



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. Everyone is welcome.

MARP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2011-2012

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

2012 MEETINGS

- 14 January** – Williamston Depot-Museum
- 11 February** – Old Dog Tavern, Kalamazoo
- 17 March** – New Pontiac Station
- 21 April** – Chelsea Depot
- 12 May** – National Train Day
- 16 June** – Muskegon Union Station
- 28 July** –RAPID Central Station, Grand Rapids
- August** – Executive Committee Retreat
- September 15** –Annual Meeting at Durand Union Station
- 13 October** – Pere Marquette Station, St. Louis MI
- 10 November** – Michigan Central Station, Essex, Ontario

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

Promontory Summit, May 10, 1869

Golden Spike is Driven !

The Central Pacific and Union Pacific Railroads Are Joined To Form The Nation's First Transcontinental Railroad

Yesterday, May 10th, at high noon, the last rail was laid and spiked, connecting the Union and Central Pacific railroads. It was the completing of an enterprise fraught with more interest than the tunneling of Mount Cenis or connecting the Red and Mediterranean seas by the Suez Canal. Exchanges and telegrams inform us that on the Pacific and Atlantic coasts it was to be celebrated with becoming ceremonies and popular demonstrations, while from down in the deserts of Utah, we have rumors of gold spikes, and silver spikes, diamond eyes, ruby lips, alabaster necks, sparkling vintage wit, sentiment, and what-not, that graced the occasion and fastened the rail. Success to the great enterprise and a volunteer toast from Montana.

-- Montana Post, Helena, May 14, 1869

A thousand throbbing hearts impulsively beat to the motion of the trains as the front locomotive of each company led on majestically up to the very verge of the narrow break between the lines, where, in a few moments, was to be consummated the nuptial rites uniting the gorgeous east and the imperial west of America, with the indissoluble seal of inter-oceanic commerce.

-- Deseret News, Salt Lake City, May 19, 1869

Fifth Annual Celebration NATIONAL TRAIN DAY May 12, 2012



The biggest little event in the Midwest will take place a week earlier on May 5 at the Toledo Amtrak station where, among a host of activities, you will have another chance to tour Amtrak's 40th Anniversary Train. For details visit tinyurl.com/marp00040

On May 12, Train Day events will be held at various locations around Michigan, including Flint, Kalamazoo, Niles, Holland, Jackson and Bangor. Visit the website NationalTrainDay.com for details of these and other events around the nation.

APRIL MEETING NOTES

by Hugh Gurney

On April 21, MARP met at the well maintained 1880 Chelsea Depot, where we were welcomed by members of the Chelsea Depot Association. Chelsea railroad historian Robert D. Shannon gave an excellent presentation on the history of the Michigan Central Railroad and the evolution of railroad service in Chelsea. Shannon showed a blown up photo of Michigan Central's **Mercury** taking on water on the run from a water trough just east of Chelsea. The **Mercury** made the trip from Detroit to Chicago in four hours during the 1940's.

The present depot is the third to serve Chelsea. In the 1890's, eight trains a day stopped there. Fortunately, the Chelsea Depot Association saved the structure from demolition by Conrail in the 1970's. Most funding for upkeep of the depot comes from rentals for wedding receptions, banquets and other functions.

Michigan will be receiving twenty new bi-level coaches out of a total order of 130 cars. The coaches will be similar to ones currently in use in California. The contract should be awarded in October, with the first of the new cars arriving in 2015. New locomotives are also scheduled for delivery in 2015.

The Michigan Senate is expected to take up legislation in the next week to establish a Regional Transportation Authority for the counties of Wayne, Washtenaw, Oakland, and Macomb.

The Surface Transportation Board has received a petition from MDOT for acquisition of the Dearborn-Kalamazoo stretch of the Norfolk Southern sometime between April 30 and May 31. The Wayne Yard and the Willow Run Yard are excluded from the acquisition.

The SS Badger, which provides ferry service between Ludington, Michigan, and Manitowoc, Wisconsin, may be shut down at the end of December, 2012, because it continues to dump toxic coal ash into Lake Michigan. The vessel was constructed by the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad as a railroad car ferry between Ludington and several points on the western shores of Lake Michigan. Plans are in the works for conversion of the ship to natural gas, but that is expensive and will take time. A committee including Monteith, Chase, Gurney and Larry Bean of the Chelsea Depot Association will review the most suitable response for MARP.

Despite the withdrawal of the University of Michigan from the Fuller Road Transportation Center project, the City of Ann Arbor plans to confirm a contract for design of a station at that location near the University of Michigan Medical Center in the very near future. Work is underway on the new Grand Rapids Amtrak station. Westrain plans to involve Chambers of Commerce, Convention and Visitor Bureaus and municipal leaders in its promotion of a second **Pere Marquette** frequency. Repair of last year's water damage to the Durand Union Station is now complete.

MARP will have a table at the large National Train Day event in Toledo on May 5. National Train Day observances are planned at a number of stations in Michigan on May 12.

The next meeting is scheduled at the historic Muskegon Railroad Depot at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, June 16.

MARP Members Invited to Meeting of Operation Lifesaver

Michigan Operation Lifesaver's next quarterly meeting is scheduled for May 11, 2012 at 9:30am, at the historic Durand Union Station. A luncheon hosted by the Michigan Railroads Association follows the morning business session. The afternoon session always features an interesting speaker. Please RSVP to Sam Crowl, *State Coordinator-MIOL* samcrowl@comcast.net.

MI-OL also invites you to visit their booth during the celebration "*Day Out With Thomas at the Henry Ford Museum*" which is continuing the weekends of May 5-6 and 12-13. See page 3 for more about the visit of Thomas the Tank Engine™ to Greenfield Village.

NOMINATIONS SOUGHT

MARP will name new officers at the annual meeting in September. In addition to Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary, there are 4 At-Large Positions (responsible for membership, meetings, communications, and governmental affairs, respectively) and 4 Regional Chair Positions. In addition, MARP is looking for someone to fill the position of our long-time Treasurer, Dave Randall, who is retiring and moving to Texas to care for aging parents. If you are interested in holding office or would like to nominate someone, please email MARP Chair Robert Tischbein rptischbein@juno.com or phone him at 586-726-9737.

MICHIGAN CONGRESSMEN APPOINTED TO TRANSPORTATION BILL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Rep. Gary Peters (D-MI 9) and Rep. Fred Upton (R-MI 6) have been appointed to the conference committee tasked with resolving the considerable differences between Senate and House versions of the surface transportation reauthorization legislation.

The current authorization SAFETEA-LU expired 30 Sept 2009. A series of temporary extensions have continued funding at 2009 levels, but have hampered long-range planning efforts of highway departments and transit agencies alike.

The Senate passed MAP-21 in March --- a bi-partisan 2-year bill that contains a number of policies to create a more balanced transportation system that moves people and goods safely and efficiently while protecting the environment.

Meanwhile, the House backed away from H.R. 7 which met such a storm of protest that it was not even taken up by committee and, in April, passed H.R.4348 to extend SAFETEA-LU --- for the 9th time! This was widely viewed as a "shell" bill to get to the negotiating table with the Senate. The bill contains some "poison pills" that will be grief-causing as the negotiations go forward. The most problematic of these concern non-transportation related items such as regulation of coal-ash and approval of the controversial Keystone Pipeline project.

The Conference Committee will begin work May 8 and hopes to finish up by the end of June. House members will be in-district the week of May 21 and again the week of June 11. If you are in Rep. Peters's or Rep. Upton's district, please look for opportunities to meet with them or their staff, especially over the Memorial Day weekend when many politicians are appearing at public events.

Two sources of information on these bills are:

www.T4America.org/blog

www.apta.com

Use the links on page 4 below to find your member of Congress. Let them hear from you.

***Have You Renewed
Your Membership ?***

FUN WITH TRAINS & SHIPS

Day Out With Thomas at the Henry Ford Museum

May 5-6 and 12-13

Thomas the Tank Engine™ chugs into Greenfield Village for 4 more days of fun and entertainment! All little engineers and their families are invited to take a ride on the 15-ton No.1 Thomas engine and participate in fun Thomas-themed activities. Advance tickets are recommended. Details and ticket purchase information at tinyurl.com/marp00039

Lake Express Special Event: "Lakers of the Lake"

Saturday May 5th

Walk onboard and tour America's first high speed auto ferry. Meet the captain and crew and tour the passenger, vehicle and outside decks. \$2 suggested donation. Or experience a ride on Lake Michigan's fast ferry by reservation only. A limited number of tickets will be available for each voyage. All proceeds from tours and paid excursions benefit the GVSU Annis Water Resources Institute. For information and reservations visit www.lake-express.com/event or call 866-914-1010.

Train Excursion to Alma Highland Festival

Saturday May 26th

Ride the train from Owosso to the Alma Highland Festival. Ticket prices include admission to the festival. Arrive in Alma in time for the parade. Spend the day in Alma enjoying the sights, sounds and food of this annual event, then ride back in comfort to Owosso.

Already attending the Highland Festival? Take a one hour train ride (1pm or 3pm) from the festival itself. A great way to take a brief moment to relax from the festivities of the Festival! Visit michigansteamtrain.com/sri/tickets/ or call the SRI at 989-399-7589. Tickets also available Saturday, near the RR Tracks on Superior Street just east of Grant Street. Information on the Alma Highland Festival is here: almahighlandfestival.com/

The average annual number of vehicle miles traveled by young people (16 to 34-year-olds) in the U.S. decreased by 23 percent between 2001 and 2009.

The share of 14- to 34-year-olds without a driver's license increased by 5 percentage points, rising from 21 percent in 2000 to 26 percent in 2010, according to the Federal Highway Administration.

View from elsewhere . . .

A balanced national transportation system requires high-speed rail lines that connect the nation's major cities. With gas prices soaring, people are driving less and looking for less stressful alternatives to congested freeways and airports. The federal government must continue to help metropolitan areas build and maintain transit systems -- including trains -- that reduce congestion, get people to jobs, improve air quality and conserve energy.

Secretary of Transportation Joseph Szabo, in Michigan to break ground on the new Dearborn station, said that he expects nearly 80% of the Detroit-Chicago line to run at sustained speeds of 110 m.p.h. by 2015, reducing one-way travel time by nearly two hours. Ridership on the Chicago-St. Louis line, for example, has more than doubled in five years. "It's happening with service that is not yet stellar," Szabo said, adding that with improved reliability and speed "ridership is just going to explode." For that to happen, though, customer service and reliability must get better. Fast trains won't help much if they don't leave the station on time.

-- Detroit Free Press Editorial, 17 April 2012

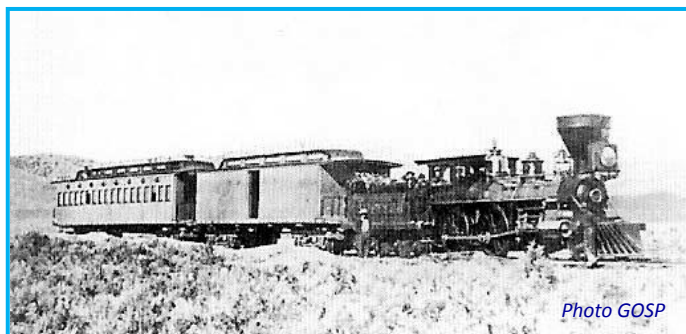


Photo GOSP

The "Stanford Special" at Promontory, May 1, 1869. Locomotive "Jupiter", commissary car, and the private car of CP President Leland Stanford. They departed by 5:00 p.m.

For an exhaustive and fascinating account of events preceding and following the driving of the golden spike, see **Promontory Summit, May 10, 1869: A History of the Site Where The Central Pacific and Union Pacific Railroads Joined to Form the First Transcontinental Railroad, 1869, With a Special Focus on the Tents of May 10**, by Robert L. Spude.

This may be viewed online at: tinyurl.com/marp00041



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