

2026 Walthers National Model Railroad Build-Off OFFICIAL COMPETITION RULES

All questions: www.walthers.com/NMRBO

or contact us at custserve@walthers.com or 1-(800) 4TRAINS.

ELIGIBILITY:

To enter the "Walthers National Model Railroad Build-off" (the "Competition"), you must, at the time of entering, be: (a) a citizen of, or a lawful permanent resident of, the United States; and (b) meet the requirements for your category and state of residency. The Competition is void where prohibited by law or otherwise restricted.

Because the purchase of a product is required for theme decorating and weathering of a freight car, residents of Colorado, Maryland and North Dakota may only participate in the **America 250 historical diorama and Freestyle categories**, which is described in greater detail in these rules. This is a regulation by each state and not a decision made by Wm. K. Walthers, Inc.

Competition is for non-professional "hobbyist" builders only. For the purposes of this Competition, a professional builder is someone who earns money or a livelihood from building miniature models.

Only one entry per person in each category. If an individual elects to participate as part of a team entry he/she may not also submit an individual entry of their own in the same category but may enter another category.

! Prior year winners of Walthers NMRBO competition will not be eligible to win any of the prize levels three years in a row in the same category. They may, however, submit an entry for another category.

Employees of Wm. K. Walthers, Inc. (the "Sponsor") and its affiliated companies, parents, subsidiaries, service partners, and advertising and promotion agencies (collectively, "Sponsor Entities"), and their IRS dependents, immediate families (*i.e.*, parents, children, siblings, spouse) and members of their households (whether related or not) are ineligible to participate in this Competition. By participating, all Entrants (as defined below) agree to the rules and conditions of the Competition.

2026 COMPETITION CATEGORIES:

There are **four categories for 2026**. Except for Freestyle, each category is divided into youth and adult divisions. In addition to the general rules, each category has its own specific requirements. Please review all rules carefully to ensure full compliance with both the general guidelines and the rules for your selected category. Three winners from each category and division will be selected to receive a prize.

1. HISTORICAL DIORAMA: Celebrating America's 250th Anniversary

This year's theme celebrates America's 250th anniversary or the semi quincennial. Entrants build a diorama with materials and scale of their choice in a 12" x 24" size depicting either a historical scene in which the railroad played a key role or a scene that celebrates America's semi quincennial.

The competition is designed to evaluate both entrants' modeling skills and their interpretation of the theme. While no purchase from Walthers.com is required to enter, each submission must incorporate at least three Walthers products from any of our family of brands. These may include items you already own. Eligible brands include WalthersProto, WalthersMainline, WalthersTrainline, Walthers Life-Like, Walthers Cornerstone, Walthers SceneMaster, WalthersTrack, and Walthers Chooch. As part of the entry process, participants will be asked to list the products used and provide a brief statement explaining how their scene relates to the theme.

- **Historical Diorama: Celebrating America's 250th Anniversary, Youth Division:** any individual **up to age 14** at the time of submitting the entry is allowed. Judging emphasis is less on skill and more on creativity and interpretation of theme. Entrants under the age of 18 must include a signed Minor Consent Form by a parent or legal guardian found at our contest site: www.walthers.com/NMRBO.
- **Historical Diorama: Celebrating America's 250th Anniversary, Adult Division:** any individual **age 15 and older** at the time of submitting the entry is allowed. Judging emphasis is weighed equally between skill and creativity and interpretation of theme. Entrants under the age of 18 must include a signed Minor Consent Form by a parent or legal guardian found at our contest site: www.walthers.com/NMRBO.

2. PATRIOTIC PAINT SCHEME: Freight Car Decorating

Requires purchase of a select Walthers Mainline® Freight Car available for purchase June 1, 2026 from Walthers official contest site. Decorate the car in any manner you like using whatever methods or materials you choose reflecting a celebration of the America semi quincentennial.

- **Patriotic Paint Scheme: Freight Car Decorating, Youth Division:** any individual **up to age 14** at the time of submitting the entry is allowed. Judging emphasis is less on skill and more on creativity and interpretation of theme. Entrants under the age of 18 must include a signed Minor Consent Form by a parent or legal guardian found at our contest site: www.walthers.com/NMRBO.
- **Patriotic Paint Scheme: Freight Car Decorating, Adult Division:** any individual **age 15 and older** at the time of submitting the entry is allowed. Judging emphasis is weighed equally between skill and creativity and interpretation of theme. Minor Consent Form by a parent or legal guardian found at our contest site: www.walthers.com/NMRBO.

3. ALL AMERICAN FAVORITE: Weathering

Requires purchase of a select Walthers Mainline® Freight Car available for purchase June 1, 2026 from Walthers official contest site. As part of the weathering, graffiti is not necessary but will be allowed if you feel it enhances your design. Use of profanity, vulgar, obscene, reckless, or illegal art will result in disqualification. Use of copywritten designs not allowed, art must be unique and created by entrant.

- **All American Favorite: Weathering; Youth Division:** any individual **up to age 14** at the time of submitting the entry is allowed. Entrants under the age of 18 must include a signed Minor Consent Form by a parent or legal guardian found at our contest site: www.walthers.com/NMRBO.

- **All American Favorite: Weathering; Adult Division:** any individual **age 15 and older** at the time of submitting the entry is allowed. Entrants under the age of 18 must include a signed Minor Consent Form by a parent or legal guardian found at our contest site: www.walthers.com/NMRBO.

4. FREESTYLE Diorama

Entrants build a diorama with subject, scale and materials of their choice to a pre-specified size of 48" x 24". The scene is then submitted and judged against all other entries and scales entered in the Freestyle Category. No age restrictions, individual or teams can enter. Those under 18 must include a signed Minor Consent Form by a parent or legal guardian found at our competition site: www.walthers.com/NMRBO

GENERAL ENTRY REQUIREMENTS:

For the purposes of these Rules, each individual or team is deemed an "Entrant." The spirit of the competition requires that all entrants start at the same time to maintain a level playing field. That start date is June 1, 2026. All entries must be created between the dates of June 1, 2026, and October 1, 2026, submitted no later than midnight, October 1, 2026, and in the case of the Freestyle diorama, must be an independent diorama meaning it cannot be a 'section' of an existing, larger layout. Any obvious pre-built, or portions of existing layouts will be disqualified. Entrants of the Freestyle category are not limited by a prescribed theme and may use any materials they wish to create their diorama provided the diorama meets the pre-specified size requirements and is built during the contest period.

A word about the Freestyle diorama size: The overall size MUST be adhered to. This is one of the ways we can ensure that the entry has not been taken from a section of an existing layout. The disqualification of an entry is not something we take lightly and do not care to do. Please ensure we can accept your entry by following the size requirements:

Freestyle Any Scale – 4'w x 2'd

JUDGING AND JUDGING CRITERIA:

Judging will begin October 5, 2026. Entrants may only submit one entry per category but can enter multiple categories if they fit the age requirements.

Entries will be judged by a team of modeling experts. Winners will be decided based on the judging criteria described below for their category.

Judging will be based on a points system as defined within each category. All decisions of the judges are final. Any entry that fails to follow rules will be disqualified from winning prizes.



For Historical Dioramas; adult and youth divisions -The entry requires two additional elements:

1. List the three Walthers Products used in the creation of the diorama.
2. Statement about the scene created and the historical reference or the celebration of America's semiquincentennial you presented in your diorama. You will find a place to include this information in the electronic contest portal. If entering via USPS, UPS or FedEx, you must include this on a sheet of paper.



Note: 10 percentage points are automatically assigned to all entrants for adherence to requirements at the start. Points are removed if rules and requirements are not followed.

Judging Criteria – Historical Diorama: Celebrating America’s 250th - Youth: Possible Score: 100%

1. Creativity and Artistry: 60%
2. Skill and Complexity: 40%

Judging Criteria – Historical Diorama: Celebrating America’s 250th - Adult: Possible Score: 100%

1. Creativity and Artistry: 50%
2. Skill and Complexity: 50%

Judging Criteria – Patriotic Paint Scheme: Freight Car - Youth: Possible Score: 100%

1. Creativity and Artistry: 60%
2. Skill and Complexity: 40%

Judging Criteria – Patriotic Paint Scheme: Freight Car - Adult: Possible Score: 100%

1. Creativity and Artistry: 50%
2. Skill and Complexity: 50%

Judging Criteria – All American Favorite: Weathering - Youth: Possible Score: 100%

1. Creativity and Artistry: 60%
2. Skill and Complexity: 40%

Judging Criteria – All American Favorite: Weathering - Adult: Possible Score: 100%

1. Creativity and Artistry: 30%
2. Skill and Complexity: 70%

Judging Criteria – Freestyle Category: Possible Score: 100%

1. Creativity and Artistry: 40%
2. Skill and Complexity: 60%


PROCESS FOR SUBMITTING ENTRY:

There are two methods of submitting your entry:

- (1) PREFERRED METHOD: Uploading photos and filling out the electronic entry form utilizing our contest portal at: www.walthers.com/NMRBO.
- (2) Sending photos and your entry information via USPS, UPS, or FedEx to:
Walthers NMRBO Competition
Wm. K. Walthers, Inc.
5601 W. Florist Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53218

Online entry portal will require name, age, email address, mailing address, phone number as well as the two additional elements for Historical Diorama entrants. **Email is our preferred and primary method of contact.** If you do not have an email address, you must provide a phone number or some other way for us to contact you. Entries by mail should include this data written legibly on a sheet of paper. Youth individual entries must also have a parent or guardian fill out the Minor Consent Form and backup contact information. The email listed for youth entry must be monitored as it is our primary method of communication. If a youth does not routinely check email, then we suggest a parent use their email for the youth entry. Any Youth team entries or adult teams with an immediate minor family member must include an individual Minor Consent form filled out for each minor member. It is the sole responsibility of the primary entrant to obtain permission from the parent or guardian of each individual team member who is under the age of 18.

SUBMITTING ENTRY:

-  Each entry must consist of color digital photographs depicting the following:
- Photos during the process to document activity. (1 or 2 will be sufficient)
 - Individual or team photo with your final entry in the shot.
 - For Historical Diorama scenes and Freestyle entries, photos with inclusion of tape measure alongside width and length to indicate size.
 - Photos of final entry from several angles; top down, front, each side.

PRO TIP: *Professional photography is not necessary; pictures can be taken with a smartphone. Remove clutter from around the entry.*

Consider the creativity used in photographing your entry. Setting your finished diorama outside to capture a natural background will enhance realism and can make a dramatic difference in how your entry is perceived. Also helpful, the use of detail shots. This is where you can really show off your work! Sometimes the difference between first and second place is found in the details. If we cannot see them, we cannot give credit.

ENTRY FORMAT:

Photo entries must: (a) be uploaded in .jpg format with a maximum file size of 2 MB; (b) not contain any copyrighted or trademarked content (other than as owned by the Entrant or Sponsor); (c) not show any recognizable individual other than the Entrant (and each team member) unless the entrant has obtained permission from such individuals appearing recognizably in the photo (or the parent/guardian of any minors appearing in the photo); (d) not contain vulgar, obscene, reckless, illegal or indecent behavior; (e) not defame or libel any third party; or (f) invade the reasonable privacy of any third party.

Entering via mail: Although not preferred, if you are unable to enter online, you may submit your entry and photos through mail. Each entry must include the same number and types of images as mentioned for uploaded entries. Color photographs printed with a printer are acceptable if the images are clear.

If you have any trouble uploading images, or are unsure how to do it, please contact us at custserve@walters.com and we will be happy to help you.

COPYRIGHT AND USE OF PHOTOS

By submitting a photo, the entrant represents and warrants that he or she owns the photo submitted, or has obtained permission from the owner of the photo to enter the photo in this Competition and entrant has obtained permission from all living individuals appearing in the photo (or the parent/guardian of any individuals appearing in the photo who are under 18 years old) to submit the photo as part of this Competition. Each entrant shall retain the copyright to the entrant's submitted photos. By submitting a photo to the Competition, entrant hereby grants to Sponsor and its affiliates and advertising partners a non-exclusive, perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free license to use the Photo in connection with Sponsor's social media and marketing and advertising of Sponsor's products via the internet, social media platforms, website, email marketing, flyers, publications and other marketing materials in accordance with these Official Rules. Entries that do not comply with these Official Rules or that otherwise contain prohibited or inappropriate content as determined by the Sponsor, in its sole discretion, will be disqualified or considered for prizes. Sponsor further reserves the right, in its sole

discretion, to remove, block or restrict any entry that Sponsor believes does not comply with these rules or edit any entry to blur out third-party trademarks, names or logos.

CATEGORY WINNER SELECTION:

Announcement of final winners: The final three winners in each category and/or division will be announced November 2026. Announcements will be made via social media after directly contacting winners to notify them of results. Finalists may be asked to provide some additional background about themselves or their team and may be asked for additional photos. Walthers reserves the right to award one or more Honorary Mentions should they feel any entry merits inclusion but did not make the top three prize levels.

PRIZES:

Historical Diorama: Celebrating America's 250th - Youth:

- First Place - \$1,000
- Second Place - \$500
- Third Place - \$250 product bundle from Walthers.com

Historical Diorama: Celebrating America's 250th Adult:

- First Place - \$1,000
- Second Place - \$500
- Third Place - \$250 product bundle from Walthers.com

Patriotic Paint Scheme: Freight Car - Youth:

- First Place - \$500
- Second Place - \$250
- Third Place - \$100 product bundle from Walthers.com

Patriotic Paint Scheme: Freight Car - Adult:

- First Place - \$500
- Second Place - \$250
- Third Place - \$100 product bundle from Walthers.com

All American Favorite: Weathering - Youth:

- First Place - \$500
- Second Place - \$250
- Third Place - \$100 product bundle from Walthers.com

All American Favorite: Weathering - Adult:

- First Place - \$500
- Second Place - \$250
- Third Place - \$100 product bundle from Walthers.com

Freestyle Category:

- First Place - \$2,000
- Second Place - \$1,000
- Third Place - \$500 product bundle from Walthers.com

Awarding of prizes: Upon announcement of winners, a W9 form will be emailed (mailed if no email is available) to the winner. (By law, all prizes over \$599 must fill out this form and sponsor must declare/ provide information to IRS.) All money will be paid to the contact person listed as entrant at the address identified in the entry form within 30 days (about 4 and a half weeks) of receiving the signed W9 form, but not before October 15, 2026. In the case of teams, it is the sole responsibility of the official team entrant to allocate winnings among the team members or otherwise allocate winnings for purposes decided by the team. Sponsor shall not resolve any dispute among team members.

All federal, state, or other tax liabilities (including income taxes) arising from this Competition will be the sole responsibility of the winner. Winning entries and prizes are not transferable; no prize substitutions are allowed except by the Sponsor who reserves the right to substitute prizes with prizes of equal or greater value. The 3rd place product bundle prizes cannot be redeemed for cash. The Sponsor, its affiliates and agencies are responsible for prize delivery only.

WAIVER:

Sponsor Entities are not responsible for any technical, mechanical, printing, typographical, human or other error of any kind relating to or in connection with the Competition, including, without limitation, errors which may occur in the administration of the Competition, the processing of entries, the announcement of the prize or any Competition-related materials; or for any liability for damage to any computer system resulting from participating in, or accessing or downloading information in connection with this Competition; for incomplete, lost, late, stolen, damaged, inaccurate, illegible, misdirected, garbled, delayed or undelivered entries; or for technical hardware or software malfunctions or failures of any kind, lost, unavailable network connections or failed, incomplete, garbled or delayed computer transmission, which may limit an individual's ability to participate. Sponsor reserves the right in its sole discretion, to disqualify any entrant or entry that is in violation of the Official Rules or to cancel, suspend or modify the Competition and disqualify any implicated entrant(s), (and their entries) if any fraud, virus, actions by entrants, technical or other error or problem of any kind, or any other occurrence corrupts or affects the administration, integrity, security or proper play of the Competition, as determined by Sponsor in its sole discretion. In the event of cancellation, Sponsor reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to award any prize in a random drawing from among all eligible, non-suspect entries received up to the time of the event or action warranting such cancellation or to take any other action it deems equitable to fairly award any prize.

NO LIABILITY:

By entering, entrants and the winners agree to comply with all Official Rules as stated and agree to release, discharge, indemnify and hold harmless the Sponsor Entities, and each of their respective officers, directors, employees, representatives and agents from and against any claims made by the winner, entrants, or any other third parties, related in any way to the operation of this Competition as well as any other claims, damages or liability resulting in whole or in part, directly or indirectly, from acceptance, possession, misuse or use of any prize or participation in any Competition-related activity or participation in this Competition.

WINNER INFORMATION/OFFICIAL RULES REQUEST:

To receive prize, winner information or an additional copy of these Official Rules, send a self-addressed, stamped business-size (#10) envelope by October 31, 2026, to

Walthers NMRBO Competition
Wm. K. Walthers, Inc.
5601 W. Florist Ave
Milwaukee, WI 53218

All questions: Walthers.com/NMRBO or contact us at custserve@walthers.com.