



ON TRACK

The E-Bulletin of the Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers

www.marp.org

marprail@yahoo.com

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The Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers, Inc. (MARP) is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation established in 1973 to improve passenger train service, travel conditions for passengers, and to work for the preservation of historic rail stations.

Monthly meetings are held at locations around the state. Check the website for dates and venues. The public is invited to attend.

MARP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2014-2016

Larry Krieg	Chair
Jim Wallington	Vice-Chair
Jeanie Merckel	Treasurer
Position open	Secretary
John Langdon	Governmental/Public Affairs Coordinator
Kathleen Newell	Membership Coordinator
Kay Chase	Communications Coordinator
Jim Wallington	Meetings Coordinator
Don Monteith	Northern Region Chair
Robert Patterson	Detroit/Metro Region Chair
Warren Fritz	West Region Chair
Position open	East/Central Region Chair

*The Michigan Passenger Editor and Webmaster, Larry Sobczak
ON TRACK Editor, Kay Chase*

2014 MEETINGS

- 18 January** – Williamston Depot-Museum
- 15 February** – University of Detroit Mercy
- 8 March** – Herrick District Library, Holland
- 5 April** – Wayne County Community College, downtown Detroit
- 10 May** – National Train Day
- 14 June** – Former GTW Depot, Lansing
- 19 July** – Traverse City
- August** – Executive Committee
- 13 September** – Annual Meeting at Durand Union Station
- 18 October** – *The Rapid* Central Station, Grand Rapids
- November 15** – Port Huron
- December** – Executive Committee Retreat

Visit www.marp.org
Email marprail@yahoo.com

MARP's Forty-First Annual Meeting Held at Durand's Historic Union Station

More than 50 MARP members gathered at Durand Union Station on September 13 to reflect on accomplishments of the past year and to talk about the opportunities and challenges in the coming year as we continue our work to improve and expand passenger train service in the state of Michigan.

After welcoming remarks from Mary Warner-Stone, Durand Union Station Executive Director, Durand Mayor Deborah Doyle, State Representative Ben Glardon, and Shiawassee County Commissioner Les Schneider, the group was treated to a [video welcome](#) from Joe Szabo, Federal Railroad Administration Administrator. He noted the upcoming 40th and 30th anniversaries of the *Blue Water* and *Pere Marquette* trains, the work underway to increase speed and reliability on the Pontiac/Detroit to Chicago route, the new stations in Troy, Dearborn and Grand Rapids, and urged support for the administration's [transportation bill](#) which would, for the first time, establish a dedicated source of funding for passenger rail.

The keynote address was given by Tom Carper who serves on the Amtrak Board of Directors. Citing examples of the re-invigoration of downtowns resulting from renewed interest in rail transit and trains, as well as the importance of rail to the many small communities served by Amtrak, he urged all present to encourage mayors, land developers, and local business people to speak up in favor of investment in our transportation system.

Members voted to accept the new slate of officers for the period 2014-2016: Larry Krieg, Chair; Jim Wallington, Vice-Chair; Jeanie Merckel, Treasurer; Kay Chase, John Langdon, and Kathleen Newell for the At-Large positions; and Regional Chairs Don Monteith (Northern), Warren Fritz (Western), and Robert Patterson (Metro Detroit). In a first order of business, Chair Larry Krieg presented certificates of appreciation to out-going Chair, Robert Tischbein, and to Hugh Gurney, who has served as Secretary since 2008, providing the detailed meeting notes that we have all enjoyed.

You can look forward to reading more about the Annual Meeting in the Fall Issue of *The Michigan Passenger* due out later this month.



MARP MEMBER MEETING

Saturday, October 18

10:00 am – 12:30 pm

Grand Rapids Transportation Center

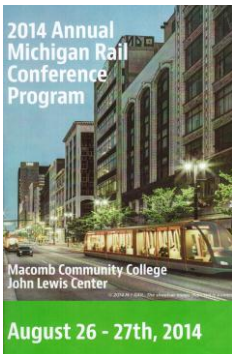
250 Grandville Ave SW, Grand Rapids MI

[Map & Directions](#)

Members will get a look at the new Grand Rapids Amtrak station just south of the Rapid Central Station. Almost complete, the station will officially open later this month. Lunch will be enjoyed across the street at Founders Brewing Co. Details on the website www.marp.org Or send email to marprail@yahoo.com

2014 Annual Michigan Rail Conference

By John Guidinger



The 2nd Annual Michigan Rail Conference was held at Macomb Community College's John Lewis Center on August 26 and 27, 2014. About 200 people participated in discussion groups and met with railroad managers, operators and allied businesses supporting the rail industry. Conference sponsors included the Michigan Department of Transportation, Michigan Technological University, the NU Rail Center at the University of Illinois, Amtrak, Norfolk Southern, CSX Transportation, and Corridor Capital.

Topics addressed in the first day of the conference included rail education, work force development, building collaborative partnerships, railroads' role in supply chains, passenger rail development, and rail support for rural development.

Among the most interesting discussions concerned the talk by Shasta Duffey, VP of Sales and Marketing for the Grand Elk Railroad, a Watco company and operator of the 151-mile line leased in 2009 from Norfolk Southern between Grand Rapids and Elkhart. She described Grand Elk's efforts to set up their operation and build traffic volume on the railroad, which connects to three Class I railroads and four short line railroads.

Another interesting discussion addressed efforts to attract young people to university programs awarding certificates and degrees in rail management or engineering. The panel included representatives from Wayne State, Michigan Tech, Michigan State, and the University of Wisconsin.

Among the companies displaying their services and products was Corridor Capital, the company selected on June 24th by the Indiana Department of Transportation to operate the Chicago-Indianapolis *Hoosier State*. Spokesman Fritz Plous indicated complete confidence that they would be able to provide the service and, indeed, increase ridership and add frequencies. He was asked how Corridor Capital would work with CSX, the owner of the track. He responded that CSX appears willing to work with them.

Tony Hatch of ABH Consulting was the keynote speaker. He kept everyone on the edge of their seats with an exciting, rapid fire talk on investing in railroad and railroad related securities. At the present time, most railroad stocks are strong, especially those of the Class I roads, and they present a good long term investment for the savvy investor.

The second day of the conference involved touring various rail facilities and new rail developments in the metro Detroit region. Stops included a meeting with Paul Childs, M-1 Rail's Chief Operating Officer, who provided a status report on the long awaited transit system being built in downtown Detroit. Tour members looked at the first work involved with installing tracks in the pavement on Woodward Avenue.

Another tour stop that participants particularly enjoyed was the Norfolk Southern Oakwood Yard where Assistant Trainmaster Greg Marck explained the unique Triple Crown *Roadrailer* operation (see below).

Other tour stops included a tour of the almost finished Dearborn Amtrak station, Conrail's Livernois COFC and TOFC intermodal yard, and Norfolk Southern's intermodal operations. Operations in railroad yards are very seldom seen by the public and the opportunity to hear managers explain these operations was very much appreciated.

*MARP members in attendance included John Guidinger, Larry Krieg, Don Monteith, Kay Chase, Dan Platz, and Leonard Barry. Life member Tim Fischer was a presenter, as were Dr. Frank Dunbar, Provost Wayne County Community College, who gave a program for MARP earlier this year, and Tim Hoeffner, MDOT Office of Rail. **Conference presentations may be viewed [HERE](#).***

Seen in the Norfolk Southern Oakwood Yard, these *Roadrailer* trailer vans are reinforced and fitted with special attachments for the rail bogies that share the weight of two adjacent vans. The trailers also have air lines to transmit air pressure from the locomotive to the brakes in the rail bogies. Customers using *Roadrailer* services pay a premium for the convenience offered by avoiding the extra time and handling required for normal piggy back service. Two *Roadrailer* trains are dispatched each day and carry primarily auto parts to Fort Wayne and the Texas area.



Tired of train delays?

Read the [recent blog post](#) by NARP President Jim Matthews. Use the links there to email, phone, or fax the Surface Transportation Board to let them know this is unacceptable. Then use [NARP's new online tool](#) to send a personal message directly to your congressional representative.

GRAND OPENING!

Troy Multi-Modal Transit Center

Tuesday, October 14 • 9 am

open to the public

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS

South of the Lake Reroute Update Draft EIS Released for Public Comment

MDOT has recently released the [Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement \(EIS\)](#) prepared as part of the Chicago to Detroit/Pontiac Passenger Rail Corridor Program. You are encouraged to review the documents, attend one of the three upcoming public hearings and submit your comments in person, online or by mail. Your input will help select the final preferred route in the very congested area west of Porter IN.

Hard copies of the [Draft EIS](#) are available in more than 75 municipal offices and libraries in Michigan. Access the list of document review sites [HERE](#). All information is available of the website [greatlakesrail.com](#).

MICHIGAN

Tuesday, October 28 • 4 to 7 pm EST
Dearborn Intermodal Passenger Rail Station
20201 W. Michigan Ave.
Dearborn, MI

ILLINOIS

Wednesday, October 29 • 4 to 7 pm CST
Chicago Union Station, Union Gallery Room (Off the Great Hall)
500 W. Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL

INDIANA

Thursday, October 30 • 4 to 7 pm CST
Genesis Convention Center, Lake Room
One Genesis Center Plaza
Gary, IN

Midwest High Speed Rail Association Luncheon

featuring

Phil Washington, General Manager and CEO
Denver Regional Transportation District
Tuesday, November 4th at Noon
Maggianno's Little Italy
516 N Clark St, Chicago IL 60654
\$60 Early Bird Special Ticket

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

MARP Outreach Chair Chuck Merckel is looking for a few good men and women to help spread the word about advancing passenger rail service in our state. As you see from the list below, there are several train shows coming up that will present opportunities to do just that. Please contact Chuck to let him know you would like to help out. You can email Chuck at crmerckel@aol.com or phone 734.522.7329.

Trainorama

Sunday, October 26 • 10 to 4
Costick Center
28600 W Eleven Mile Rd
Farmington Hills MI 48336

Kalamazoo Train Show & Sale

Kalamazoo Model Railroad Historical Society
Sunday, October 26 • 10 to 3
Kalamazoo County Fairgrounds
Expo Center Building
Contact: john-langdon@sbcglobal.net

Grand River Valley RR Club Show

Saturday, November 1 • 10 to 3:30
Home School Building
5625 Burlingame, Wyoming MI
Contact: john-langdon@sbcglobal.net

Gratiot Valley Train Show

November 1st & 2nd • 10 to 4
Gibraltar Trade Center North
237 N River Road, Mt. Clemens MI 48043

Lansing Model Train Show

Sunday, November 9 • 10 to 4
MSU Pavilion, 4301 Farm Lane, East Lansing MI

VOTE November 4

ASK your candidates what they will do to improve and expand passenger train service in Michigan. Then get out and help those candidates you support.

Every vote counts

View from elsewhere . . .

“The passenger trains are like canaries in the coal mines. If they’re falling behind schedule, freight likely is, too.”

-- Marc Magliari, Amtrak Governmental Affairs, quoted in a [Charlotte Observer](#) article pointing up problems resulting from congestion that delays both freight shipments and passengers.

“Train commuters ranked their commute notably more enjoyable than driving and other public transit modes – likely because of the opportunity for productivity that it provides. Commuter rail – often equipped with comfortable seating, free Wi-Fi and enough room to pull out your laptop or review that report – allows people to use travel time to get work done and spend more of their free time relaxing, spending time with family, or participating in hobbies.”

-- Michael Lamb, co-founding member of [Friends of WALLY](#), in a recent [blog post](#) citing results of a survey of satisfaction levels of various commuter preferences.



Engineer Rich Kay Honored

As part of the 30th Anniversary Celebration of Amtrak’s *Pere Marquette* route on 16 Sep 2014, MARP and Bangor’s Railroad Café saluted Rich Kay for “His 30 Years of Professional Service as a Railroad Engineer for Amtrak on the *Pere Marquette*.”



OUR ADDRESS HAS CHANGED



MARP, INC
PO BOX 510842
LIVONIA, MI 48151-6842

Contact Your Lawmaker

Congressional Switchboard
202-224-3121

tinyurl.com/Stabenow

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