



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 2016-2018

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

2017 MEETINGS

- 14 January** – REO Town Depot (former Grand Trunk Depot), Lansing
- 18 February** – 1st Methodist Church, Kalamazoo
- 18 March** – Clinton Northern Railway Museum, St. Johns
- 22 April** – Grand Trunk Pub, Detroit
- 13 May** – Chicago Union Station
- June** – Executive Committee
- 15 July** – Traverse City
- August** – Bangor
- 23 September** – Annual Meeting at Durand Union Station
- October** – tentative Grand Rapids
- November** – tentative SE Michigan
- December** – Executive Committee

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

Midwest High Speed Rail Association Spring Meeting Features Varied and Interesting Program

A large gathering of passenger train advocates convened in Chicago on 1 April for the annual spring meeting of the Midwest High Speed Rail Association (MHSRA). Rick Harnish, executive director of MHSRA, led off the proceedings with the observation that we are “living in interesting times”. With a number of challenges facing public transportation across the board, he opined that advocates need to focus efforts on the Congressional appropriations process, pointing out that three members of the transportation subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee are from the Midwest: David Joyce (R-OH), David Young (R-IA), and **Mike Quigley** (D-IL).

Rep. Quigley spoke later and quipped he might prefer more “boring times”. Quigley acknowledged the extraordinary challenges ahead in moving toward a 21st century transportation network that enhances economic development and “has a whole lot less low-speed rail”. He appealed for our help in educating the public and decision makers on the issues.

Mark Walbrun, leader of Rail & Transit practice for Mott MacDonald (and, incidentally, a member of MARP), gave a succinct and informative presentation titled “Frequency – The Key to Success in Passenger Rail Corridors”. He described seven corridors around the world in terms of hours of operation, punctuality, and reliability. Major U.S. corridors compare well with these global examples, but Chicago-St. Louis and Chicago-Detroit fall short. The critical factors in raising performance in these two corridors are: increasing frequency and reducing travel time. Eleven daily round trips would give greater flexibility for the traveler and make more efficient use of equipment and personnel.

Tim Hoeffner, director of MDOT’s Office of Rail, reviewed the important work of the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission (**MIPRC.org**) in preparing the region to benefit from federal investment over the last several years, citing in particular the acquisition of the Next-Gen “Charger” locomotives manufactured by Siemens. As might be expected with several Michiganders in the audience, Hoeffner fielded a number of questions

(SPRING Meeting continues on page 3)



MARP Member Meeting

Saturday, April 22, 10:00 am – Noon
Grand Trunk Pub

612 Woodward Ave, Detroit MI 48226

Map & Directions

Our guest speaker will be Nicole Brown, Community Relations Manager for M-1 Rail, the host line for the Q-Line Streetcar scheduled to begin service on May 12.

Meeting details on the website www.marp.org

Or send email to marprail@yahoo.com.

Make Plans Now for May Meeting at Chicago Union Station

MARP is planning a special meeting for Saturday, May 13, at Chicago Union Station. The meeting will take place in the former Barbershop that has been impressively restored as a meeting room. It is located adjacent to the new Legacy Lounge off the southwest corner of the Great Hall. To accommodate *Wolverine* passengers, the meeting will begin at 11 a.m. A detailed announcement will be sent in early May.

Martin Bloedt, Sales and Product Manager Locomotives, Siemens Industry Inc. in Sacramento, will be speak to us about the SC-44 Charger locomotives currently being delivered for use on Michigan, Illinois, and Missouri routes. MARP is hoping to arrange for us to tour one of these locomotives.

We are inviting colleagues from All Aboard Wisconsin and the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance to join us.

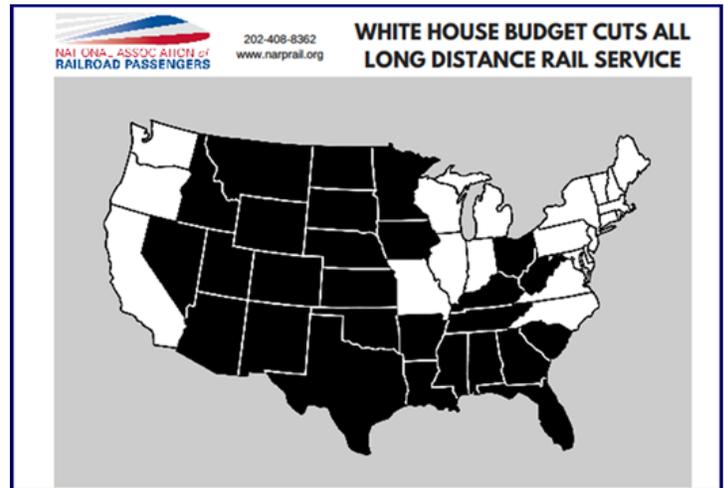
Some pleasant surprises are in store if you have not visited Chicago Union Station lately. Ticketing and queuing to board trains now takes place in the Great Hall. As you approach the Great Hall, you will envy the business and first class passengers you see on the other side of the large windows who are enjoying the comforts and amenities of the new Metropolitan Lounge. The famous steps have been rebuilt with travertine from the same quarry as the original.

Notes on March meeting in St. Johns

MARP met on 18 March at the Clinton Northern Railroad Museum in St. Johns. Our hosts were Jenny and Gary McCampbell who have served as volunteers with the Museum since its beginning in 1981. Jenny related some of the interesting history of the building and the passengers who used it when it served as a depot for the Grand Trunk Railroad. Gary told about the efforts of a loyal cadre of volunteers who are working to restore three historic rail cars displayed on the grounds of the Museum.

The "Sault Sainte Marie" is a **1902 Barney and Smith Sleeper car** built for the Duluth South Shore and Atlantic that served passengers on the St. Ignace-Soo-Duluth route until 1936. Restoration work has uncovered beautiful wood inlays in the mahogany veneer of the interior. Also on display at the station: a **1903 RPO Car**, which now receives children's letters to Santa each Christmas, and a **1926 Ann Arbor Crew Car**.

In the business portion of the meeting, Mark Miller was appointed by the executive committee to fill the vacant Northern Region Chair position. Mark lives in Oscoda after moving back to Michigan from Washington State where he was active in All Aboard Washington. Val Pulido, artist and student of historic preservation at Eastern Michigan University, spoke briefly about efforts focused on historic rail stations.



STATES IN BLACK WILL HAVE NO TRAINS

Michigan advocates have long recognized that the nature of our "peninsula" state cuts us off from easy access to surrounding states. A look at the above map paints a stark picture of how the Midwest could become a similar "peninsula", cut off entirely from train access to the rest of the country, should long-distance train routes disappear.

This bleak picture could become reality if Congress goes along with the Administration's threat to eliminate operational support for the nation's 16 long-distance routes, serving 220 communities, large and small.

It is sobering to realize that we Michiganders might no longer be able to take a train to Cleveland, St. Paul, New York City, Boston, or Washington DC, much less New Orleans, Denver, or Seattle. Nor would folks in those places be able to come by train to enjoy a visit to "Pure Michigan".

Please take action today to let your elected leaders know that this must not happen. Find Sen. Stabenow [here](#) and Sen. Peters [here](#) and your U.S. Representative [here](#). Phone their offices today. Ask to speak with the staff member who handles transportation issues. State your name, address and zip code. Tell them you use trains and why they are important to you. Ask that the Representative or Senator oppose any cuts to Amtrak.

Be assured that your call does have an impact. Staff members do keep track of how many people call and their positions on issues.



Due to a mix-up with our P.O. Box in Okemos, some of you may have had your membership payments returned to you. The problem has been taken care of and you can re-send your payments to P.O. Box 1368, Okemos MI 48805-1368. We apologize for the inconvenience.

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(SPRING Meeting continued from page 1)

regarding Michigan services, in particular, adding frequency on the *Blue Water* and *Pere Marquette* routes and shortening the schedule on the *Wolverine* corridor. Saying he is in "survival mode" under the financial burden placed on the states by PRIIA Sec. 209, he needs to find ways to reduce costs and to "get some successes under our belts." MDOT is dispatching as far as Ypsilanti and will take over the remaining 20 miles to Dearborn within the next couple of months. PTC installation will be complete by November, at which time MDOT can "start making those decisions" on adjusting the schedule. He said MDOT is continuing to look at the proposed restoration of *Coast-to-Coast* service connecting Detroit-Ann Arbor-Lansing-Grand Rapids and is "very supportive" of MARP's efforts to establish a shuttle service connecting *Wolverine* passengers with VIA trains at Windsor.

Derrick James, Amtrak Government Affairs-Central, spoke on the critical need for the 28 new train sets being acquired for the North East Corridor (NEC), which has 11% of the ridership and 27% of the revenues for the Amtrak system. He said that Amtrak in the Midwest is in a "contraction" mode, needing to become less dependent on federal funding. He reported that the *Winter Park Express* that operated 12 consecutive weekends between Denver and Winter Park Resort was a resounding success.

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[Editor's Note: Denver to Winter Park is a portion of one of the 16 Amtrak routes facing elimination under the President's budget proposal.] Questioned on equipment procurement and on station staffing, James answered that equipment is the responsibility of the states and that only 7% of Amtrak ticket sales are made through a station agent, adding that Michigan "will have staff where it is needed."

Gene Skoropowski has recently retired from his position guiding All Aboard Florida in development of *Brightline*, the nation's first and only privately owned higher-speed intercity passenger train. He reported that the southern portion of the route **will begin revenue service this summer**, linking West Palm Beach, Fort Lauderdale and Miami. Service will be extended to Orlando next year.

Katie England, Director of Multimodal Planning & Programs for IN-DOT, gave an update on the *Hoosier State* train, which recently transitioned back to Amtrak. She said that the 18+ month "experiment" with Iowa Pacific management brought some successes (growth in ridership, revenue and customer satisfaction) and showed that a private/public partnership has the potential for success. Several hundred million to upgrade CSX track is critical to improving performance on the route. Although Indiana enjoys a large budget surplus (!), that has not trickled down to the rails. However, she stated that Indiana is "light years" from where it was a few years ago and is seeing improved relations with Amtrak, productive conversations with Indianapolis, and the return of Beechgrove as a "partner".

MARP members in attendance included Eldeen Carpenter, Kay Chase, JP Descamps, John Guidinger, Larry Krieg, Jeanie Merckel, and Chuck Merckel.



Northwest Ohio and Southeast Michigan celebrate
Train Day Toledo
Tenth Annual OPEN HOUSE



Saturday, May 6, 2017
9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Toledo Amtrak Station
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Plaza
415 Emerald Avenue, Downtown Toledo
Served by TARTA
Opening Ceremony 9:30 a.m.

Freight RR Locomotives, Children's Train Ride, Rides on Handcars and Speeders,
Model Train Layouts, Train Trip Drawing, Displays, Vendors, Exhibits, Food, Music,
Operation Lifesaver Kids' Rail Safety workshops



FREE EVENT FREE PARKING

[facebook.com/NationalTrainDayToledo](https://www.facebook.com/NationalTrainDayToledo)

Calling all 9th – 11th Graders

Students currently in the 9th through 11th grades are invited to explore rail and intermodal transportation and have some fun doing it. Scheduled for July 9-15 at Michigan Technological University, the course will explore why trains are considered the "green transportation alternative", how fast high-speed passenger trains move, and how containers find their way from China to the USA. The course investigates rail management, visits rail yards, and includes fieldtrips to Duluth, MN and Superior, WI.

FULL SCHOLARSHIPS ARE AVAILABLE.

APPLICATION DEADLINE IS MAY 1.

FOR COMPLETE INFORMATION VISIT

www.rail.mtu.edu/event/rail-and-intermodal-transportation-2017



Early Train Travel in Michigan

The photograph at the right was included in an interesting photo essay exploring "[Early train travel in Michigan](#)" published in the Detroit News earlier this year.

MARP member Mark Campbell emailed us to say that he had a quibble with the characterization of the venue at 612 Woodward as the ticket office for "downtown commuters."

"While it may be correct to say that 'commuters could buy their tickets there', I think the main function was as a city ticket office for the Grand Trunk of Canada which operated the main line from Montreal to Chicago."

Mark continued, "The commuter trains from Detroit were run by what became the Grand Trunk Western. Until the merger of Canadian railroads, around 1921, the line from Detroit to Pontiac continued on to Holly, crossed the Grand Trunk at Durand, and then connected to car ferries at Grand Haven for the crossing to Milwaukee. At that time, the line was called the 'Detroit, Grand Haven and Milwaukee'.

The Grand Trunk was absorbed into the 'Canadian National', a creation of the Canadian government to prevent a trans-continental bankruptcy of most railroads in Canada. The Canadian economy sustained a financial 'melt down' in advance of our Depression of 1929."

Mark also recalls that fellow MARP member Julien Wolfe was in charge of the SEMTA Detroit to Pontiac commuter trains until they were terminated in 1984 and could further enlighten us on the history of the Grand Trunk ticket office.



The Grand Trunk Western Railroad ticket office at 612 Woodward, seen between 1903 and 1915, enabled downtown commuters to purchase tickets without going to the station. *Photo Library of Congress*



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