



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.

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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

14 July – Executive Committee
Durand Union Station

7-9 August – Michigan Rail Conference
Saginaw State University

28 September – Outreach Event
Grand Rapids Art Prize

October – Meeting Cancelled

10 November – Annual Meeting
Dearborn

December – Executive Committee

Visit www.marp.org

Email marprail@yahoo.com

A2TC Project Merits Further Study

The effort to establish passenger rail between Ann Arbor and Traverse City has reached a major milestone with the release, on October 8, of the **Northern Michigan Rail Ridership Feasibility and Cost Estimate Study**. This marks completion of the first major step in developing passenger rail service along the 240-mile-long corridor.

The findings are promising. When fully built out, passenger trains between Ann Arbor and Traverse City could attract 1.5 million riders a year and generate \$100 million in annual revenue by 2040, according to the consultants.

The 10-month study explored track repair, operating costs and potential revenue of a passenger rail line along an existing, mostly state-owned railroad corridor between Ann Arbor and the Traverse City and Petoskey region.

The study assesses several operating speeds and the costs and potential ridership associated with each option. As travel to the Traverse City region increases—tourist numbers are predicted to double in the next couple of decades—the train could keep tens of thousands of cars off the roads and provide people with direct, downtown-to-downtown connections among Michigan communities along the route. The study team says that even at 60 miles per hour, trains would capture roughly 380,000 existing trips taken by car along the corridor every year.

To test the market, the study team recommends launching low cost “special event” trains and then building the service as interest and demand grows. The Federal Railroad Administration allows “special event” train service, to operate on most tracks. Achieving daily 60-mph service, which would create a five-hour travel time between Ann Arbor and Traverse City, would require about \$40 million in capital costs, according to the study. 110-mph trains would require nearly a billion dollars in track upgrades, but would cut the travel time to three and half hours and attract nearly five times more riders and revenue than a 60-mile-per-hour train.

In 2019, the Michigan Department of Transportation is expected to repair
(*A2TC continues on page 2*)



Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers

45th Annual Meeting

10 November, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

O'Kelly Banquet Hall
23663 Park St, Dearborn MI 48124

Map & Directions

Make your plans now to attend. Reservations must be in by November 1.
Details on next page. Questions? Send email to marprail@yahoo.com.



Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers

45th Annual Meeting

Saturday, November 10, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
O'Kelly Banquet Hall, 23663 Park St, Dearborn MI

Keynote Speaker

Paul Larouche

Mr. Paul Larouche recently retired from Bombardier Transportation where he was Product Manager for High Speed and Commuter Rail passenger vehicles. Other invited speakers will give updates on passenger train services in Michigan and the Midwest. Election of officers for the 2018-2020 term will be held.

GUESTS ARE WELCOME

\$25 per person includes a catered luncheon

Reservations must be received by November 1st

CLICK HERE to register online using PayPal, a major credit card or debit card
Or **download the mail-in form** and send with a personal check payable to MARP, Inc. to:

MARP, Inc. | PO BOX 405 | OKEMOS MI 48805

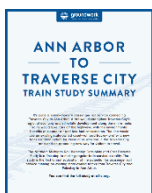
(A2TC continued from page 1)

several miles of tracks near Traverse City, which could allow special events train service to run directly to Traverse City as soon as 2020.

The rail line would be valuable in attracting the next generation workforce that wants to live and thrive in Michigan without always depending on a car to get around. It could serve the approximately 90,000 university students who live along the route as well as young entrepreneurs who find the distance is too far to drive, yet too close to fly.

The study was funded by a Federal Transit Administration grant program, the Michigan Department of Transportation, the Petoskey Downtown Management Board, the Petoskey Area Visitors Bureau, the City of Traverse City, Traverse City Tourism, the City of Alma, and Washtenaw County. Other funding partners include Rotary Charities of Traverse City, the Les and Anne Biederman Foundation, the National Association of REALTORS® and the Traverse Area Association of REALTORS®.

CLICK HERE
to View the
Study Summary



CLICK HERE
to View the
Full Report



Extra Helpings of Trains for Thanksgiving

Amtrak will accommodate the surge of Thanksgiving travelers with extra trains in **Michigan**, plus additional capacity on other **Amtrak MidwestSM Network** routes for the holiday. Extra trains are scheduled to and from Chicago and the Illinois stations in Normal and Quincy, along with the Michigan stations in Ann Arbor and Holland.

Even with the added capacity, trains fill quickly. Passengers are advised to plan ahead and **book tickets** early.



The Chicago-Milwaukee corridor is the Midwest's busiest and space is limited on Amtrak **Hiawatha Service**, so a reservation will be required to travel from Nov. 20 - Nov. 25.

The schedule for Extra Michigan Trains November 21-25 is:

<i>Wolverine #356</i>	Departs Chicago 9:00 AM	Wed, Sat, Sun
<i>Wolverine #359</i>	Departs Ann Arbor 4:28 PM	Wed, Sat, Sun
<i>Pere Marquette #372</i>	Departs Chicago 10:00 AM	Wed, Sun
<i>Pere Marquette #373</i>	Departs Holland 3:10 PM	Wed, Sun

Last year, Amtrak saw the busiest day in its 46-year history, with more than 160,000 passengers aboard trains on the Sunday following Thanksgiving.

Michigan Operation Lifesaver Raises Awareness of Safety Around Railroads

Did you know? There were 2,100 train-motor vehicle collisions across the country in 2017. While that may seem an alarming number, it is a dramatic reduction from the roughly 12,000 annual incidents that occurred in 1972.

This 83% reduction in accidents at rail crossings can be credited in no small part to the efforts of **Operation Lifesaver**, a nonprofit public safety education and awareness organization dedicated to reducing collisions, fatalities and injuries at highway-rail crossings and preventing trespassing on or near railroad tracks.

This success is made possible by a dedicated group of volunteers throughout the U. S. and Canada who generously give of their time to advance the mission of Operation Lifesaver.



Rick Burn, Holland MI, holds the Outstanding Volunteer Award presented to him for his work with Michigan Operation Lifesaver. He is flanked by Curtis Stewart and Sam Crowl.

Long time MARP member, Rick Burn, is one of those volunteers. He was recently recognized for his efforts as a presenter and as the prime mover in organizing a successful event in Holland MI as part of the annual nationwide observance of **Rail Safety Week**.

Rick is an enthusiastic champion for Operation Lifesaver and is intent on

recruiting others to join him in this important work. "There is a great need for more volunteers," says Rick, adding, "You will find a warm welcome into a very congenial group." Volunteers are needed for train shows and community forums where they distribute educational materials and answer questions. Another important function is making presentations to law enforcement officers and emergency responders. The next in an ongoing program to train additional volunteers will take place in Ann Arbor on November 19 (see ad on this page). If you are interested in learning more about becoming a volunteer, contact Rick Burn at rhburn3@gmail.com.

Clarification: Yuri Popov has pointed out misleading information on the last page of the September issue. Three rail lines, not eight, cross at the **Forest Hills Junction in South Chicago**—CSX, Norfolk Southern and Belt Railway of Chicago, each double-tracked at this location. Union Pacific trains and Metra Southwest commuter trains also operate within the zone. Long freight trains waiting for traffic to clear create backups in all directions. This congestion causes delays for Metra commuter trains as well as for the *Hoosier State* and *Cardinal* trains that traverse a short section of Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern track in the area. Michigan trains, the *Lakeshore Ltd.* and *Capitol Ltd.* are not affected.

The **75th Street Corridor Improvement Project**, which recently received \$132 million in federal funding, involves five separate projects designed to improve train movements on all lines in this constricted area. A flyover at the Forest Hills Junction is one of the largest and most significant of the improvements. To the east of Forest Hills Junction, a flyover connection between *Metra Southwest Service* (SWS) and *Metra Rock Island District* (RID) will redirect the SWS line to run on the RID line between this connection and downtown Chicago. As a result, the *Metra Southwest Service* will terminate at the LaSalle Street station instead of Chicago Union station, thus freeing up additional capacity for Amtrak at Chicago Union station. Regrettably, the latter project awaits additional funding.

This fascinating **video** explains how the **75th Street Corridor Improvement Project** will improve freight and passenger train movements in South Chicago.

LOOK
LISTEN
LIVE!

**OPERATION
LIFESAVER**

Michigan Operation Lifesaver (MI-OL.com) will be holding a training class for anyone interested in becoming an Operation Lifesaver Authorized Volunteer (OLAV).

WHEN: 9am – 3pm on November 19, 2018

WHERE: Washtenaw County Sheriffs complex
in Ann Arbor

Participants will be provided with all the necessary materials to give presentations and do Special Events across the state and nation. All materials are free and lunch will be provided.

Anyone interested may contact Michigan State Coordinator Sam Crowl for more information.

You are encouraged to visit the OLI web site at www.oli.org or the Michigan site at www.mi-ol.org.

CONTACT:

Sam Crowl 248-823-7037 or samcrowl@comcast.net

**Election Day in Michigan
Tuesday, November 6, 2018**

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View from elsewhere . . .

“One hundred years ago, the United States had a public transportation system that was the envy of the world. Today, outside a few major urban centers, it is barely on life support. What happened? Over the past hundred years, the clearest cause is this: Transit providers in the U.S. have continually cut basic local service in a vain effort to improve their finances. But they only succeeded in driving riders and revenue away. When the transit service that cities provide is not attractive, the demand from passengers that might ‘justify’ its improvement will never materialize.”

—Jonathan English, in a recent essay **Why did America give up on mass transit? (don't blame cars)**

“A suggestion that the New York City subway could be replaced by tunnels for autonomous cars would only exclude the riders who need it most.”

—Jarrett Walker, consultant in public transit planning and policy, in an essay **You can't fix mass transit by destroying it**

Up To His Boot Tops in Diamonds



There are four diamonds at Wayne Junction, a crossing owned jointly by MDOT and CSX, and used by Amtrak passenger trains as well as CSX and Norfolk Southern freight trains. In a 16-hour blitz on August 14 and 15, 2018, crews with Amtrak and CSX Transportation rebuilt four railroad diamond crossings at this junction near Wayne, Michigan. The project entailed removing the old diamond crossing and installing a new prefabricated unit. Complicating the project was a diamond comprised of four crossings, making it both a heavy lift and requiring precision alignment to reconnect to existing rail lines. For just a single day, Amtrak *Wolverine* trains were terminated at Ann Arbor with bus service bridging the gap to Dearborn, Detroit, Royal Oak, Troy, and Pontiac. CSX and NS freight trains were either rerouted or halted. The project was funded 75 percent by CSX and 25 percent by MDOT.

Watch the process in this dizzying **time-lapse VIDEO**.



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