



TIES AND RAILS

The Monthly Publication of the Crossville Model Railroad Club

April 2025

Editor's Notes

I know it seems like it is taking forever to get the surveys, and the permit process completed, but you need to understand by not trying to force the completion of these documents and related services, we have managed to save thousands of dollars because of the discounts we secured by not demanding expedited results.

As the relationship between the Crossville Model Railroad Club and the Upper Cumberland Railroad Society continues to improve, we need to maintain that level of cooperation in completing this building project. We still have some hurdles we must jump over and there is going to be some give-and-take, but overall, I think our level of cooperation has enhanced our ability to work together for our common goal.

A fund-raising committee has been formed, but as of this writing I have no further information to pass on. Will still need to establish how the donations are submitted, for what purpose they were earmarked and how they need to be distributed.

Our club, which turns 24 years old this year, has a solid foundation based solely on volunteerism. However, many times when a call goes out for manpower needed or filling an officers position or one of our many committees needs members few hands go up. As an example, in the last six months or so I was just a regular member. Then I filled in as secretary and then I became vice president. All of which at the time of my appointments, volunteers were requested but no hands were raised. It has taken a toll on all of us over the last two years. Just being a name only member begs the need to appreciate all the hours of work, countless meetings and tremendous effort to keep our heads above water. It has been incredibly challenging for the board. It would be extremely helpful if every member took on some of the responsibilities which the few have been dealing with since we left the mall. **IT'S YOUR CLUB AND BEING AN ACTIVE PART IN OUR REBIRTH NEEDS ALL HANDS ON DECK.** Please help where you can or ask what needs to be done so you can help do it.

Remember New Meeting Location

Roane State Campus, Cook Rd

Just past Stone Memorial High School

Board Meeting April 7th 10am Art Circle Library

Social Hour April 14th 3:30 Membership Meets at 4pm



Model Train History: From Tinplates to Detailed Collectibles

Model trains have long captivated the imagination of hobbyists, collectors, and enthusiasts of all ages. From their origins as simple tinplate toys to today's intricate, highly-detailed machinery, model trains trace a fascinating evolution that mirrors advancements in technology and changes in cultural trends. Let's explore how this beloved hobby developed over the decades.

Tinplate Trains and Toy Railways (1890s-1910s)

Model trains first appeared in the late 19th century as simple tinplate toys, often crafted by hand. Companies like Märklin in Germany and Lionel in the United States were pioneers in this space.

Märklin, initially a producer of dollhouse accessories, shifted to manufacturing tinplate trains in the 1890s. Early models were made from stamped metal and powered by wind-up or clockwork mechanisms – all finely crafted and considered showcases of both engineering and artistry.

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Upper Cumberland Railroad Society

A Chartered Tennessee Non-Profit Corporation, IRC 501(c)(3) designated

Our first quarterly Educational Clinic. of 2025 , titled '**Wiring – Track – Part 1**', was held on March 15, 2025 at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Sheehan Hall in Fairfield Glade, TN. The Clinic was presented by Paul Falk, one of our BOD Officers, and in-house Technical Experts. Topics included how to Improve wiring reliability. Making DCC more reliable and the basic functions needed for reversing loops.

You can find a pdf version of the PowerPoint presentation on the UCRS website at www.uppercumberlandrailroadsociety.org . Go to the Education tab and select 2025 Clinics.

The second quarter clinic, **Wiring – Track – Part 2** is scheduled for Saturday May 24, 2025 at the same location. This clinic will delve into the intricacies of how to wire the dizzying array of turnouts. Yes, they are not all the same.

Watch for the signup announcement in late April, or early May, and be sure to Register by contacting us at Uppercumberlandrailroadsociety@gmail.com to reserve your seat.



SPRING TRAIN SHOW

Sponsored by the Music City Train Collectors Association

Saturday, May 10th
9am - 3pm

Location: Tennessee Building
Wilson County Fairgrounds

945 East Baddour Parkway

945 US-70, Lebanon Tennessee

Admission \$8 Children under 12 Free

CMRC MEMBERS WILL BE THERE SELLING

We all have model railroad stories we could tell - some funny, some not-so-funny, maybe educational or just unusual, or even heartwarming. If you have a story to tell about your model railroad experience, let us know about it.

Here is the first of, I hope, many model railroad stories to be presented in this section...

Protecting Your Model Railroad Set At All Costs

by Robert Lobitz

Train Story, Fragile train models

As a model railroad enthusiast I have raised all my kids to respect the essence of what I call "my work" and they are not allowed to touch my railroad set if I am not there with them to supervise. This has been a long-standing rule in the home and if you have children you have probably done the same yourself. Protecting my railroad set and the investment I have put into it is the most important thing I can do.

Getting started in Model Railroading

There are several different popular train scales available. Which one you choose depends on the following:

- a) how much space you have,
- b) how much money you can comfortably devote to the hobby,
- c) whether you like a lot of scenery vs. more emphasis on the trains,
- d) whether you would prefer long running trains or shorter trains, and
- e) whether you have the patience, the visual acuity, and finger dexterity to deal with very tiny engines on tiny tracks.

Incidentally, the words scale and gauge are often confused.

Scale refers to the ratio between the measurement of a model compared to that of the prototype.

Gauge is the term used to describe the distance between the 2 rails of track - usually 4 ft 8-1/2in ("standard gauge") in the prototype. "Narrow gauge" is a term used for rails that are closer together than standard gauge - usually around 3 to 3 1/2 ft.

To get more detailed information to help you decide on what scale to use, go to the "Scales" page. The third thing to decide in your model railroading adventure is how you will show off and operate your trains.

Do you want a huge wall-to-wall empire, or a small switching layout on a shelf (See Shelf Layouts for Model Railroads, by Iain Rice), or something in between? There are other possibilities and considerations as well...

Are you building this railroad for your own enjoyment? Will you have friends helping you and participating in the operation of the railroad when it is completed? Is it mostly for your children or grandchildren to enjoy? Will it become part of a larger club layout? Do you want to build a small scene that you could sell at a craft show or on eBay?

There will most likely be some limiting factors that may enter into this decision also, such as space, time and monetary considerations.

While you are planning and designing your model railroad, it is important to remember that there are standards that have been developed by the National Model Railroad Association that will help you considerably in assuring that your trains run smoothly and without derailments.

Some of these standards are mentioned below but be sure to visit the NMRA.org website to learn a lot more. In fact, if you are serious about model railroading, you should really consider joining the NMRA as a member. **MORE HINTS NEXT MOINTH**

Staging: Off-scene storage tracks representing the railroad system not actually modeled. Trains originating in staging are handled as if arriving from distant terminals, and trains tying up in staging

We usually define our terms as we go in *The Operators*, and you'll find that many of our past columns (since January 2007) expand and elaborate on some of the definitions given here. [MR](#)

DISASTER in DUNLAP

from Mark McAllistor

Several of us walked the railroad today to assess the damage. While some of the damage is devastating, it could have been much worse. The railroad right of way, for the most part, is in good shape except for pockets of burnouts. Many trestles were damaged and some totally destroyed.

It is still too early to know exactly what plans will be laid out going forward. Some are waiting on insurance adjusters to assess loss. Our people and clubhouse are safe and that is the most important thing. We've had so many offer help to rebuild and we are grateful to be part of such a giving community of hobbyists. Once plans are struck, we will make announcements and contact those interested. Anyone that would like to help can contact our club leadership at: Steve Wassell: president@csme-epr.com or Dale King: secretary@csme-epr.com

Please continue to pray for those who experienced loss. Our hearts go out to them.

Plum Cove Studios has organized a fundraiser to help with recovery at the railroad. If you feel lead to participate, the link is below. Thank you to all.

Donation link: <https://www.facebook.com/share/152QkNqF4n/>



This was one of the first locomotives that the club owned, a Rail Systems GE Dash 9. It was later sold to a club member and was stored onsite. There was an aluminum body F-unit on the other side of it that completely melted. Behind it was a riding car.





The Golden Age (1920s–1950s)

The interwar period and post-World War II era marked the golden age of model trains. During the 1920s and 1930s, model trains became more detailed and realistic, catering to both children and adult collectors.

Lionel dominated the American market with its O gauge trains, while European manufacturers like Hornby and Märklin refined their designs to create more realistic models.

During this time, accessories such as buildings, stations, and landscapes became commercially successful, featuring in now iconic media and advertising of the era. Hobbyists began to build entire miniature worlds, and the community started to form clubs and even competitions to showcase their artistry.

This era also saw the rise of smaller scales, such as HO scale (1:87), which originated in Germany in the 1920s. HO scale quickly gained popularity due to its balance between size and detail, enabling hobbyists to create more expansive layouts in less space.

The 1950s brought a boom in the popularity of model trains, fueled by post-war economic prosperity and the advent of mass media. Lionel's advertising campaigns on television turned their trains into a must-have holiday gift for children, something many of us still associate with this age of Americana today. **Continued on page 10**



On Mon, Mar 24, 2025, 5:13PM Upper Cumberland Railroad Society <uppercumberlandrailroadsociety@gmail.com> wrote:

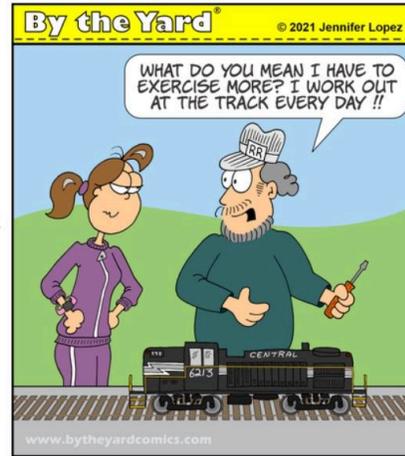
To all concerned, just a note to let everyone know - the problem with the URL being redirected to the Welcome Page of the website has been resolved. The redirect has been moved from the Website settings to an internal WORDPRESS function. Took us over an hour Chat session to get it resolved, but seems to work OK now.

All you need is: uppercumberlandrailroadsociety.org to access the welcome page and use the upper Main Menu to get to where you need to be.



Operation: Running model trains as if they were actually carrying freight and passengers. This activity is typically based on prototype (real railroad) rules and procedures, but to a greater or lesser extent as the operators desire.

Operating session: Period set aside for the operation as defined above. The operating session may be solo, conducted by the railroad owner or builder alone, or involve any number of operators depending on the size and traffic of the railroad. Operating sessions typically do not include train running for its own sake, testing of locomotives and rolling stock, or demonstrations of layout features outside the purposeful movements implied by the definition of "operation" given above.



Something New This Month

Have you had any work done on your home, your boat, your RV, your lawn mower or just some handyman odd jobs you needed to get addressed or fixed? You likely had some difficulty finding vendors who showed up on time, did excellent work in a timely manner and did not rake you over the coals with costs.. This page is designed be a resource page of companies club members have used and would recommend the professional they were pleased with.

So every month, I will post recommended vendor's business cards. So if you have any of the above type of work completed, please submit names and business cards if you have one to be featured. I will keep adding space as needed before removing any of the currently listed business.

**GARY'S
BODY SHOP**

2486 Cook Road, Crossville
931-484-0800

Serving Cumberland County for over 40 years

HOBBO Hobbies
128 Northside Lane, Crossville, TN,
(931)484-1900 hobohobbies@yahoo.com
hoboshobbies.com

ARCY HOBBY
Serving your Hobby Needs Since 2002
www.arcyhobby.biz
4439 Blaylock Rd., Crossville, TN 38572
931-788-3373

**Tollett's
Total Tree Service**

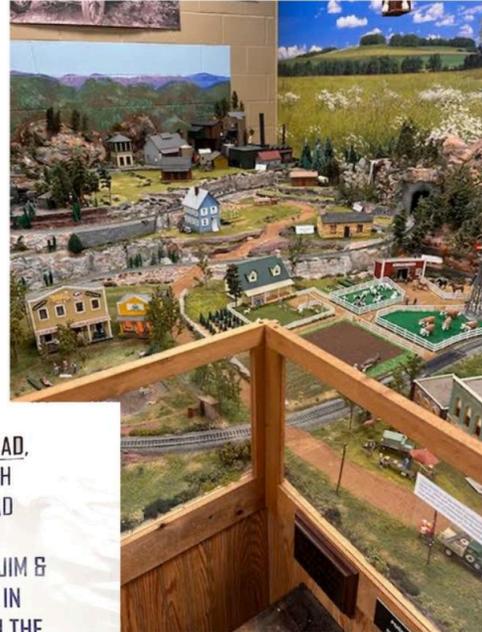
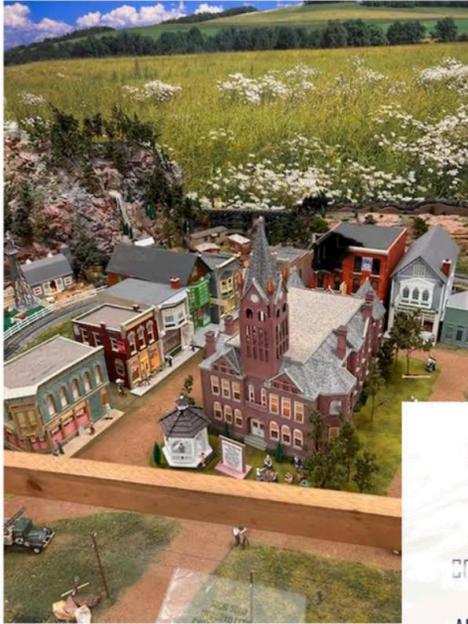
JERRY TOLLETT
Owner

LICENSED
INSURED
FREE ESTIMATES

931.261.0428

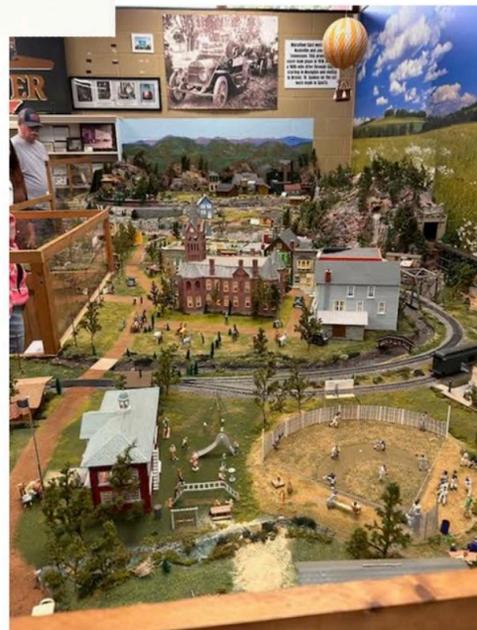
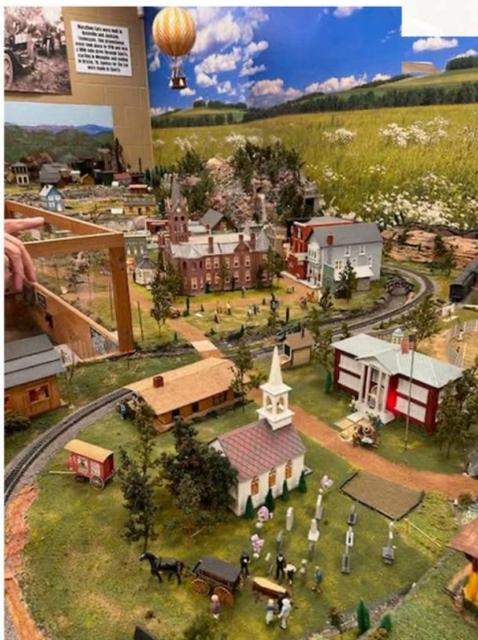
White County Heritage Museum - Sparta TN

144 South Main Street



**N C & STL RAILROAD,
SPARTA BRANCH
MODEL RAILROAD**

**CONSTRUCTED BY JIM &
ANN GROGITSKY IN
ASSOCIATION WITH THE
CROSSVILLE MODEL
RAILROAD CLUB
2008-2009**



The Shift to Scale Modeling (1960s–1980s)

By the 1960s, model trains began shifting from toys to collectibles and scale models for serious hobbyists. Enthusiasts focused on replicating real-world railroads in exquisite detail. This era saw the rise of N scale (1:160), which became popular for hobbyists with limited space, as well as innovations like realistic weathering techniques and advanced track layouts. Electric technology improved dramatically during this period. Manufacturers introduced more reliable motors and power systems, while features like lights, sound effects, and smoke generators made trains increasingly lifelike.

The 1980s also brought digital control systems into the hobby. Digital Command Control (DCC), introduced in the late 1980s, allowed hobbyists to control multiple trains independently on the same track. This innovation revolutionized the way model railroads operated, providing unprecedented realism and flexibility.

Precision and Detail (1990s–Today)

The modern era of model trains is defined by unparalleled precision and realism. Today, manufacturers like Broadway Limited Imports, Atlas Model RR Co., WalthersProtot, Rapido, Bowser, and Athearn produce models with incredibly fine details, from hand-painted lettering to intricate undercarriages. Digital sound decoders can mimic the exact sounds of specific locomotive engines, while LED lighting creates realistic effects.

Enthusiasts use 3-D printing, laser cutting, and other advanced technologies to create bespoke pieces for their layouts.

Model railroading has also embraced technology in other ways, with smartphone apps and computer programs enabling advanced control and layout design.

Meanwhile, collectors continue to seek out vintage models from Lionel, Märklin, and other classic brands. Rare pieces from the early 20th century can fetch thousands of dollars at auctions, making model train collecting both a passion and an investment for many enthusiasts.

The Enduring Appeal of Model Trains

What makes model trains so enduring? For some, it's the nostalgia of Christmas gifts, and for others, it's the challenge of designing and constructing intricate layouts that bring a miniature world to life. For many, it's the appreciation of craftsmanship, whether in a vintage tinsplate model or a modern-scale replica.

Model trains have come a long way from their tinsplate origins, but their ability to inspire creativity, connect generations, and celebrate the magic of railroading remains timeless. Seasoned collectors and newcomers can all find something to enjoy at shop.trains.com.

APRIL 7th BOD APRIL 14th CLUB AGENDA

Please sign the attendance sheet

Call To Order

Pledge of Allegiance

Moment of Silence

Approve March BOD Minutes - Richard

Approve the March Club Minutes - Richard

Approval of March Financial Report - Mike

CMRC Annual Audit Completed - Mike

UCRS Financial Report - Jan

Committee Reports: PR - Marketing

Membership - Fund Raising

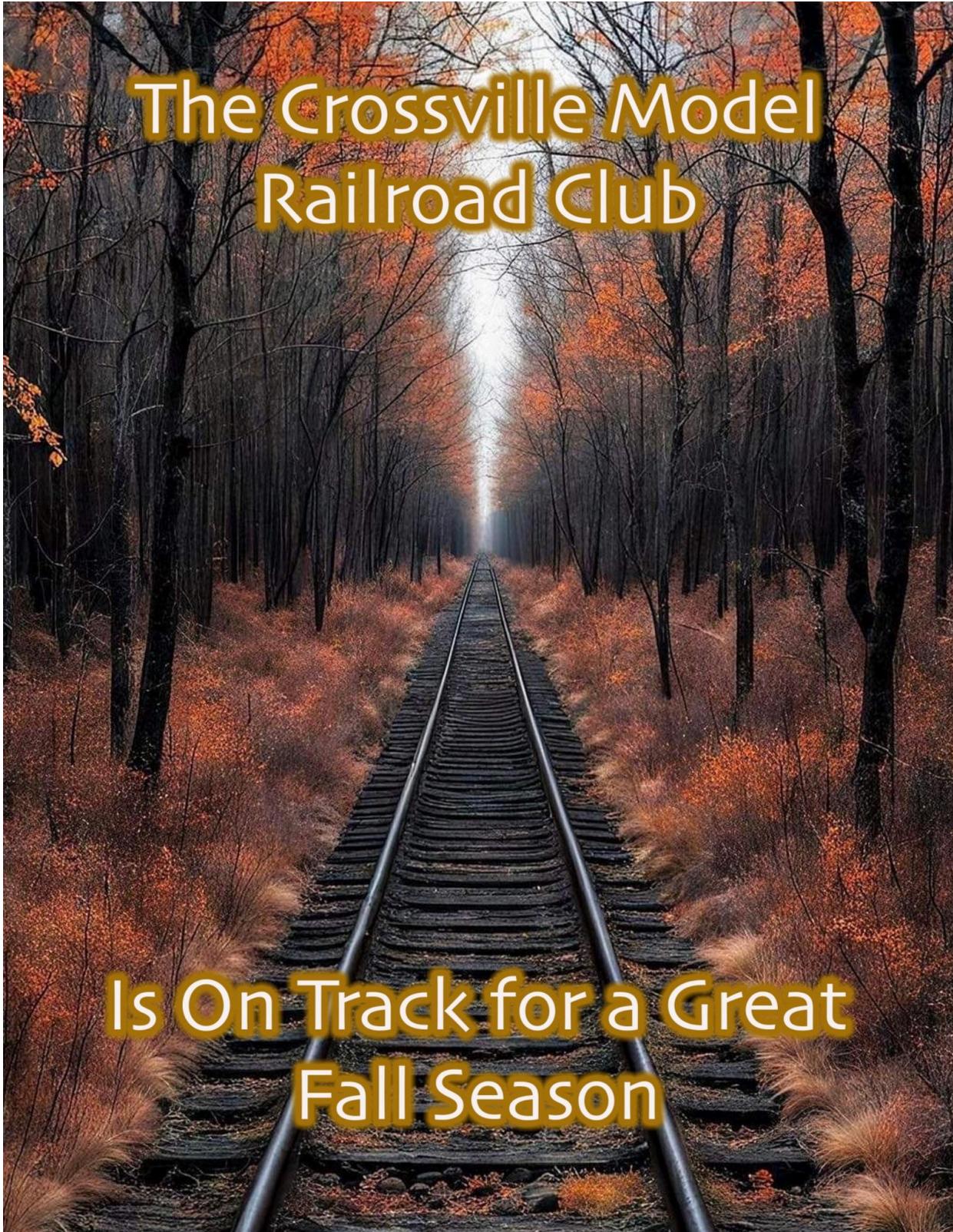
Building Project Update - Ann

UCRS Report and Future Clinics - Art

Newsletter Submissions - Pat

Other Old Business

New Business



The Crossville Model Railroad Club

Is On Track for a Great
Fall Season