

The Official Newsletter of the Prince William County Model Railroad Club

**THE
MANIFEST**

POINTS OF INTEREST

| | |
|--|---|
| Working on the Railroad Committees Excel | 1 |
| Turntable Review | 4 |
| | 5 |

THE BUSINESS CAR

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| The Corporate Office | 2 |
| From the Cab | 2 |
| Board Briefs | 3 |
| Arrivals and Departures | 6 |

EXCURSIONS

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| 2005 / 2006 Shows | 2 |
| Rail Excursions | 7 |
| The Time Table | 8 |

Reminder:

*2006 Club Dues
Are Now Being
Collected.*

*Pay Early and
Don't Miss Out on
an Exciting 2006
Year of Model
Railroading*

The Prince William County Model Railroad Club is a non-profit 501(c)(7) Corporation.

We provide a forum for model railroaders to learn and enjoy the hobby of model railroading. But more importantly, we are an organization who likes to have **fun!**

WE'VE BEEN WORKING ON THE RAILROAD



Members determine the radii for a curve near the far end of PWMRC's Quantico layout.

Photo by R. McKeever

If you haven't been to the Town of Quantico lately you are missing a lot of railroad action. Since October, maintenance crews have been replacing rail ties and reballasting roadbed along the CSX mainline. That has slowed rail traffic going North and South and created a parade of freight and passenger trains moving slowly past the Quantico train station. It is a real train lover's delight.

Meanwhile inside the train station, club members have been busy constructing PWMRC's new permanent layout. As of November, members have finished all bench work and track work along the entire layout. Turnout motors were installed at a record pace. Three out of five power districts have been wired and tested. The first train was run along the first two power districts in early November.

Scenery is keeping up with the fast pace of the layout. Most of the plasterwork from the small town of Armstrong past Leesylvania has been completed. Hills and rockwork have been completed from Armstrong to the town of Evansport. Basic scenery including roads, trees, mountains, and turf have been completed in the town of Armstrong.

Membership participation at work sessions has been steady. In some cases track crews, wiring crews, and scenery crews have been working side by side on various projects.

The flurry of activity at the depot has generated public interest as well. Many evenings and afternoons visitors have dropped in to see the progress. Several have taken membership information or joined because of the layout. In December PWMRC will start hosting a series of public open houses. On December 4th, PWMRC will operate an open house in conjunction with the Town of Quantico Christmas Parade. The following weekend, PWMRC will host an open house on December 10th in concert with the Virginia Railway Express Christmas Trains. In 2006 PWMRC will host an open house each month during the first week of the month.

The Quantico Station has generated a lot of activity for PWMRC members in addition to our other club events. Stay tuned for more developments in future issues. ☼



THE CORPORATE OFFICE

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SHOW SCHEDULE

(M-Modular, Q-Quantico)

October

15-16 Central Library Show (M)

November

19-20 Greenberg Train Show – Dulles (M)

December

4 Quantico Station Open House - Quantico
Christmas Parade (Q)
10 Quantico Station Open House – VRE Santa Trains (Q)
10 - 11 Bull Run Library Show (M)

2006

January

7 Quantico Station Open House (Q)
7-8 Chinn Park Library Show (M)

February

4 Quantico Station Open House (Q)
11-12 Worlds Greatest Hobby Show – Dulles (M)

March

4 Quantico Station Open House (Q)
TBA BSA Train Show – Saunders Middle School (M)

July

2-8 NMRA National Convention – Philadelphia (M) ☼

FROM THE CAB

A Message from our President

Avoiding the Lull or *Who are We?*

By Rob McKeever



There is a perceived drop-off in members' activity down at Quantico of late. There is also a perception that there has been a recent slow-down of listserv email traffic. (Remember not too long ago when there were complaints of *too much* traffic?) There is also a perception among many members that club morale is down as well.

As a purely modular club, we thrived on shows. We thrived on the chance to be able to run trains, both at shows, and members' homes. As I recalled last column, the whole experience, while fun and educational, was also fraternal in nature. Pre-setup breakfasts geared us for the day to come. Many of us would spend the whole day there, allowing our hobby to be shared with the public and between us, even to the point of several members being willing to let kids operate their trains. Throw in the bonus of shopping at some shows, and intermingling with the other modular clubs at others; we had a grand old time.

The core question to be answered is this: *“Are we a modular club that happens to have a permanent layout, or a club with a permanent layout that dabbles with modules?”* I would wager that the majority of the club would prefer the former postulation. The 30 module commitment to the 2006 NMRA convention in Philadelphia would seem to reinforce this concept. Once the major construction of Quantico is finished, will the modular development and focus be restored?

Quantico cannot be an afterthought. Back in February, there were not any “NO” votes on the motion to submit the Club's RFP proposal for the Quantico Station. While there has been a core group of members working on the layout, that core has shrunk a bit in the last month or so since Labor Day.

The Quantico layout has made large strides in the three months since construction began. However, the progress can fly under the radar to any member who does not get a chance to visit the station on a regular basis. We are a volunteer organization, and each member must ask himself or herself what they want out of their experience in the club. The opportunities are endless. We are still a haven to mentor the beginning modeler. Even those of us with experience readily admit we don't know everything, and most of us are like sponges, just waiting to absorb more information on trains.

The club voted to suspend the regular business meetings for the months of November and December. The heavy business of the Quantico construction had been settled at the September meeting, so waiting until January for the next one will not hurt the day-to-day operations of the Club. Also desired by the club was to have the 4th Tuesday sessions to be work sessions in addition to the bull sessions that we have been doing. While this is good in the near term, it is not a long-term solution. There is some satisfaction from being able to host meetings, and to be able to see other members' progress on their layouts from time to time.

SEE CAB, PAGE 6, COL. 1.



BOARD BRIEFS

A Summary of Club Business Meetings

CLUB MEETINGS

SEPTEMBER

Secretary's Report

Thank you letters had been sent to TDP and Associates and Tony's Train Exchange for their donations to the Quantico layout.

Membership Report

Received one application for active membership.

Quantico layout

Most of the bench work is completed. There was discussion of the fascia color. Changes are to be made in the Division yard in the CAD drawings. Most of the first leg of DCC wiring is completed and approximately 1/3 of the total track has been laid. The backdrop has been painted and that the fascia is in the process of being painted. Scenery is getting ready to start in the Armstrong area. Looking into pricing the material for the skirting for the layout. Building and Grounds committee is in need of members

OLD BUSINESS

Quantico Show Schedule:

Discussed the schedule of open houses at the Quantico station. Marine Corps Birthday - Dave R. he would send out a series of e-mails on milestone dates to the membership and have the open houses advertised through the VRE.

Upcoming events

A sign up sheet was passed around the membership present for module commitment for the Central Library show to be held October 15-16.

NEW BUSINESS

Modular Show Dates

There was discussion of other show dates. The membership present felt we should not participate in the June, 2006 show as it is not a paying show.

Motion passed to participate in the Greensburg Show at Chantilly November 19 and 20, 2005.

Club Layout

Revised layout spending proposal submitted to the membership. The membership accepted the proposal.

Membership Operations Guidelines

There was discussion by the membership of the need for general guidelines for operations by club members. This item will be placed on a future business agenda.

OCTOBER

Membership Committee

Accepted 2 members into Active membership.

Quantico Layout

Benchwork Committee

Benchwork is near completion. Requested members look out for bowling alley style lockers for use by the members at Quantico.

Trackwork Committee

Trackwork is 90 percent complete. Trackwork is scheduled for Tuesdays and Thursdays at 7PM for the immediate future.

Scenery Committee

The committee will meet to work on scenery every other Tuesday (traditional off week for the club meeting at members homes) a 7:30 PM.

Electrical Committee

Electrical work is 30 percent complete.

NEW BUSINESS

Suspension of November and December Business Meetings

President McKeever presented a motion for the suspension of meetings at member's homes for at least the rest of this year to facilitate the Quantico project. The motion passed

USMC birthday participation

Our contract with VRE did not require us to participate in this celebration this year. The membership agreed in light of the amount of work necessary to be completed for an open house.

NMRA

Bob R. will write an article about the Quantico project for the regional NMRA newsletter. Recommended that we advertise our first open house as an NMRA open house in NMRA publications.

Website

Jim C. requested Quantico work photos for the website.

Christmas Party

Lynn K will request either the 10 or 17th of December for use of the church hall. A second option will be to use Quantico.

Open House Schedule 2006

The first Saturday of every Month beginning in January is the schedule according to our contract with VRE.

Town support letter

Brion B. presented a form letter to the Board about Quantico and he urged all members to send out. A motion was passed to have one letter go under the club's name. ☼

**2006 DUES
ARE NOW BEING
COLLECTED**

**\$60 – ACTIVE / CHARTER
\$18 ASSOCIATE
\$12 JUNIOR**

**MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO
"Pwmrc"**

QUANTICO COMMITTEES EXCEL PICTURES CAPTURE THE STORY

By Bill Lyders.

Pictures! We at PWMRC are in a breakneck speed construction project. We are trying to "have a baby in 3 months" when nature says it takes 9 months. It's supposed to take years to build a model railroad layout. Somehow we have the impression it has to be done in months and not years. *I hope we don't burn ourselves out and stop having fun.* But we will capture this exciting adventure in pictures.

The club has eagerly jumped into construction of our new permanent layout. The Benchwork, Track, and Scenery Committees have a dedicated crew of volunteers led by a very creative maestro, Brion, that has encouraged about 610 people to be at the Quantico train station at least 4 days or nights a week. Some day this sprint to completion will be captured by the many pictures that have been taken: The first board mounted on the wall for backdrops and benchwork support, the first standing benchwork, the first backdrop, the first painted backdrop, the first clouds, the first installed tracks, the first train running, etc. We have all these captured in pictures.

These pictures have been captured in digital cameras of the participants but because of the hectic and sometimes frantic pace none have been documented on our web site for the world to see. But they will be soon, I hope.

One set of pictures taken was by Rob M, Club President. Rob captured the first layout section that had completed benchwork, backdrop, track installed, and some scenery. He even captured me playing "Michelangelo", the scenery maestro that is leading a talented team of "artists" to capture the layout designer's vision.



First base coat of green paint at Armstrong. Photo by R. McKeever

In the first picture (above), the base terrain for Armstrong is captured. The completed benchwork, fascia (painted too!), the installed & painted

backdrop, and the Homosote base with installed and operational track work is shown as completed by the Benchwork Committee and the Track Committee. An initial "grass" of green paint makes the bare Homosote presentable until the real scenery can be added. From this base the Scenery Committee will construct hills/mountains to reach up to the backdrop, install ground cover, trees, streams, and ponds to complement the structures to be added by the Structures Committee.



Bill prepares to work his magic with green paint at Evansport. Photo by R. McKeever

In the second picture (above), the similarly completed layout from Armstrong to Evansport is shown. "Michelangelo" is shown studying the masterpiece including some bare ground areas adjacent to the turntable (now an open cutout) area.

Some day (probably sooner than we all think) scenes like this will be captured in pictures from around the room. Almost 90% of the benchwork and 40% of the track work were completed in the 60 days leading up to Labor Day and scenery is just starting.

More pictures are coming so all of you too can share our warp speed efforts.

Editor's Note: Since the above article was written, additional progress has been made on the club layout. The pictures below document the progress to date:



Brion and Tim work on forms from the main yard. Photo by R. McKeever

SEE EXCELS, PAGE 6, COL. 2.

THE NEW WATHERS' TURNTABLE

A Review of one of Walthers' Latest Releases

By Mat Thompson

This article is a discussion of the Walthers' Turntable and other Walthers engine facility models. A few months ago there was some discussion among club members about the new Walthers Turntable being able to use Digital Command Control (DCC).

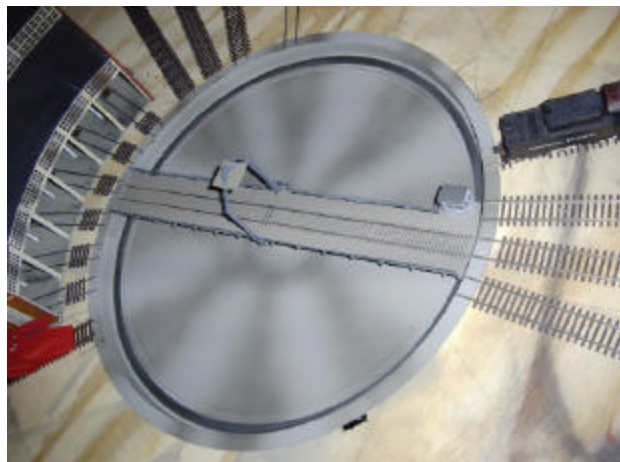
In mid-October George Hughes helped me install my Walthers' Turntable. Now I can tell you - It works just great using DCC - I see no reason why it would not work just as well using DC - actually I think DCC or DC is immaterial.

Wiring and the electrical components of the Turntable could not be easier using DC or DCC.

- There is a wire bundle on the bottom of the Turntable with a clip - plug it into the controller.
- Two wires come from the 12 volt AC terminals on a power pack to the controller.
- One wire each comes from the two wires of the track bus to the controller. If you get the beeps of a short when you run an engine across the Turntable, reverse the wires.
- That's it. Wiring complete.

Once that is done, you control the direction of an engine the same way you always do with Digitrax - by changing the setting on the throttle. You can do this on the lead track, on the Turntable, or on any of the tracks going off the Turntable.

The controller has buttons that rotate the Turntable left and right. It is a simple process to program stops at each track. If you do, the Turntable stops at each indexed position until you press the right or left button again - there is no way to move to the sixth track in line without stopping at the each of the first five. If that bothers you, don't index any positions. Instead, line up the tracks visually each time you move the Turntable - just like the real railroads.



An overhead view of Walthers' new turntable.

Photo by M. Thompson

The toughest part of installation was not the electrical issue; it is lining up the Walthers' Roundhouse so that every run off the Turntable is a straight line into the Roundhouse. I have the three stall Roundhouse plus an additional three stalls. The instructions don't provide the distance

between the edge of the Turntable and entrances into the stalls of the Roundhouse. The box cover picture shows eight ties on the rail so I figured the distance was 2 1/8 inches. That's close - then we had to jockey the building some and still one track is just a tad off - it works but if you sight down it you can see a slight bend.

This problem comes from the Walthers' Roundhouse kit and the Add-on Stall kit. They don't go together exactly right and that means the spacing between stalls is off just the smallest amount. That little bit magnifies as you add stalls. I would never consider adding a second Add-on Stall kit to get 9 stalls - I just don't think you could get all the tracks lined up.

I also have the Power House which can be added to one side of the Roundhouse or used as a separate building. I found that if you tried to use it attached to the Roundhouse the curve in the track was so tight the run off the Turntable was not straight so I have it as a separate building.

There are no similar problems with any outside tracks you install (these are called garden tracks) - just lay them out straight.



A view of Walthers' turntable, roundhouse and powerhouse.

Photo by M. Thompson

You will want to know how to place the Roundhouse. It is 18 inches across. The distance from the back of the Roundhouse to the front edge of the Turntable is 40 inches. Double-headed diesels and large steam engines can be 15 inches or more. Two fifteen-inch garden tracks opposite each other plus an 18-inch Turntable requires a four foot wide space.

On my layout, one side of the Turntable is near the mainline track and there is no room for garden tracks. Even still, I will have six Roundhouse tracks, three lead tracks, three other tracks into repair buildings, and ten to twelve outdoor garden tracks. You can program up to sixty stops on the controller but my guess is most people will find 20 to 30 tracks is a lot. Losing a few possible track spaces due to real estate limitations is a problem we modelers share with 1:1 railroads.

To get to the Turntable, you use lead tracks. The signature building on the lead tracks is the Coaling Tower. The Walthers Coaling Tower kit has two tracks for refueling under the tower and one for refueling on one side. On the other side is a track for delivering coal to the tower. Tichy also makes a Coaling Tower using the same track configuration.

SEE TURNTABLE, PAGE 7, COL. 1.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Membership Updates

One person has applied for membership.

Four members were approved for Active / Junior memberships.

Membership Statistic as of September 2005

| | |
|--------------|----|
| Charter | 9 |
| Active | 37 |
| Associate | 7 |
| Honorary | 5 |
| Junior | 2 |
| Probationary | 5 |
| Total | 65 |

Members residing:

| | |
|------------|----|
| VA | 59 |
| MD | 2 |
| DC | 1 |
| NY | 1 |
| MT | 1 |
| West Coast | 1 |

Probationary Members to be voted to Active Status:

October 9 (2 to Active) - *Completed*

November 9 (1 to Active & 1 to Junior) - *Completed*

December 6 (1 to Active) ☒

Cab, From Page 2.

What to do about it?

If you complete a major project or milestone, let us know. We are entering the stretch run toward public open houses at the station, as well as a renewed calendar of modular shows to complete the year and start the next.

Energy in an organization often feeds upon itself. The question is presented: "Does the club possess enough members with enough energy to both sustain the Quantico effort and reinvigorate the Modular component of the club?" Energy, however, is not the sole need. It takes time, a commodity that many of us are short on. It takes commitment to see a project through.

No contribution is too small, no effort unappreciated. Every member gives in different ways. We have "experts" (loosely used to mean that they know more than most of us) on many different areas of railroads, from aspects of modeling, historical knowledge, photography (both model and prototype), electrical and electronics.

There are two avenues that need to be addressed: "*How do we maintain and spread the energy and participation at Quantico*" and "*How do we re-establish the modular engine that was once PWMRC?*"

As to the first question, regular updates from Quantico should help fuel the effort. As to the second one, to borrow from Nike, "Just do it" comes to mind. There are newer members that have been working on modules, and others that want to work on new ones; even to the point of building an interchange of their own to do a Freemo-like branchline off of the club oval at a future shows. Unlike the Quantico layout, each member still controls

the content of his or her module(s). This variety is something I looked forward to seeing at each show, as to who would

show up and with what modules. Members like Ed M, Jr. started a new set of modules from scratch, while others kept improving theirs. Others we got to see rise from the beginning stages to complete modules over the course of several shows, such as Max's Fredericksburg or Robin's airfield. Others were also local prototype based, and they always garnered comment from show visitors. Even John H. got in the act building a set of harbor modules that offered switching clear of the mainline after he got tired of "sticky acres" he had inherited. They say "variety is the spice of life", which is especially true of our modules.

We are still growing, but the quality of our product has slipped a little. It is time we stopped that slide and put forth renewed effort into what PWMRC can make available for old and new members alike to enjoy. ☒

Excels, From Page 4



Russ works on roadbed in the main yard.

Photo by R. Rodriguez



Bob works on rockwork at Armstrong (STRONG Benchwork Guys!!!)

Photo by R. McKeever

Continued Next Page

Excels, From Page 6.



New scenery at Armstrong.

Photo by R. McKeever

⊗

Turntable, From Page 5.

To get these four tracks parallel you need a three switch ladder. The tracks need to be a bit farther apart than four yard tracks so the width in this part of the engine facility needs to be at least 18 inches. The lead tracks would also have water stands, an ash pit, a sand facility, and perhaps oil refueling stands. To get all this in and let the tracks curve slightly to get a straight line onto the Turntable will require at least three feet.

All this means you need a four foot by four foot square plus a three foot by one and one-half foot rectangular space to fit every thing in. The Turntable also needs to be relatively easy to reach – if anyplace on a model railroad has to be prime for derailments it's a turntable. Plan ahead so you can reach in when you have to.

The fit of the Roundhouse pieces is not as good as it could be, but with care you can make an acceptable model. You could also make some roof pieces or back wall pieces removable to show off the interior of the Roundhouse. If you do, the Roundhouse floor is built with cut-outs between the rails and pre-formed inspections pits. The inspections pits are below floor level so you have to "dig" out the "ground" to allow them to fit.

I did not use the inspection pits. I taped some black construction paper over the holes so looking into the building you see a black space. I could have gotten the same effect by painting my plywood base black.

Besides the Roundhouse and Power House buildings, I have the Walthers Coaling Tower and the Ash Hoist. The Ash Hoist is a simple kit – the only complication is the pit part is below ground level so you need to "dig" a small hole in the base material.

The Walthers Coaling Tower is another "acceptable" kit. Construction is easy but building seams are not tight. Since the building is supposed to be made of concrete, the gaps look terrible. Use plastic putty and sandpaper to close the gaps. Once

you spray paint the building, the gaps will be gone. This little bit of extra effort brings a dramatic improvement.

Not long ago having a turntable on a model railroad required the skills of a master electrician, and a journeyman mechanic plus a tycoon's bankroll. It also take so much time and effort, it was practically its own hobby.

Walthers has changed all that. Their Turntable is reasonably affordable (\$300 retail/\$240 Street) and easy to install. They have made a large engine facility practical on any railroad with the space. If your space is limited, an engine facility would make an interesting small layout all by itself.



Entrance to the OCRR engine facility looks great with all the walters' structures.

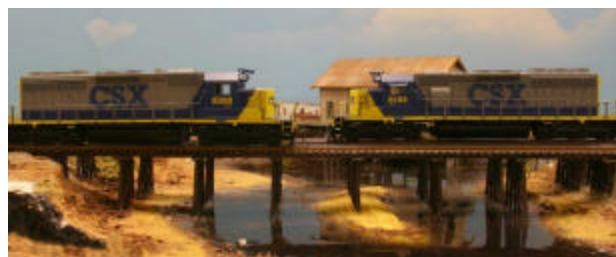
Photo by M. Thompson

You are all welcome to visit my Oregon Coast Railroad and see for yourself. ⊗

RAIL EXCURSIONS

Highlights of Club Events Over the Last Quarter

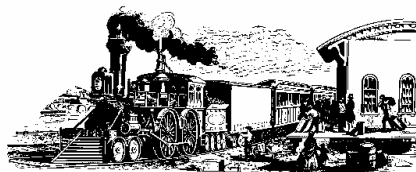
In October, PWMRC traveled to Manassas for a weekend of train operations at the Central Library. Many visitors came by to admire the handywork of club members and enjoy an afternoon of model railroading. Members answered questions about the club and model railroading. The layout performed well over the two-day event and a good time was had by all.



Two busy CSX freight trains meet on Brion's creek module

Photo by J. Connal

Well that wraps up this issue of the PWMRC News. If you've been watching the weatherman lately they are predicting a colder than normal winter! Sounds like a great season for model railroading! ⊗



THE TIME TABLE

October 11 (Tuesday)

Club Meeting –
Lake Ridge, Virginia

October 15–16 (Saturday – Sunday)

Central Library Show (Setup 8am Sat.) Sat: 10 – 5, Sun
12-4. Manassas, Virginia

October 25 (Tuesday)

Club Meeting – Quantico

November 8 (Tuesday)

Club Meeting – Quantico

November 19-20 (Saturday – Sunday)

Greenberg Train Show (Setup Fri-TBA, Sat 7-9)
Sat 10-4, Sun 10-4 – Dulles Expo Center

November 22 (Tuesday)

Club Meeting – Quantico

December 3 (Saturday)

Club Christmas Party – 7PM Quantico

December 4 (Sunday)

Quantico Open House – 12 – 4

December 10 (Saturday)

Quantico Open House – 11-5

December 10-11 (Saturday-Sunday)

Bull Run Library Show (Setup 8am Sat.) Sat: 10 – 5, Sun
12-4. Manassas, Virginia

December 13 (Tuesday)

Club Meeting – Quantico

December 27 (Tuesday)

Club Meeting – Quantico

January 7 (Saturday)

Quantico Open House – 11-5

January 7-8 (Saturday-Sunday)

Chinn Park Library Show (Setup 8am Sat.) Sat: 10 – 5,
Sun 12-4. Lake Ridge, Virginia

January 10 (Tuesday)

Club Meeting – TBA or Quantico

January 24 (Tuesday)

Club Meeting – TBA or Quantico

Key: =Home Layout, ^{DCC}=DCC equipped
 =DCC Radio/IR =DCC Infrared
 = Clinic Scheduled

The PWMRC News

Published Quarterly and is the official publication of the Prince William County Model Railroad Club. PWMRC News is distributed to the general membership of the Prince William County Model Railroad Club and affiliated organizations.

Articles from members are welcome. All articles should be submitted at least one month prior to publication dates as listed below:

- December for Winter Issue
- March for Spring Issue
- June for Summer Issue
- September for Fall Issue

Views expressed are not necessarily endorsed by PWMRC.
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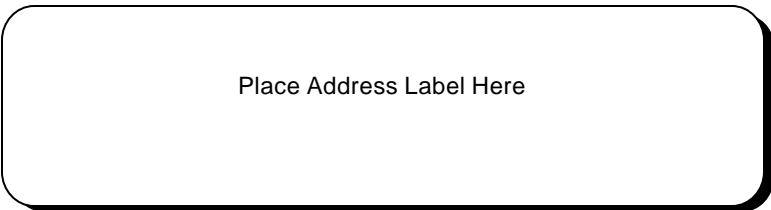
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