



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
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2018 MEETINGS

- 27 January** – Member Meeting
Okemos Public Library
- 20 February** – Executive Committee
- 20 March** – Executive Committee
- 21 April** – Member Meeting
MSU Detroit Center
- 29 May** – Executive Committee
- June** – Meeting Cancelled
- 28 July** – Executive Committee
Durand Union Station
- 7-9 August** – Michigan Rail Conference
Saginaw State University
- September** – Outreach Event
Grand Rapids Art Prize
- 27 October** – Member Meeting
Location TBA
- November** – Annual Meeting
- December** – Executive Committee

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

We Have Our Work Cut Out for Us

With the fall campaign season heating up and changes at Amtrak (actual or rumored), supporters of a strong national network of passenger trains are facing unprecedented opportunities and challenges.

Amtrak's new CEO, Richard Anderson, is coming under increasing fire for changes he is making or contemplating. Rumors and conspiracy theories are threatening to run amok. We, as advocates, wonder to whom we should most appropriately address our concerns.

Peter LeCody, chair of the board of the [Rail Passengers Association](#) and President of the [Texas Rail Advocates](#), has expressed his discomfort with Congress micro-managing Amtrak affairs. However, he is sufficiently alarmed to state that "if that's what it takes for management to understand we want daily national service, better service, newer and better trains, then so be it."

In a similar vein, Lloyd Flem, executive director of All Aboard Washington, echoes concerns we all have about recent changes at Amtrak: the elimination of full dining service* on the *Lake Shore Limited* and the *Capitol Limited*; the loss of ticket agents at many stations; and the proposal to replace *Southwest Chief* service between Dodge City KS and Albuquerque NM with a bus bridge. While counseling skepticism in the face of rumors and conspiracy theories, he, too, is sufficiently alarmed to write in the latest issue of [Washington Rail News](#): "Do I know exactly what Amtrak has in store for the near future and beyond? I do not. But, without arbitrarily concluding that Mr. Anderson's plans for Amtrak would prove detrimental to our national network trains or to intercity rail passenger service generally, I urge you to contact your US Senators and your Member of Congress with your concerns."

The Rail Passengers Association website includes a helpful tool to [Find Your Elected Officials](#). Once you have located the official, click on his/her website to learn how to make contact. Note also the location of their local office. Getting acquainted with the local staff person can be very helpful. Also, look for opportunities during the coming campaign season to talk

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NO MEMBER MEETING IN JULY

The Executive Committee will meet on July 28 in the Board Room, Durand Union Station. Your comments and ideas are welcome as planning for the rest of the year goes forward.

**Please contact Steve Vagnozzi for further information.
svagnozzi@comcast.net 517-349-4809**

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with candidates. Tell them of your concerns and ask what their views are.

You may also wish to let the Amtrak Board of Directors know of your concerns. Address your letter to Mr. Anthony R. Coscia, Chair Amtrak Board of Directors, 1 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001.

The situation with the Southwest Chief is particularly troubling because of the implications for the national passenger train network. Amtrak's renegeing on its promise to contribute a portion of the cost of the Raton Pass section of the *Southwest Chief* route is seen as a betrayal of an effort that has been a poster child for cooperation among the various private and public interests along the route: BNSF Railway, the states of Kansas, Colorado and New Mexico, as well as communities along the route. It also puts in jeopardy efforts to extend the *Heartland Flyer* northward from Oklahoma City, through Wichita KS to connect with the *Southwest Chief* at Newton KS, an initiative with strong support that would significantly expand options for travelers throughout the Southwest and, indeed, the country. The **Rail Passengers Association** is providing a petition in support of the *Southwest Chief*. You may sign the petition [here](#).

Closer to home, attention is turning to the fall election. And, if Michiganders are not asking candidates about their views on the transportation funding crisis in the state, they should be. The crisis goes far beyond whether potholes get filled. Failure to grapple with the widely acknowledged gaps in infrastructure investment will inevitably affect plans to increase frequency of service on the *Wolverine*, *Blue Water* and *Pere Marquette* routes or to expand services with the proposed **Coast-to-Coast** or **A2TC** (Ann Arbor to Traverse City) routes.

In a recent series of articles, **Bridge Magazine** offers an **overview of the infrastructure challenges** facing the next governor and legislature, and examines **where the candidates for governor stand** on fixing the roads. *Bridge* finds that, of the seven candidates for governor, "not a single one has proposed a plan that would raise the additional \$2.6 billion that the governor's **21st Century Infrastructure Commission** says Michigan needs to budget each year to maintain its roads and bridges".

Seldom, if ever, does the state of passenger trains or public transit enter into the campaign rhetoric. The most recent analysis by the American Society of Civil Engineers **gives a grade of C-** to Michigan's rail and transit systems, stating that the needs outpace funding.

It's up to us to ask the questions and demand straight talk from the candidates.

*A hot meal choice **has been now been added**.



Michigan Rail Conference

"End to End Journeys – Integrating Partners"

7-9 August 2018

**Saginaw State University
Conference Center**

DRAFT PROGRAM

Visit the Website for More Information

And to Register

www.rail.mtu.edu/mrc2018

New Location for Michigan Flyer-AirRide at Detroit Metro Airport



Effective July 13, *Michigan Flyer-AirRide* coaches will use a new, more convenient location at the McNamara Terminal of Detroit Metro Airport (DTW). This is the terminal used by Delta Air Lines and its partner

carriers. Passengers will be picked up or dropped off at a single stop on the Departures Level of the terminal, just outside the "International Ticketing/Check-In" door for Air France and AeroMexico.

When leaving the airport, *Michigan Flyer-AirRide* passengers with checked bags will go down one level to Luggage Claim, then go up two levels to Departures. Look for the bus right outside the Air France/AeroMexico door. Those without checked bags can just go up one level from the airline gates to the Departures Level.

Buses will no longer be boarding passengers at either of the two former stops in the Ground Transportation Center in the parking ramp across the road from the terminal.

Look for the service advisory on the **Michigan Flyer-AirRide** webpage for more information and graphics that will help orient you to the new pick-up location.

The *Michigan Flyer-AirRide* provides frequent daily service to the airport, leaving from the Marriott Hotel in East Lansing and the Blake Transit Center in Ann Arbor.



We're waiting to hear from you
(And you know who you are!)

Go to [PayPal](#) to renew your membership

Or download a mail-in form [HERE](#)

Stadler Building *Flirt* DMUs for TEXRail

By Steve Vagnozzi

The Swiss-based railcar manufacturer, Stadler US Inc., is currently at work on eight six-car trainsets for use on the 27-mile TexRail route between Fort Worth and Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport.



The service is scheduled to open in 2018. The body shells and bogies will be produced in Switzerland and final assembly will take place at [Stadler's new plant in Salt Lake City](#).

Martin Ritter, CEO of Stadler US, a featured speaker at the recent Midwest High Speed Rail annual meeting in Chicago attended by several MARP members, said that the *Flirt* (Fast Light Intercity- and Regional Train) being built for TexRail is the company's first "self-propelled commuter rail train to be Federal Railroad Administration-compliant".

Quite aside from the breadth of [Stadler's product line](#), ranging from city transport vehicles to high-speed intercity rail, MARP members were particularly impressed with the innovative modular vehicle design concept employed by the company.

A unique feature of Stadler's *Flirt* train is that the DMU power module is located in the center of the train. The lighter weight equipment meets the Federal Railroad Administration's AVT (Alternative Vehicle Technology) requirements, as well as those of Buy America and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Each train comes equipped with 224 seats, worktables with USB ports and ADA-compliant restrooms. The wide doors and spacious lower floor area make it easy for passengers to board and disembark.

Stadler also has a contract for 16 six-car, electrical, double-decker multiple units for Caltrain. The contract includes an option for another 96 double-decker multiple units and is valued at \$551 million. These new, high-performance, double-decker multiple units will run between San Francisco and San José. The first Stadler double-decker will

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be delivered in August 2019 and put into commercial use in 2020 after required testing.

In 2002, Stadler secured its first order for 20 articulated multiple units (GTW) for the New Jersey Transit River Line. Subsequently, the company fulfilled an order from the Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority (CMTA) in Austin TX for six diesel articulated multiple units to run between the Austin city center and Leander TX. The trains were delivered in the spring of 2008 and an additional order was placed in 2015 for four more trains.

Stadler also obtained an order from the Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA) to design and manufacture eleven GTW diesel multiple units. These low-floor trains have been serving six stations in the Denton County region of Texas since 2012. In April 2014, San Francisco's Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) commissioned Stadler to supply them with eight diesel articulated multiple units to service the line between the Pittsburgh/Bay Point terminus and Antioch.

Last month, Amtrak issued a request for information (RFI) for coach cars, trainsets and self-propelled units that could replace its 40-year old Amfleet I equipment which is used primarily on routes east of the Mississippi.

Stadler US Inc. is well positioned to benefit from Amtrak's apparent interest in lighter weight trainsets such as the *Flirt* DMUs. The company [has already been chosen](#) by VIA Rail Canada Inc. to participate in a request for proposals (RFP) to replace that railroad's rolling stock along the Quebec City-Windsor corridor.

Rick Harnish, Midwest High Speed Rail Association, has long advocated for new design standards for our country's passenger trains. He anticipates that TexRail will prove that [commuter trains should lose some weight](#). He argues that [modern high-performance passenger trains](#) around the world are lighter than their U.S. counterparts without sacrificing strength or safety. Because such trains are lighter, they accelerate and stop faster thus using less fuel and creating less pollution.

Visit stadlerrail.com/en/products/ for more information on Stadler's product line.

Kay Chase contributed to this article.

STUDENT DISCOUNT IS BACK!

Thanks to the Michigan Department of Transportation, students are again eligible for a 15% discount for travel on Midwest routes. See page 4 for details.

View from elsewhere . . .

“Having lived and studied abroad in countries with much better public transportation...I know that we are wasting so many of the world’s energy resources to support an unhealthy, unnecessary addiction to the automobile. It’s just one of the things that stems from a throwaway culture that takes its wealth and power for granted. But there are many opportunities for us to change this, and I believe promoting quality passenger rail service is something we at AAWA can do to make better use of what we’ve been blessed with as America.”

—Patrick Carnahan, Editor, **Washington Rail News**, the newsletter of All Aboard Washington.

“Long distance train routes form the foundation of the national passenger train network. Their unique capabilities allow them to connect congested urban areas and bring economically viable mobility to rural areas and small towns, many of which are becoming more isolated from major cities as regional airline and intercity bus service disappears.”

—from **Long Distance Trains: Multipurpose Mobility Machines**, a White Paper published by Midwest High Speed Rail Association and National Association of Rail Passengers in 2010.



Raton Rallies to Save Its Train

Joe Boardman, former Amtrak CEO, joined citizens of Raton NM (population 6,103) in July of 2014 when the *Southwest Chief* was facing elimination due to questions of track maintenance. Subsequently, a “grand bargain” was struck in which track owner BNSF Railway agreed to provide on-going maintenance and Kansas, Colorado and New Mexico, along with Amtrak and several communities on the route, committed funds to match a series of federal grants to support the track refurbishment project. Now, Amtrak appears to be backing out of its commitment, a move seen as a betrayal of this model of cooperation. Garden City in Kansas, Lamar, La Junta and Trinidad in Colorado, and Raton stand to lose their train service if agreement is not reached. You can show your support by [signing the petition here](#).



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MARP, INC
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Congressional Switchboard

202-224-3121

Sen. Debbie Stabenow

Sen. Gary Peters

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Find Your State Senator

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