



# ON TRACK

The E-Bulletin of the Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers

www.marp.org

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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
Rosemary Horvath	Acting Secretary
John Langdon	Governmental/Public Affairs Coordinator
Kathleen Newell	Membership Coordinator
Kay Chase	Communications Coordinator
Don Westcott	Meetings Coordinator
Don Monteith	Northern Region Chair
Robert Patterson	Detroit/Metro Region Chair
Warren Fritz	West Region Chair
Steve Vagnozzi	East/Central Region Chair

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

### 2015 MEETINGS

**10 January** – Lansing’s former Grand Trunk Depot with Special Guest Speaker Bob Johnston, writer for TRAINS Magazine

**February** – No Meeting

**14 March** – Kalamazoo, 1<sup>st</sup> Methodist Church

**25 April** – Ypsilanti Depot Freighthouse

**16 May** – Durand Union Station

**June** – Crossroads Village (date TBA)

**July - August** -- TBA

**5 September** –Annual Meeting at Durand Union Station

**October-December** – TBA

Visit [www.marp.org](http://www.marp.org)  
Email [marprail@yahoo.com](mailto:marprail@yahoo.com)

## Passenger trains could once again connect Michigan’s largest cities

*By Kay Chase*

There are people, not that old, who remember riding a train from Detroit to Grand Rapids. If results of a study currently underway are favorable, a new generation of Michiganders could once again enjoy the safety and convenience of jumping on a train to attend a festival in Holland, a medical appointment in Grand Rapids, an academic conference in Lansing, or a baseball game in Detroit.

Affectionately referred to as the **Coast-to-Coast** line, the idea grew out of comments gathered in a series of community forums hosted in 2012 by the **Trans4M** coalition. One of the top priorities of people across the state was the restoration of train service to connect Michigan’s three major population centers: Detroit, Lansing and the Grand Rapids/Holland area.

On April 16, MARP members John Langdon and Larry Krieg, along with others on the committee guiding the process, met with Alex Metcalf, project manager for **Transportation and Economic Management Systems (TEMS)**, the firm hired to conduct the study. Formally titled “Detroit-Holland Rail Ridership and Cost Estimate Study”, an aggressive work schedule will see completion of the study by the end of the year.

MARP has received a \$2500 grant from the **Michigan Environmental Council (MEC)** to support MARP's activities in **Michigan By Rail** initiatives, one of which is promoting the **Coast-to-Coast** proposal. The partnership agreement between MARP and MEC specifies that MARP will assist with outreach and public engagement to monitor interests and preferences as the study progresses. A series of public meetings is planned during the next several months, affording a number of opportunities for MARP members to assist in making local arrangements and promoting the meetings in their communities.

If you are looking for an opportunity to participate in what could be a significant milestone for passenger trains in our state, please contact John Langdon who is MARP’s point person on this project. You can e-mail John at [john-langdon@sbcglobal.net](mailto:john-langdon@sbcglobal.net) or phone him at 616-218-9009.



**MARP Member Meeting**  
**Saturday, May 16**  
**10:00 am – 12:00 pm**  
**Durand Union Station**

200 Railroad Street, Durand MI 48439

[Map & Directions](#)

MARP and Durand Union Station, Inc., are collaborating to present a special [Durand Railroad Days](#) presentation by historian Joseph Michael Mishler “*Flint and Holly Railroad, its economic impact on the area and the man that built it, Henry Howland Crapo.* Details on page 2.



**Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers**  
*and*  
**Durand Union Station**



**Durand Railroad Days Program**  
**Saturday, May 16, 10:00 am**

The Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers (MARP) will be having its monthly membership meeting at Durand Union Station on May 16. The meeting will start at 10:00am in the second floor Ballroom at the station.

Following a membership meeting, **MARP** and **DUSI** will be co-sponsoring a Durand Railroad Days Program presented by Joseph M. Mishler on the *“Flint and Holly Railroad, its economic impact on the area and the man that built it, Henry Howland Crapo”*.

**JOSEPH MICHAEL MISHLER**

Joe is a US Army combat wounded Vietnam Veteran. He is a retired Holly High School teacher who taught History, Government and Drama. Joe has a Bachelor’s from Central Michigan and Masters of Liberal Studies – American Cultures from UofM Flint. He is currently the Chairperson of the Friends of the McFarlan Veterans Memorial Park, Chairperson of the Holly Education Foundation and the newly created Karl Richter Community Center in Holly. Joe is an author, a playwright, a consultant, a lecturer/presenter, a grant writer, a project organizer, and has directed over 100 musicals and plays. Joe is a member and Past President of Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 175-Genesee County, and Commander of American Legion Post 149 of Holly. He is a member of the Great Lakes National Cemetery Advisory Board, and a mentor with the Genesee County Veterans Treatment Court. Joe is also with the Holly Dickens Festival and directs “A Christmas Carol-Abridged”. He is married to Linda and lives in Holly.

The MARP meeting and the program that will follow the meeting are open to all interested persons. Membership in **MARP** or **DUSI** is not required, however membership forms will be available for anyone that would like to join and support either or both of these organizations.

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200 Railroad Street, Durand MI 48429  
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## Ypsilanti Freighthouse provides MARP an interesting meeting place

*24 April Meeting Notes*

The historic, but drafty, Freighthouse that once served the Michigan Central Railroad was the site for the April 24 general membership meeting. Longtime member Ren Farley (renf@umich.edu) distributed information he prepared on the freighthouse, the Michigan Central depot and the nearby Ypsilanti Automotive Heritage Museum occupying the site of Carl L. Miller’s Hudson Sales and Service franchise which sold and serviced Hudson automobiles for more than half a century.

A key feature of the meeting was a presentation by Liz Treutel whose duties as a policy associate at the Michigan Environmental Council are focused primarily on the linkages among transportation policy, sustainable land use, economic development and place making in Michigan. She presented information on Proposal 1 which voters will see on their May 5 ballot. Treutel explained what Proposal 1 does and how it will financially benefit Michigan, specifically with the addition of \$116 M to the Comprehensive Transportation Fund (CTF) that supports rail and transit. Her main message was that this is a bi-partisan package that simplifies our funding system and supports the complete transportation system. If the proposal fails, she fears that the legislature will continue to “kick the can down the road” and that funding to adequately support trains ad local transit will continue to face uncertainty, as will other important funds such as the school aid fund and local revenue sharing. She distributed a fact sheet which can also be downloaded [HERE](#). *(FREIGHTHOUSE continues on next page)*

*(FREIGHTHOUSE continued from page 2)*

Following discussion, members decided that MARP would not take a position either for or against Proposition 1.

Steve Sobel entertained and informed those present with a 15 minute "Newsreel" summary of the progress along the Amtrak "Wolverine" route since late 2013. He included the two new intermodal stations: the Troy Transit Center which opened on 14 October 2014 and Dearborn's John D. Dingell Transit Center which opened on 13 December 2014.

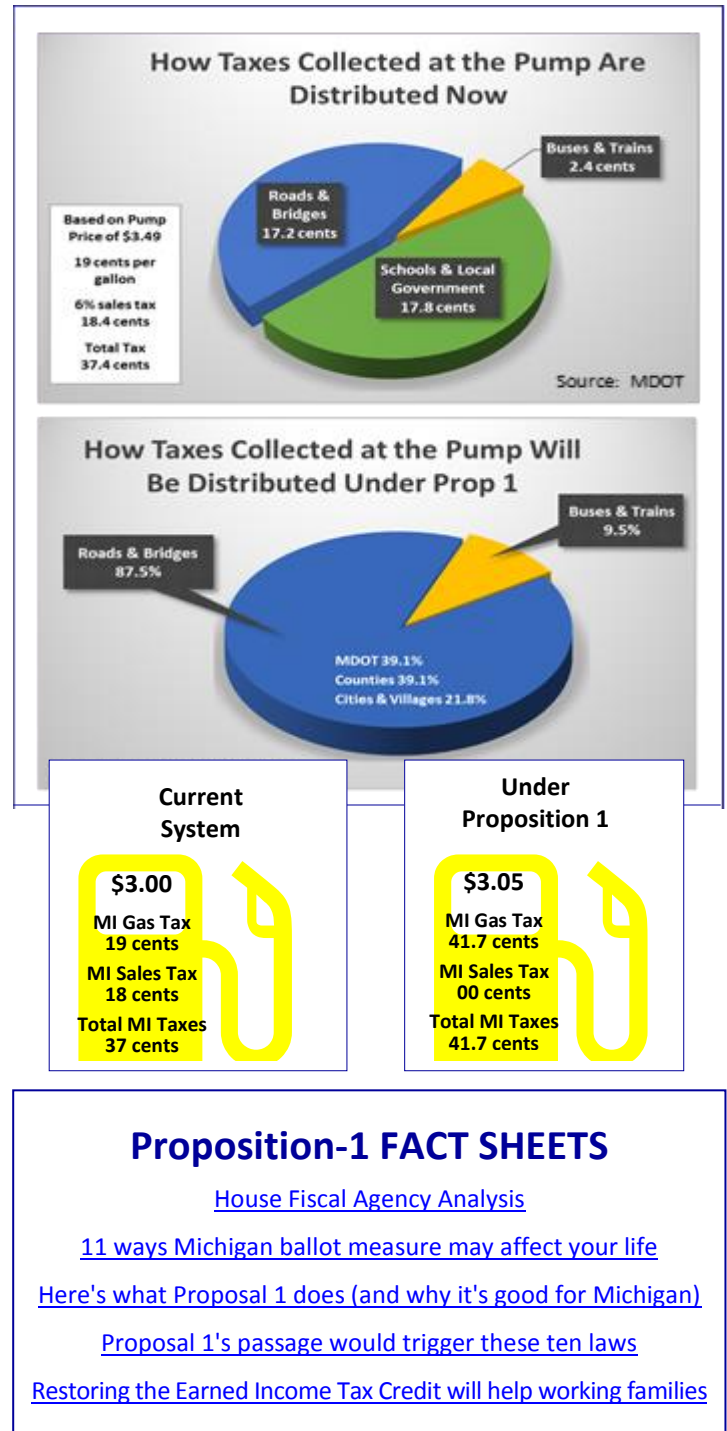
This was followed by photos of the **M-1 Rail** construction along Woodward Avenue in Detroit.

He also showed a few pictures of the ongoing construction on the soon to be completed Junction Ave viaduct which will permit Amtrak trains to move much more smoothly and quickly between the West Grand Blvd (Detroit) and Dearborn stations. According to Amtrak and MDOT, this will save 5-10 minutes of travel time.

Steve briefly took us back to the fall of 2013 when two Norfolk Southern track gangs, under Amtrak supervision, were replacing ties and rail near the Ann Arbor station.

He concluded with photos of the Michigan Avenue corridor where a 2nd track is being installed from the old Dearborn station to just east of downtown Ypsilanti. When completed in the fall of 2015, it will act as a long passing track and thus prevent delays when trains meet.

Don Westcott outlined preliminary plans for MARP's annual family summer fun event to be held in June at the **Crossroads Village** near Flint. There is a possibility of meeting and lunching aboard the Genesee Belle, a replica paddlewheel riverboat, while cruising around Mott Lake. An 8-mile ride on the 3' gauge steam-powered Huckleberry Railroad would be a "must do" activity. MARP members will have a guided tour of the railroad restoration and maintenance facilities rarely open to the public. As soon as a date is set, you will be notified so you can make plans for a weekend getaway.



## YOUR VOTE MATTERS ★★★★★ VOTE May 5

Michigan voters have some weighty issues to decide when they go to the polls May 5. The fate of Proposal 1 has implications for the funding of our Michigan passenger trains. You may wish to revisit articles and information sources included in the **MARCH** and **APRIL** issues of ON TRACK. **CLICK HERE** to see how Michigan transportation revenues are distributed currently. These formulas, established in the Constitution, remain the same under Proposition 1. With many moving parts, passage of Proposition 1 is intended to guarantee that all taxes collected at the gas pump go to transportation purposes without harming schools and local governments that currently depend on revenues from the 6% sales tax on gas. An concise analysis of what this means for you is **HERE**.

## View from elsewhere . . .

*"The Grand Rapids region should work to support efforts to establish rail service to and from Detroit. It is very early in the process, and plenty of questions will go unanswered until the study is complete. But public and private transportation and economic development groups in Grand Rapids should work to ensure they have a strong voice in the process as it moves forward."*

— Grand Rapids Press Editorial Board, 15 March 2014.  
Read more [HERE](#).

*"There are a number of cities in Michigan that are not connected with one another . . . There's a statewide vision of a rail network across the state. You've got Amtrak, which connects a limited number of cities, but this is part of a vision to connect more cities with each other."*

— Michael Benham, Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority strategic planner, announcing selection of Transportation Economics and Management Systems, Inc. (TEMS) to conduct a rail ridership and cost estimate [study of potential passenger train service](#) along the Detroit-Lansing-Grand Rapids corridor.



## Sun Powers Transit Maintenance Facility

Valley Metro, the Phoenix transit provider, marked Earth Day by powering-up their Rail Operations & Maintenance Center using solar power. With 2,800 solar voltaic panels spanning 1.15 acres — mounted at ground-level and on parking lot shade canopies — the array is capable of generating 1.3 million kWh of energy savings annually, enough electricity to power 123 homes. Funded in part with a federal TIGGER grant (not TIGER), Valley Metro has been recognized by the American Public Transportation Association for its commitments to sustainability. Read more about the project [HERE](#).

## AMTRAK TRAIN DAYS EVENTS

[VIEW ALL EVENTS](#)

### [Official Amtrak Train Days Kick-off at Chicago Union Station May 8 & 9](#)

Go to [amtrak.com](http://amtrak.com) to book your seat on a VIP Train to the Journeyman Winery in New Buffalo (\$100) or an "excursion" train tour of the Chicago yard (\$10). Buy tickets at the station for a "Hard Hat" tour of the nooks & crannies of the station (\$75) or a tour of the Joseph C. Szabo Control Center (\$50).

### [Bangor Depot Railroad Cafe Train Day and Birthday Celebration May 9](#)

A day of fun, magic, and music by the Deep Fried Pickle Project!

### [Fernwood Botanical Garden & Nature Preserve Features the Railway Garden May 9](#)

Celebrate Train Day at Fernwood. Visit the Railway Garden. Free with paid Fernwood admission. Fun for all ages!

### [Port Huron Railroad Historical Society Celebrates Train Day May 9](#)

The Port Huron & Detroit Railroad Historical Society is your host in Port Huron to celebrate Amtrak Train Day, May 9, 10am – 3pm. Free refreshments and a light lunch will be served. Amtrak 2015 schedules, timetables, and vacation planners will be available.

### [Lansing/Kalamazoo Brew Train Departs East Lansing May 16](#)

Meet at the East Lansing Amtrak station to take the train to Kalamazoo. Visit a thriving downtown, check out the brew pubs and enjoy a responsible train ride home with friends. Leave around 8am and return around 9pm the same day. Great Time in K-zoo.

### [Dearborn's John D. Dingell Amtrak Station Celebrates Train Day May 23](#)

Volunteers from the Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers will be on hand with advice on traveling by train. Free coffee, donut holes, pop and chips will be offered compliments of Tim Horton's.

### [Grand Rapids Vern J. Ehlers Amtrak Station Hosts the Amtrak Exhibit Train July 25](#)

The Amtrak Exhibit Train will pull into the Grand Rapids Amtrak Station on July 25. Step aboard for a free self-guided tour through Amtrak's past, present and future. For the youngest rail fans, stop off at Chuggington Kids Depot, featuring toy train and coloring tables.

If you would like to help with an event in your area, please contact [john-langdon@sbcglobal.net](mailto:john-langdon@sbcglobal.net).