



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
Steve Vagnozzi	Vice-Chair
Jeanie Merckel	Treasurer
Kay Chase	Acting Secretary
John Langdon	Governmental/Public Affairs Coordinator
Chuck Merckel	Membership Coordinator
Kay Chase	Communications Coordinator
Adam Tauno Williams	Meetings Coordinator
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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

2016 MEETINGS

- 16 January** – REO Town Depot (former Grand Trunk Depot), Lansing
- February** – Cancelled
- 12 March** – Howell
- 16 April** – New Buffalo Library
- 21 May** – Jackson TBA
- 11 June** –Amtrak Station, Dearborn
- July** – Executive Committee
- August** – Marquette, in conjunction with 4th Annual MI Rail Conference
- 24 September** –Annual Meeting at Durand Union Station
- 8 October** – Dowagiac
- November** – TBA
- December** – Executive Committee

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

Students Say “Yes” to Trains

A recent survey of college and university students throughout the Midwest has found overwhelming support for passenger trains. An astonishing 17,000+ students participated in the online survey designed to gauge attitudes toward, and use of, trains by students attending thirty (of the hundreds) of institutions of higher education that lie along Amtrak routes in nine Midwestern states.

Significantly, nearly 6,000 of those students responded affirmatively when asked “Would you be interested in helping advocate for an improved passenger rail system in our region/country?” Those students are now putting that commitment into action by participating in a massive social media event on April 14. As of this writing, 183 students and others have agreed to join their collective Facebook, Twitter and Tumblr voices in a **Thunderclap** event to publicize results of the survey, potentially reaching 166,000 friends and followers.

At 10:00 am central time on April 14, the **Students Say YES to Trains** message will go out, inviting people to explore the very affirmative results of the survey. Responses have been compiled for each of the participating schools and aggregated for each of the nine Midwestern states in which those institutions are located and will be available for viewing after 10:00 am, April 14, under the News tab at www.miprc.org.

If you have a Facebook page, and/or use Twitter or Tumblr, there is still time to sign on as a participant. Go to <http://thndr.me/SjzgJy> before 9:59 am on April 14 to become part of the campaign.

The idea for the survey arose with the University Partnerships Committee of the **Midwestern Interstate Passenger Rail Commission (MIPRC)**. In thinking about where the next generation of advocates is coming from, it seemed useful to begin by discovering current attitudes toward passenger trains.

MIPRC is a nine-state interstate compact that promotes, coordinates and supports regional improvements to passenger rail service. Appointed commissioners include state legislators and governors’ designees. Tim Hoeffner, Michigan Office of Rail, currently serves as MIPRC’s chair.



MARP Member Meeting
Saturday, April 16
10:30 am – 1:00 pm
New Buffalo Township Library
33 N Thompson St, New Buffalo MI 49117
Map & Directions

We have invited our colleagues from Indiana to join us for discussion of projects and concerns of mutual interest. Updates on the *Hoosier State* and the Indiana Gateway are on the agenda, as are reports from NARP’s spring meeting in D.C. Details on the website www.marp.org Or send email to marprail@yahoo.com.

WALLY and Coast-to-Coast Featured at March MARP Meeting

Mike Cleary extended his hospitality to 41 MARP members and friends who gathered at the eponymously named Pub on Howell's main thoroughfare on March 12. We were welcomed to "the future home of the WALLY and Coast-to-Coast lines" by Nick Proctor, who, as mayor of the City of Howell, said these proposals are a boon to his community. He lauded trains as "a simple, easy way to travel that provides an opportunity actually see the countryside."

Chair Krieg recognized Michael Lamb for his leadership of **Friends of WALLY**. Ten Friends members were present.

Treasurer Jeanie Merckel reported dues receipts of \$3,049 from 113 new and renewing members and donations of \$330, for total receipts of \$3,379.00 for Jan and Feb. Expenses of \$1680.25 included a new printer, mailing costs, a train ticket for the 2016 annual meeting speaker, office supplies, PayPal fees, and snacks and beverages for member meetings and the opening of the new East Lansing station. Funds available for operations are \$13,746.57. The Pratt Fund was valued at \$17,211.39 at the end of February.

Warren Fritz, West Regional Chair, reported on meetings in Niles on Dec 5 and Battle Creek on Jan 28 to begin an initiative to build support among local officials and community leaders along the Wolverine route. Rick Harnish, Midwest High Speed Rail Association, gave a presentation in which he argued for double-tracking the entire route to realize its full potential.

Krieg reported on a similar meeting held in Dearborn on January 28, attended by about 25 people. Follow up efforts will continue in order to raise awareness, keep people informed, and lay the groundwork for future action.

Michael Benham, Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority, provided an update on the current status of the **North-South Commuter Rail Project**, otherwise known as the WALLY. The feasibility study, underway for about a year, is wrapping up and a series of public meetings is being planned in the near future.

Benham outlined alternative service plans and said that possible station locations have been identified and preliminary cost estimates completed. The team is doing some comparisons with similar projects (Northstar in Minneapolis, Music City Star, a couple others) and exploring ways to reduce capital costs, for example, less than full protection at some grade crossings and reducing the size of maintenance facilities. Other options considered are use of DMUs and running a train north in the morning. Issues of governance and sources of funding are yet to be addressed. Ridership estimates will be ready in a few weeks.

(MEETING continues in next column)

(MEETING continued from previous column)

To be eligible for federal New Starts funding, a detailed financial analysis will have to be completed.

Liz Treutel Callin, Michigan Environmental Council policy associate, reported on the recently released **Coast-to-Coast Passenger Rail Ridership and Cost Estimate Study**, for which she was the project manager. Charged with examining potential ridership and probable costs, the consultants conclude that the project shows sufficient promise to warrant more detailed analysis. Three potential routes were identified connecting Detroit and Lansing: Route 1: Detroit to Lansing via Wayne, Ann Arbor and Jackson; Route 2: Detroit to Lansing via Wayne, Ann Arbor and Howell; and Route 3: Detroit to Lansing via Wayne and Plymouth. All three continue to Grand Rapids and Holland. Route 1 has the highest potential ridership, while Route 2 has the greatest potential return on investment. Service on each of the routes was evaluated for conventional equipment operating at 79 mph and for advanced equipment capable of operating at speeds up to 110 mph. Not surprisingly, the study finds that higher-frequency, faster-service options generate the greatest ridership and potential to provide an operating surplus. Capital costs include actual purchase of the track to enable 110-mph service.

Outreach and education will continue as partners and funding are identified to undertake a full feasibility study. Access the report at www.MiByRail.org.

Krieg presented Treutel Callin with a Certificate of Appreciation in recognition of her energy, enthusiasm, and diplomacy in shepherding this project to its conclusion.

Krieg announced that the long-sought Ypsilanti train stop has been given a green light by MDOT. Funding must be secured and two little-used grade crossing closed. Challenges include compliance with ADA regulations, accommodation of freight movements and historic district considerations. Construction will not start for at least a year.



MARP WANTS YOU

We are looking for a few (well, two to be exact) good men and women to fill the positions of Secretary and East Central Chair.

If you would like to be part of MARP's leadership team, this one's for you!

Send email to marprail@yahoo.com. Acting Secretary Kay Chase or former regional chair Steve Vagnozzi look forward to talking with you.

THE 2016 REGIONAL TRANSIT AWARDS



12 May – 5:30 to 8:30 pm
Greektown Casino Hotel
1200 St. Antoine
Detroit MI 48226

Each year, Transportation Riders United (TRU) celebrates “the amazing people who have dedicated extraordinary energy and creativity to improve public transit in greater Detroit.” This is a wonderful opportunity to rub elbows with the folks who are making it happen in greater Detroit. At the same time you are helping to support the ongoing advocacy work of Transportation Riders United, a group that shares MARP’s focus on expanding transportation options for all people.

On Thursday evening, May 12, the reception begins at 5:30 pm with hors d’oeuvres and a cash bar. A 3-course dinner and wine will be served at 6:30 pm. The Award Ceremony will run from 7:00 until 8:00 pm, recognizing each awardee.

REGISTER HERE by April 20
to take advantage of the EARLY BIRD SPECIAL!

TRU is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Payments and donations are tax-deductible, less the \$40 retail value of each dinner.

OTHER EVENTS

The 5th Annual Boxcar Buffet Benefit

New Buffalo Railroad Museum
 13 May, 6-10 pm EST
 Hellenic Center, New Buffalo MI

Buy your Boarding Pass now to support the New Buffalo Railroad Museum. This popular “Fun Raiser”, features an all-you-can-eat buffet with prime rib and a selection of sides donated by area restaurants and topped off - for a donation - with a tempting dessert cart. Details and ticket purchase [HERE](#).

Midwest High Speed Rail Japan High-Speed Rail Tour October 2016

Planned to give everyone an opportunity to enjoy the rich history of train travel the country offers, the itinerary includes riding the very first high-speed rail line, visiting at least one railroad museum and meetings with experts in the field. Arrangements are underway for technical visits and train tours. Details of the trip finalized as soon as 10 fully-refundable deposits are made. More information [HERE](#).

Make Plans Now for MARP’s Second Ever Meeting in the Upper Peninsula

The **4th Annual Michigan Rail Conference** is slated to take place on the campus of Northern Michigan University in **Marquette MI** on August 17-18. The MARP meeting will take place in conjunction with the conference.

This year’s theme is *Connecting the Dots: Business, Communities and Technology*. The organizers are currently taking suggestions for conference topics. If you have an idea about a topic you'd like to see included in the 2016 Michigan Rail Conference, or if you would like to present a topic yourself, [click here](#) to submit your idea.

MARP members Shasta Duffey, Frank Dunbar, Derrick James, Nick Little and Liz Treutel Callin are members of the organizing committee and are anxious to hear your suggestions.

Currently there is only one session dedicated specifically to passenger issues, likely focusing on “last mile” solutions for getting people to and from stations. However, the committee is exploring the idea of a conference break out session focused on advocacy, with MARP as the primary organizer. This means coming up with a topic and either a speaker or group of panelists. Again, your thoughts on this are most welcome. Send your ideas in an email to marprail@yahoo.com.

In any event, you will want to start making your plans now to attend the conference. Admittedly, this is a long trip for most of us, but why not consider this part of your summer vacation? Plan to spend a few days in the **Upper Peninsula** with family or friends exploring the not-so-ordinary pleasures of our **far north**.

EARLY BIRD conference registration continues until June 20. It is recommended to make your **Room Reservation** soon to assure availability.

A limited number of full scholarships are available for students who are interested in rail transportation. Contact Amanda Kerttu at alkerttu@mtu.edu.

SAVE THE DATE



AUGUST 17TH Conference

\$100 Early Bird Registration

AUGUST 18TH Field Visit

\$35 Early Bird Registration

[CLICK HERE for Information and Registration](#)

View from elsewhere . . .

“This route itself probably doesn’t make sense in its current form, but that’s not to say there aren’t parts of it that do make sense. So our challenge is to kind of isolate the dead weight, find alternate ways to serve those people because there are people using the entire route, and then take areas of the route that are growing and find ways to pump up service.”

—Neil Greenberg, DDOT manager of service development and scheduling, **riding the No. 11 Clairmount bus last week** along a route that has seen ridership drop from 13,000 in mid-1980’s to 500 today

“We’re proud of our work to provide reliable, energy-efficient transportation, draw more customers to rail, and ultimately reduce the carbon footprint of the traveling public. We are committed to being a good steward of our resources and having a positive impact in the communities we serve.”

—Amtrak President and CEO Joseph Boardman in Jan-Feb issue of **Amtrak INK** focusing on Amtrak’s sustainability efforts



NextGen Locomotive Unwrapped

This first of 34 high-performance Charger diesel-electric passenger locomotives, destined for use in Michigan, Illinois and Missouri, rolled off the line at Siemens manufacturing plant in Sacramento CA at the end of March. Charger locomotives are designed to operate at speeds up to 125 mph and deliver the highest performance, lowest fuel consumption, cleanest emissions, and lowest total cost of ownership of any locomotive engine. The Siemens plant itself sources up to 80% of its energy from two megawatts of solar energy. Technical specifications for the locomotive may be found [HERE](#).



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Contact Your Lawmaker

Congressional Switchboard
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Sen. Debbie Stabenow

Sen. Gary Peters

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