

2019 National Convention in Chattanooga TN.

One thing is for certain, as far as National Conventions are concerned, Chattanooga is going to be a tough act to follow, for anyone hosting a Nats. Let's start with 'Pros' from the beginning.

Registration was a breeze thanks to new software and computers provided by IPMS/USA. It was quick and easy considering they had 961 registered modelers. Most of the registered attendees were completed during their online pre-registration process, but everyone still had to get this packets and such.

A separate room was provided to fill-out model registration forms and there were volunteers on-hand to help place your models. The display room was well laid-out despite the huge size. Good lighting, big tables with ample walkways in between. Plenty of room for models and I saw no overcrowding or models piled on top of one another. This was impressive considering there were over 5000 models on display, all of them exceptional quality that you expect to find at a Nats.

The vendor room was enormous and there more vendors than I have seen before. Over 450 vendor tables were sold, the most ever for any Nats so far. The vendor tables were also well placed and spaced and there was everything to be had, from new and old kits for sale, supplies, tools, paints, you name it. There were also a good number of product demos showing new products and kits. It was hard to see everything there was so much. Pete and I used the standard model show tactic of making a quick recon of the room followed by tactical surgical strikes on our favorites, followed-up with after-strikes afterwards to ensure we didn't miss anything.

We missed most of the scheduled discussions and demonstrations, but we heard from everyone that they were all worth seeing. Even with 4 days, there is not enough time to see and do everything. The awards ceremony experienced the only 'Con' although we didn't partake so we had no complaints. Instead of a formal dinner banquet, Chattanooga opted for a 'dessert buffet' just prior to the awards. This I'm afraid was a debacle! The lines were long at the dessert stations were quickly overwhelmed with hungry modelers. Dishes were piled high! This resulted with those being at the end of the line getting only a clean dish to show for time and money. People were not happy! The Nooga Boys realized this and offered a humble apology and refund to everyone who got only a clean dish. There was certainly a lesson learned here.

The awards ceremony overall was fantastic. Plenty of stadium style seating, all with good visibility of the two giant screens and good audio. The awards went off without a hitch. Mike, the Nooga Nats Chairman did a wonder speech that thanked all those involved without going too far to bore those anxious modelers waiting for the results. Len from San Marcos did a wonderful presentation of the up-coming 2020 Nats in his city. He started with a history of San Marcos that was really explanation of their logo that earned a huge applause.

In conclusion, Chattanooga was an amazing National Convention Experience, one that we'll learn and emulate as we prepare for ours in 2021. Congrats to all the Nooga guys and gals. A job well done.

Bob Lomassaro