



ON TRACK

The E-Bulletin of the Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers

www.marp.org

marprail@yahoo.com

Issue # 92

July 2019

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 2018-2020

Adam Tauno Williams	Chair
Open	Vice-Chair
Steve Vagnozzi	Treasurer
Open	Secretary
Dwight Phillips	Gov't/Public Affairs Coordinator
Jeanie Merckel	Membership Coordinator
Kay Chase	Communications Coordinator
Chuck Merckel	Meetings Coordinator
Robert Patterson	Detroit/Metro Region Chair
Open	Northern Region Chair
Warren Fritz	West Region Chair
Joshua Hamilton	East/Central Region Chair

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

2019 MEETINGS

- 26 January** – Member Meeting
St. Johns
- 12 February** – Executive Committee
- 12 March** – Executive Committee
- 6 April** – Member Meeting
Dearborn Amtrak Station
- 14 May** – Executive Committee
- 22 June** – Member Meeting
Sanford Centennial Museum
Sanford MI
- 16 July** – Executive Committee
- 7-9 August** – Michigan Rail Conference
Michigan State University
- 14 September** – 46th Annual Meeting
Lansing MI
- 8 October** – Executive Committee
- 9 November** – Member Meeting
West Region Location TBA
- 10 December** – Executive Committee

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

Total Ridership vs. Riders per Departure

By Mike Christensen, Executive Director
Utah Rail Passengers Association

I sometimes make maps and do repetitive data entry as a way to relax. What follows is the result of me relaxing over the past couple days.

Earlier this week, I stumbled upon a 2013 article on *CityLab* titled “*Visualizing how poorly Amtrak’s route network serves most of the U.S.*” The article features a map with proportionally-sized dots representing Amtrak’s total annual ridership for its 500+ stations. Unfortunately, we see long-distance routes attacked due to their relatively low ridership.

However, I believe this is the wrong way to examine ridership as it gives the impression that only people in blue states ride trains in large numbers.

It is a similar issue as those who try to claim that New York City is a dirty city due to its large total emissions, yet ignore that New York City has the

(RIDERSHIP continues on page 2)



**ALL ABOARD
MICHIGAN!**

**46th Annual Meeting
Michigan Association of
Railroad Passengers**

*Saturday
14 September 2019
Tony M’s
Lansing MI*

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!
Details in August Issue

(RIDERSHIP continued from page 1)

lowest emissions in the nation on a per capita basis.

Obviously, a station on the Northeast Corridor with 70+ departures per day is going to have higher total ridership than a station on a long-distance route with 2 departures per day. The deeper question is how the ridership compares on a per train basis. So, I set out to redraw the map based on riders per departure.

Step One—Recreating the annual ridership map. I downloaded a spreadsheet listing all Amtrak stations and their locations from the US DOT. I then somewhat painstakingly downloaded the 2018 ridership statistics for every station from the Rail Passengers Association and added the 2018 total ridership for each station to the spreadsheet. Then I loaded the spreadsheet into ArcGIS and generated a 2018 version of the map featured in the *CityLab* article.

Step Two—Create a map showing the number of departures per year from each station. Rather than spending hours looking through Amtrak schedules to determine how many times per day a train stops at each station, I queried the Amtrak Status Maps Archive Database for each station during the 2018 calendar year. The database automatically provides the total, which I added into the spreadsheet. Then I could generate a map with each station sized by the number of departures during 2018.


Step Three—Create a map showing riders per departure. This was the easiest step, since all it required was having the spreadsheet divide the total 2018 ridership by the total 2018 departures. The resulting map shows that long-distance routes perform much better when ridership is examined on a per train basis. More trains equal more ridership.



(A couple caveats about the map: The Auto Train terminals at Lorton and Sanford result in huge dots, as does the Ski Train at the Winter Park Resort. Also, the ridership data includes transfers between routes, which will make stations like Chicago larger.)


I'll repeat the bottom line again: More trains equal more ridership. This lends support to the "more trains" portion of our push for "more trains, better trains."

*This article appeared in the June 2019 issue of **All Aboard Indiana**, the newsletter of the **Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance**.*



Farewell Hoosier State

On the map above, the large red dot in the middle of Indiana is Indianapolis, where Trains #850 and #851, the *Hoosier State*, have carried passengers to and from Chicago and the communities of Dyer, Rensselaer, Lafayette, Crawfordsville and Indianapolis for more than three decades. Despite the efforts of the four smaller communities, who rallied to financially support the service when a 2008 change in federal policy required states to fund routes of less than 750 miles, service was suspended on June 30 of this year due to the failure of the state legislature to approve the annual \$3 million appropriation to keep the train running.



Register Now! www.rail.mtu.edu/MRC2019



MIRC 2019
MICHIGAN RAIL CONFERENCE
"Think Global, Act Local"



Ronald Batory
Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration
Keynote Speaker

Breakout Sessions to include:

- New Technology in Rail
- Crossing Safety
- Railway Suppliers
- Passenger System
- International Connections

August 7-9, 2019
Henry Center at
Michigan State University
3535 Forest Road
Lansing, MI 48910



Derek Taylor
Vice President Southern Region
Canadian National
Conference Opening

Information & Registration at rail.mtu.edu/MRC2019

Michigan Rail Conference in East Lansing August 7 through 9

The **Michigan Rail Conference** will take place this year on August 7-9 at Michigan State University's **Henry Center** at 3535 Forest Road in East Lansing MI 48910.

This year's keynote speaker is Ronald Batory, administrator for the Federal Railroad Administration. Derek Taylor, vice president of the Southern Region for Canadian National Railroad, will give the conference opening speech.

The opening plenary panel focused on "Michigan Updates" will feature Tim Hoeffner, MDOT Office of Rail; Joe McHugh, Amtrak VP for state-supported services and business development; Jodi Heath, Norfolk Southern Railroad; and Joe Gurskis, WSP, the firm that worked on both the Chicago-Detroit/Pontiac corridor study and the recent FRA-led Midwest Regional Rail study.

Joe McHugh will return in the afternoon as a member of the panel discussing "International Connections". Also on the panel are Dan Lynch, Director of the Centre for International Trade and Transportation at Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, and Sara Moore, who is International Border Crossing and Trade Specialist at MDOT.

An afternoon panel will address issues related to "last mile" and passenger issues. Peter Savolainen, Michigan State University will talk on "MSU SocioMobility Research". Matt Oudsema, Capitol Area Transportation Authority, will outline "CATA Connections to Amtrak". Matt Webb, Southeast Michigan Regional Transit Authority will present ideas on "Toledo to Detroit Metro Airport".

Other topics to be discussed include: new technology in

(*CONFERENCE continues in next column*)

(*CONFERENCE continued from previous column*)

rail, railroad crossing safety, railway suppliers, and local opportunities and impacts. An optional field trip to area rail-related facilities is offered on the closing day of the conference.

Always an opportunity for spirited competition and camaraderie, **The Student Scholarship Golf Outing** invites participation by any conference attendee on the opening day—Wednesday, August 7. Check-in will be at 8:30 am and play will start at 9:00 am. The cost of \$75 per player includes 18 holes and cart rental.

An opening reception for all conference attendees will be held Wednesday evening, August 7, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm at the **Henry Center**.

The conference is sponsored annually by the Michigan Department of Transportation, Michigan Technological University's Rail Transportation Program, Michigan State University, Michigan Railroads Association, and other industry partners.

IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO MAKE PLANS TO ATTEND
[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

CORRECTION: Sharp-eyed member Doug Howe pointed out an error in the article "*About the Charger Locomotives*" in the June issue. The Cummins engine that powers the Siemens SC-44 Charger locomotive produces 4,400-hp not the 44,000-hp incorrectly stated in the article. But Doug thanked us for the "momentary daydream".

Thank You!

To all who have renewed their 2019 membership dues, we thank you. If you have not yet done so, it's easy to renew online.

You do not need a PayPal account to pay online. You may pay with a debit or credit card by using the **PayPal Guest Checkout**

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

Springfield, Massachusetts Union Station Reborn

Springfield Union Station was opened by the Boston and Albany Railroad (B&A) in 1926. Shuttered by Amtrak in 1973, a massive rehabilitation project was undertaken by the **Springfield Redevelopment Authority** in recent years. The facility was reopened to travelers and residents alike in June of 2017 as a true intermodal center serving customers of Amtrak's *Northeast Regionals*, *Lake Shore, Ltd.*, and *Vermonter* trains; the **CTrail Hartford Line**



commuter trains launched in June of 2018; the extensive regional network of the *Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVRTA)*; and *Greyhound* and *Peter Pan* intercity bus services. A new high-level platform is almost ready for use by train passengers. Each of the services provides staffed ticket counters and there are comfortable lounges for bus and transit users. The 26-bay bus terminal is just outside the west door and a multi-level parking structure completes the complex. Click on the links above to learn about milestone events and see photos of the station. Visit the **Great American Stations** website to learn more about the history of the station and the city.

View from elsewhere . . .

"For well over two decades, we've had no big-picture guiding purpose for the federal transportation program. Like a ship with a jammed rudder heading off aimlessly into forever, federal transportation policy has been limping along without an overarching purpose or destination in mind. How does this inertia lead us toward all the wrong things?"

-- **"National transportation policy is a rudderless ship sailing off into oblivion"**, commentary by Stephen Lee Davis posted on **Transportation for America**. Indiana Rail Passenger Alliance colleague, Phil Streby, urges fellow advocates to get this into the hands of local media. Maybe state and federal decision makers, as well?



**GET UP TO
35% OFF FOUR
TICKETS WITH
SHARE FARES**

Save up to 35% on select Amtrak® routes with friends and family

A three-day advance purchase is required.
Other terms and conditions apply.

[Amtrak.com/ShareFares](https://www.amtrak.com/ShareFares)

Passenger 1 – full price Passenger 2 – 15% off full price Passenger 3 – 60% off full price Passenger 4 – 70% off full price



MARP, INC
PO BOX 405
Okemos, MI 48805

Contact Your Lawmaker

Congressional Switchboard
202-224-3121

Sen. Debbie Stabenow

Sen. Gary Peters

Find Your Congressperson

Find Your State Senator

Find Your State Representative