

Being an active division in the NMRA has a lot to offer. Fellowship, learning, and just plain old fashion fun. When I took over our inactive division (Area), it had been inactive for quite some time. Our region president told me that it needed someone who would be willing to put forth the effort and try to regain active status again. To this day, we are now an active division and we have successfully changed our division name to something that means more to all of the members in our division and includes them all as well. I will tell you my story and maybe it will give those inactive divisions encouragement to make something of their area.

I started out by joining the NMRA a few years ago. That was fine, but I wanted more. So the next year, when I renewed my membership, I joined the region and thus the area. After a month or so of being a region member, I emailed our region president and asked for a list of members in my area to see who was in it and maybe get some fellowship out of it. Within a couple of days I had what I requested from our president. So as I looked through the list, I noticed that a lot was in my area and somewhat close by. Within a couple of days more, I received yet another email from the region president telling me how the area had been stagnant for quite some time and was wondering if I wanted to be area director. I thought about it for a day and said, "What the Heck", it should be easy enough. So he appointed me area director. After that I had created an introduction letter to mail out to all the members that was on my list. The letter just stated whom I was, what my modeling background was, and that I had accepted the position of director.

I had also included a form asking the members to fill it out and mail or email me with their information so I could make sure what I had was correct. I had about a 25% return on this. But persistence pays off. I shortly after that had a few emails from some members stating that they would like to help out.

By this time, I was in the process of creating a newsletter. I had come up with the idea of doing a "member of the month" section to maybe get some people interested in our area. Sure enough I had one volunteer. He had stated that he was fairly new to the area like I was and wanted to get something out of the dues he was paying. So he sent a picture of him along with a small article giving the history of his modeling background, scale, and such. This led to a lot more gears turning in my head. I had written a thought of month section that encouraged members to get involved so they could at least get to see what they were paying their dues for.

So by the time I had mailed out the first newsletter, I had received a couple of letters from other members stating that they had been in the NMRA and area for a long time and they, in my opinion sounded weary of what I was trying to do, really didn't care to have any involvement other than paying their dues and going to conventions.

So in the mean time, the member who had volunteered to be the first member of the month contacted me to say he and his wife had talked about it and decided to volunteer being the newsletter editor and publisher. He said he had the

resources to create it and publish it faster than I could. So I said sure. I had also asked him if he would be interested in being the assistant director. He said sure. So, months go by and we had decided to hold an area meeting. In this time, we were still producing the newsletter and getting more and more feedback from members. Our fire was raging and we knew we were on the right track. So time drew closer for our organizational meeting. We along with another member had a pre-meeting meeting about a month ahead. This turned out to work out great as we all had great ideas for the meeting and were excited about it. In this pre-meeting meeting we were discussing items such as becoming an active division, the newsletter, our web site, etc.

We had sent out a letter stating that were having a membership organizational meeting and we were needing RSVP's for attendance. Slowly but surely they trickled in. Meeting day arrived and we were anxious about how it would go. Our region president had asked for other division officers and such to please try and make this meeting as it was extremely important to our area to get the support that we needed.

The meeting had gone better than to a T. We had great discussions on what the members wanted and would like to see. Then the big discussion, did we want to pursue being an active division? We had about an hour and forty-five minute discussion about this. Items such as constitution and by-laws, requirements and such were all discussed and the questions for the most part were answered. So we had a motion and a second on the floor to sign our petition to become an active division. Then a question was raised on how our area name came about. We had some discussion about this and decided to hold a suggestion period for new names and then hold a member vote.

The meeting was a great success. We had gained 3 or so new members to the NMRA. We also had great feedback on what the members wanted to see in the near and distant future as well.

Then it was time to confront the board of directors. We had to create a packet that included our petition of wanting to become an active division and our constitution and by-laws. We presented it to them and it passed. Our name change passed as well.

So as you can see it was some work, but well worth it. I have made a lot of new friends and learned a lot along the way. If you would like some ideas or help with getting your inactive division (Area) going, please contact any of the Eastern Iowa Division officers. Our web site is [www.thewigwag.org](http://www.thewigwag.org).