

DESERT MODELER

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Getting involved in AP

We have many new members who may not know about the Achievement Program. Some longer-term members may be confused, too.

Just hearing about AP and MMR and other esoteric items doesn't help folks understand the program. Their dues are paying for the program, so they might as well get what they want out of it.

"What they want" is key here. Just because you avail yourself of the program doesn't mean that you have to aspire to become a Master Model Railroader.

The goal of the AP is to help you be the best modeler you choose to be. So, it isn't about us, but about you.

If you have a layout, you may have already done the work for several certificates.

Only seven are required to become a MMR.

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Evaluators & Mentors

Members of the AZD (Arizona Division) who wish to lead evaluations for other members of the AZD must be approved by the division AP manager (me). This has not been being done with any formality and folks can be confused. To minimize confusion, I am creating a listing of approved evaluators and recommended mentors on the AZDiv-NMRA.org website.

As a side note, folks living outside the AZD must be approved by the PSR (Pacific Southwest Region) AP manager to evaluate within the PSR. The AZD AP manager alone cannot approve them.

Okay, what is necessary to be a lead evaluator? Three things:

Attitude

Folks on the AP committee need to embrace these viewpoints:

1. Model railroading should be fun!
2. Evaluation is not the Spanish Inquisition.
3. NMRA is an EDUCATIONAL organization. Leaving the modeler with an understanding of what they did well, as well as what they can do differently to improve is important. The score is actually less important than the understanding.

Understanding of the subject

Folks who have knowledge of the subject (structures or cars or ...) need to demonstrate that knowledge to the AZD AP Manager. Holding a certificate for the subject goes a long way toward this.

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Getting involved (ctd)

The starting point is to have someone from the AP committee visit and look at your work.

This may get you signed-off for the Golden Spike award - see the requirements by [clicking here](#).

Your visitor can let you know what certificates you are already qualified for and make suggestions on how to move forward to secure them.

Frequently this initial visit will lead to a follow up with a team coming to your layout and to do the evaluation(s) for one or more certificates.

Another way to become aware of what evaluators are looking for is to become active in contest judging or AP evaluations. Let the AP manager or contest chair know of your interest and you can be part of future evaluations and contest judging.

We will be listing Evaluators and Mentors on the division website to assist members in expanding their skills and getting the recognition for their work.

The sooner you start, the sooner your modeling will improve.

Evaluators & Mentors (ctd)

There are extenuating circumstances. In my case, I have college degree(s) in electronics and engineering. My Electrical certificate was one of the last two I earned for my MMR. Did I have the technical knowledge to evaluate someone's Electrical prior to receiving the certificate? Yes!

So, you don't have to have the certificate, just convince the AP manager that you have the knowledge.

Understanding of the evaluation process

Evaluation for AP awards involves a team of 2 to 4 people. One is the lead evaluator and some or all of the others can be trainees.

We work with the idea that a model that is reasonably complex and of such quality that the evaluators would be proud to have it on their own layout deserves a Merit Award, earning a minimum of 87.5 points, 70% of the available 125 points. When I was in school a 70% score earned a "C" grade.

With experience in evaluation, folks can fine-tune their observation skills and their understanding toward becoming lead evaluators.

Our list will include all folks who are available as lead evaluators. If you contact a lead evaluator to work with you, they will help you fill out the team to do your evaluations.

Mentors

If you have the attitude and knowledge but need more experience to be a lead evaluator, there are two big places for you on the AP committee:

1. Be a mentor and coach and encourage folks along the way. The more you know about the AP process, the more help you can be.
2. Be part of an evaluation team. Working with a lead evaluator is the best place to gain the understanding of the evaluation process necessary to become a lead evaluator.