

Get On Board with the Abilene Society of Model Railroaders

Mission

The Abilene Society of Model Railroaders (ASMR) is an officially chartered [501(c)3] non-profit organization. It was established to promote public awareness and appreciation of Abilene's Railroad heritage, and the important role played by railroads in national and local history. It has been doing this through various public outreach programs and projects, including operating model railroad layout displays, for *almost 30 years*.

History

In 1990, Abilene's mayor decided the city should start celebrating its railroad heritage annually with a community festival which would include model railroad layouts. Responding to the mayor's call, several local model railroaders joined forces and built HO-scale, O-gauge, and S-gauge model train layouts. They finished just in time for the first "Abilene Railroad Festival", which took place the following spring.

The model railroaders enjoyed the Railfest projects so much they decided to form a train club, and the result was the Abilene Society of Model Railroaders.

Abilene's Preservation League provided space for ASMR to set up model train layouts in the historic Cypress Building downtown. The first five years ASMR had a home there. During that time the modular HO layout grew steadily in size and



complexity and was moved to the Civic Center each year for Railfest weekend. ASMR also entertained large crowds during downtown events like Artwalk, City Sidewalks, the club's annual Open Houses, and other occasions. In 1996, the club had to vacate the Cypress Building so the historic structure could undergo a total restoration.

After several interim "homes", ASMR moved into the old TSTI facility on North 2nd St., where it

remained for almost 15 years. In 2017, the club took a five year lease on space in the Westwood Professional Bldg. 598 Westwood, then moved to its current location at 1802 Pecan St.

ASMR Layouts

ASMR had a complex modular HO-scale layout for years, parts of which dated back two decades and had been continually added to and modified. In 2010, members scrapped most of this layout and constructed a double-deck pike. It was soon operational, and all but a few areas that remained "works in progress" had scenery. A Digitrax DCC system with hand-held throttles power it, and wide radius curves accommodate the largest locomotives and 25 to 50-car trains. Several dioramas reflect scenes along the T&P/MP/UP route west of Fort Worth, including Abilene. The layout was torn down and rebuilt in 2017, and is being rebuilt again after the 2022 move. A large O-gauge layout that was donated to the club has also been set up in the new location.

The club also has modular HO-scale and O-gauge layouts that can be readily transported and set up

for off-site displays. They have been featured at a variety of local area events and venues. In helping to preserve Abilene's railroad heritage and educate the public about it, the club employs a



combination of model railroads, outreach programs, and various teaching tools and methods.

Membership Information

Starting with less than a dozen founding members, ASMR currently has around 30. A wide range of ages, occupations, and interests in model and prototypical railroading are represented. Several members also have home layouts in various scales.

Membership is open to any person who enjoys model trains, railroad history, "railfanning", collecting railroad memorabilia, etc. The initiation fee is \$25. Monthly dues are \$20 for members aged 18 – 65; and \$15 for ages 14 – 18,

and 65 and older. The "family rate" is \$25 per month. *Note: Members under the age of 14 must be accompanied by an adult. If a parent is a member the child's monthly dues are \$2.*

Business meetings are held at 10 a.m. on the first Saturday of each month. Clinics on various model railroad subjects are conducted from time to time, and the club also hosts annual Open Houses for the public. Informal sessions for train running and layout work start at 7 p.m. on Tuesdays & 10 a.m. on Saturdays. These are always open to the public. Please feel free to



drop in and visit with us during our informal Tuesday or Saturday sessions. If you have questions, you may contact any member, including the club officers:
Kent Stark , v.p., 325 260 -8377
Cody Hilliard sec. 325 690 -9574
Ken Riediger treas. 325 725-0539

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ABILENE SOCIETY of MODEL RAILROADERS

*Proudly Promoting Model Railroading
and Preserving Abilene's
Railroad Heritage for more than a
Quarter of a Century!*



1802 Pecan St.
Abilene, Texas 79602
(Located behind
Willow Creek Gardens nursery)
(See contacts on back of brochure.)

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