitches as our banquet speaker. His talk can be viewed on MCR's Facebook page.

There were an incredible number of planning and execution activities done to make this event a success. These are evident in the following reports, insights, recommendations, details, photos and other attachments. Thanks to all of you that came, and all of you that welcomed our out-of-region friends. We hope to see all of you next year as we renew old friendships and make new ones in Boardman, Ohio when Division 1 hosts the 2019 MCR convention.

Rick Crumrine
Chair

John Burchnall
Vice Chair

Report Sections

Candid Photos from the Convention

Overall Report with Master Event Schedule, Economic Budget and Approximate Sales

Attendance and Feedback Analysis

Sub-Committee Reports and 2-page Publicity Flyer

Separate Attachments

Expanded Registration Package and Publicity Slides

Timetable/Program (excluding the covers)

Space Needs and Diagrams (Hotel Meeting Rooms and EnterTRAINment Junction Exhibition Hall)



NMRA President Charlie Getz fields a question



Others in the Leadership Team participate



Charlie Atkinson, Chair of the 2005 Cincinnati Limited National Convention



Attendees plot their strategy while studying the convention program and layouts packet



Relaxing in the Atrium



Vice Chair John Burchnell relaxes



Lots of White Elephants to buy



Paul Musselman and the Company Store



Attentive attendees at Assistant Superintendent Chuck Endreola's Clinic



Bus tour group staging in the Atrium



Boarding one of 10 comfortable buses



Two of our 13 young modelers having fun

Photos by Don Phillips



Enjoying the Wine Tasting at the Meet and Greet



Zumba demo at the Meet and Greet



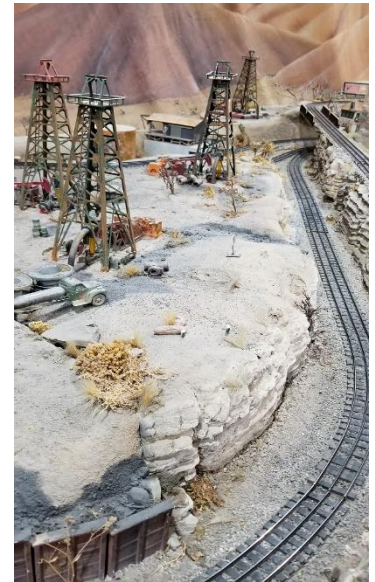
Happy customers at the greeting card making clinic



President Charlie Getz brown bagging it into the Wine Tasting?



Larry and Hildy Bonhaus treating us to great music



Neil Young's layout at EnterTRAINment Junction



Tri-State N-Trak guest layout at EnterTRAINment Junction

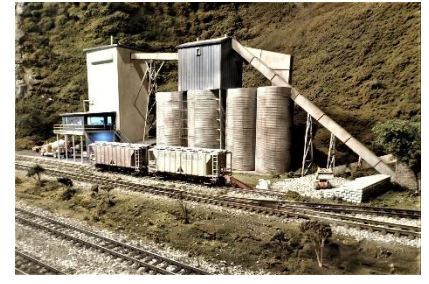


Water Fitness Aerobics in the hotel pool



Ohio Valley Sipping & Switching Society guest layout at EnterTRAINment Junction

Photos by Don Phillips, John Burchnall and Ruth Anne Burchnall



EnterTRAINment Junction's "Train Journey" model railroad



Behind the scenes at EnterTRAINment Junction



Matandy Steel on the "Steel Tour"



Tropicana plant and "Juice Train" tour

The American Sign Museum tour



Chair and Vice Chair Report

Cincinnati Express Design Strategy –

- We intentionally emphasized our strengths (quantity and quality of layouts, strong general and industry attractions, many operating session slots, great hotel, EnterTRAINment Junction) while also devising good rail and non-rail clinic programs, banquet, TCS booth, hotel layouts, raffle and a huge white elephant sale (vs. silent auction)
- We featured our layouts in novel ways - open houses and guest ops all 4 days, scenicked layouts at the hotel, EnterTRAINment Junction pizza reception with 2 large guest layouts, 4 different great model railroad mini-bus tours, and 2 premier early bird layouts
- We carefully formulated a breakeven budget at the MCR average 220 attendee level while also enabling a relatively low \$75 primary registration fee with \$25 for guests/teens and younger kids for free, including subsidies for some bus tours and meal events
- We intentionally sought an affordable and nice hotel in a great location – then we negotiated a deal we couldn't refuse (no meeting room fees, reasonable lodging count minimums, 3 year advance contract with fixed reasonable food and lodging prices)
- As we did with our 2005 NMRA National convention, we intentionally designed nearly all events to not overlap, thus enabling back-to-back bookings if folks desired such
- We strived for high quality execution of everything, including publicity – missing only on 1 non-critical item and another beyond our control (see Improvement Areas section)
- We implemented several unique features at this convention (see this specific section)

Key Planning Documents – 2 to 3 years in advance of the event, we devised initial drafts of five key documents that guided and reflected nearly all our planning decisions. We strongly recommend all convention planners do the same. Taken together they define your plan.

- **Committee Roster** – Very early on we listed all the leadership roles we needed and then recruited folks to fill those positions. We then captured this “committee roster” on a single page document, plus included everyone's phone numbers and email ids. This confidential document was circulated only to the team leaders and was extensively used.
- **Strategy** – This described our key focuses and desired features, many unique, for our specific convention. See the section above on this.
- **Space Plan** – 3.5 years before our event we estimated the room size needs for each convention activity. This was key in our visits to several candidate hotels. Once we narrowed our hotel choices down to two, we devised initial space plan diagrams for each. Comparing those plans and the economics of each hotel's proposals guided our decision.
- **Budget** – This was our most important and revealing planning document, as it captured most of the “plan” for each convention activity, as well as our registration fee strategy. This was not just a table of simple numbers, but rather a math model where the basis for each line item was expressed within an equation that linked to other variables, such as attendance. We then used this initial budget to determine how to have lower registration

fees and for sensitivities to different attendance levels. Our initial budget was tweaked over time, but didn't vary substantially beyond absorbing our contingency and reducing our base attendance projected surplus from \$1000 to zero (per attached below).

- **Event Schedule** – In addition to the budget, having an accurate and visual master schedule capturing all room and event timings is critical to all your planning efforts. This gets everyone on the same page and enables conflict management and demand planning. We used an Excel spreadsheet, with rows for each room/event and narrow columns representing 15 minutes. Cell outline commands were used to outline rectangular blocks for each event, with text and cell fill colors used to label each. The final version of this schedule was imported into the center pages of the convention program/timetable. Since spreadsheets enable mathematical equations, we also created a powerful demand model version by entering approximate attendances for each event in extra rows beneath each event. It was then a simple matter to sum each column to total the number of attendees present for each 15 minute increment. This demand model was very important in allaying the fears of some that we had too many parallel activities.

Publicity Strategy – We intentionally (and even unintentionally) created and widely circulated clear and compelling information about the key features of our convention well in advance -

- **Website** – About 3 years prior, we added a Cincinnati Express page to our website, plus links from other key existing pages. This convention page was populated with as much key information as became available, including items typically never seen on webpages, such as: full master schedule, full layouts schedule, overall layouts map, white elephant electronic form, detailed ops selection form, detailed hotel and EnterTRAINment Junction space plans, refund policy, TCS booth information/link.
- **Flyers** – 3 years prior we prepared large dual sided “Save the Date” postcards having our logo, convention dates and 3 key features. 2 years prior we had a short powerpoint slide deck. A year prior we devised a color dual sided 8.5 x 11 inch flyer, plus expanded and updated the slide deck. These were handed out at our booths in the 3 prior MCR conventions, plus our flea markets, shows and monthly meetings. The Rail and General Interest bus tours were not firmed up until about 9 months prior, so all promo materials before then had “Tentative” banners on those items.
- **Shirts** – Over 3 years prior we devised our name and logo, then had custom embroidered shirts made. Our members bought these and wore them everywhere. People asked questions about them, leading to great word-of-mouth publicity.
- **Neighboring Regions** – About 4 months prior we surveyed the websites of all adjacent regions and built an email list of all main officers and newsletter editors. We then emailed all of them a compelling note about our convention and asked them to post it and our flyer in their newsletters. This and other factors produced 51 registrants from those regions, excluding 15 already affiliated with the convention (speakers, friends).
- **Expanded Registration Package** – Similar to our website, our registration package contained extra items that helped everyone better plan their activities and sign-ups. This

was publically available in early January on our website, as well as most of it in the electronic and hardcopy issues of the January MCR Kingpin newsletter. We also emailed it in mid-December to all pre-registrants, meeting our promise to provide them priority for activity sign-ups.

- **Non-Rail Registrant Mailing** – About 2 months prior to the convention we snail-mailed each Non-Rail registrant a letter reminding them of the general interest events available for them to sign up for. Our Registrar did receive some added selections from this.
- **OPSIG** – We scheduled many guest operating sessions across all 4 days of our convention and advertised it as substituting for our typical SWOOPS guest ops event held every few years. We then advertised our convention via emails to our past SWOOPS participants, as well as ads and articles in the OPSIG newsletter.
- **Booths** – We set up and often staffed convention display booths at our annual show, annual flea market and prior MCR conventions all 3 years before our big event. We also set up at an MER convention, plus several monthly meetings at Division 3 and 7.
- **Layout Collage Posters** – Over 3 years before our convention our webmaster starting creating attractive 1 page photo collages for each of the scenicked layouts in our Division. PDFs of each collage were posted on our extensive “Layouts & Clubs” tab of our website. Each collage was also mounted on pieces of black foamcore board, then 9 each were attached onto a large 30 x 40 inch sheet of white foamcore. Over the following months we ended up with 4 of these giant posters, displaying 36 of our layouts. These posters on easels formed the cornerstone of our publicity booths. Over time we also included some of the compelling pages from our convention publicity slides.
- **2017 Convention Advertisement** – The 2017 Louisville convention leaders graciously invited us to place a free color ad for our convention on the back page of their Timetable (Program). We did so, and extended the same to the 2019 convention.
- **Word of Mouth** – This should not be underestimated. Some attendees said this was key to them coming. Our many members, friends, layout owners and leaders became ambassadors for our event, and every conversation mattered with friends, relatives, doctors, store clerks, non-NMRA modelers, hobby shop owners and patrons, church members, fellow travelers, etc. Wearing our shirts often spurred these conversations. We also encouraged layout owners to invite out-of-town friends in our invite letters.
- **Traveling Slide Show** – One of our members with broadcast experience presented our slide show at the 2017 banquet as well as a couple local divisions. We originally planned to do the same at other MCR divisions, but never got around to it. It didn’t appear to matter, as all our great electronic publicity seemed to work well.

Cincinnati Express Unique Items –

- Kids under 13 free – this resulted in 11 young kids registering with at least one adult
- Extra content on website – full master schedule, full layouts schedule, overall layouts map, white elephant electronic form, detailed ops selection form, promo materials, detailed hotel and EnterTRAINment Junction space plans, refund policy, TCS info/link

- Color Coded Tickets – Yellow (layouts), White, Blue (rail), Green (general), Pink (non-rail)
- Spreading Layouts and Ops sessions across all 4 days – solved previous conventions issue of too many layouts to see in 1 or 2 days and some layouts having no visitors
- Great Model Railroad minibus tours – 4 tours covering 3 different layouts apiece
- Used our proven Color Dot system to form and manage sub-groups for layout bus tours
- EnterTRAINment Junction Pizza Dinner w/ behind-scenes tours and 2 large guest layouts
- Many NMRA national team officers were in attendance – most giving presentations
- Subsidized the Banquet, Ladies Luncheon and some bus tours to make them more viable
- TCS, NMRA LCC Layout, DXI Sound Decoder Installation Booth – very popular
- Large Screen Display of Extra-Fare Events – real time availabilities and times
- Police officer escort – for curbside viewing of CSX yard off the Western Hills Viaduct
- 90 minutes between Rail Clinics (vs. 75) – 15 minutes to pack up and 15 min to set up
- Rail Clinics thru lunch – since folks eat at different times + spreads out eating crowds
- Rail Clinics Keyed 2 Ways – Sequential #'s linked to alphabetic names/descriptions

Economics –

- See attached for our original zero-based budget – our actuals are still being worked
- Actuals are expected to net a surplus due to –
 - Huge attendance (365, netting 145 more than our base budget of 220)
 - Correspondingly higher extra-fare activities sign-ups (negating those subsidies)
 - Correspondingly high volumes from the raffle and white elephant sales
 - Sale or transfer of all A/V equipment to Division 1 (next convention) and Division 7
 - Several expenses lower than budget (hospitality, registration, printing, credit card fees, signs, publicity travel)
 - Incurring only 2 significantly higher expenses than budgeted (\$100 more for police escort, \$250 in PPE safety equipment) – net, our budgeting was very thorough
- For future conventions, subsidies should continue to be budgeted for selected extra-fare events to enable attractive fares in countering high bus and food costs

Improvement Areas –

- **Contest Room Size and Open Hours** – When we were planning all the spaces in the hotel we knew the contest room was tight, but we had no other options. In the end we made it work by using narrow tables (the hotel calls them “skinnies”) and squeezing in a few more. However, the resulting narrower aisles caused the regional contest chair to decide not to allow guests in during the judging - contrary to what was published in the program.

Then, in another major reversal from the program, the Regional Contest Chair decided not to open the room after the judging and before the banquet. The reason was his team had spent significant time placing all the winning ribbons and didn't want anyone to see who won until after the banquet. He decided his team wouldn't have time after the

banquet to place the ribbons. This upset several attendees, including those that needed to get their models since they were leaving and not coming back. It turns out those folks could have knocked on the door and would have been let in to retrieve their model, as long as they promised not to tell anyone who won. However, the sign on the door didn't say that, which caused folks to be upset and confused.

In past conventions this problem was solved by placing all the judging papers face down, and then placing plain white "winner" slips of paper on all the award winners, with ribbons hidden underneath. Once the banquet was over, the team simply removed the blank cover paper to reveal the awards. This or something similar definitely needs to be put in place, as it appears to be the only way to enable folks to see and photograph the models and "winners" on Saturday, plus entrants picking up their models, for the 50% or so of the attendees that are not attending the banquet.

- **Hospitality Room** – In another deviation from our program and signage, our hospitality room did not serve coffee or tea. Apparently there were miscommunications amongst our committee and no one was really in charge of the room. As a result, our chair and his wife ran out and purchased bottled water, ice and cookies. On Saturday another of our members supplied more cookies when the others ran out. In our survey, a few guests grumbled about the lack of coffee and tea. However, regardless of the mix-up issue, the need for a separate hospitality room for this convention appeared highly questionable since the hotel had a huge nice open atrium area for folks to gather and relax. Future conventions having such nice hotel amenities should seriously consider dropping the separate hospitality room.
- **Rail Clinics in Registration Package** – If possible, it would be ideal for the clinic slate and schedule to be done by the end of November so it can be included in the first distribution of the registration package. Several attendees requested this to aid in scheduling their time. This would require sending clinicians a draft of the convention events schedule so they can ask for clinic times away from tours and other events they wish to attend.
- **Interfaces with Others in Authority** – Those that run events know issues can often arise when others outside your team have some authority for your event. This occurred in two out of four such instances for CX. The two successes were the banquet agenda and the Sunday MCR Superintendent's breakfast meeting. The most embarrassing instance was the aforementioned change in contest room open hours, despite previous negotiations to have an acceptable policy in the convention program/timetable. The other miss was minor, involving a miscommunication on the start time of the Friday night MCR BOD meeting. In the future, we strongly recommend the responsible MCR officers pro-actively reach-out to the Convention Chair on each interface matter, no matter how minor they think it is. This should ensure everyone is on the same page, including our guests.

Insights for Future MCR Conventions

- Bus tours and big food events (banquet and luncheon) require significant subsidies to make the fares more reasonable and attractive (to offset high bus and food costs)
- Strive to find a nice hotel that offers all meeting spaces, tables and chairs free in return for reasonable room counts for each of 3 nights – free parking is also a big draw
- A/V equipment (computers, projectors, screens, cables) can be a huge expense – buying used or heavily discounted is likely the least cost, especially if professionally refurbished
- Complementary/Gratis items can quickly add up – they should be very judiciously offered (we had only 3 comped outside clinicians and subsidized 9 full time committee leaders)
- Resourceful sourcing can save lots of money (registration bags/local maps obtained free from local chamber of commerce or visitors bureau, custom printed neck wallet name badges via on-line discounter, used A/V equipment, discount sign printer)
- Advertising in the OPSIG quarterly newsletter and placing notices in OPSIG email/yahoo/website yields interest from serious operators, both in and out of the region
- Consider White Elephant Sales instead of Silent Auctions – they generate much interest and provide instant sales, without last minute frustrations and complex closing efforts
- Try to have a larger contest room than we had - we didn't have any other options, and fortunately we were able to make it work
- We must have a way for the contest room to be open after judging and before the banquet. This is a must to allow the many attendees not going to the banquet to see and photograph the “winners” (they don't need to know the “places”) plus pick up their models if they are leaving for the day.
- Having a large electronic tour desk display of the status of all ticketed event availabilities and times works great to keep everyone informed and encourages more sales
- In addition to a printed layout address list and clear hand-drawn maps, having a custom google map pre-set with all the layouts was helpful to those with GPS or a smart phone – only 1 person called our “lost helpline”
- Hospitality rooms may not be necessary if the hotel has a large central atrium for folks to gather and mingle
- Advertising to adjacent regions can yield significant additional registrants
- Large host divisions may naturally have an attendance advantage since their own members boost the totals (e.g. – Div 7 has about 250 members and about half registered, with many of the rest helping host several layouts apiece)
- The traditional dog & pony road show at all divisions to help publicize the convention is not necessary if you have excellent electronic promotional materials (flyer, registration form, etc.) posted at least a year in advance and updated frequently on a clear and complete website – Facebook, OPSIG and MCR email notices also help spread the word
- Spreading layout open houses and operating sessions over all 4 days appears to be the solution to both enable guests to visit more layouts and net more guests for each owner

Other Topics

- **Tickets** – As we did for our 2005 NMRA National Convention, we used an Excel spreadsheet to generate the vertical and horizontal text for all our tickets, printing out an 8-up page for each need, then using those in a commercial laser copy machine (ink jet is not color-fast) to print onto purchased perforated ticket cardstock. We had different colors of cardstock to make it easier to identify tickets – blue for rail items (merchandise and tours), yellow for layouts, green for general interest, pink for non-rail (merchandise and clinics) and 4 colors for each of the banquet dinner entrees. Everything worked great.
- **Interior Signs & Easels** – As we did for our National, we had 22”x28” sheets of rectangular commercial cardboard silkscreened with our convention logo at the top, then we used 2 sided tape to fasten 2 to 4 clear page protector sleeves below in landscape fashion. We then used Excel to create all the interior signs we needed, using huge fonts, and printed them out on plain white paper. Several signs had multiple pages for each sleeve, to reflect different events each day, such as the 3 rail clinic room signs. Then it was a simple matter to place all the pages into the proper sleeve on each sign-board. Bob Shreve led the team to place all our 30+ easels and sign-boards at locations pre-marked on our master floor plan diagram. Bob also inventoried and repaired all our many easels we had in storage, most made for our 2005 national and also used at fall shows. Bob also took all our signs and easels down as final events in each room ended. For future events, we suggest using thicker cardstock or corrugated plastic to minimize curling from humidity.
- **Hotel** – Our hotel was a joy to work with, beginning over 3 years prior when we negotiated our contract. Further, extensive interior renovations were completed just 6 months prior to our event, making it essentially all brand new. We asked them to make us an offer we couldn’t refuse, like gratis meeting rooms, chairs and tables, and fixed food prices, in exchange for reasonable numbers of room nights, and they delivered. The hotel location was also superb, with convenient access to EnterTRAINment Junction, the Interstate highway, most of the layouts and many local restaurants.
- **Meeting Room Keys** – Timely locking and unlocking of the doors for each meeting room is often a headache for such complex events. Fortunately this hotel graciously provided us with two sets of keys for each room having a traditional lock, plus two sets of key cards to unlock the other rooms, along with an important Allen wrench needed to lock/unlock the panic bars on the doors of the five ballrooms. We entrusted the leaders of each room with one key, while retaining the other key for a backup. The single wrench proved to be an issue once when we were late in unlocking a clinic room to allow for clinician setup.
- **Layouts** – The quantity and quality of model railroads in our Division are one of our key strengths, and we intentionally featured them in a variety of ways across all 4 days – including 2 premier layouts open Thursday afternoon, pizza dinner at EnterTRAINment Junction, scenicked layouts at the hotel, 4 great model railroad bus tours (covering 12

premier layouts) and rotating open houses and ops all 4 days. Spreading the self-guided tours out over all 4 days worked well to both enable guests to visit more layouts and hosts to have more visitors. Accommodating all the interactions between the owners that also helped run other layouts proved especially challenging when scheduling all this. We provided each host one of our standard corrugated plastic yard signs customized with their unique layout number. Each attendee was given an extensive layout guide book that included descriptions, addresses, schedule and hand-drawn maps. This time the page with the overall map included color keyed layout markers to more readily discern which layouts were open when. Also new was a pre-set Google map for use in attendee's smart phones to directly run their GPS.

- **Bus Tours** – On Friday and Saturday we successfully ran 10 bus tours (4 layouts, 4 rail and 2 general interest) all using air-conditioned commercial buses and drivers, and our own experienced guides, each equipped with our customized guidebooks containing maps, etc. The tours were intentionally all 3.5 to 5 hours long, during either the morning or afternoon, so there was no need to provide meals, plus folks could book back-to-back tours if desired. Mini-buses were used for most of the layout tours for a better fit on tight residential roads. Also, regardless of bus size used, we limited the number of sign-ups to about 25 for all layout tours. This increased the cost per person, but more importantly enabled longer viewing times per sub-group at all layouts due to fewer sub-groups. We used our proven color dot system to easily designate who is in which sub-group (see attachment). We stocked each bus with gratis coolers of iced water bottles – this is a nice touch and costs very little to provide. Our team's dispatcher managed the bus window signs and coolers, plus the timing of each guide leading their flock to load. We used the hotel's large sunken atrium for our bus loading staging areas and it worked great. Finally, we subsidized the costs of a few of our bus tours to make the fares more reasonable and uniform. In the end, sign-ups were strong enough to just break-even on all the bus tours.
- **Tour and Registration Desks** – Our Tour and Convention Registration Desks were conveniently located in the entrance lobby of the hotel, across the lobby from the hotel registration desk. These desks also served as our Information and Volunteers Check-in Desks. This worked well in all respects, including facilitating frequent between desks communications. As we did at our 2005 National, we had a real-time large electronic display of upcoming ticketed events. This showed tickets availabilities and timing for each event, helping keep everyone informed and encouraging walk-up sales.
- **Volunteers** – Randy Kerka led our efforts to recruit and follow-up with all our many volunteers, using a spreadsheet to document assignments. This is a complex task as folks can easily end up double-booked, sick or simply forgetful. It's further compounded as commitments to help layout hosts are not normally shown on the volunteer schedule.

- **Check-in Packet** – The packet everyone received upon check-in at the Registration Desk included a bag (with the timetable/program, layout guidebook, a county map and literature for local attractions) plus an envelope (with pre-printed name badges, monogrammed neck wallet, event tickets, summary receipt and popular vote contest ballot). The bags, maps and local info were graciously provided by the local Visitor's Bureau. The nice zipped neck wallets and name badges were surprisingly in-expensive via an on-line discounter. Everything worked great, except some guests didn't see their popular vote contest ballot (to be filled out and deposited in the contest room) and a few guests didn't realize the layouts information was separate from the timetable/program. Clear instructions on both these items were in the timetable/program, and both items are the norm at MCR conventions. However, this feedback from a few is still understandable since we had about 13% first timers and 18% from outside the MCR.
- **Audio/Video Equipment** – These items can easily be a large cost. Their performance is critical to having a good convention experience, not only for the 3 rail and 1 non-rail clinic rooms, but also for the Registration/Tour Desks, as well as for back-ups, including the contest room and any other needs. Renting is generally cost-prohibitive. We dismissed borrowing these from other Divisions or our members as that is very risky from reliability, wear & tear, liability, quality and virus standpoints. Fortunately we were able to buy 6 lightly used high quality projectors at relatively low cost, then re-sell 4 to Division 1 for next year's convention. Our division already had 2 large projection screens, and we purchased a few new lower cost ones at discount prices. We considered buying new basic laptop computers, but discovered our local Micro Center store offers an extensive selection of factory re-conditioned laptops at great prices. We purchased 7 of them (including backups!) for under \$350 each, including 1 year MS Office for Windows licenses, 90 day warranties, and all new solid state drives. They worked extremely well. We highly recommend all future convention committees do likewise. Afterwards, we re-sold 6 of these laptops to Division 1, at a further discount.
- **Rail Clinics** – 27 clinicians conducted 48 rail clinics across 3 clinic rooms, starting Thursday night. There were 37 different clinics, with 11 of them given twice. All rooms had excellent projectors, computers, slide clickers and screens. Two of the rooms were monstrous, so we used portable microphone systems with lapel mics (one owned by our Division and the other borrowed from a member). Equally important, the crash bars on the entrance doors for each clinic room were locked in, so the door latches were recessed and did not make noise as folks went in and out. We had many wonderful guest clinicians, including three designated as our featured clinicians. Those were Hal Miller, Editor of Model Railroader; Lou Sassi, Contributing Editor of Model Railroader; and Gerry Leone, NMRA Vice President as well as a Video Publications Host for Model Railroader. Gerry was also our very entertaining banquet speaker. His talk can be viewed on MCR's Facebook page. We were fortunate to have an expert A/V team led by Division 7's Randy Kerka. A member of his team worked with each clinician during their setup and we

understand no significant A/V issues occurred during the 52 (counting 4 non-rail) clinics. In the future, if possible, it would be ideal if the clinic slate and schedule can be done by the end of November so it can be included in the first distribution of the full registration package. This would require sending clinicians a draft of the convention events schedule so they can ask for clinic times away from tours and other events they wish to attend.

- **Reception & Banquet** – Our 2 largest clinic rooms became our huge banquet room on Saturday night. Continuing our practice set at our 2005 National, we elected not to have a head table. For the presentations, we had two large video screens and a large riser platform with podium, microphone and 2 awards tables. We received many late banquet sign-up requests, and the hotel graciously allowed us twice to add another table of folks past their deadline. Fortunately the room was big enough, even with our intentionally generous table spacing allowing folks to walk easily between tables. We seated a more comfortable 8 people per round table instead of the 10 seats hotels often recommend. We ended up with 167 attendees spread over 23 tables, with dignitaries pre-assigned to the front middle six tables. Sign-ups for the rest of the tables were self-serve via a large diagram posted earlier that day at the Registration Desk and later outside the main banquet doors. To better accommodate groups of folks signing up together, we intentionally set two more tables (10%) than we needed.

We served seated dinners, with 3 entree choices, plus vegetarian and special diet options. Two desserts were alternated, and folks could trade with each other if they wished. During the gathering and eating time we projected candid photos taken by one of our members during the entire convention. This was very popular. Before the dinner, we conducted our social hour in the huge atrium just outside the banquet hall. Two cash bars were kept busy, while we also served light snacks (pretzels and chips). Besides the many conversations, the highlight of this reception was the wonderful live strings music played by our accomplished members Larry and Hildy Bonhaus. Our banquet was emceed by one of our members having broadcast experience, and Gerry Leone's keynote talk had everyone in stitches. The only improvements suggested by a couple attendees were to have a shorter program, and perhaps some way for other folks entering the contest to attend for free during the awards portion of the program.

Rick Crumrine
Chair

John Burchnall
Vice Chair

2018 Cincinnati Express - Master Events Schedule

as of April 11, 2018

	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		
THURSDAY	Madison	Setup		Hospitality Room															
	Lobby	Setup		Registrations/Tour Desk															
	Ballrooms I&II	Setup		White Elephant + Co. Store						W. Elept + Co Store									
	Ballroom V	Setup		Contest						Contest									
	Hamilton	Setup		Raffle						Raffle									
	Glendale/Liberty	Setup		Hotel Portable Layouts						Hotel Port. Layouts									
	Fairfield	Setup		TCS/LCC															
	Ballroom III	Setup		Rail Clinic		Rail Clinic		Rail Clinic											
	Ballroom IV	Setup		Rail Clinic?		Rail Clinic?		Rail Clinic											
	Ballroom VI	Setup		Rail Clinic?		Rail Clinic?		Rail Clinic											
	Tri-County	Setup		Meet/Wine		Geneology		Meet/Wine											
		Lawson & Bonhaus Open House						EJ Pizza Recep		Layout Open Houses Grp 1									
		Thursday Guest Op Sessions																	
FRIDAY	Madison	Hospitality Room																	
	Lobby	Registrations/Tour Desk																	
	Ballrooms I&II	White Elephant + Company Store						W. Elephant + Co Store											
	Ballroom V	Contest						Contest											
	Hamilton	Raffle						Raffle											
	Glendale/Liberty	Hotel Portable Layouts						Hotel Portable Layouts											
	Fairfield	TCS/LCC Booth						TCS/LCC Booth											
	Ballroom III	Rail Clinic	Rail Clinic	Rail Clinic	Rail Clinic	Rail Clinic	Rail Clinic	Rail Clinic											
	Ballroom IV	Rail Clinic	Rail Clinic	Rail Clinic	Rail Clinic	Rail Clinic	Rail Clinic	Rail Clinic											
	Ballroom VI	Rail Clinic	Rail Clinic	Rail Clinic	Rail Clinic	Rail Clinic	Rail Clinic	Rail Clinic											
	Pool/Tri-County	Water		Aerobics		Make		Cards	MCR BOD Mtg										
		RAIL 1 Matandy+Hamilton Tour				GEN 1 Findlay Mkt + Conservatory Tour													
		RAIL 2 Tropicana+Brighton Tour				RAIL 3 Cinti Barge & Rail Tour													
	LAY 1 GMR Bus Tour (North)				LAY 2 GMR Bus Tour (Near)				Layout Open Houses Grp 2										
	Friday Guest Op Sessions																		
SATURDAY	Madison	Hospitality Room																	
	Lobby	Registrations/Tour Desk																	
	Ballrooms I&II	White Elephant + Company Store				Close Books		Settle/Pickup		Settle/Pkup									
	Ballroom V	Contest Open Judging				Tally/Photograph		View		Pickups									
	Hamilton	Raffle				Tally/Post Results		Winner Pickups		Win Pickup									
	Glendale/Liberty	Hotel Portable Layouts				Takedown													
	Fairfield	TCS/LCC Booth										Takedown							
	Ballroom III	Rail Clinic	Rail Clinic	Rail Clinic	Rail Clinic	Rail Clinic	Rail Clinic	R. Clinic	Recptn										
	Ballroom IV	Rail Clinic	Rail Clinic	Rail Clinic	Rail Clinic	Rail Clinic	Rail Clinic	R. Clinic	Recptn										
	Ballroom VI	Rail Clinic	Rail Clinic	Rail Clinic	Rail Clinic	Rail Clinic	Rail Clinic	R. Clinic	Recptn										
	Tri-County	Lunch/Cookie Decor.																	
		GEN 2 Sign Mus Tour + Spring Gr				RAIL 4 Cincinnati Railfan Tour													
		LAY 3 GMR Bus Tour (East)				LAY 4 GMR Bus Tour (Central)													
	Saturday Guest Op Sessions				Layout Open Houses Grp 3														
SUN	Ballrooms I&II	Setup		MCR Super Bkft															
		Layout Openings Grp 4				Layout Openings Grp 5													
		Sunday Guest Op Sessions																	

Cincinnati Express Final Sales Report

Thursday, May 24, 2018

Item #	Description	Max	Left	Taken	
FULLREG	Full Regular Registration	300	62	238	365
FAMREG	Family Member (Teenager, Spouse or Non-Rail Guest)	300	207	93	
FREEREG	Family Member (Child 12 or Under)	50	42	8	
ONEDAYREG	Special Registration	10	7	3	
COMREG	Full Time Leaders Registration	10	1	9	
COMPREG	Complimentary Registration	30	16	14	
MAGMEM	NMRA Full Membership w/Magazine	100	100	0	7
FULLMEM	NMRA Full Membership Without Magazine	100	98	2	
RAILPASS	NMRA Railpass Membership with Magazine	100	95	5	
C109	Custom Accurail 36 Ft Box Car - 1923 MVR #109	50	44	6	36
C3352	Custom Accurail 36 Ft Box Car - 1923 Red V&O #3352	50	46	4	
C3357	Custom Accurail 36 Ft Box Car - 1940 Red V&O #3357	50	36	14	
C435	Custom Accurail 36 Ft Box Car - Gray V&O MOW #435	50	50	0	
CSET	Custom Accurail 36 Ft Box Car - 4 Car Set	50	47	3	
SCLX	Ladies Cornerstone Short Sleeve 2X 3X 4X 5X 6X	50	50	0	0
SCL	Ladies Cornerstone Short Sleeve S M L XL	50	50	0	
SGL	Ladies Long Sleeve Shirt	50	50	0	
SCMX	Mens Cornerstone Short Sleeve 2X 3X 4X 5X 6X	50	48	2	14
SCM	Mens Cornerstone Short Sleeve S M L XL	50	46	4	
SJMX	Mens Jerzees Short Sleeve 2X 3X 4x 5X 6X	50	49	1	
SJM	Mens Jerzees Short Sleeve S M L XL	50	47	3	
SGM	Mens Long Sleeve Shirt	50	46	4	
OPS-TH-34	OPS - Rick Case EBT Railroad (TH 7:00 - 10:30 PM)	12	5	7	44
OPS-TH-47	OPS - Paul Miklos B&O Chillicothe Sub (TH 7:00 - 10:30)	10	0	10	
OPS-TH-59D	OPS - Ed Swain PRR Middle Division (TH 7:00 - 10:30)	14	2	12	
OPS-TH-9	OPS - Gerry Albers - Deepwater District VGN Ry (TH 7:00 - 10:30)	15	0	15	
OPS-FR-33A	OPS - Cincinnati Northern Club (FR 7:00 - 10:30 PM)	14	5	9	38
OPS-FR-37	OPS - Bob Chapman Great W. Trunk RR (AT&SF) (FR 7:00-10:30)	12	8	4	
OPS-FR-56	OPS - Curt LaRue PRR Panhandle Div (FR 7:00 - 10:30)	18	0	18	
OPS-FR-71	OPS - Keith VandeStadt Suffolk Northern Ry (FR 7:00 - 10:30)	5	2	3	
OPS-FR-73	OPS - Matt & Debie Snell Conrail New Jersey Div (FR 7:00-10:30)	4	0	4	
OPS-SA-17	OPS - Rick Stern AT&SF Southern California (SA 8:30 - Noon)	15	3	12	33
OPS-SA-43A	OPS - Andre Stone Norfolk Southern 1st District (SA 8:30 - Noon)	6	0	6	
OPS-SA-50	OPS - Jim Rollwage Denver Pacific (SA 8:30 - Noon)	10	6	4	
OPS-SA-52B	OPS - Ed Bley PRR Monongahela Branch (SA 8:30 - Noon)	7	0	7	
OPS-SA-80	OPS - Bob Adams Whistle Creek Div - N&W Ry (SA 8:30 - Noon)	11	7	4	
OPS-SU-19	OPS - Ron Pearson EBT Railroad (SU 8:30 - Noon)	10	3	7	34
OPS-SU-24	OPS - Dan Hadley Sierra Northern (SU 8:30 - Noon)	8	3	5	
OPS-SU-50A	OPS - Bob Bartizek Pennsylvania & Western (SU 8:30 - Noon)	13	4	9	
OPS-SU-65	OPS - John Listermann B&O Railroad (SU 8:30 - Noon)	10	1	9	
OPS-SU-74	OPS - Daniel Mack Ohio Valley & Eastern (SU 8:30 - Noon)	12	8	4	
LAY1 (GMR1)	Great Model Railroads Tour 1 - North (FR 7:30 AM - Noon)	23	8	15	91
LAY2 (GMR2)	Great Model Railroads Tour 2 - Near (FR 1:00 - 5:00)	23	0	23	
LAY3 (GMR3)	Great Model Railroads Tour 3 - East (SA 7:30 - Noon)	30	0	30	
LAY4 (GMR4)	Great Model Railroads Tour 4 - Central (SA 1:00 - 5:00)	30	6	24	
LAYTH	Lawson & Bonhaus Open Layouts (TH 1:00 - 4:00)	96	5	91	117
EJUNC	EnterTrainment Junction Reception (TH 4:30 - 6:30)	120	3	117	
RAIL1	Matandy Steel/Hamilton Tour (FR 8:00 - Noon)	40	28	12	167
RAIL2	Tropicana & Brighton Tour (FR 8:00 - Noon)	25	7	18	
RAIL3	Cincinnati Barge and Rail Tour (FR 1:00 - 5:00)	45	2	43	
RAIL4	Cincinnati Railfan Tour (SA 1:00 - 5:15)	45	30	15	
GEN1	Findlay Market and Krohn Conservatory (FR 12:30 - 5:30)	30	2	28	
GEN2	Spring Grove & Sign Museum Tour (SA 8:00 - Noon)	30	11	19	
MGWINE	Meet & Greet with Wine Tasting (TH 7:00 - 8:30)	48	1	47	
WAERO	Ladies Water Aerobics (FR 9:30 - 10:30)	18	3	15	
GCARD	Greeting Card Making Workshop (FR 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM)	20	4	16	
LLUNCH	Ladies Luncheon with Cookie Decorating (SA 1:30 - 4:00)	28	1	27	
BCHICK	Reception and Banquet - Chicken Entrée (SA 6:00 - 9:30 PM)	58	0	58	
BRIBS	Reception and Banquet - Short Ribs Entrée (SA 6:00 - 9:30 PM)	55	0	55	
BSALM	Reception and Banquet - Salmon Entrée (SA 6:00 - 9:30 PM)	52	0	52	
BVEG	Reception and Banquet - Vegetarian Entrée (SA 6:00 - 9:30 PM)	2	0	2	
BDINNER	Reception and Banquet - Special Diet Entrée (SA 6:00 - 9:30 PM)	0	0	0	

2018 Cinti Express Regional Convention Budget

January 8, 2018

Income	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Basis</u>	<u>Base Budget</u>
Registrations			<u>220</u>
Primary			@ \$75 170 \$12,750
Family/Companion			@ \$25 50 \$1,250
Company Store	Paul Musselman	10% other Div's consignments	\$25
White Elephant	Frank Koch	10% individual consignments	\$75
Raffle	Bruce Knapp/Russ Poynter		\$100
Total Intake			\$14,200

Expenses

Clinics			\$4,298
3 Featured Clinician Rms	Rick C/Mike B	2 Thu nights (rest gratis in hotel contract)	\$286
Banquet Speaker Travel	Rick C/Mike B	if needed, approx.	\$1,000
Gratis Banquet Meals	Rick C/Mike B	about \$60 x 1.2 x (3+3 companion)	\$432
Computers Rent/Buy (8)	Randy K/Rick C/John B	4 clinic, reg., tour, contest, spare	\$1,600
Screens (4 total)	Randy K./Mike B.	+1 big (have one 72x96, four 60x80)	\$200
Mics/Sound	Randy K./Mike B.	at least for 2 large clinic rooms	\$300
A/V Cables + Remotes	Randy Kerka	about 8 x \$40 + 4 x \$40	\$480
Registration			\$4,080
Credit Card Fees (Reg.)*	Roy H/Frank K	about 80% x 5% x Reg. Fees	\$560
Full Time Leaders Reclass	Roy H/Frank K/Rick C	11 x (Primary-Family)	\$550
Registration Matls (no pin)	Roy Hord	about \$5/person x 260	\$1,300
Event Tickets Printing	John B/Roy H	~4x260/8up*\$.07 (have ticket stock)	\$10
Layout Tours Guidebook	John Burchnall	about \$2 x (railcount + 10)	\$360
Timetable Program	Bob Shreve/Rick C	about \$5/person x 260	\$1,300
Other			\$3,948
Remote LT Lodging Help	Rick C/John B/Frank K	\$120/2 x 3 nites x 6 leaders	\$1,080
Publicity Posters/Misc.	Randy K/John B/Bob S	~\$200 prepaid posters + future	\$300
Publicity Gasoline	Randy K/Rick C	~10 x 350 miles/26 mpg x \$3/gal	\$400
Layout Yard Signs	John B/John L	about \$15 x about 40 signs	\$600
Inside Signage	John Burchnall	~\$6x50 (have 10 tripods + more)	\$300
Contest Awards	Brad Jonas	\$24x24x1.07x20 plaques	\$514
Door Prizes	Bruce K/Russ P	no income, slight admin cost	\$25
Hospitality Refreshments	Rick C/Linda K	tea,coffee,water,cookies (260 x \$1.5)	\$390
Bus Tour Guide Books	John Burchnall	about 8 buses x about \$8	\$64
Appreciation Certificates	John Burchnall	about 150 x \$1 (some mailed)	\$150
Contingency/Misc. Admin	Rick C/John B		\$125
Extra Fare Events			\$1,875
Bus Tours/Excursions	John B/Merlyn/Linda K	\$9*60 seat subsidy, breakeven otherwise*	\$550
Extra-Fare Clinics	Linda K/Mike B	fees designed to breakeven*	\$0
Non-Rail Luncheon	Linda K/Rick C	\$10*40 subsidy, breakeven otherwise*	\$400
Banquet w/ Cocktail Hour	Rick Crumrine	\$7*130 subsidy, breakeven otherwise*	\$925
Sunday MCR Supers Brkfst	Frank K/John B/Bob S	cost paid directly by MCR	\$0
Total Expenses			\$14,200

Surplus/Loss

* extra fare fees must factor in 5% credit card fee

\$0

Cincinnati Express Attendance Analysis

Cincinnati Express was carefully designed, organized, publicized and conducted to provide 4 days of great attractions for all in a great hotel and a great hotbed of the hobby. Even still, nearly everyone was surprised at such strong attendance (365, across 19 states). Soon after the convention, we speculated this was due to our quality attractions and convention design plan (many aspects), \$20 lower registration fee, free kids under 13 (a first for MCR?), multi-source publicity, wise spending, long duration since our last convention (13 years), great reputation, strong ladies/non-rail program, using commercial buses (not vans), quality and timely web materials, extensive publicity, awesome newly renovated hotel, and strong team.

Further, we surmised drawing from 19 states was likely due to our targeted emails, word of mouth, our website, our quality layouts and speakers, our many published layouts (due to our relationship with Lou Sassi), our ops publicity (SWOOPS email blasts and articles in the OPS SIG newsletter) and our strong national reputation gained from the 2005 National Convention. More specifically, our speculations on why our attendance was so high and wide included –

- We haven't had a convention since our successful 2005 National NMRA Convention
- Div 7 has an excellent track record/reputation for conducting outstanding conventions
- The high quality (35 published) & quantity of layouts, and we showcased them all 4 days
- We had an excellent and timely website with clear info and many layout photo collages
- Our hotel was incredible and like-new with the recent renovations – and had free parking
- We had excellent coverage in OPSIG publications and email/Yahoo
- We had an excellent Non-Rail/General Interest program, attracting about 90 women
- We had 10 appealing bus tours – 4 GMR layouts, 4 prototype and 2 general interest
- All bus tours used comfortable commercial buses, not vans
- We had a great mix of famous, regional and local clinicians
- We intentionally scheduled all activities to minimize overlaps and conflicts
- We intentionally set our base registration fee low at \$75, about \$20 less than others
- We admitted children under 13 free, attracting at least 8, plus a few teenagers
- We conducted a very popular White Elephant Sale instead of a Silent Auction
- The TCS/DXI/LCC booth and sound decoder installation service was attractive
- We had 206 op session slots (72% taken) at 19 diverse layouts spread over all 4 days
- We had popular in-hotel layouts, all with completed scenery
- We had a popular (117) special private dinner event at famous EnterTRAINment Junction
- Our registration package was clear, complete and well organized
- Drawing from 19 (14 non-VIP) states proved our appeal was strong and publicity wide

We performed two different types of analyses to try to understand our high attendance –

- Plotting Attendances on Maps – to see patterns for Regions, MCR Divisions and States
- Post-Convention Attendee Survey – for feedback as well as attendance reasons/insights

Attendance Patterns – We plotted (see attached maps) the demographics of our attendees to try to better understand where they all came from, and to see any attendance patterns.

- About 295 registrants came from within the MCR and about 51 non-affiliated registrants came from outside (14% of total registrants), all but 1 from adjacent regions – this says adjacent region publicity is very important, which we did via OPSIG, web and officer email
- MCR attendance somewhat followed driving distance, except for a few anomalies: Dayton Div 3 (13%) and Pittsburgh Div 2 (6%) were a bit low as a % of members, while Central PA Div 11 was high (27%) – Dayton might be due to over-exposure to Div 7 (bus trips, joint meetings, last Div 3 convention) – it’s unclear what happened with Divisions 2 and 11
- A huge 130 registrants came from the host Division, representing about half of Div 7 and 43% of the 295 MCR registrants – this is phenomenal considering many others did not register as many helped run several of the 67 layouts - this says we generated much excitement within our Division – it also says larger divisions can naturally have an attendance advantage, although you still need to generate enough local excitement
- Deducting half the host Cinti division registrants and all the un-affiliated non-MCR folks nets a more typical MCR convention total of 249 – this reinforces outside region attendance and an excited large host division are both important to have a large turnout
- About 90 non-rail ladies attended, plus 11 kids (3 teens) – we emphasized both in our meetings, including only \$25 for ladies/teens and free for kids under 13 - many cited the good general interest activities as reasons they came – early complete publicity was key

Attendee Feedback – We polled registrants after the convention (see attached 9 questions) to try to determine reasons for such high attendance, plus suggestions for future conventions – we used Survey Monkey to do this electronically using the attendee email ids we had. Over 50% of the registrant email ids responded to our survey. We charted the results of each question, per attached, including breaking out two key sub-groups – First Time Convention Goers and Non-MCR folks. Here are our observations of the responses to each question:

- **Q1 - Overall Rating** – 99% of all responders rated the convention Excellent (72%), Very Good (24%) or Good (3%), with 96% rating it Excellent or Very Good. 1 person rated it Fair. Interestingly, a whopping 89% of first time convention goers rated it Excellent. Ratings for those attending from outside the MCR were also skewed higher (81% Excellent).
- **Q2 - Within or Outside the MCR** – 82% of all responders as well as 84% of the First-Timers live in the MCR, while of course 100% of the Non-MCR folks live elsewhere.
- **Q3 - How They Discovered Cincinnati Express** – Overall, 52% heard about the convention via their Division Newsletter or MCR Kingpin newsletter, while 22% heard from a friend, website or social media, with the remaining 27% spread across 7 other means. First-Timers were similar, except with even higher reliance on their friends and newsletters. Non-MCR folks relied much more on the web/social media/OPSIG (43%) and “word of

mouth” (37%, layout owners, friends, and committee). Clearly great electronic publicity was key (flyer, neighboring regions officer emails, website, Kingpin, OPSIG announcements) including early fully populated website and social media (Facebook), plus our booth at 3 prior conventions (with lots of compelling pictures) – ironically, traditional dog and pony slide shows to each MCR Division were largely skipped.

- **Q4 - Who Came With Them** – About 40% of all responders said they came by themselves, while the rest came with their spouse, friends and other relatives, in descending order. First-Timers came more with those other relatives (26%). Non-MCR folks came more by themselves (46%) and with friends (29%), while less with their spouse (25%).
- **Q5 - Why They Came** – Overall, folks said they came due to the layouts, clinics, driving distance, Division 7 reputation, fellowship, sales and value, with 12 lessor reasons also mentioned. The primary reasons First-Timers came were a bit different – layouts, clinics, proximity, rail tours, sales and contests. Non-MCR folks were much more balanced across 8 main reasons – layouts, clinics, proximity, reputation, ops, fellowship, sales and value.
- **Q6 - Layout Visits** – We also tried to get a better feel on how many of the non-hotel layouts that the attendees visited. The overall results are somewhat skewed by the large number of host division registrants tied up working the convention. As such, 30% visited no outside layouts, 52% saw less than 10 layouts, 16% visited 10 to 20, and 2% more than 20. Understandably, First-Timers saw a bit more layouts, with 21% seeing 10 to 20, and 5% visiting more than 20. Interestingly, Non-MCR folks saw even more layouts, with 30% visiting 10 to 20.
- **Q7 - Convention Experience** – While 75% of attendees were convention veterans, Cincinnati Express still attracted 25% relative rookies (13% First-Timers plus 12% who attended a few prior conventions). A whopping 89% of the Non-MCR folks were experienced convention-goers, with the rest (11%) being First-Timers.
- **Q8 - Convention Likes** – We had many interesting comments by the responders on our open-ended question of what they liked best about Cincinnati Express. Sorting yielded 15 response groupings, with the largest being layouts (40%), clinics (36%) and the great design/execution of the convention (34%). The next tier is fun/fellowship/friendly (26%), ops (17%), the hotel (15%) and rail tours (11%). Superlatives include incredible, great, excellent, exceptional, perfect, best, diverse, smooth, friendly and fun. A few said it was the best convention they have ever attended, including better than some Nationals.
- **Q9 - Suggestions for Future Conventions** – We also had interesting feedback to our open-ended question on suggestions for future convention committees. We grouped these responses into 14 categories, with by far the largest being “Duplicate, If Possible” (54%) and “No Suggestions” (42%). Beyond that, folks had thoughts about layouts (17%), rail clinics (16%) and miscellaneous topics (10%). Three other topics received improvement

suggestions - banquet (7%), hospitality room (4%) and contest room (4%). Six other responses were less than 4%. Note, some responses to this question were “positive” and others “constructive”, either reinforcing something done well at Cincinnati Express or suggestions to improve something they would have liked at Cincinnati Express. For example, nearly all the layout, rail clinic, banquet, contest and hospitality room comments were improvement suggestions. See selected responses listed below the attached chart.

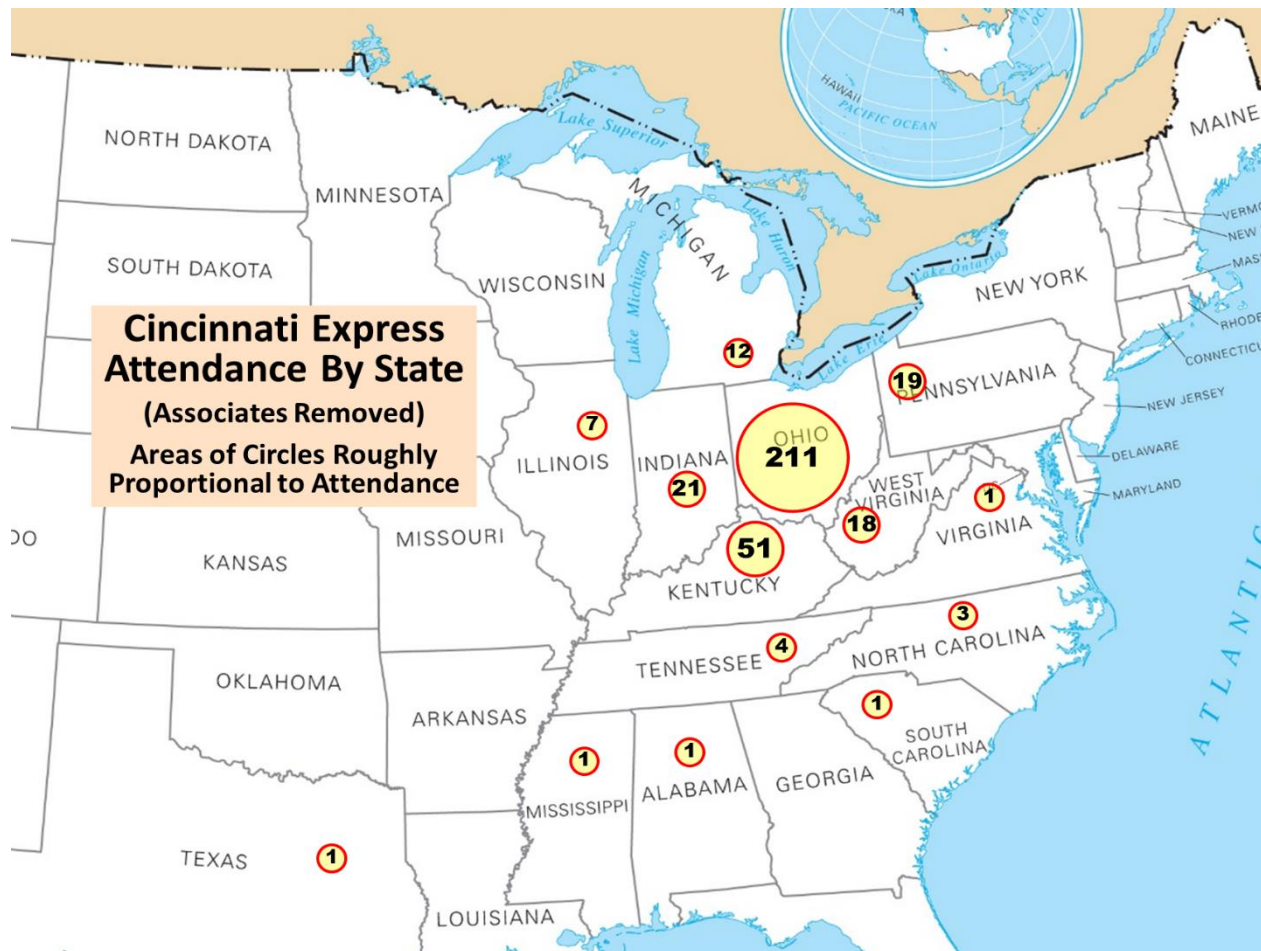
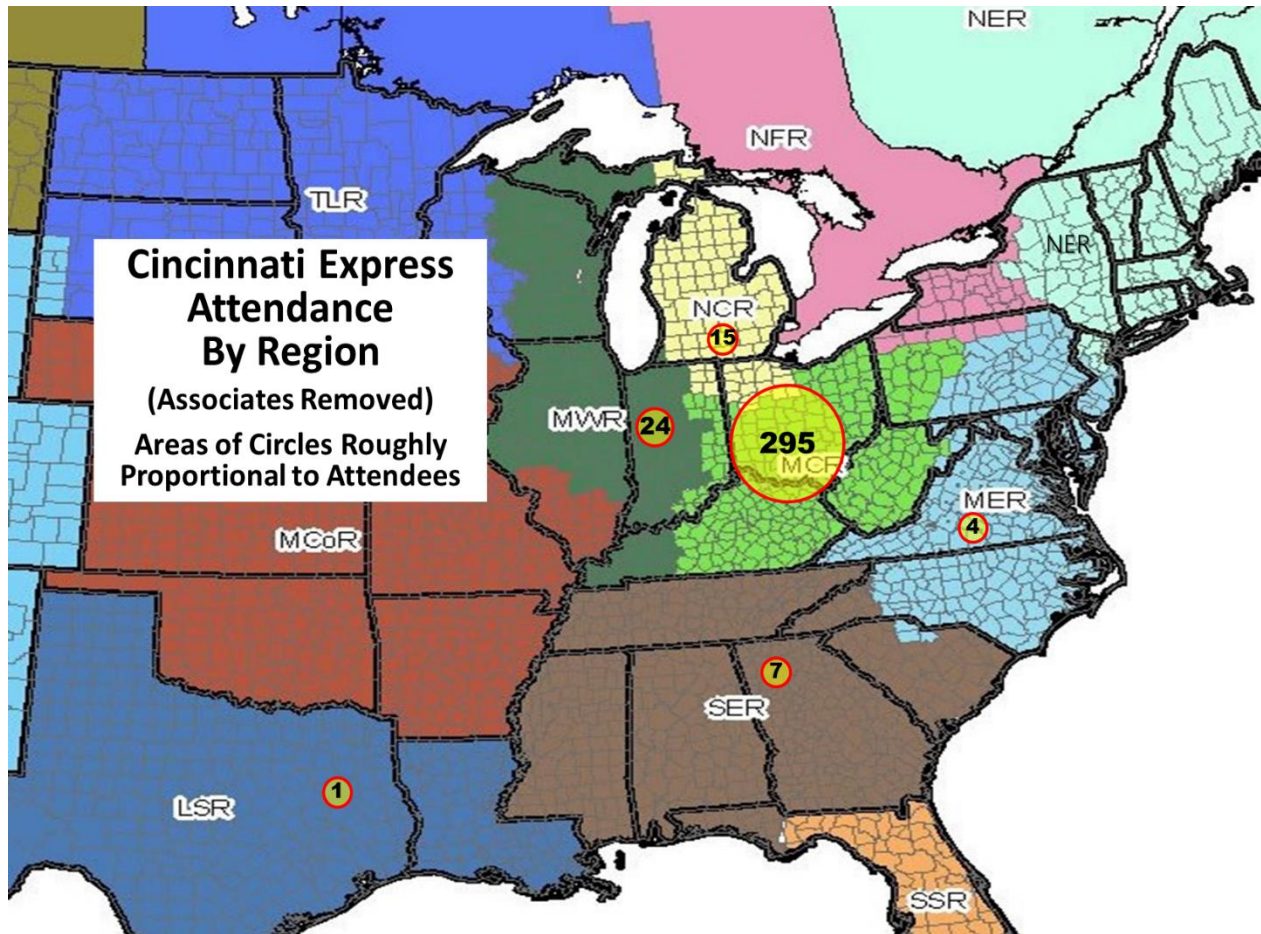
High Attendance Conclusions –

Net, the high attendance at Cincinnati Express appears due to a combination of factors –

- Division 7's strong reputation, many published layouts, strong clinicians and attractions
- Early complete multi-faceted publicity, largely electronic, plus word of mouth and booths
- The value proposition – low registration fees, high quality hotel with free parking
- 51 non-affiliate attendees from outside the MCR, via email, website, OPSIG and friends
- Big excitement in a large host division netting huge local turnout (50% of Division 7)
- High % attendance from Divisions 8, 9, 10 and 11 (more than 25% of their members)
- Attendance would have been 30-50 higher if two other key Divisions had had similar %'s

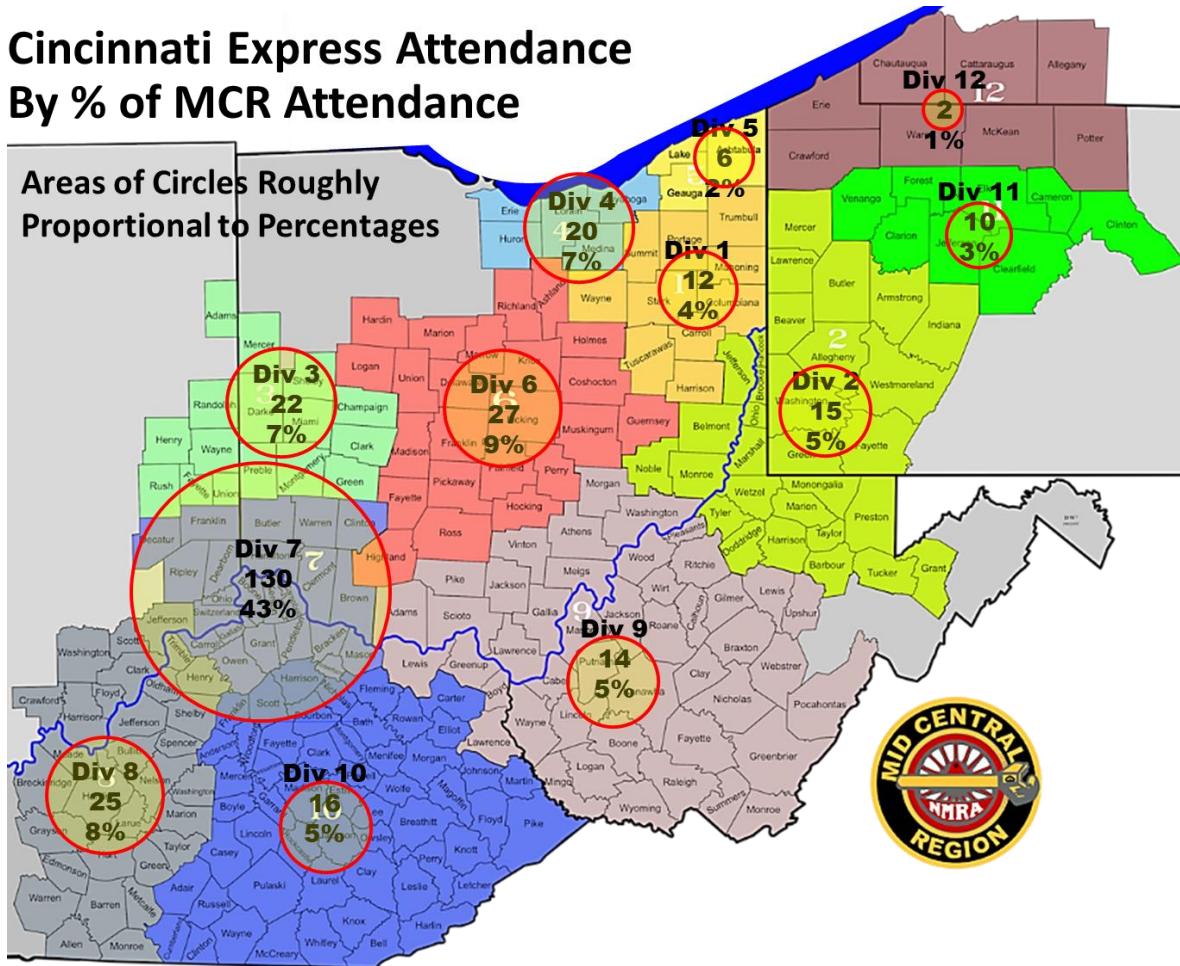
Rick Crumrine
Chair

John Burchnall
Vice Chair



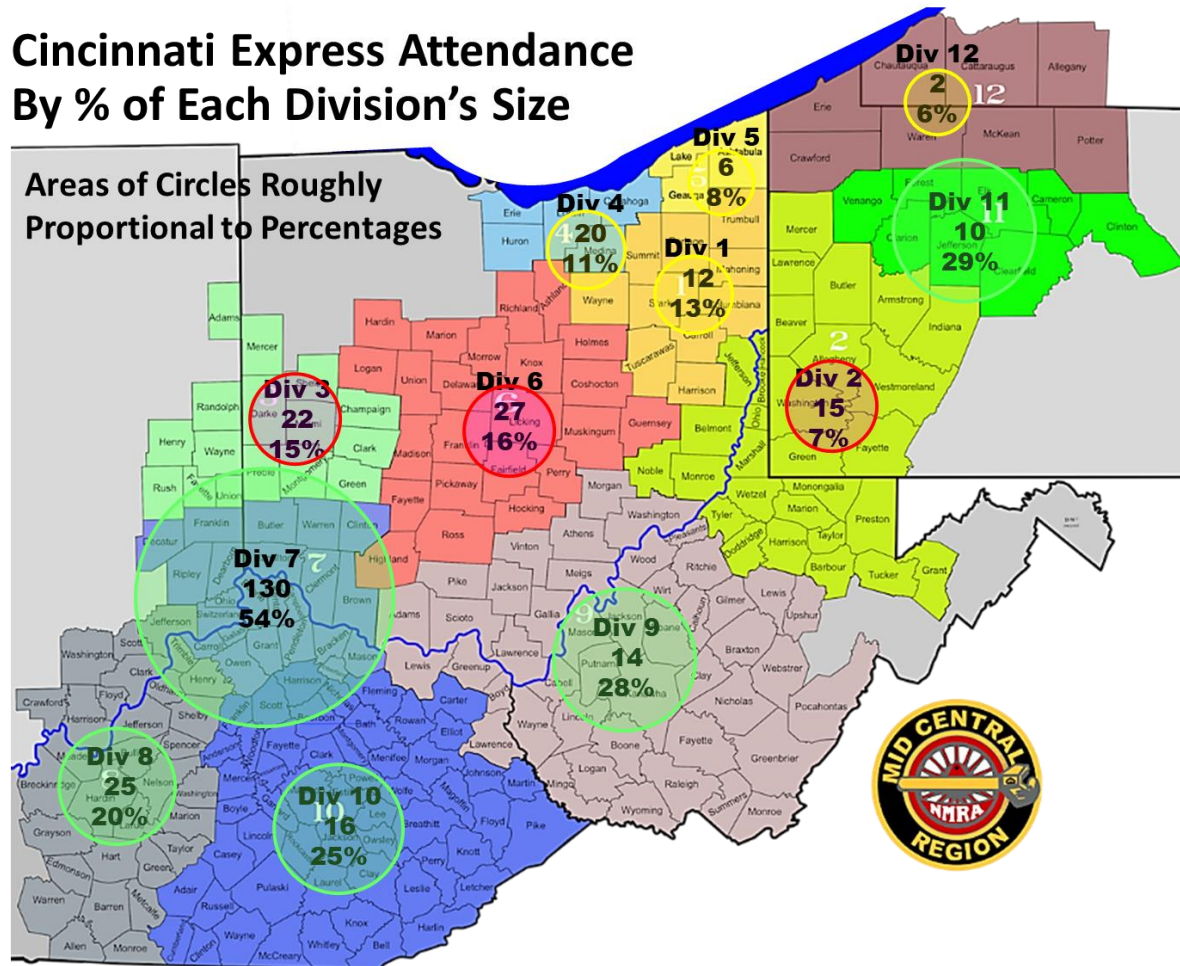
Cincinnati Express Attendance By % of MCR Attendance

Areas of Circles Roughly
Proportional to Percentages



Cincinnati Express Attendance By % of Each Division's Size

Areas of Circles Roughly
Proportional to Percentages



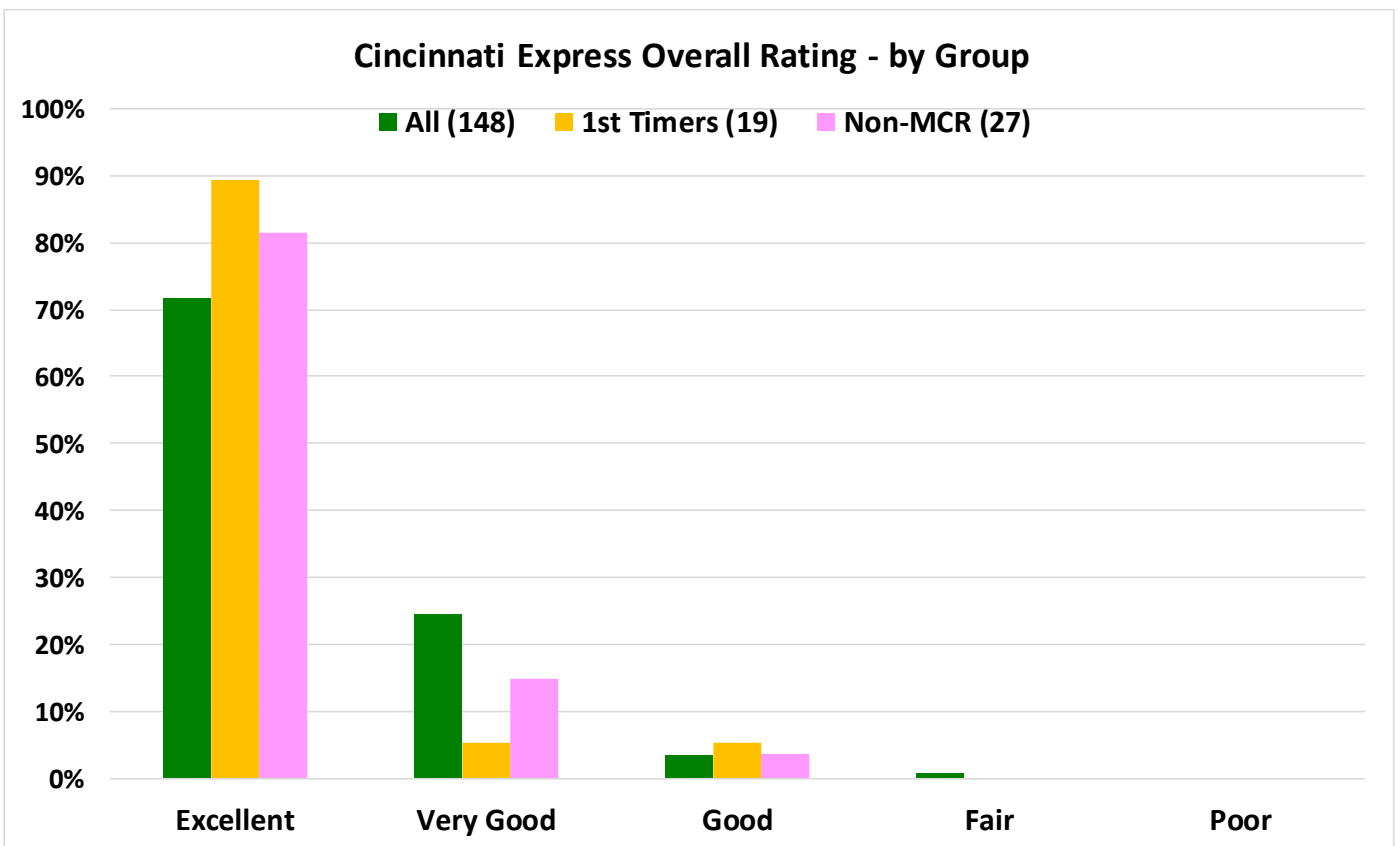
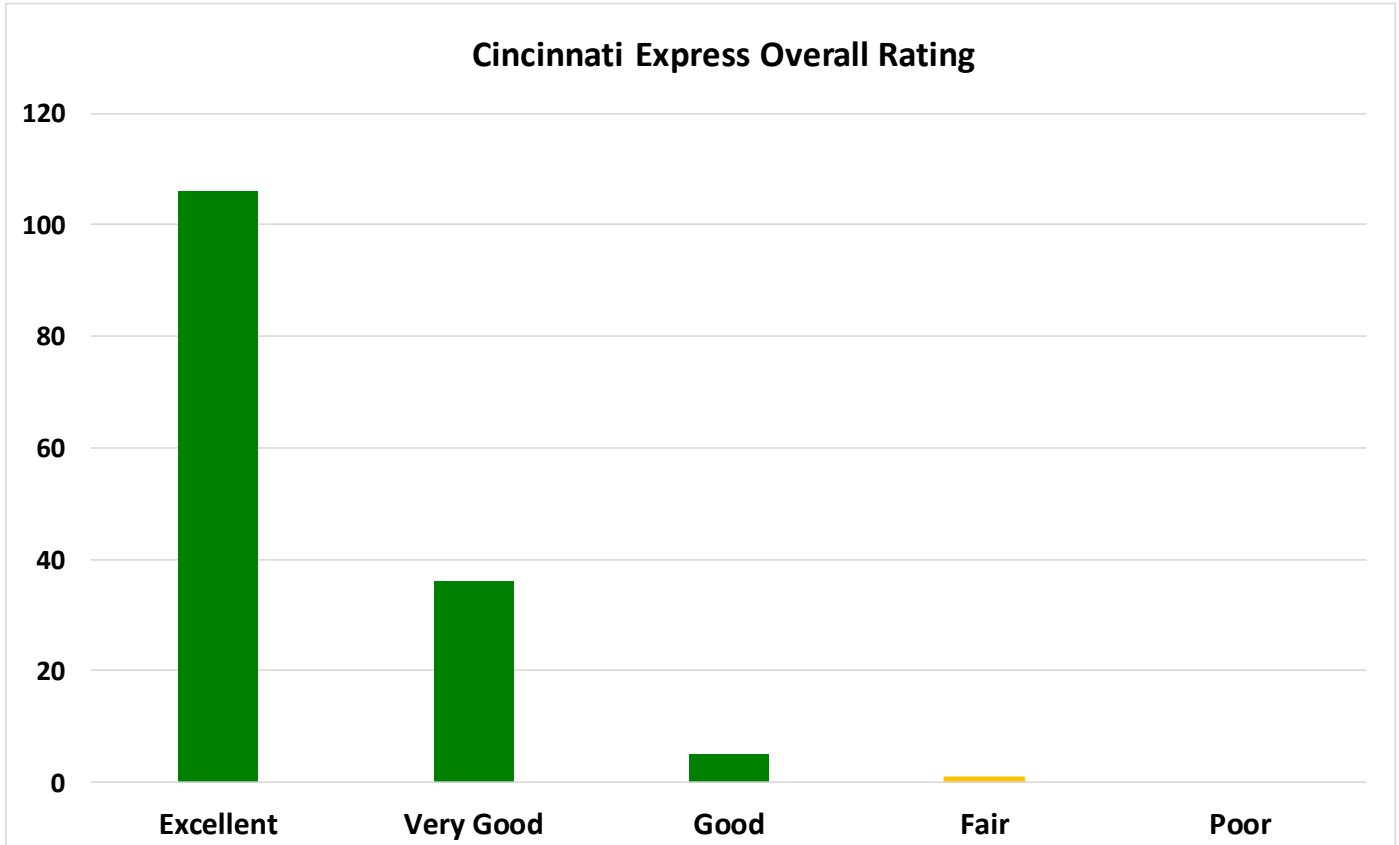
Cincinnati Express Post Event Survey Questions

1. Overall, how do you rate the Cincinnati Express convention?
a. Excellent b. Very Good c. Good d. Fair e. Poor
2. Do you reside within the Mid Central Region of the NMRA?
a. Yes b. No
3. How did you first find out about the Cincinnati Express convention? Check all that apply
a. From a friend
b. From a notice in a model train magazine
c. From the Mid Central Region Kingpin newsletter
d. From your Division newsletter
e. From the OPSIG Dispatchers Office magazine or other OPS e-notice(s)
f. From a flyer at a hobby shop or model train convention
g. From a website or search
h. Other (please specify) _____
4. Did you attend with someone else? Check all that apply
a. No b. Yes, with my spouse or partner
c. Yes, with my modeling friend(s) d. Yes, with my offspring or grandkid
e. Other (please specify) _____
5. Why did you decide to register and attend? Check all that apply
a. To attend guest operating sessions
b. To visit the many published layouts
c. To attend clinics and presentations
d. To meet the several famous model railroaders in attendance
e. To go on one or more Great Model Railroad bus tours
f. To go on one or more Rail Industry or Railfan bus tours
g. To go on one or both General Interest bus tours
h. To visit the White Elephant sale
i. For the Modeling, Photo or Arts & Crafts contests
j. To visit the TCS LCC demo booth or sound decoder installs
k. To see all the layouts and behind-the-scene tours at EnterTRAINment Junction
l. Due to the reputation of Cincinnati Div 7 in running good conventions
m. The nice hotel facilities and room pricing
n. To see and have fun with my friends
o. The relatively low registration fee and free parking
p. The reasonable driving distance from my home
q. Other (please specify) _____
6. About how many of the 63 layouts outside of the hotel did you visit or operate?
a. None, I was too busy with other activities b. Less than 10
c. About 10 to 20 d. Probably more than 20
7. How many other model train conventions (not shows) have you attended in the past?
a. None, this was my first b. A few
c. Several, but only Region or Division conventions d. Several, including at least one National Convention
e. Too many to count
8. What did you like best about the Cincinnati Express convention?

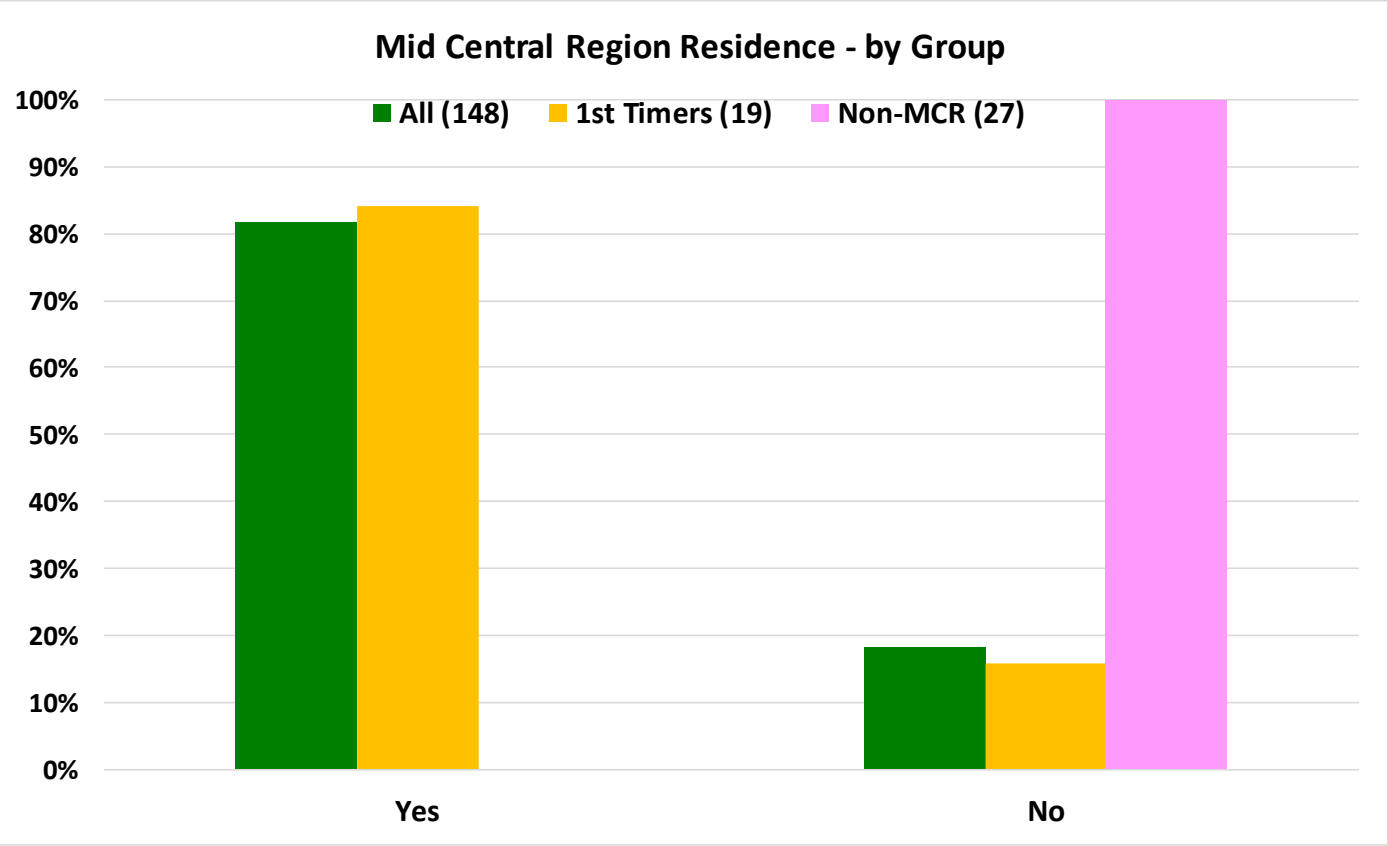
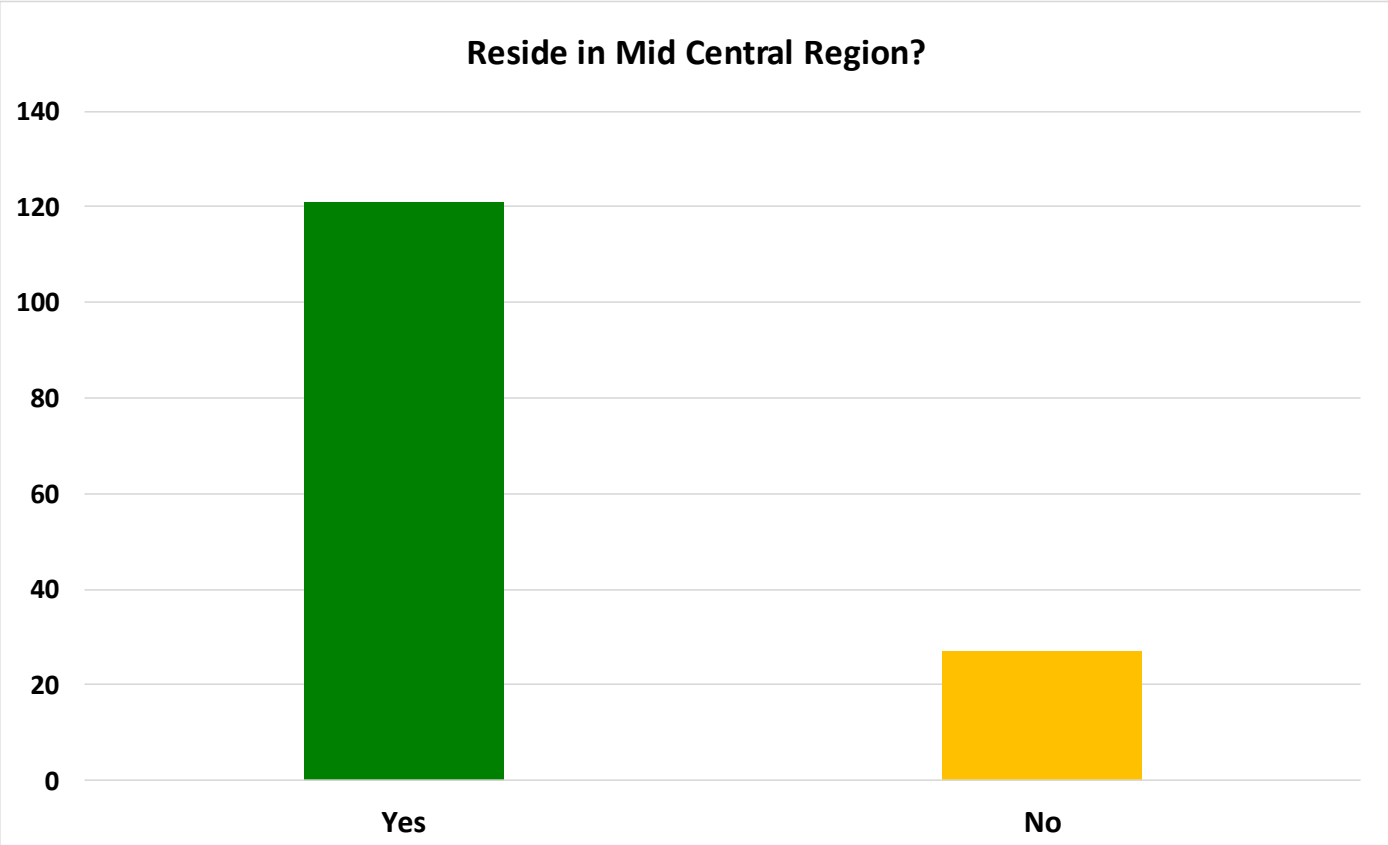
9. Do you have any suggestions or advice for future convention host committees?

Thank you for your attendance and participation in this survey!

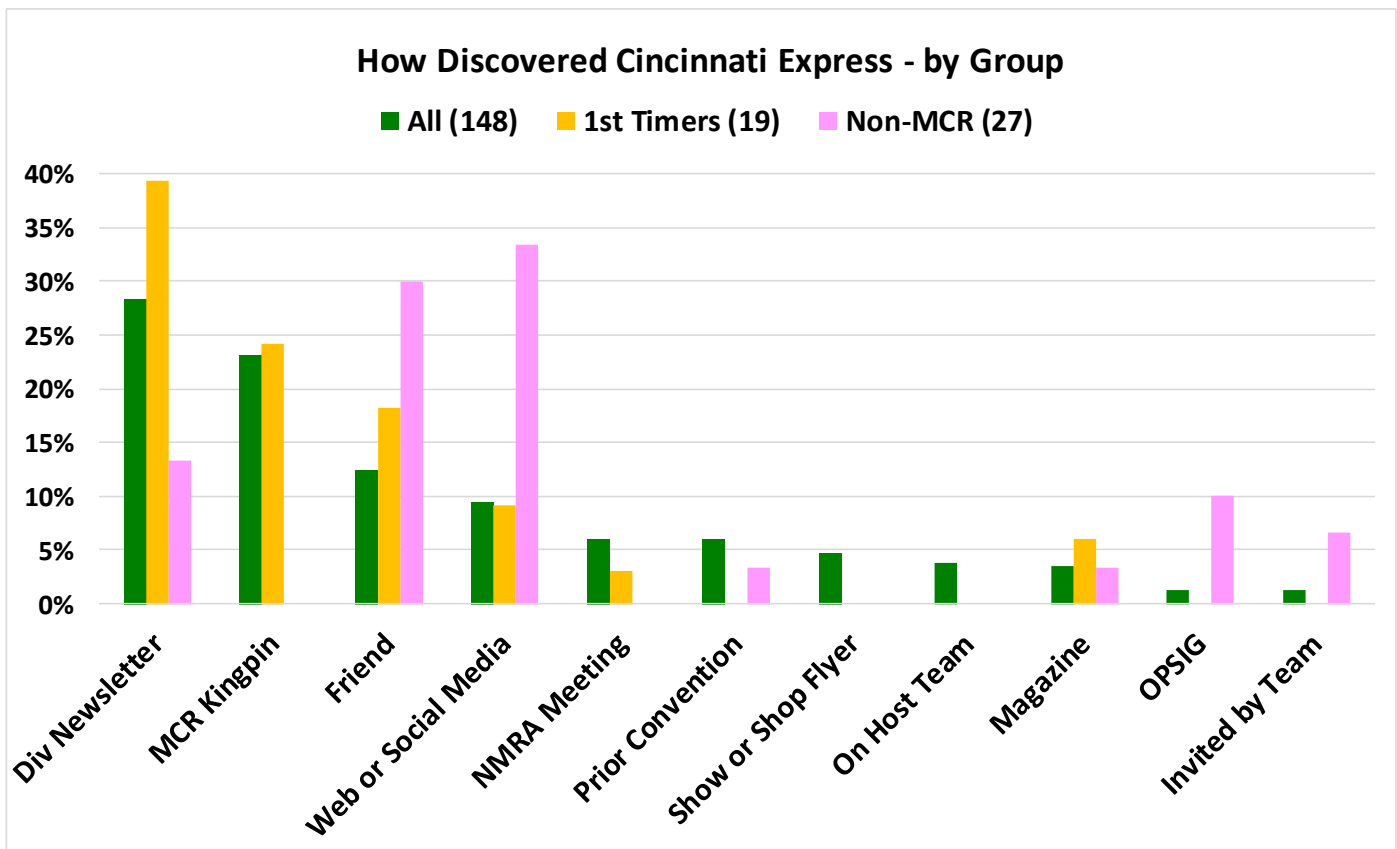
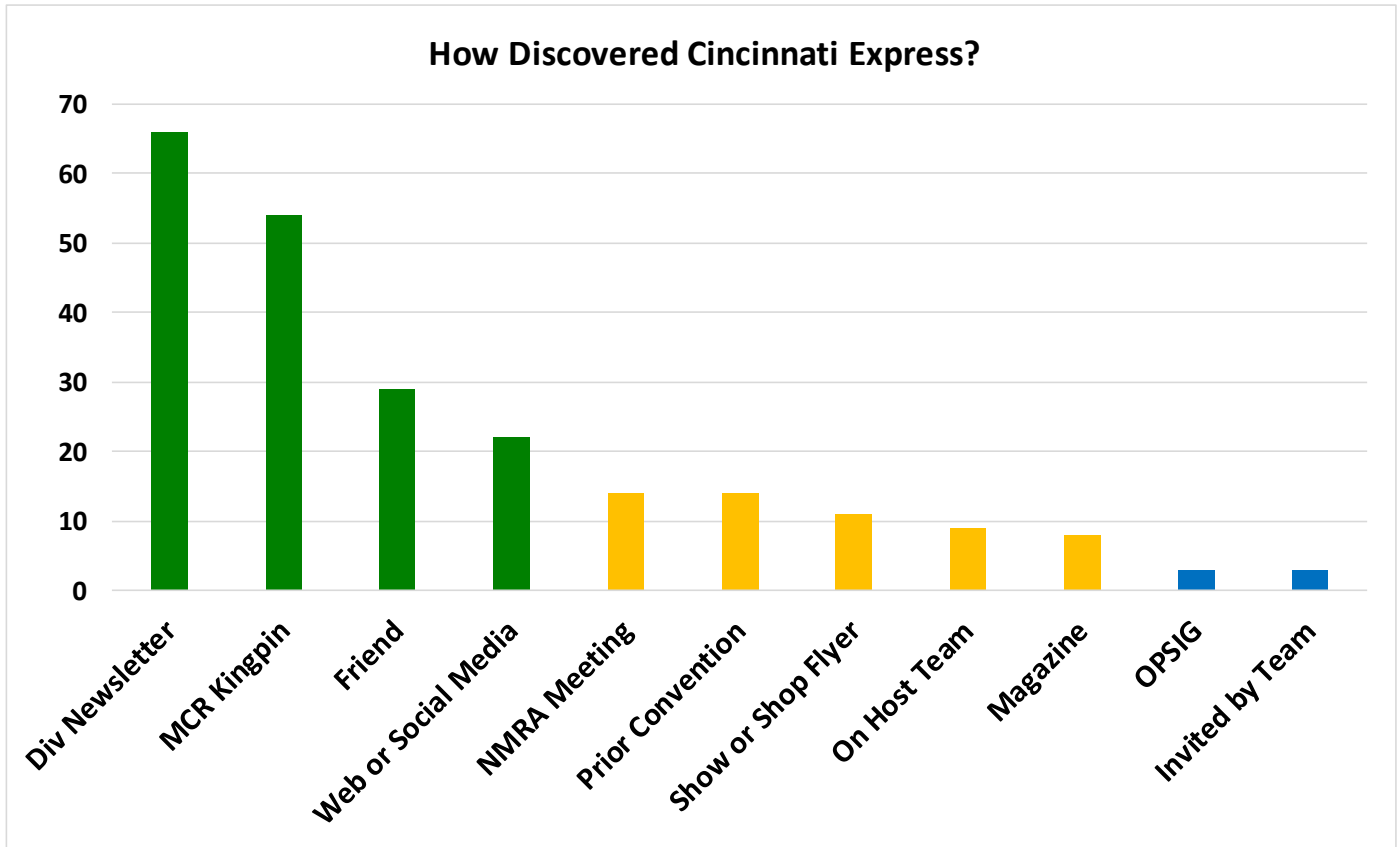
Question 1: Overall Rating



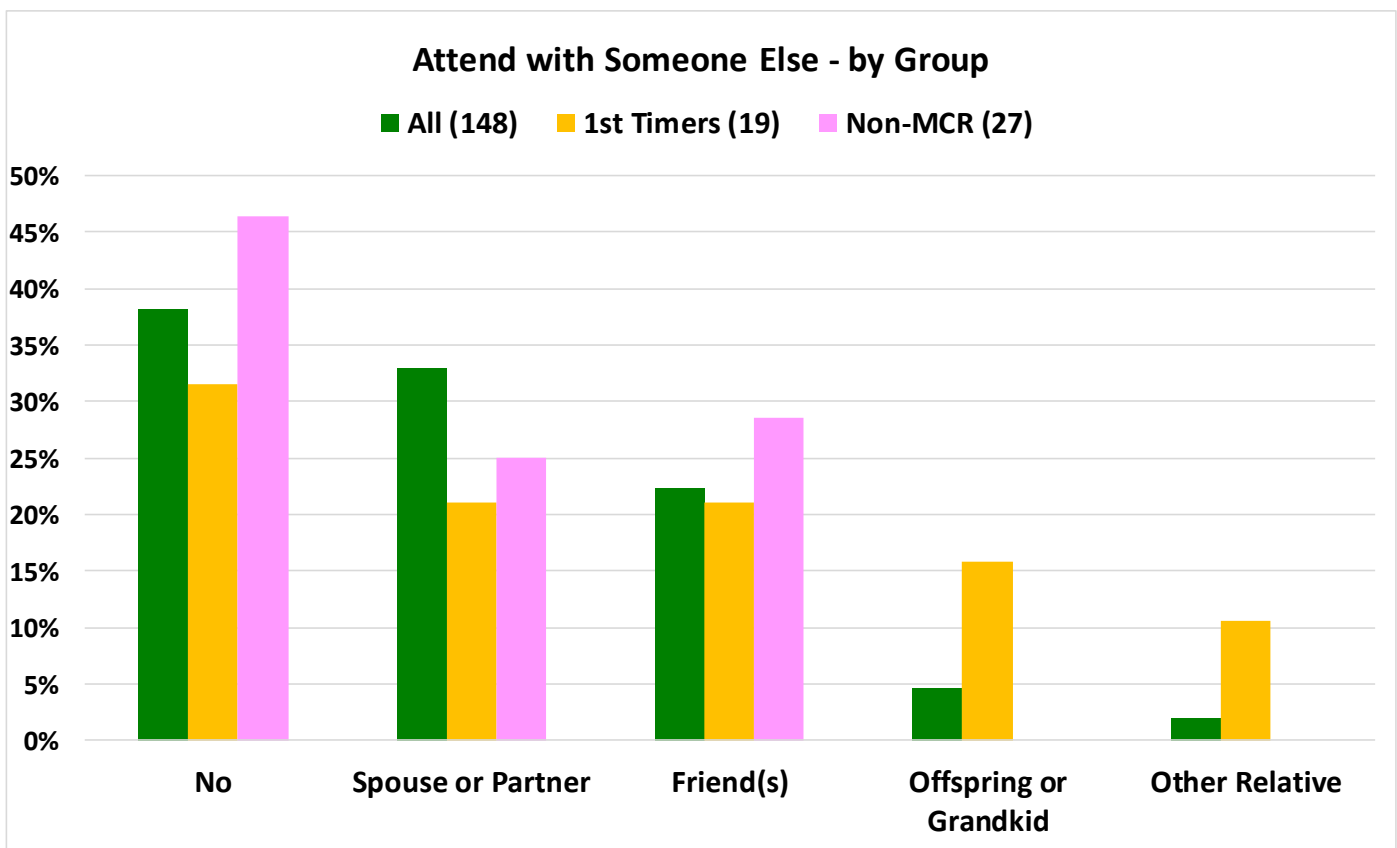
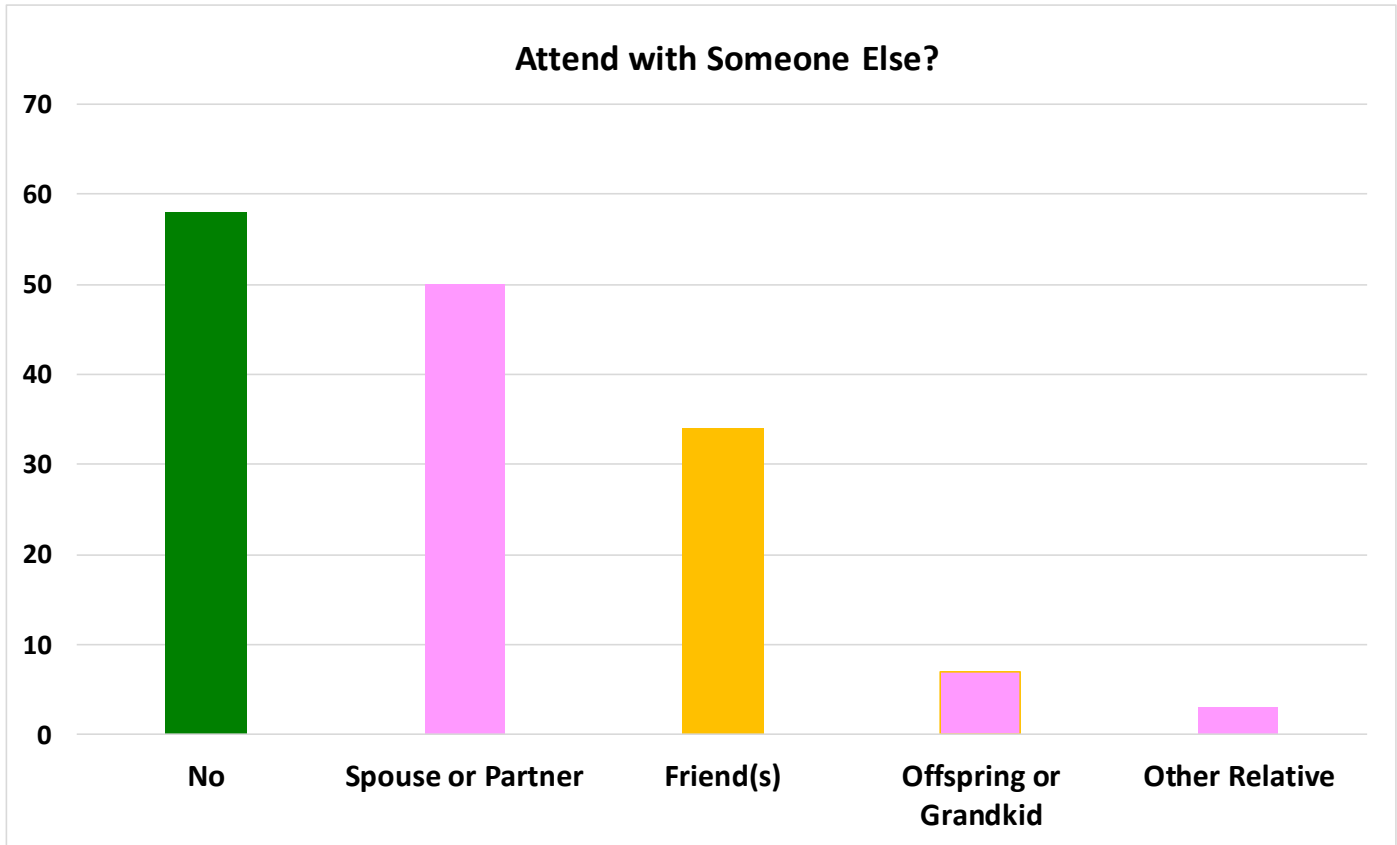
Question 2: Residence



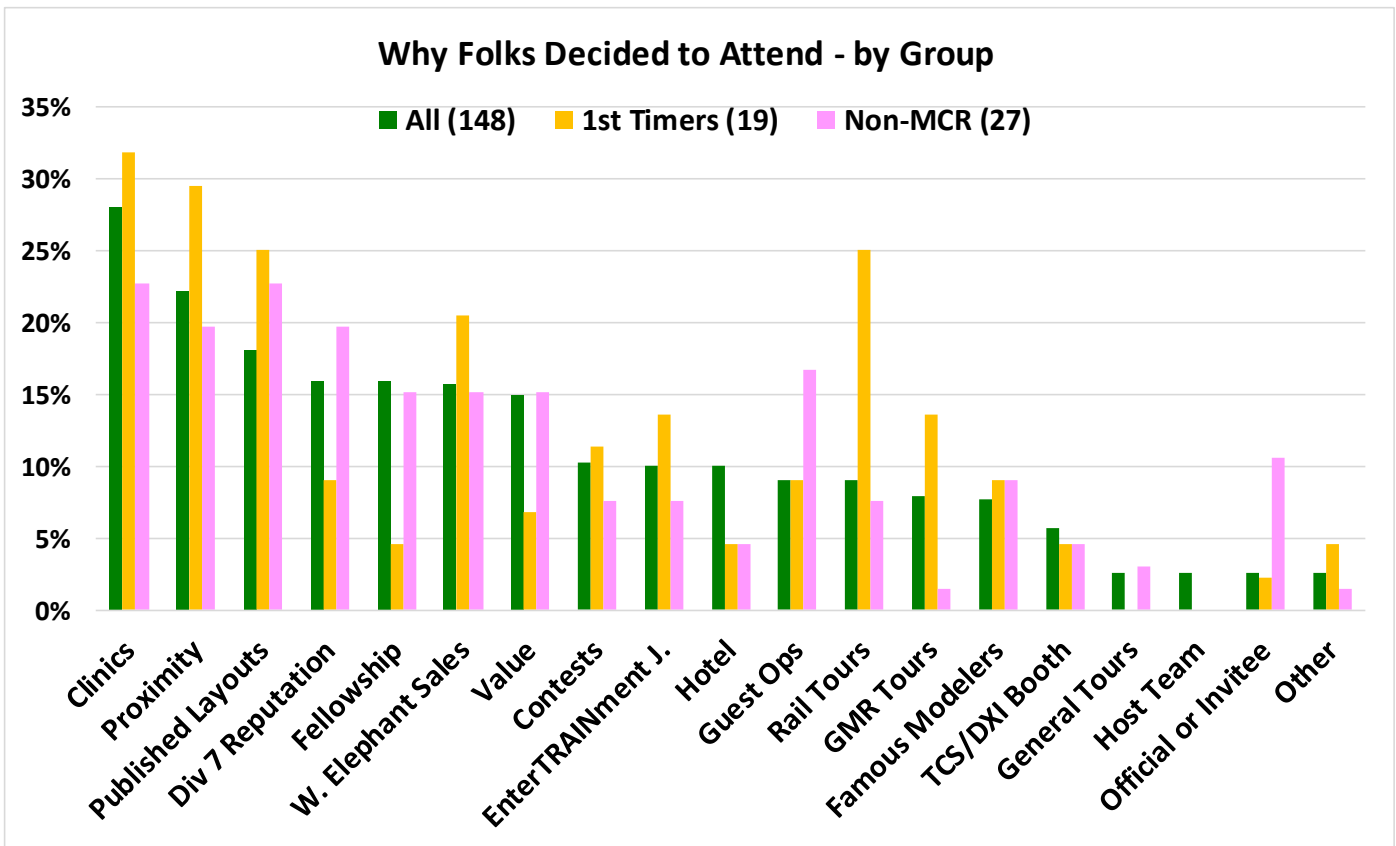
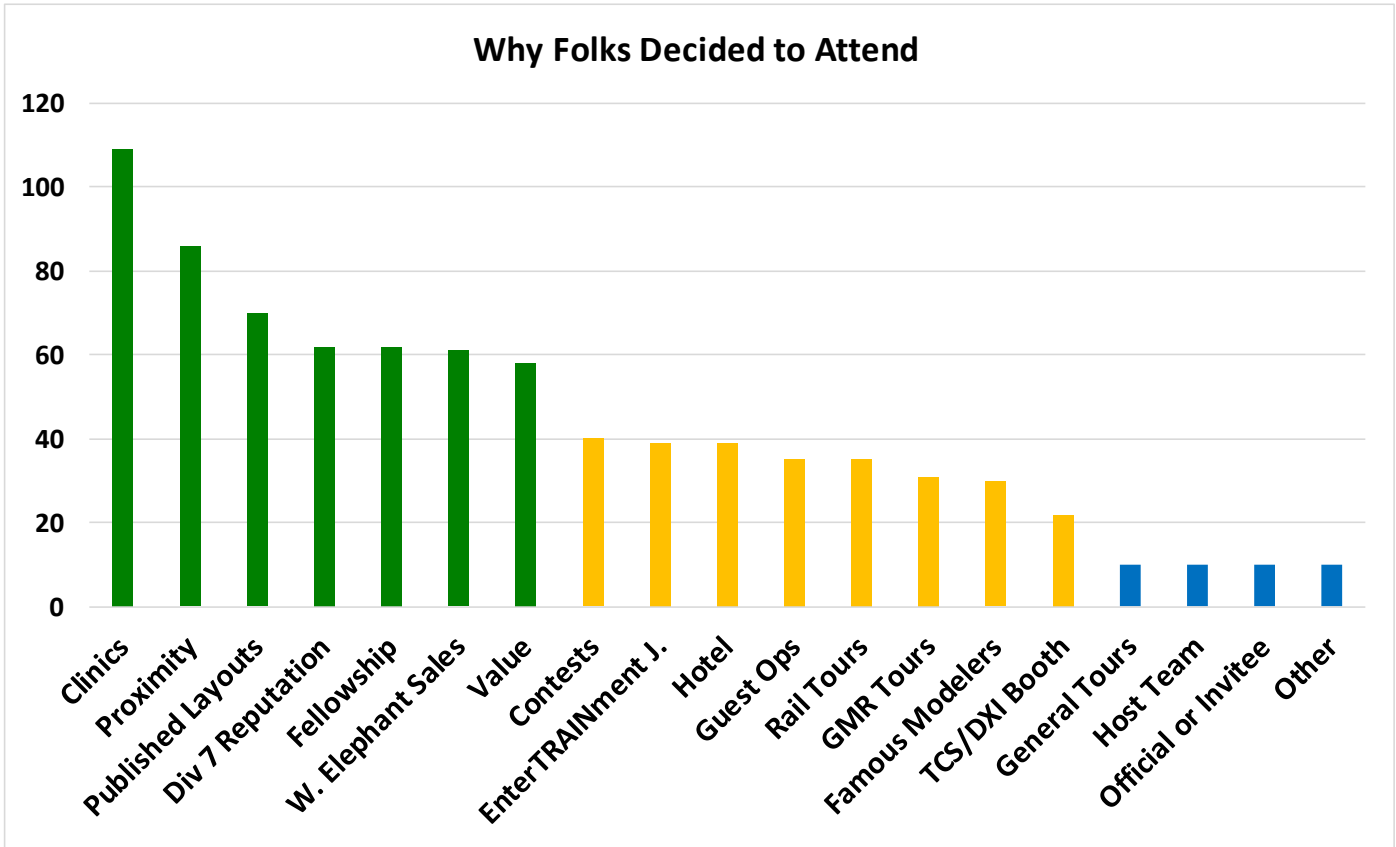
Question 3: How Found Out About Cincinnati Express?



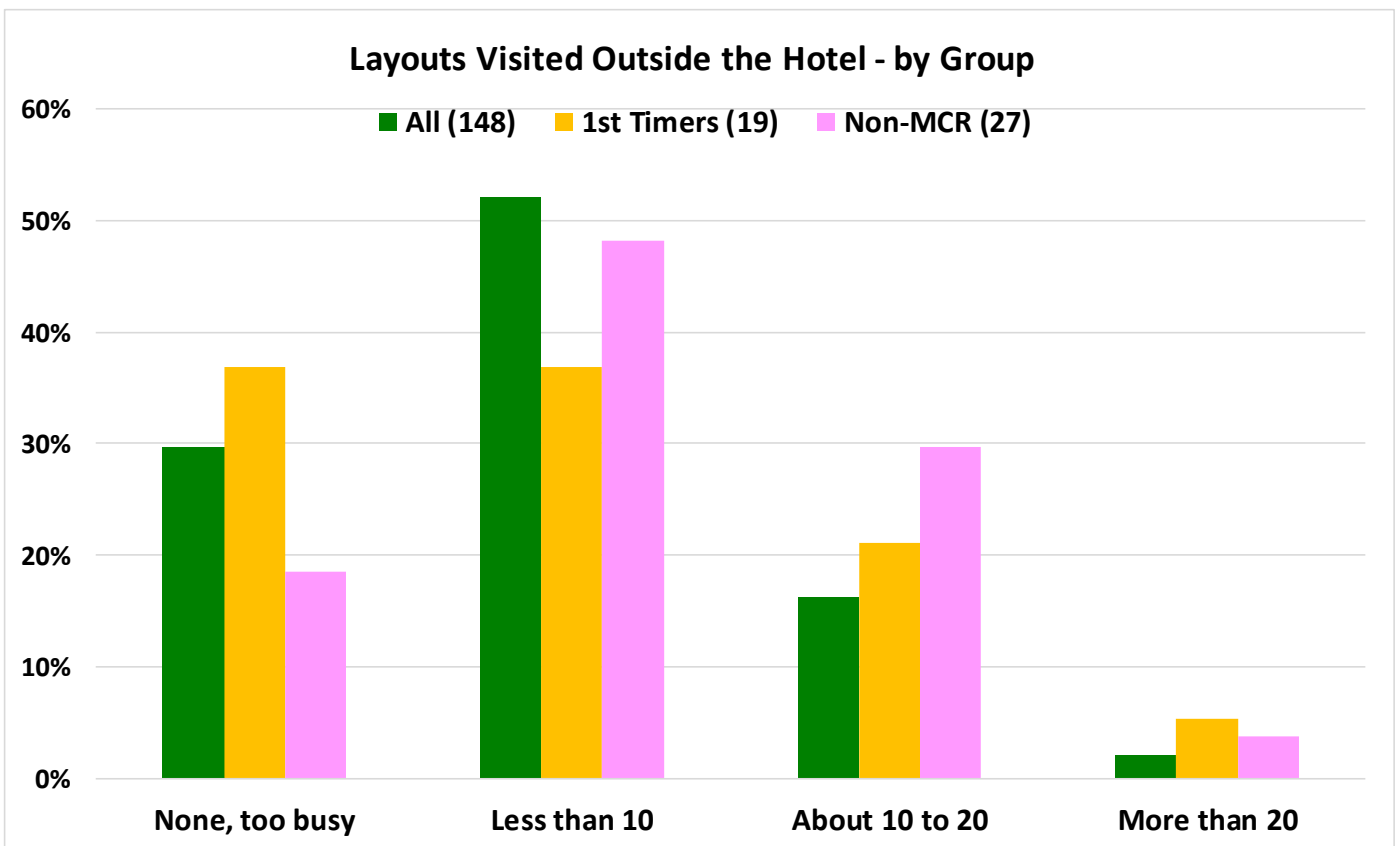
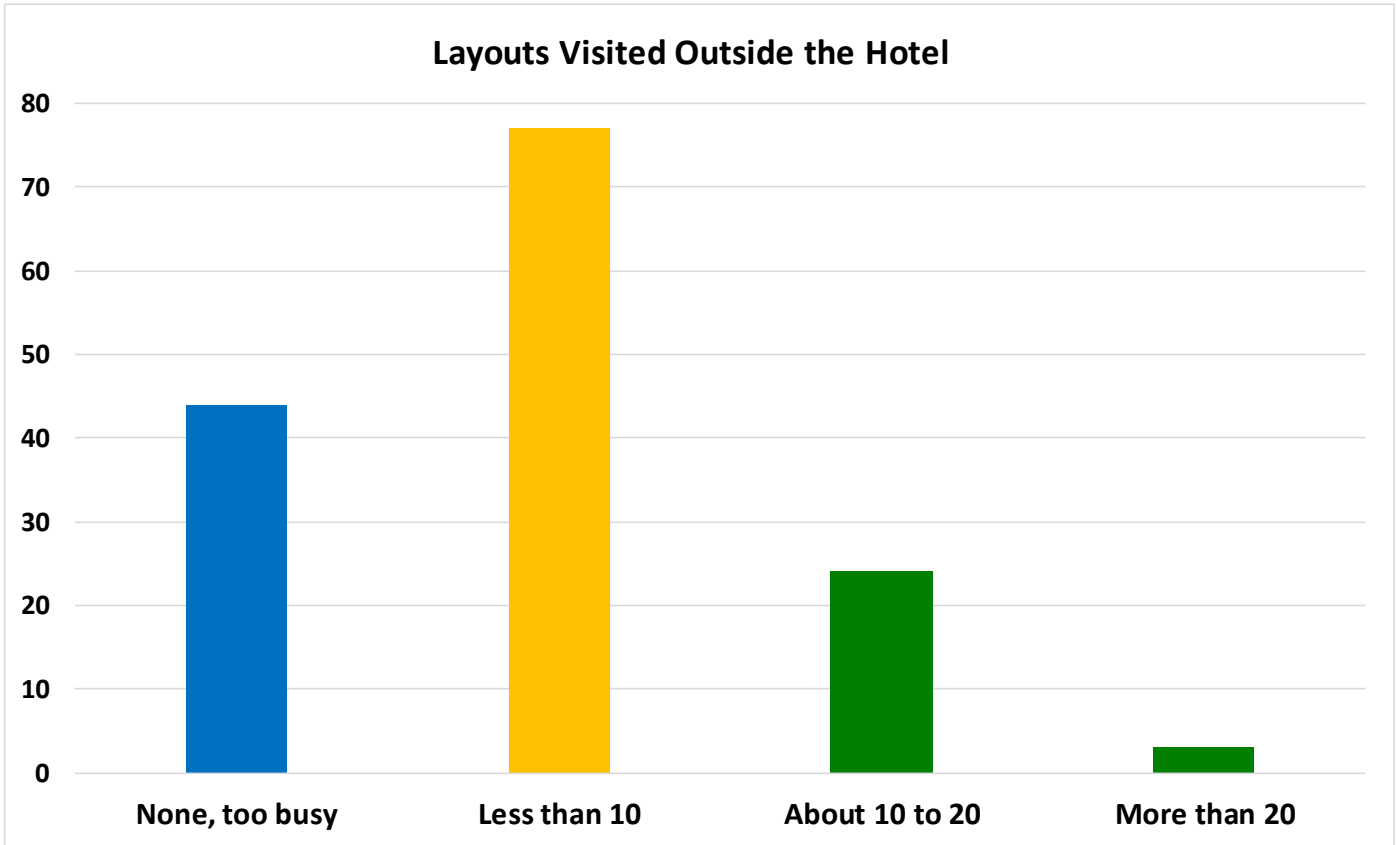
Question 4: Attended with Who?



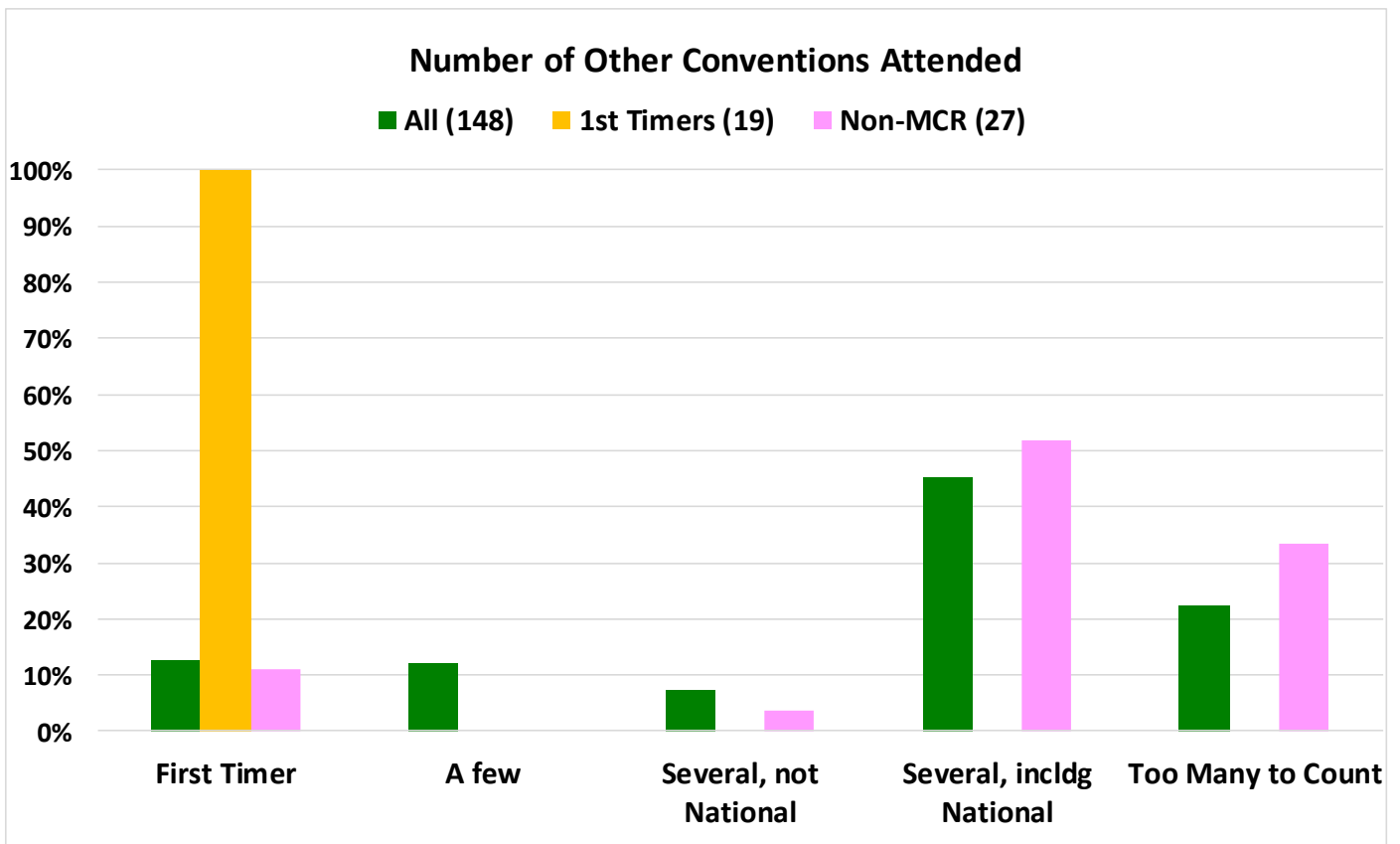
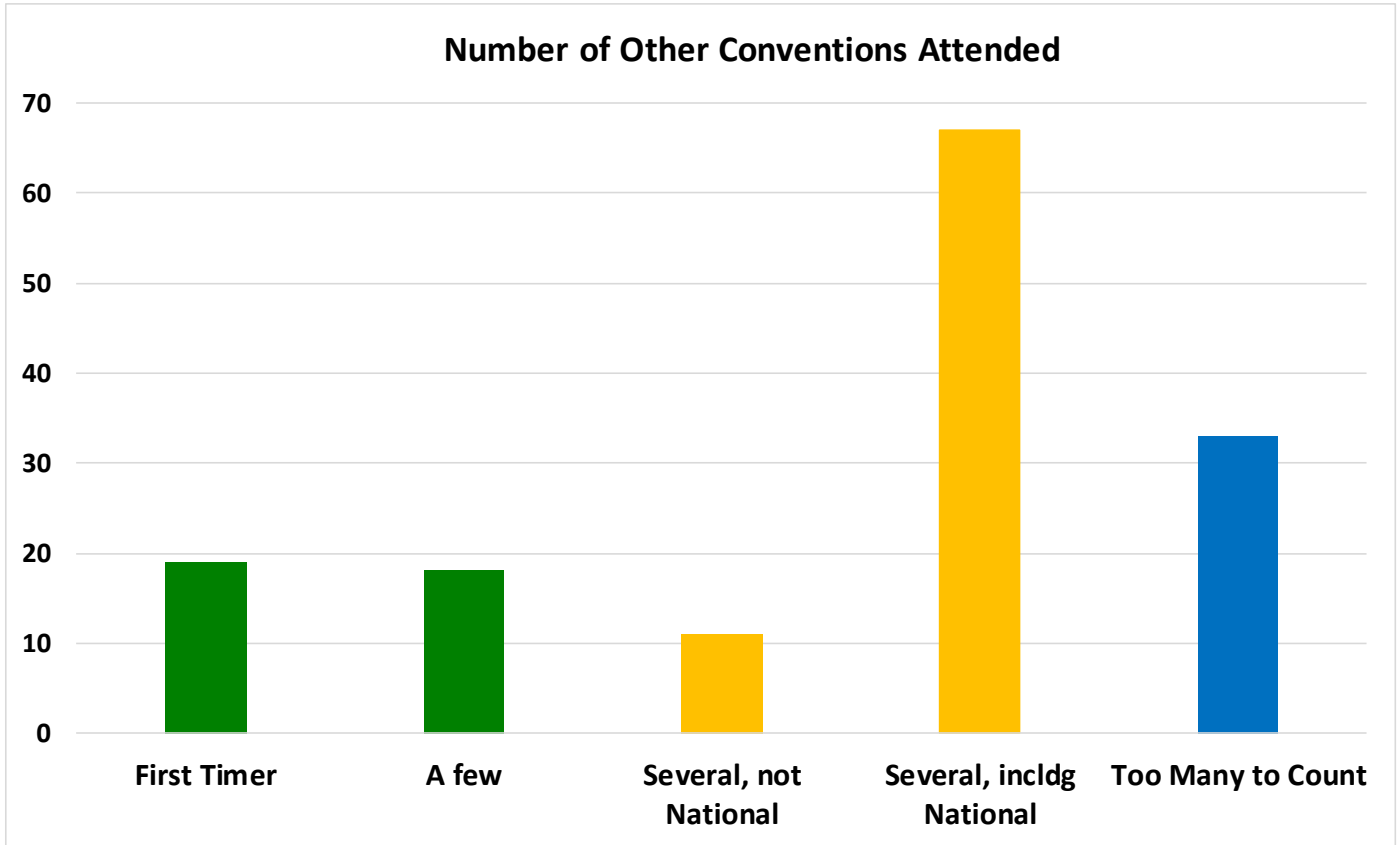
Question 5: Why Decided to Attend?



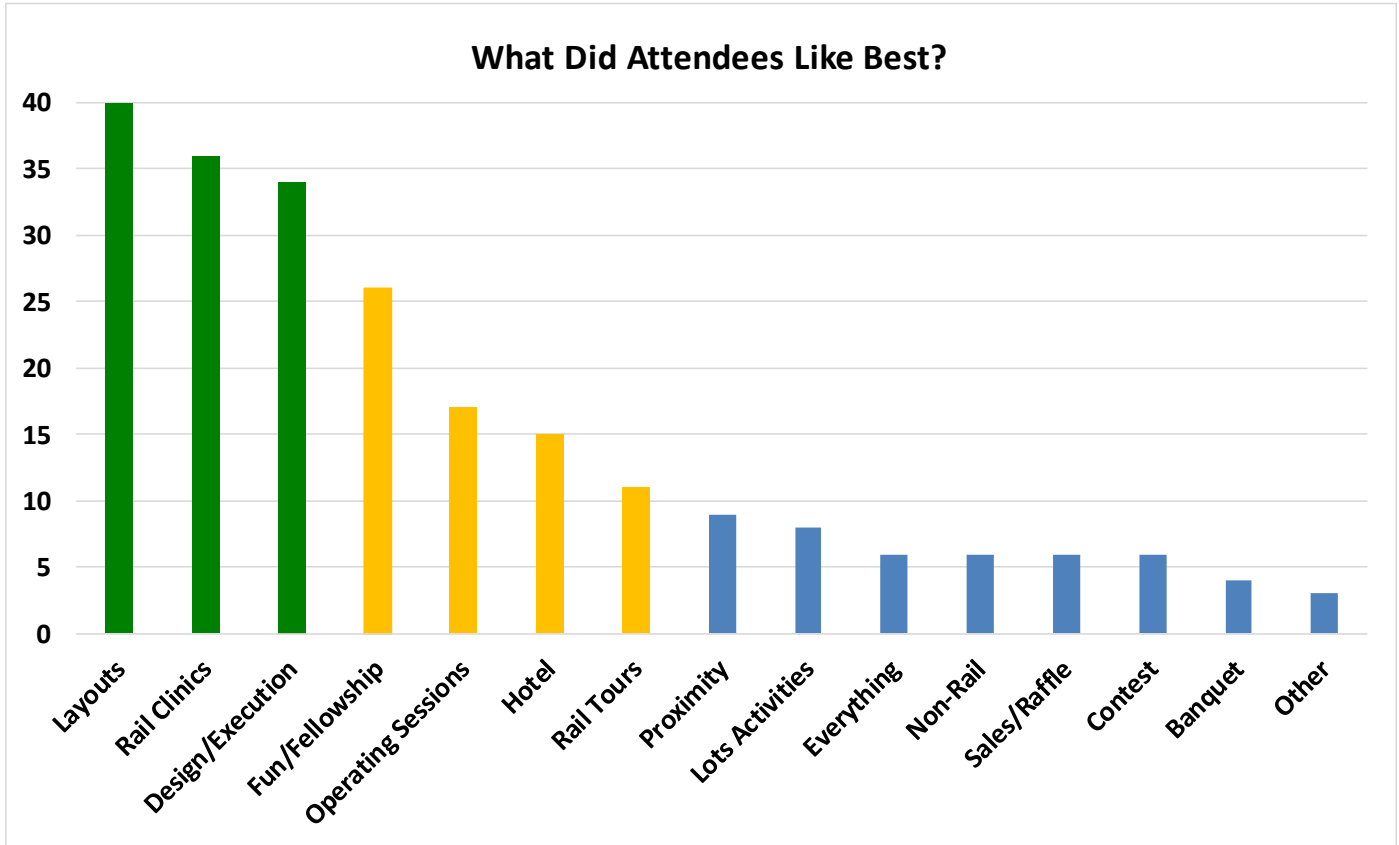
Question 6: Number of Layouts Visited Outside Hotel



Question 7: Number of Other Conventions Attended?



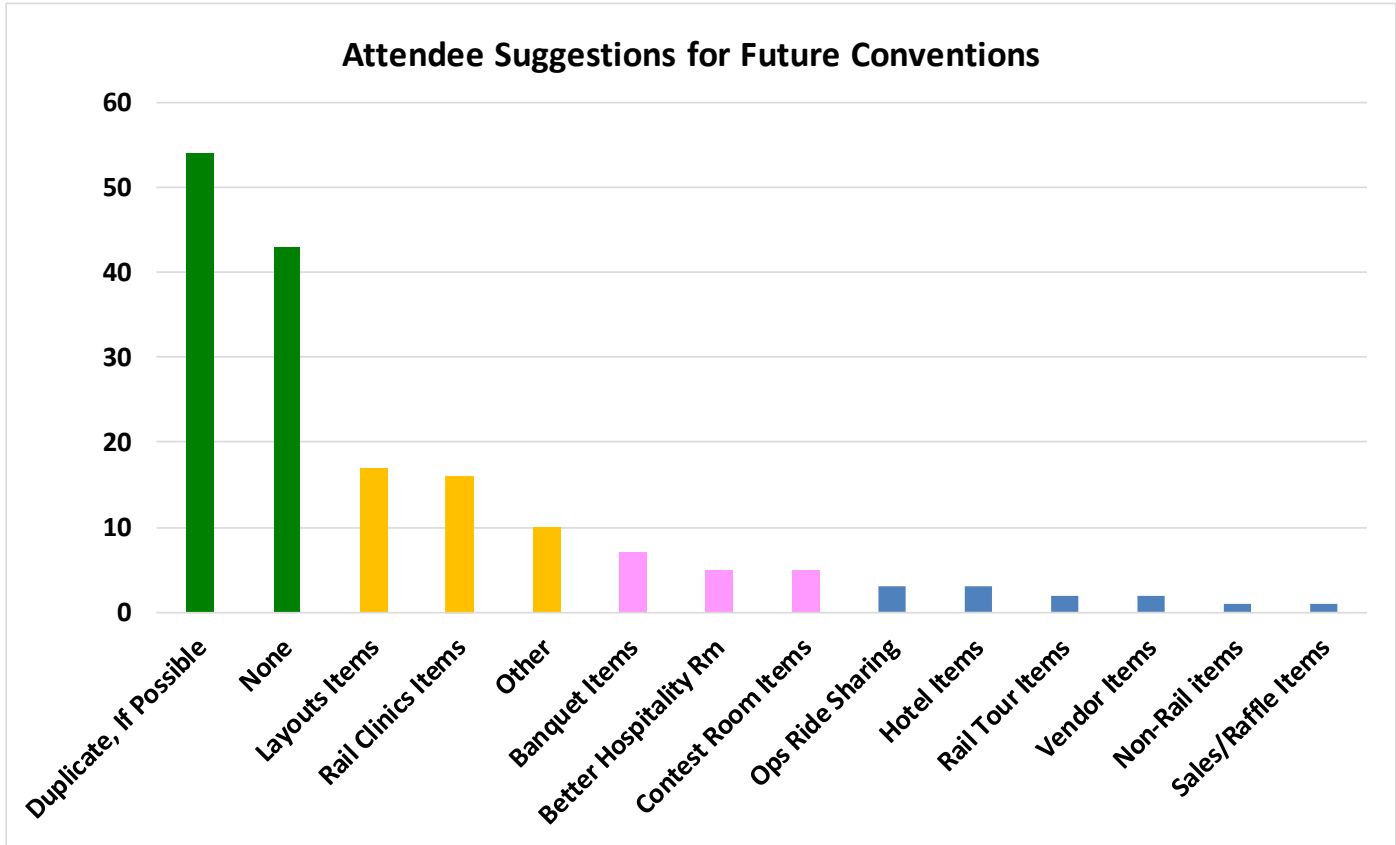
Question 8: Ad Hoc Likes



Selected Quotes

- Incredible wealth of layouts
- Friendly/great people!
- Excellent Hotel/Facilities
- Excellent Clinics
- Fun!
- Good guest speakers
- Exceptionally well planned and advertized
- Perfect
- Like sipping from a firehose
- EnterTRAINment Junction
- Everything ran very smoothly
- Best access to Interstate
- Lots of activities for my wife
- Great ops layouts
- By far the best regional I've attended
- Similar in quality to a National, but less expensive
- Info out early enough for us to plan
- Many diverse activities and opportunities

Question 9: Ad Hoc Suggestions



Layout Items

- Have more free GMR openings (2)
- Coach ops owners
- Don't have Sunday AM Ops
- Don't have layouts open at night
- Have pre & post convention layout openings
- Have less layout tours
- Continue using half bus loads for layout tours (2)
- Better/clearer maps (3)
- Each layout open more than once
- Don't open far away layouts
- Have small ops layout(s) at hotel
- Better publicize all layouts not open on Sunday
- Open some layouts on Saturday evening

Banquet Items

- Allow contest winners to attend awards free
- Lower cost banquet
- Publicize banquet table reservation system (2)
- Shorter banquet
- Emcee should not out-entertain the speaker

Contest Room Items

- Need bigger room (4)
- Open room more often

Rail Clinic Items

- Have hands-on clinics
- Have kickoff keynote speakers each morning
- Have better clinics (2)
- Don't have clinics during lunch time (when is that?)
- Have more clinics (3)
- Have more scenery demos/clinics
- Run each clinic twice (3)
- Poll registrants for clinics desired
- Provide clinic handouts
- Have mics for all speakers (even small room)
- Publish clinic schedule with registration package

Other Items

- Continue having plenty of off-site activities
- Run Joint with a RR Historical Society
- Open to public on 1 day
- Have discount for host division members
- Plan early like Cincinnati did
- List nearby places to eat
- More activities on Thurs (couldn't attend Sat/Sun)
- Have way for us to contact other attendees

Hospitality Room

- Improve it - serve more drink types (5)

Registrations Report

Areas of Responsibility

The Registration Team was responsible for accepting and recording registration request forms and payments. These requests included basic registrations, rail and non-rail extra fare events and bus tours, guest operating session spots and pre-convention sales of convention shirts and convention cars. Registrants could select from 61 different items.

The Registration Team received payments in the form of checks, cash, money orders or credit cards. Deposits were made on a frequent basis and reported to the convention Treasurer. Credit cards were processed using the "Square" application on my iPhone which reported them immediately to the convention treasurer.

The Registration Team reported sales progress to the Convention Chair and Vice-Chair on approximately a weekly basis using a standard Sales Report Excel spreadsheet (copy attached).

The Registration Team prepared the registration documents and registrant credentials to be distributed at the convention. These documents included name badges and associated souvenir neck wallets, event tickets and final receipts. Additional documents were prepared by others but were distributed by the Registration Team, including the convention timetable (program), popular vote ballot and layout tour map booklet.

The Registration Team contacted the Butler County Visitors Bureau and arranged for them to provide maps and information for local attractions, all in convenient Mylar tote bags, which we also used later to hold our check-in registration materials. These items were graciously provided free of charge by the Visitors Bureau.

Software and Suppliers Utilized by the Registration Team

My Invoices and Estimates by Avanquest Software - This inexpensive software package provided the basic mechanism for recording registrant personal information, managing the inventory of registrations, events and merchandise and collecting and properly crediting payments. This package has extensive reporting capabilities which were used to keep the convention leadership apprised of sales progress and inventory depletion. It also has a powerful capability to email customers with confirmation of their requests.

Microsoft Excel - This popular spreadsheet program was used to fulfill requests for data from various persons. The My Invoices software can export data in Excel format which is very useful.

Avery Design and Print Application - This free download from Avery products was used to produce mailing labels, name badges and other labels. It has powerful mail merge capabilities and can integrate with *My Invoices*.

Customized souvenir neck wallets to hold the name tags and tickets were obtained from on-line vendor *Marco Promotions*. These were surprisingly inexpensive, and even included a zippered pocket.

Timeline of Registration Team Activities

Beginning approximately 15 months before the convention (February, 2017) we began to design the registration documents to be distributed at the Louisville, KY MCR Regional Convention in May, 2017.

At the Louisville convention attendees were encouraged to take advantage of priority registration which would guarantee them first shot at extra fare, limited attendee events. Approximately 80 such registrations were received before January 1, 2018.

By December 1, 2017 we designed the full registration package. We physically mailed this about mid-December to the priority registrants to fulfill our commitment to them. Response to this mailing was less than anticipated. Nevertheless, a steady stream of completed registrations was received beginning in January, 2018.

About mid-January the full registration package appeared in the emailed MCR *Kingpin*, plus the websites of both the MCR and Cincinnati Division 7. The MCR then physically mailed the *Kingpin* to MCR members by about February 1, 2018. Registrations from then until the convention came in steadily at about 10-20 per week.

As the registration forms were processed, any sales of convention shirts or cars were added to a spreadsheet which was sent to the Company Storekeeper so the appropriate merchandise could be set aside to fill the orders. A ticket for each item ordered was included in the ticket packet everyone picked up at check-in. Those merchandise tickets were exchanged during the convention for those items at the Company Store.

About 2 months prior to the convention we worked with the Non-Rail team to snail-mail each Non-Rail registrant a letter reminding them of the general interest events available for them to sign up for. We did receive some added selections from this.

Approximately five weeks before the convention the event tickets were printed and supplied to the Registration Team. About three weeks before the convention the Registration Team began to assemble the individual envelopes containing printed name badges, event tickets, popular vote contest ballots, ribbons and a final registration receipt. A "Go-Slow" approach

was used wherein the envelop packets were assembled in groups of about 20 registrations at a time over a two-week period. This insured the materials in the packets were appropriate to the specific registration and the chance of errors was reduced. Further, there were instances where registrants made changes to their event choices before the convention. Those packets were easily adjusted by adding or deleting tickets.

The convention programs, layout maps and Mylar bags were delivered about two weeks before the convention. One program and map packet were pre-placed in each bag, but not the individual envelop packets. These were stored in alphabetical order in two trays. As the registrants arrived at the registration desk they were given their envelop packet along with the one bag and one souvenir badge holder (neck wallet) per attendee.

About 15 people chose to register at the convention, plus others bought event tickets then. A special registration form (attached) was used for such registrations and event purchases. These orders were taken at either the Registration Desk or the adjacent Tour Desk. All tickets and payments were handled at the Registration Desk.

Specific Learnings

Early planning and setup of the registration process is crucial to achieving a smooth and error-free experience for the convention attendees. Make sure everything is ready before you “open the doors” to registrations!

Sending a registration confirmation via email saves a lot of headaches and unnecessary communications since the attendee is fully informed of their registration choices and their payment status. It also validates the email address on the registration form. This is also an excellent time to suggest additional events they may like to sign up for.

Thanks

The Registrar would like to thank the members of his team who staffed the Registration Desk at the Convention. In addition to those persons on the Volunteer List, my thanks go to Jim Stewart, Jim Hodde, Gary Orcutt and Dianne Rowland and probably a few others.

Respectfully Submitted,

Roy F Hord
Cincinnati Express Registrar



CINCINNATI EXPRESS

Mid-Central Region Convention

West Chester, Ohio, May 17-20, 2018

Form for Use
During the
Convention

YOUR INFORMATION

Name _____ NMRA # _____ Region _____ Division _____
 Email Address _____ Phone _____ Reg. # _____

REGISTRATIONS & NMRA MEMBERSHIP

Item	Quantity	Price	Amount
Full Regular Registration *		\$75.00	\$
Family Member (Teenager, Spouse or Non-Rail Guest)		\$25.00	\$
Family Member (Child 12 or Under)		Free	\$
NMRA Full Annual Membership, with NMRA Magazine ***		\$75.00	\$
NMRA Full Annual Membership, without NMRA Magazine ***		\$47.00	\$
NMRA RailPass Membership (9 months, with NMRA Magazine) **		\$19.95	\$
Registrations & Membership Total			\$
Extra Fares Total (from below)			\$
TOTAL AMOUNT DUE			\$

PAYMENT INFORMATION

Make **Checks Payable** to *Cincinnati Division 7, MCR, NMRA*. Check # _____
Credit Card: Visa _____ MasterCard _____ Card # _____ - _____ - _____ - _____
 Expiration Date: (MM/YY) _____ / _____ CVV: _____ Billing Zip Code: _____

EXTRA FARE ITEMS

Item #	Item Name	Day	Time	Quantity	Price	Amount
LAYTH	Lawson & Bonhaus Open Layouts	Thu Aft	1:00 - 4:00		Free	\$ - 0 -
EJUNC	EnterTrainment Junc. Reception	Thu Eve	4:30 - 6:30		\$19	\$
MGWINE	Meet & Greet w/ Wine Tasting	Thu Eve	7:00 - 8:30		\$15	\$
LAY1	Great Model RRs Tour 1 - North	Fri AM	7:30 - noon		\$44	\$
RAIL1	Matandy Steel/Hamilton Tour	Fri AM	8:00 - noon		\$38	\$
RAIL2	Tropicana & Brighton Tour	Fri AM	8:00 - noon		\$38	\$
WAERO	Ladies Water Aerobics	Fri AM	9:30 - 10:30		Free	\$ - 0 -
GEN1	Findlay Mkt & Conservatory Tour	Fri Aft	12:30 - 5:30		\$49	\$
LAY2	Great Model RRs Tour 2 - Near	Fri Aft	1:00 - 5:00		\$44	\$
RAIL3	Cincinnati Barge & Rail Tour	Fri Aft	1:00 - 5:00		\$38	\$
GCARD	Greeting Card Making Workshop	Fri Eve	7:00 - 8:30		\$10	\$
LAY3	Great Model RRs Tour 3 - East	Sat AM	7:30 - noon		\$44	\$
GEN2	Sign Mus. & Spring Grove Tour	Sat AM	8:00 - noon		\$47	\$
LAY4	Great Model RRs Tour 4 - Central	Sat Aft	1:00 - 5:00		\$44	\$
RAIL4	Cincinnati Railfan Tour	Sat Aft	1:00 - 5:15		\$38	\$
LLUNCH	Ladies Luncheon w/ Cookie Dec.	Sat Aft	1:30 - 4:00		\$35	\$
BCHICK	Receptn & Banquet - Chicken	Sat Eve	6 - 7 - 9:30		\$54	\$
BRIBS	Receptn & Banquet - Short Ribs	Sat Eve	6 - 7 - 9:30		\$54	\$
BSALM	Receptn & Banquet - Salmon	Sat Eve	6 - 7 - 9:30		\$54	\$
BVEG	Receptn & Banquet - Vegetarian	Sat Eve	6 - 7 - 9:30		\$54	\$

Extra Fares Total	\$
--------------------------	----

Example Ticket Blank

Generated via an Excel Spreadsheet Program

○

BRIBS
Sat Eve

Reception & Banquet
Short Ribs Entree
7:00 PM to 9:30 PM
Report between 6 PM and 7 PM
to the hotel Atrium
6:00 PM Reception, 7:00 PM Banquet
\$ 54 Exchange Value - If Sold Out

BRIBS
Sat Eve

○

BRIBS
Sat Eve

Reception & Banquet
Short Ribs Entree
7:00 PM to 9:30 PM
Report between 6 PM and 7 PM
to the hotel Atrium
6:00 PM Reception, 7:00 PM Banquet
\$ 54 Exchange Value - If Sold Out

BRIBS
Sat Eve

○

BRIBS
Sat Eve

Reception & Banquet
Short Ribs Entree
7:00 PM to 9:30 PM
Report between 6 PM and 7 PM
to the hotel Atrium
6:00 PM Reception, 7:00 PM Banquet
\$ 54 Exchange Value - If Sold Out

BRIBS
Sat Eve

○

BRIBS
Sat Eve

Reception & Banquet
Short Ribs Entree
7:00 PM to 9:30 PM
Report between 6 PM and 7 PM
to the hotel Atrium
6:00 PM Reception, 7:00 PM Banquet
\$ 54 Exchange Value - If Sold Out

BRIBS
Sat Eve

○

BRIBS
Sat Eve

Reception & Banquet
Short Ribs Entree
7:00 PM to 9:30 PM
Report between 6 PM and 7 PM
to the hotel Atrium
6:00 PM Reception, 7:00 PM Banquet
\$ 54 Exchange Value - If Sold Out

BRIBS
Sat Eve

○

BRIBS
Sat Eve

Reception & Banquet
Short Ribs Entree
7:00 PM to 9:30 PM
Report between 6 PM and 7 PM
to the hotel Atrium
6:00 PM Reception, 7:00 PM Banquet
\$ 54 Exchange Value - If Sold Out

BRIBS
Sat Eve

○

BRIBS
Sat Eve

Reception & Banquet
Short Ribs Entree
7:00 PM to 9:30 PM
Report between 6 PM and 7 PM
to the hotel Atrium
6:00 PM Reception, 7:00 PM Banquet
\$ 54 Exchange Value - If Sold Out

BRIBS
Sat Eve

○

BRIBS
Sat Eve

Reception & Banquet
Short Ribs Entree
7:00 PM to 9:30 PM
Report between 6 PM and 7 PM
to the hotel Atrium
6:00 PM Reception, 7:00 PM Banquet
\$ 54 Exchange Value - If Sold Out

BRIBS
Sat Eve

Non-Rail Committee Report

Non-Rail Clinics, Tours and Luncheon

When I was asked to develop a program for the Non-Rail Clinics and General Interest Tours for Cincinnati Express we made a list of places we thought would be of interest to our guests. We considered museums, historical homes, aquariums, potteries, riverboat rides, exotic markets (Jungle Jim's and Findley Market) and Spring Grove Cemetery/Arboretum. We ended up choosing activities fairly near each other so moving from venue to venue would be easy.

For clinics, we considered activities such as Zumba, Water Aerobics, arts and crafts, wine and cheese "meet and greet" and cooking classes. We ended up selecting clinics that involved exercising, fellowship, genealogy and crafts that many of the attendees might enjoy doing.

Trying to do something a bit different at this regional, we offered a Ladies Luncheon. It turned out to be very successful. Normally only offered at National Conventions, we felt this would be a nice opportunity to gather most of the Ladies and have a lot of fun. We held this event at the hotel and served a scrumptious Buffet Style Lunch. For our after lunch activity, we hired a local pastry chef and we all decorated cookies. Everyone appeared to have a wonderful time and enjoyed eating the cookies. Adding a touch of class to our luncheon, we had wonderful live string music provided by a member (violinist) and his wife (cellist).

Preparing for the Convention

I called upon the wives of Division 7 members to meet and discuss how to proceed with the Non-Rail convention activities. It should be said right now, "You can't do everything. You must delegate or risk going crazy." Luckily, two remarkable people stepped forward to help with planning and execution. For two years prior to the event, we had periodic meetings to discuss how to proceed. Attention to detail made all our events a success, such as promptly sending checks to the venues to cover the cost of the tours and to prepay for admission tickets. We found splitting responsibility for clinics and tours gave all of us time to properly plan and execute.

In order to establish viability and secure each of our venues, we started contacting venues two years in advance of the convention. We periodically checked back with them to re-confirm arrangements, work details, issues and payments, etc. At each committee meeting we continued to discuss ideas and possible issues. We also met with the operations personnel at each tour venue to discuss how we envisioned the tour happening and make any special arrangements. We continued to meet right up to a week before the Convention.

Once clinic topics and clinicians were selected, we needed to continually maintain regular contact with our clinicians, either by phone, email, snail-mail letters or in person. We especially needed to cover the following with our clinicians:

- Will they definitely be honoring their commitment to appear
- What equipment will they need i.e. A/V, tables, etc.
- What is the cost of their clinic (if any)
- Confirm the exact time, date and location

- Offering to help them in any other way we could

I also contacted the Butler County Convention and Visitors Center for businesses that might be interested in doing a clinic. They were very helpful and also provided our Convention Bags. About 2 months before the convention we worked with the Registrar to mail each Non-Rail registrant a note reminding them of the available general interest events.

Volunteers

Both ladies that agreed to help me gave greatly of their time and effort to make this the best convention ever. Both did a wonderful job organizing the tours and making sure everything was done on time. Because of their dedication we had no problems or complaints about the tours. You CAN NOT thank your key helpers enough for all their hard work and help.

Other ladies volunteered to make door prizes for the Ladies Luncheon. They made beautiful tote bags, hand towels and aprons. They also volunteered to work in the Hospitality Room during the convention. Other ladies worked the Registration/Tour Desk and did judging for the Contest Room. A great Job was done by all of our Volunteers. The following ladies should especially be recognized -

- Ruth Anne Burchnall – General Interest Tours, Non-Rail Letter Mailing
- Jane Hancock – General Interest Tours
- Jean Jarman – Tour Desk and Arts & Crafts Judging
- Linda Crumrine – Luncheon Door Prizes and Hospitality Room
- Jeannie Weiglin – Luncheon Door Prizes and Hospitality Room

Expenses

In order to help make everything extra special for our Non-Rail attendees, we provided door prizes (at the Wine and Cheese Meet and Greet and Water Aerobics), thank you gifts for the Clinicians (remember, your clinicians are probably not model railroaders), posters we made to advertise the Non-Rail events, thank you stickers, and postage for special “advertising” notes sent to the wives of attendees. These miscellaneous items totaled about \$300. Our Treasurer graciously and promptly paid invoices for each event cost, as well as the other supplies for the Wine and Cheese Meet and Greet, cookie decorating and card making activities.

Final Notes

This was a great convention and for the Non-Rail attendees [read: MRR Widows] it was the best ever. We had a super high attendance of women for a regional convention and they virtually all told us how much fun they had.

The secret to having a successful convention is to make sure you pick teammates that want to work hard and are willing to do anything to get the job done. Also, when picking clinics, try to mix-up the topics so you will have something for everybody to do (the days of jig-saw puzzles in the Hospitality Room are gone). We spent 2 years planning this convention and it most definitely paid off.

Linda Lee Kerka
Non-Rail Committee Chairwoman

Prototype & Industrial Tours Report

Tours Purpose - The Cincinnati Express 2018 Prototype and Industrial tours were put together to offer convention attendees the opportunity to tour working industrial facilities that are served by rail as part of their normal operations. All these tours used commercial buses and had knowledgeable guides.

Background

Industrial Tours - Approximately nine (9) industrial facilities were contacted starting about 24 months prior to the start of our Convention. We introduced ourselves, expressed interest in their rail-served operations and requested they allow our attendees to tour their facilities. Of the nine contacted, one refused to communicate back, three turned down our request and five agreed to host a tour. Of those five, one was a late addition, confirmed 3 months prior to the start of our convention. When trying to arrange industrial tours, the business owners and/or management have justifiable concerns about safety, disruption to their normal operations, insurance, lost productivity of employees involved in tours, and accommodating non-customers in their place of business (restrooms, accidents, etc.). Another big issue was management and industry contact changeover. Each time we discovered this occurred we had to scramble to re-establish our relationship and re-obtain permission for the tour.

Prototype Railroad Tours - Prototype railroad tours are almost non-existent today except for those provided at short-line or regional railroad companies. Almost exclusively, Class 1 railroads very rarely host public tours of their facilities due to concerns over safety, security, and insurance as well as disruption for their operations and employees. Our proposed tour of the Norfolk Southern container yard was turned down even after arrangements were made by a current NS employee at the local level. In lieu of a tour to a prototype railroad facility, we substituted an area railfan tour that permitted photography of railroad activities from public access locations or access to a railroad museum facility open to the general public.

Preparation

In order to prepare for a Convention offering of prototype and industrial tours, a lot of groundwork is necessary including contacting potential industrial facilities, discussion of tour details, liability release sign off forms, checking with senior management, and coordination of tour times and tour procedures. Each potential industrial location was personally contacted first by letter or e-mail, and then personal visits to verify details of the tour. Details needing to be discussed with potential rail-served businesses include the time and date of the tour, expected number of attendees, requirements for safety gear, areas where attendees are allowed and those off-limits. Additionally, the route of the tour inside the facility is generally reviewed so the Tour Leader can be familiar with tour timing and what is expected to be seen during the tour.

Multiple visits to the industrial sites are generally needed to cover the myriad of tour details and to meet for a final review of the tour prior to the event to see if there are any changes or updates that the Tour leader should be aware of. In our experience, a minimum of two and sometimes three face-to-face meetings at each site were necessary to hammer out all tour details.

The number one concern of all host industrial businesses is and was SAFETY. This was expressed to all tour attendees numerous times during the tour. Additionally, during the initial interview, the subject of allowing photography of the ongoing operations, or parts of the facility, should be discussed. In some cases photography was allowed everywhere, in others certain areas of the facility had no photography.

The requirement for any required safety gear such as safety glasses, vests, hearing protection or hard hats should be factored into the budget either as an outright purchase by the host Division or rolled into the tour ticket cost. The leader of the Prototype and Industrial Tour committee should recruit potential tour guides for each tour. These persons may or may not be the primary Division person contact with that business. Sometimes, a Division member is the prime contact in communicating with a potential industrial business, but is not the Tour Leader. The committee Coordinator should schedule committee meetings periodically before the convention to review progress, any problems or concerns, logistics of tour timing and any special site requirements.

Schedule

Once industrial venues are selected, agreement is reached to allow a tour, and any special preparations are known (safety gear, etc.), the geographic location, route to the industrial venue and return to the convention hotel, allowed tour times, and order of the tours can be inserted into the master convention schedule. During our convention, we had combined two (2) ea. industrial venues on two of the tours, so tour timing became important for each of these, to ensure the tour at the 1st industrial site didn't run long and delay the start of the tour at the 2nd industrial site. Consideration must be given to keeping the tour on time, transit time to the next venue, and transit time to return to the hotel. As well, the expected number of attendees for any tour must be taken into consideration when figuring the size and number of buses needed. For our convention, the use of "mini-buses", rather than a full size motor coach, was an option for accommodating a small number of attendees for certain tours, or for navigating areas where tight turns or parking was problematic.

Publicity and Tour Descriptions

During the initial meetings with industrial venues, it is necessary to get an accurate description of what item(s) or processes are performed at each business so this can accurately be communicated to potential attendees in the convention publicity materials. Importantly, when arranging the tour, inquiries should be made as to how the business uses, or did use, rail

service in their operations. To facilitate this gathering and communication of information, each primary Division contact filled out a tour description form (see separate attachment) for each industrial business with whom we had confirmed a tour. This and the schedule information were used to work with the Vice Chair to devise the content for the convention publicity, the registration sign-up forms, and the master timetable.

Tour Operation

Use of a central “Dispatch/Tour” desk is needed in order to properly sequence tours when multiple tours are departing/arriving at the Convention hotel, plus to check-in each tour guide. Our Division has used this with every convention as it provides a high level of command and control in order to dispatch tours in an orderly fashion. Along with this, the requirement for a general gathering area for tour attendees is always needed – we used the large hotel atrium for this which provided seating and an area away from clinic rooms and other activities, enabling Tour Leaders to check-in and assemble their tour group prior to departure. Tour Leaders were given a tour roster on a clipboard to use to check in all attendees, plus a guide book with maps, contact information for the tour destinations, and contact phone number for the Tour Dispatcher. We also provided our Tour Leaders with sign boards on a stick that displayed a printed sign with large lettering showing the name of their tour. Tour Leaders could then head to the assembly area about 15-30 minutes prior to their tour departure and gather their tour attendees before leading them out the bus.

The Tour Dispatcher should check for the tour bus arrival about 20-30 minutes prior to the tour departure, check in with the driver, post the tour name sign onto the bus window, and load the cooler with iced water bottles. Once loading time for each tour starts, the Dispatcher should follow the group to supervise loading. Additionally, the Dispatcher should make a “last call” for each tour in the assembly area to catch any stragglers who may not have met up with their tour group. The Dispatcher then returns to the bus and signals the OK to depart. Once tours return to the convention hotel, the Dispatcher should supervise unloading, demount the bus window sign, and off-load the ice cooler.

Police Escort

For the railfanning tour, we knew of a perfect location for photos overlooking the CSX Queensgate hump yard tower and loco facility. However, this location was on a busy viaduct needing a police escort to stop the bus on the curb lane and allow attendees to exit. After many, many phone calls, emails and false leads we finally were granted permission to do this, hired an officer, plus obtained a free permit from the highway department. At the eleventh hour they decided we needed 2 officers, plus the cost per officer doubled as they said the minimum pay for the officers would be 2 hours vs. 1. We were able to talk them back to one (1) officer, since the event was on a Saturday where traffic was lighter. This portion of the tour worked well, although it cost over \$200 and took a ton of effort to arrange.

Overall Summary

Areas of Concern

Attendees missing tours - We know of at least two instances where tour attendees failed to get on their tour due to forgetting the tour time, oversleeping, or choosing to forgo their tour due to attending a clinic or other activity.

Additional uninvited tour attendees - We had at least two instances of one spouse purchasing a tour ticket and then bringing their spouse along, even though a second tour ticket had not been purchased. Tour guides must thoroughly check that all attendees have a valid ticket.

Unauthorized photography - We had an instance where midway through an industry tour the business rep notified the tour leader photography was not permitted in a certain interior part of the facility even though photography everywhere was agreed to prior to the tour. The attendees then had to restrict their photography for part of the tour. Photography resumed once attendees got to the exterior.

Unexpected tour length - On one of the trips, what was expected to be a 2 to 2-1/2 hour industry tour was cut short by the business rep at just over one hour after the tour arrived. After some communication with our tour dispatch desk, a local popular railfan site was selected along the return route to the hotel and the tour bus guide took attendees for some bonus train watching to take up most of the remaining tour duration.

Tour Schedule and Satisfaction

The tour schedule worked well during our convention and reports from tour attendees were positive on what was seen on tours and the variety of the venues. All the tours ran on time or within 10-15 minutes of posted times and few, if any, traffic problems occurred which could have resulted in late return of tour buses. To the best of our knowledge, no accidents or safety related incidents occurred.

Respectfully submitted,

Merlyn Jarman

Merlyn Jarman
Industrial and Prototype Tours Coordinator
Cincinnati Express 2018

Cincinnati Express Prototype and Industrial Tours Committee

Coordinator: Merlyn Jarman
Committee Members: Jim MacKnight, Keith Corman, Mike Tener, John Burchnall
Additional Guides: Bill Edwards, Dave Puthoff, Wil Davis (Division 3)

2018 Cincinnati Express Bus Tours

<i>Cincinnati Express Tour List by Bus</i>

Day	Leave Hotel	Return to Hotel	Tour #	# Stops	Tour Description
47 Pass. Motor Coach					
Friday	8:00 AM	Noon	Rail 2	2	Tropicana, Brighton (West Chester/Sharonville)
Friday	12:30 PM	5:30 PM	Gen 1	2	Findlay Mkt, Krohn Conservatory
55 Pass. Motor Coach					
Friday	8:00 AM	Noon	Rail 1	3	Matandy, Precision, Coke Plant Photostop (Hamilton/Middletown)
Friday	1:00 PM	5:00 PM	Rail 3	1	Cincinnati Barge & Rail (Ohio River east of Boathouse)
25 Pass. MiniBus					
Friday	7:30 AM	Noon	Lay 1	3	North (3 Stops in Lebanon/Mason/Monroe)
Friday	1:00 PM	5:00 PM	Lay 2	3	Near (3 Stops in West Chester/Liberty Twp)
47 Pass. Motor Coach					
Saturday	8:00 AM	Noon	Gen 2	2	American Sign Museum, Spring Grove Cemetery
Saturday	1:00 PM	5:15 PM	Rail 4	8	Cincinnati Railfan (8-9 stops along Mill Creek Valley & N. KY)
47 Pass. Motor Coach					
Saturday	7:30 AM	Noon	Lay 3	3	East (3 Stops in Anderson Twp/Milford)
Saturday	1:00 PM	5:00 PM	Lay 4	3	South (3 stops in Amberly Village/Westwood/Glendale)

<i>Cincinnati Express Tour List by Tour Type</i>

Day	Leave Hotel	Return	Tour #	# Stops	Tour Description
Friday	8:00 AM	Noon	Rail 1	3	Matandy, Precision, Coke Plant Photostop (Hamilton/Middletown)
Friday	8:00 AM	Noon	Rail 2	2	Tropicana, Brighton (West Chester/Sharonville)
Friday	1:00 PM	5:00 PM	Rail 3	1	Cincinnati Barge & Rail (Ohio River east of Boathouse)
Saturday	1:00 PM	5:15 PM	Rail 4	8	Cincinnati Railfan (multiple stops along Mill Creek Valley & N. KY)
Friday	12:30 PM	5:30 PM	Gen 1	2	Findlay Mkt, Krohn Conservatory
Saturday	8:00 AM	Noon	Gen 2	2	American Sign Museum, Spring Grove
Friday	7:30 AM	Noon	Lay 1	3	North (3 Stops in Lebanon/Mason/Monroe)
Friday	1:00 PM	5:00 PM	Lay 2	3	Near (3 Stops in West Chester/Liberty Twp)
Saturday	7:30 AM	Noon	Lay 3	3	East (3 Stops in Anderson Twp/Milford)
Saturday	1:00 PM	5:00 PM	Lay 4	3	South (3 stops in Amberly Village/Westwood/Glendale)

- Friday = May 18, 2018; Saturday = May 19, 2018
- All buses depart from and return to the Cincinnati Marriott North (Union Centre and I-75 in West Chester, OH)
- The convention committee will provide at least 1 guide on each bus with a detailed map and directions
- The convention committee will have a dispatcher at the hotel to direct and facilitate the loading of each bus
- The convention committee will provide bus/tour name signs to post inside windows of each bus
- Bus quotes to include all fees, taxes and driver gratuities (10%?, so riders do not pay more at end of each tour)
- Each bus is paired with a morning & afternoon trip, providing 1 driver & full day per bus cost efficiencies
- Departure times are tentative - they may vary by as much as 30 minutes once event planning is finalized
- Buses need to arrive at hotel at least 20 minutes prior to departure time, and preferably 30 minutes prior
- All buses must have fully functioning air conditioning and a PA/microphone for our hosts to use

Layout Bus Tour Procedures Using Color Dot Stickers

This describes how to use three-quarter inch diameter color dot stickers to easily manage bus layout tours where the layout size requires dividing into groups. Most layouts can only accommodate one-half to one-quarter the number of people on a typical over the road bus. We have found this simple system works flawlessly, is very fair to all visitors and does not burden the layout owner with managing it. The bus tour guide manages the group rotations as well as timings, typically from near the entrance of the layout room.

Prework – Purchase three-quarter inch diameter color dot stickers at an office supply store such as Staples. Avery #05472 is the type we've used, having 4 different colors – red, green, yellow and blue. Importantly, before the trip use scissors to cut 3 or 4 sheets into strips of 5 dots of the same color, then cut between each dot, forming single dot square pieces. Use 4 small snack zip lock bags to store each color in its own bag.

Assigning Groups – Once the bus is underway on the main highway towards the destination, the guide should announce he/she will be assigning everyone to 1 of 4 groups to manage the crowd at each layout. Continue by saying something like "Some layouts can take half the bus and others only a quarter of the bus. We'll use color dot stickers to assign the groups. When I give you one, please peel and stick it to your name badge."

The guide needs to determine the group size by dividing the number of people, including him/her self, by 4. Hence, if there are 43 people on bus, then there will be three groups of 11 and one group of 10. The driver is not counted – he/she is a wild card and can join any group at each venue if he/she wants to see that layout.

The guide stands in the aisle and asks "Who wants to be in the Red group, I need 10 or 11 people, please raise your hands?" The guide walks the aisle handing out exactly the right number of dot stickers for that color. Each of the other 3 colors is done the same way. After that the guide can re-check the number in each group by having folks raise their hands, one color at a time. If there is an imbalance, the guide simply asks for a volunteer to move from one group to another, and provides the correct color sticker.

Setting the Group Order – Before the bus arrives at the first layout, the guide should randomly determine and write down the group ordering sequence for that layout – for example Yellow first, then Blue, then Green, then Red. While they are at it, it would be good to also write down different sequences for each of the other layouts coming up on the trip. The simple way to be fair is to keep rotating in the same sequence – for example the second layout would be Blue first, then Green, then Red, and last Yellow.

Managing the Flow – As the bus arrives at the each layout, the guide announces which group is first (and also first off the bus), which group is "on-deck", and where each waiting group should hang out together. Often there will be spare rooms in the house for groups to wait, sometimes with displays or a dvd playing. Other times folks can wait on a front or back porch or in the garage (ask the owner ahead of time to move their cars out) – the garage is especially good if it is raining. As a last resort the groups can simply wait on the bus.

The guide then escorts the first group into the house and into the layout, telling them they will have XX minutes to view the layout, so please keep moving and use your time wisely. The number of minutes needs to be strictly managed by the guide, with a verbal reminder at the half way point and about 2 minutes before the end. The time for each group is the total visit time less 5 minutes (to load/unload bus) divided by the number of groups needing to rotate through (2 or 4), then rounded down about 1-2 minutes (to allow for transition time between groups). For example, if the visit time is 65 minutes with 4 groups, then the time per group would $65 - 5 = 60$ divided by $4 = 15$ min., less 1 or 2 = 13 to 14 min. per group.

As each group moves out and another into the layout, the guide (or a helper) instructs each remaining waiting group to rotate into the next room or que location, eventually getting to the on-deck location, and then into the layout. Each group is called out by their dot color, such as "Yellow group on deck" or "Red move downstairs to the family room". On large layouts that can accommodate half the bus at a time, the guide refers to 2 groups together, as in "Green and Blue in first". As each group leaves the layout the guide usually needs to instruct them to go directly outside the house near the bus or onto the bus. Sometimes an owner has other areas of the house for them to visit, such as snacks in the kitchen or model displays in another room of the house.

PROTOTYPE TOUR INFO SHEET

Name of tour:

Street address:

City / State / Zip

Phone number(s):

Key contacts-name-phone-email:

1)

2)

3)

Brief description of business and tour (what does business do? type of facility? operations that Attendees will see during tour?)

Is safety briefing required?

YES

NO

Any special protection equipment needed-hard hats, safety glasses, ear plugs, safety vests? Describe:

Additional tour details:

Rail Clinics Report

The MCR 2018 Regional Convention was my eighth as Clinics Chair. My first was the MCR Regional in 1977, and my most recent was the NMRA National in 2005.

My first action after undertaking the responsibility was to sign up Tony Koester as the banquet speaker in the summer of 2016. Around Christmastime, we learned that Louisville had signed him up for the same task at the May 2017 MCR Convention, so my second action was to cancel with Tony. My third was to re-book with NMRA VP-Special Projects Gerry Leone, an engaging and entertaining speaker. I then began searching for clinicians at the MCR 2017 Convention in Louisville, and signed up several clinicians during that convention. Soon after I contacted Neil Besougloff, then the Editor of *Model Railroader*, who agreed to present at our convention.

I signed up several clinicians at the Louisville convention, and in the months following several individuals contacted me, offering to present in Cincinnati. I also signed up the current NMRA President, the President-Elect, the VP-Special Projects, the CFO, and the At-Large World-Wide Director for a "Meet the NMRA Leaders" session.

We were also able to engage Lou and Cheryl Sassi of Kalmbach Publications, and new *Model Railroader* Editor Hal Miller agreed to present. Also, John Forsythe of Train Control Systems agreed to bring his booth and some clinics to Cincinnati, and presented clinics about DCC sound and LCC continually on a rotating basis throughout the three days of the convention.

Clinics were scheduled 90 minutes apart in two or three clinic rooms Thursday afternoon, all day Friday, and Saturday until dinnertime. In all, 50 clinics were presented in the clinic rooms by about 30 clinicians, with quite a few more presented in the TCS room nearby.

As usual, several clinicians had to cancel for various reasons, but we were able to rearrange things to keep our roster full.

While it has been suggested that the entire clinic schedule and clinician list should have been laid out six months before the convention, it is my experience after doing eight of these large events that far too many people are still uncertain of their schedules even three months before the event. This is more a problem now than it was in the 1970s when we were all much younger and life was more predictable than nowadays.

The major presenters were lined up before Christmas 2017, but several of them had to cancel and other clinicians were being scheduled through April, weeks before the event. There was even one change that was necessary on the Friday of the convention.

Thanks

Every clinician who volunteers to sit in a dark room on a beautiful spring day, imparting knowledge to a waiting crowd, deserves thanks. We were fortunate to have about 30 of these selfless individuals available to us. This was a great group to work with!

Speaking of great groups, a special thanks is due to several volunteers who made it possible to keep our clinics on schedule and on an even keel.

- **Randy Kerka** was in charge of audio-visual for the convention, and he worked steadily and without complaint to make sure each clinician had the tools needed for his or her presentation.
- **Rick Crumrine, John Shields,** and **Bob Shreve** assisted me in setting up the three clinic rooms and tending to them so that each clinic was able to start and end on time.
- **Bob Shreve** was also responsible for putting the convention guidebook together. He was patient with me as I worked to get my materials to him by deadline.

All in all, there were very few logistical problems during the convention. We had trouble with one projector, so we changed it out. All clinicians but two used the provided laptops to control the projectors. Of the two remaining, one was able to connect his laptop to the projector without incident, while the other had considerable problems getting his computer to talk to the projector. As it turned out, the problem was resolved moments before the clinic was scheduled to begin, and the attendees were treated to an unscheduled clinic on how to connect a current model MacBook to a slightly past-prime VGA projector. Some of the audience seated near the projector may have learned some new words during the process, but I maintain that most of those words were common in locomotive repair shops throughout the country, even in steam days.

Mike Brestel
Rail Clinics Chair
Cincinnati Express 2018

See attached Timetable/Program for Rail Clinician Names and their Clinic Titles and Abstracts

Contest Report

Prior to Convention

- Worked to prepare marker signs for the various contest categories
- Prepared People's Choice ballots for People's Choice voting - when they were printed got them cut into singles
- Various conversations and e-mails with Regional Contest Chair Steve Zapytowski to confirm People's Choice categories, plaque sizes and order of presentation at the Convention Dinner
- Worked with Trophy Awards to develop plaque design
- Presented various plaque designs to Convention Committee to vote on the plaque design to be used
- Ordered plaques and made sure that the maker (Trophy Awards) had all aspects of design fully understood
- Picked up the plaques when they were finished - made sure Treasurer Frank Koch got the bill and that he understood how much they cost, how many we were paying for vs. how many the region paying for
- Scheduled people to help handle the bag check in area in the contest room, and informed the Volunteers Coordinator, Randy Kerka
- Worked with our Vice Chair and the Regional Contest Chair to determine satisfactory content and verbiage to include in the convention timetable/program

During the Convention

- I helped people get their entries to the appropriate areas, continually rearranged the contest areas to accommodate the number of entries in each category
- Helped set out ribbon awards for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place and merit awards
- Helped Steve Zapatowski hand out the awards at the banquet

What Worked Well

- All aspects of contestant's entries were handled smoothly by Steve and his crew - they had enough folks to avoid a backlog of people waiting to enter items - this made it easy for my local team to help folks properly place their items in the correct area
- Everything went very smoothly at the awards presentation – largely due to advance preparations in designing, making, placing and sorting all the awards/ribbons, plus the photo crew Steve brought with him to photograph and project slides of the winners
- Many other areas worked very well, including using duplicate playing cards and clothes pins to mark bags in the bag check area (no bags permitted in contest area)

Future Improvement Areas

- As we suspected going in, the contest area was a bit too small for the number of entries received - we continually had to adjust tables and category locations - a larger area was simply not available - future conventions should plan at least 750 sq. ft. (about 25 x 30)
- Not many people voted for the People's Choice Award - the biggest reason heard was folks had no idea where their ballot was - in the future we need to make sure there is a clear notation on the outside of the ticket envelopes so folks know their ballot is inside
- We had 2 disappointment areas for some guests, both reversals of content written in the timetable/program – 1) having to close the contest room during judging since the aisles were smaller due to adding more tables for the entries, 2) all Saturday afternoon, the doors were closed with a sign saying the room would not be open until after the banquet – this upset several guests, including those that were leaving and needed to get their models – our Vice Chair was able to intervene on behalf of one of the modelers, but others likely missed that opportunity – the reason for this reversal was that the award ribbons were placed after the judging and the team didn't want folks to know who won until the banquet ceremony – this might be avoided in the future by placing a blank sheet of paper or cardstock on top of all the judging and awards papers and ribbons, then right after the banquet the team quickly removes those top sheets – this or another system needs to be devised to eliminate this source of contention

Volunteers

- My wife Sally was a tremendous help - she worked the entire convention except for the time we had to take off to help with the Eastern Loggers layout open house
- Chuck Endreola and his wife helped about 3 hours during the entire convention
- David Wynne and his wife also worked a limited amount of time
- Laddie Henninger, Ron Gribler and Sam Swanson were originally slated to also help, but were not needed due to the number of regional folks brought by Steve

Respectfully submitted,

Brad Jonas

Cincinnati Express Contest Coordinator

Volunteers Report

Best Practices

- Choose a volunteer chair with an outgoing personality that possesses a good working knowledge of those folks in your Division who have shown a past willingness to participate in events, i.e. Train Shows, Swap Meets, etc. Let's call these the "movers and shakers".
- The "movers and shakers" (usually about 15% of your membership) are the folks to be targeted first. Several will probably be tapped as Committee Chairs but the rest should be personally approached by the Volunteer Chair and given first shot at filling volunteer "slots".
- Next the Volunteer Chair needs to find out from the various Committee Chairs those folks they have already secured to help them in their various areas and how much additional help they will need to successfully run their individual venues.
- The Volunteer Chair then needs to study the Division roster and make a reference list of the newer Division members so that each can be offered volunteer slots. There is no better way to get new members involved with Division activities. You have no doubt learned that new members are somewhat reluctant to step forward but generally jump at the chance to get involved if individually and personally asked.
- At this point it is necessary to introduce the membership to your Volunteer Spreadsheet at a Division meeting starting no less than 6 months before the convention. The Volunteer Chair should be given a few minutes at each meeting to talk about the importance of having enough help to pull off a great convention and also how crucial it is that everyone support this effort! OK... it may seem something akin to "begging" and may not win the Volunteer Chair a popularity contest but if not done will likely jeopardize the success of your event.
- The Volunteer Chair should sit at a table before each meeting and during all breaks with his spreadsheet and a couple of pens.
- At about the 2-Month mark, a copy of the Volunteer Spreadsheet should be emailed to everyone in the Division with the Volunteer Chair's return email address. Many volunteers will have signed up for slots and forgotten and it gives those that still have not committed to help to communicate with the Volunteer Chair and secure a volunteer slot or two.

Notes

One month before the convention phone calls should be made to unresponsive members to fill remaining slots. Several folks will simply blow you off and will likely offer some sort of excuse. You will likely run into some resistance by those members who are committed to helping their buddies run their layouts during open houses. This is a tough one but these folks and the layout owners themselves need to be delicately reminded that the open houses are only for a few hours each day. Lastly, never fear. Some folks unresponsive to your efforts will mysteriously appear at the convention and ask what they may do to help. Be ready for this, lavish thanks upon them and immediately tell them what you think they can do to help out. This also will apply to a few attendees from outside your Division. This is an awesome occurrence and should be met with thanks and positive response!

Randy Kerka

Cincinnati Express Volunteers Chair

rkerka001@gmail.com

Audio Video Team Report

Best Practices

- This person must have a general working knowledge of computers, projectors and PowerPoint.
- The AV Chair will need 2 or 3 helpers along with the clinic chair to assure the success of ALL clinics. These helpers only need to spend about 10 minutes before the start of each clinic.
- Virtually all clinicians at the 2018 Cincinnati Express Regional mentioned how great it was to have an AV Committee person in the room prior to their clinic to assure all was working properly and to assist with controlling the room lighting. The net result due of this effort was 100% happy clinicians and ZERO problems.
- Thoughts on “sound”. Depending on the size of clinic rooms and the preference of clinicians, you may or not have the need for sound systems. At CE 2018 we had two large rooms that were set up for sound. An inexpensive lapel of hand-held mic set along with a small amplifier should do the trick. You may already have such a system to use at Division Meets. Simple is better so just duplicate that system. In small clinic rooms sound should be a non-issue.

Notes

Once you have settled on projectors, computers, pointer/slide movers, screens and sound systems, most of the pre-convention work is done.

Make sure you have several multi-block extension cords and AV projection tables. The tables should be able to be provided by your hotel. You might want to confer with the hotel about their sound systems but “big sound” will likely not be needed with the exception of your banquet. Unfortunately, at CE2018 we relied on the hotel house sound system and it failed! We did not have enough time to set up our own system but it would have certainly done the job. Most hotels do have an AV guru on call but on Saturday night? Forget it!

I strongly suggest that you combine the Clinician office with the AV Office, as we did. Don't skimp on the size of the room. Plenty of table space will certainly assist in organization of the myriad of equipment and related cables, etc.

Lastly, it would be smart to have one AV cart that is mobile. This cart should be set up with a backup projector and computer ready to wheel were needed put into service. Non-Rail clinics may only have occasional and limited AV needs so have a mobile system ready to roll helped us a lot!

Randy Kerka
Cincinnati Express AV Chair
rkerka001@gmail.com

Publications Report

Publications work for the 2018 convention involved creation of the Full Registration Package to be included in the MCR Kingpin newsletter and then the creation of the Timetable Program Booklet provided to each convention attendee upon check-in.

The Full Registration Package

This is included in the December/January issue of the Kingpin newsletter. Microsoft Word software was used to create the registration package document. It is laid out in an 8.5" x 11" page format. Due to printing deadlines, etc. it is necessary to have the registration package to the Kingpin editor by December 1. This deadline should be coordinated with the Kingpin editor well in advance. You then work backward from that deadline to determine when the registration information is needed from the convention committee members, time to do the editing, and time to have the information reviewed before submitting it to the Kingpin editor. For our schedule, we figured 1 month for review/corrections and 1 month prior to that for the publications person to have all of the material submitted from the committee.

In years past, the convention issue of the Kingpin has allowed 8-10 pages for the information and registration packet. For 2018, we needed 12 pages due to the volume of information needed to be communicated (overall schedule, layout of sessions, layout open houses, registration forms, and layout, industry, and general interest tours).

The Timetable Program Booklet

This was produced in a 4.25" x 11" format, using folded 8.5" x 11" sheets with a printed cardstock cover. Microsoft Publisher was used to create this as it has a standard template for producing printed documents in this format. It displays the pages as they will appear when printed, so it is easy to see on the computer screen how the finished product will look. Text is entered in text blocks created on each page. Text blocks can be linked so that text which overflows a block on one page will flow into the block on the next page. It is also very easy to add, remove, or move pages around within the document.

I was able to generate PDF files from the print menu in two formats. One format displayed one page at a time in a 4.25" by 11" format. This file showed the pages in numerical order and was intended for viewing/reviewing on a computer screen. The other format was intended to be sent to a printer to be printed double-sided on letter size paper. Publisher automatically sequences the page contents so the printed output is in the correct order when the pages are stacked together, seam stapled and folded.

Bob Shreve
CX Publications Editor

White Elephant Sales Report

The convention sponsored a “White Elephant Sale” so that attendees could sell excess railroad items to other attendees. The convention retained 10% of gross sales to cover expenses and credit card fees, with any surplus going to the convention. We had 46 attendees offering items for sale. The sale was conducted the same way the Division has been doing it for many years.

We accepted cash, personal checks and credit cards. We had the ability to run credit cards on-site so verification was instantaneous. There were no issues with credit cards or checks.

We chose to conduct a White Elephant Sale rather than a Silent Auction as it is less complex and is much easier to settle at the end.

Each seller prepares an inventory list containing their personal contact information plus a unique item code consisting of their three (3) initials and an item number. They also include a short item description and the firm price (prices only in whole dollar amounts). Each item is marked with the item code and price. The inventory sheet serves as a record of what was submitted, what was sold, what was returned, and what payment was made.

We made the inventory sheets available in advance (see attached) so that sellers could prepare their sheets. We had blank inventory sheets in the room for anyone who needed one.

Each sales transaction was documented by recording the item code and price. Each overall sale had a separate sales slip with this detailed information. The sales were then recorded on the inventory sheets for later settlement.

After the sale, there is no need to settle with buyers as they settle when making the purchase.

After the sale, all the unsold items are gathered, sorted by seller, and the items are compared to the inventory sheet. Every item is marked as present and returned to the seller or marked as sold. The total of the sales less 10%, rounded to whole dollars, is paid to the sellers as either cash or check. The sellers initial the inventory sheet to indicate they have received their unsold merchandise and payment.

We were completely settled with all sellers and the room was cleared within 45 minutes of the end of the sale. This is a very efficient process requiring no computer or software. All it requires is the individual inventory sheets, the sales slips and a calculator.

Volunteers were used to keep the tables neat and the items organized as needed. We never needed more than one assistant, except at closing when they were used to collect and check seller’s unsold items against the inventory sheets. (We did not retain a list of those who volunteered as they changed frequently.)

Frank Koch
White Elephant Manager

Cincinnati Express White Elephant Sale 2018

(10% of actual sales retained by Division 7)

--

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone Number: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Initials	Item #	Short Description	Firm Price (\$)	Sold	Office
	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
	5				
	6				
	7				
	8				
	9				
	10				
	11				
	12				
	13				
	14				
	15				
	16				
	17				
	18				
	19				
	20				
	21				
	22				
	23				
	24				
	25				
		Total			
		10% Fee			
		Net Due To Seller			

Raffle & Door Prize Committee Report

Pre-Convention

Fellow Co-Chair Russ Poynter and I met several times to discuss our duties and the operation of this committee before, during, and after the event. We needed to provide not only door prizes, but also prizes for the convention raffle. We also discussed door prize drawing and ticket pricing for the raffle. We decided to draw convention attendee badge numbers for the door prizes. We ended up drawing 12 door prizes, 6 each day for Friday and Saturday, one each daytime hour. We set the raffle ticket price at five tickets for one dollar, same as the normal monthly division raffle. This made it simple for making change. Experience also made us aware that the usual procedure of selling by the “arm length” had produced some negative feelings at past conventions.

We decided to approach some of the national manufacturers and suppliers for our prizes. We used two separate lists for our source of suppliers, a list from our 2005 *Cincinnati Limited* National Convention, thanks to Frank Koch. Our second list was from Louisville’s 2017 MCR Convention. I worked with John Burchnall to draft a request letter, which I reviewed with Russ Poynter. We then printed up 80+ letters, 75 of which got mailed to vendors selected from our lists. Rick and Linda Crumrine volunteered a Sunday afternoon to address and stuff envelopes. We were successful and received an excellent return for our effort. We also had donations from Division members and the hotel. We ended up with 90 prizes for the raffle and door prizes.

During the Convention

We had an extremely nice room for our prize headquarters, which was conveniently located near the layout display rooms. Our first job on Thursday was separating prizes for the raffle and door prizes. We then placed ticket tubs on the tables by each raffle prize. The tubs were courtesy of MCR and have been sent on to Division 1 for next year’s MCR convention. The extra tickets will be used for future Division 7 events. During the set-up phase we received helpful advice from Chair Rick Crumrine and Vice Chair John Burchnall.

We drew badge numbers for door prizes, which we posted periodically, both outside our prize room as well as at the convention Registration Desk. Additionally, we started selling raffle tickets almost immediately. Several of the prizes drew a lot of interest and generated tremendous ticket sales, especially the dozen Accurail hopper kits. Russ and I are glad we decided to keep the kits as a set. We had member Don Doctor assisting us on Thursday, and had help from the convention staff throughout the entire event. Sam Parfitt took tickets to the admissions desk to generate additional sales. We tallied and posted the Raffle winning numbers at the published time on Saturday afternoon, then the winners collected their prizes.

Results and Recommendations

Overall, the prize committee was very pleased with our efforts, we ended up taking in \$601.00 for the convention and making a lot of attendees very happy. The only improvement I would suggest is to list the winning raffle ticket numbers in numerical order on the results poster so attendees could more efficiently see if they won anything. My suggestion to future prize

committees would be plan early, contact suppliers early, and communicate with the rest of the committees, to make sure everyone is on the same page.

Acknowledgements

We need to recognize the following members for very timely, and helpful assistance; Rick Crumrine, John Burchnall, Frank Koch, Sam Parfitt, The Cincinnati Northern Model Railroad Club, Don Doctor, Randy Kerka and several other members who stopped by to check on us. I also need to recognize my fellow Co-Chair and partner-in-crime, Russ Poynter

Respectfully Submitted,

Bruce A. Knapp
Cincinnati Express Raffle Co-Chair

Company Store Report

The Company Store and Flea Market shared space at the convention. Space was adequate, even though we had to keep scrunching things closer together as more and more flea market items showed up!

Sales of both store and flea market items were brisk. I regret not having opened one of the boxes-- an N-scale Santa Fe passenger streamliner in brass! VERY pretty! I only saw it because the customer who bought it let me peek inside. If I'd seen it earlier, it was pretty enough to make me rip out all the trees on my T-TRAK modules and install desert!

Sales at the store were healthy. Total sales were 1269.68 (plus tax). This included some pre-ordered shirt sales that came directly to the Store, and bypassed Roy's registration desk.

Unfortunately, we have 27 leftover convention shirts. Buy early and often!

Paul E Musselman
CX Company Store Manager

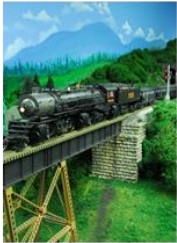


Welcome Back! May 17-20, 2018

Our first convention since
the 2005 NMRA National



We've prepared tons of fun for everyone!



Abundant Premier Layouts!

Special Thurs Afternoon Early-Bird Layout
Open Houses - *Bob Lawson* and *Larry Bonhaus!*
Layout Tours & Operating Sessions All 4 Days!
Special *EnterTrainment Junction* Events!



Awesome Commercial Bus Tours!

Fantastic Rail Industry Prototype Tours
Fabulous General Interest Tours



4 'Great Model Railroad' Mini-bus Tours (12 layouts)!



Numerous Rail and Non-Rail Clinics

Special Guests *Gerry Leone*, *Lou Sassi* and
Hal Miller, Editor of *Model Railroader!*
Non-Rail Luncheon and Saturday Banquet



Plentiful Additional In-Hotel Attractions

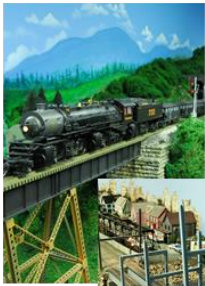
Extra Large White Elephant Sale!
Model, Photo and Crafts Contests
Raffle, Company Store, Hospitality Room
Layouts at Hotel + *EnterTrainment Junction*

Special *TCS Booth* with *Loco Sound Free Installs!*



Register Now for Priority on Extra Fares & Ops

See registration package at www.cincy-div7.org/convention.html



Abundant Layout Events

67 layouts, 35 published, 10 in GMR, 5 at EJ
Bob Lawson and Larry Bonhaus on Thurs Aft
 Great Model RR Tours + Hotel, EJ Layouts,
 Operating Sessions, Layout Open Houses



Fantastic Rail Industry Tours

Steel Tour (Matandy, Precision Strip)
 Cincinnati Barge & Rail Terminal
 Excel Logistics Tropicana &
 Enerfab Brighton Tru-Edge
 Deluxe Cincinnati Railfanning



Fabulous Non-Rail Activities

Findlay Market & Conservatory Tour
 Arboretum & American Sign Mus. Tour
 Luncheon with Cookie Decorating Chef
 Genealogy & Greeting Card Clinics
 Meet & Greet w/ Wine Tasting
 Water Aerobics Class



Wonderful Newly Remodeled Hotel

Cincinnati Marriott North (877) 739-9460

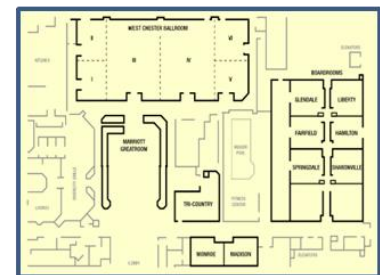
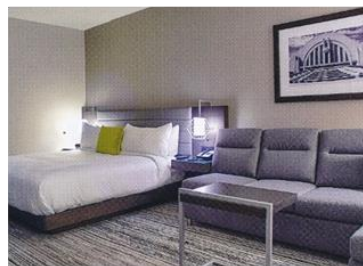
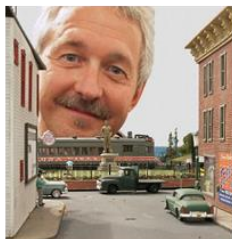
I-75 & Union Center Blvd, West Chester, Ohio

\$109 King, \$119 Double Beds, \$119 King w/ Sofa,

Pre-Tax, Code: "National Model Railroad Assoc."

Great Guest Speakers

Gerry Leone, Hal Miller,
 Lou Sassi, Allen McClelland,
 Rick Tipton, Charlie Getz ...



Low Cost Registration Fees

Only \$75 Rail, \$25 Family (Spouse/Teen), Kids under 13 Free w/ Reg. Adult

See full registration package and forms at www.cincy-div7.org/convention.htm