

WHAT'S A MINI-MEET?

Bill Fassett, Superintendent, PNR 5th Division

The 2017-18 executive committee has established a goal of holding 3 mini-meets within the division during 2018 and will allocate funding to support local clubs or just groups of individual NMRA members who will set up a mini-meet.

We will also provide support for local clubs or NMRA members who wish to hold a stand-alone clinic if it is open to all NMRA members.

I've been asked, as a result, "what's a mini-meet?" Here's my take:

A 5th Division mini-meet is a get-together that provides activities of interest to model railroaders. Mini-meets are often open to "soon-to-be NMRA members," or to the public. As far as I can tell, there are no set rules, other than to meet, greet, learn, and have fun. Here are some examples from other divisions and regions:

Division & Event	Location, Hours	Activities
PNR 1 – "Spring Mini-Meet"	Baptist church, 9 am to noon	"Clinics, model railroad contests, and AP evaluation"
PNR 3 – "Spring Meet"	Lutheran church, 9 am to ?	"Coffee – donuts – conversation – favorite model contests – Achievement Award judging – Displays – Silent Auction – Layout tour"
SER Magnolia – "Mini-meet"	Hotel, 8:30 am to 3:00 pm	5 clinics, tour of G-scale layout, tour of historic depot
SER Central Savannah River Mini Meet	Local university, 9:00 am - ?	"Open to Public;" clinics on building and operating a model railroad; layout tours
Thousand Lakes Region (Canada) 1 – Mini Meet	Local restaurant, time not specified in article	Clinic on "what's it like to attend an NMRA convention;" clinic on building an N-scale award-winning trestle.
MER New Jersey – "mini-meet"	Not specified	"One extra-fare clinic, introduction to the Arduino Microprocessor."
PNR 4 – "Santa Fe Railway Fans mini-meet"	Lutheran church, 10 am to 5 pm	Clinics, \$10 cost
MCR Eastern Iowa Div. Winter Meet	Railroad Club, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm	Clinic, "Bring and Brag model judging," Op session at RR club
MCR Western Heritage Div. Monthly meet	Library, 9:00 am to noon	Clinic, "kit bashing/scratch building ... and tips on building with woods, plastics, and metal ..."
PCR Coast Division, Quarterly Meet	Elks Lodge, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm	Auction, clinics, model contest, show & tell, photo contest, switching contest

Some key elements of all appear to be: (1) not a business meeting; (2) not a swap meet; (3) geared to encouraging participation in the hobby, for NMRA members as well as non-members. Almost all mini-

meets include some clinics and most include a layout or other tour. Some charge a modest registration fee to cover costs (typically around \$10).

I'd probably distinguish a 5th Division "mini-meet" from a "stand-alone clinic" in that the stand-alone clinic is a single session, typically 60 – 90 minutes on a single topic, whereas the mini-meet has a longer format of 3 hours or more with more than one activity.