



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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ON TRACK Editor, Kay Chase

2020 MEETINGS (tentative)

15 February – TechTown, Detroit

14 March – Dearborn Amtrak Station

09 May – Kalamazoo

20 June – Owosso Steam RR Institute

12 September – 47th Annual Meeting

17 October - Jackson

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

Bits & Pieces at Year's End

Making lemonade out of lemons, Joshua Hamilton has initiated a Volunteer Station Host Program for the East Lansing Amtrak station as a constructive response to the decision by Amtrak to eliminate ticket agents at stations across the state. You may read about the program in the Winter issue of *The Michigan Passenger*, due out shortly.

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Speaking of the loss of Amtrak station agents, Kalamazoo has joined the ranks of the “agent-less” as of January 2. This leaves only Battle Creek, Dearborn, Ann Arbor and Detroit with Amtrak station agents. Caretakers are now on duty at stations that have lost agents in the last year. In some cases, open hours for the stations have been extended, one silver lining to an otherwise dismal situation. Caretakers provide an assuring presence for waiting passengers, may assist with boarding and are expected to perform some basic custodial duties.

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MARP members and friends met in Kalamazoo in November to hear a fascinating presentation on the use of hydrogen to power trains. Andreas Hoffrichter, who directs the Rail Research and Education program in the Broad College of Business at MSU, was part of a team at Birmingham University in England that built a small scale prototype to demonstrate the feasibility of hydrogen fuel cell technology in railway applications. Adding immediacy to the presentation, it was announced that rail equipment manufacturer **Stadler US** signed a contract in just that week to build a **hydrogen-powered FLIRT H2 trainset** for San Bernardino County's nine-mile long **Redlands Passenger Rail Project (Arrow)**. An extended version of Dr. Hoffrichter's presentation may be **viewed on YouTube**.

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The **Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission** met last fall in Washington DC to update commissioners on activities of the nine states that are part of the compact and to kick off a campaign to inform Congress of progress made in the Midwest and of the need for greater investment in passenger rail. This effort is being undertaken as lawmakers begin consideration of reauthorization of the FAST Act to fund surface transportation programs for the next five years. MARP member, Kay Chase, attended the meeting. Look for her report in the January issue.



*Best Wishes for a
Prosperous and
Happy New Year*

Now Arriving!

2020 Membership Dues Are Being Accepted

PAY ON-LINE with a credit card

You may use PayPal as a Guest
It is not necessary to register

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



High Speed Rail Alliance

No. It's not a new kid on the block. In a move to "expand our reach and set our sights on a bigger goal," the Midwest High Speed Rail Association **has announced a name change** and is now known as the **High Speed Rail Alliance (HSRA)**.

The goal: "Making high-speed rail a priority in the 2020 federal transportation funding bill."

HSRA advocates for provisions that allow for high frequency shared use of rail infrastructure:

- Adding track capacity to improve both freight and passenger service
- Making annual investments in maintenance
- Providing significant financial incentives for on-time performance.

HSRA views high-speed rail as a game-changer due to the potential for spurring economic growth and delivering societal and environmental benefits.

By turning federal policies and priorities away from a vicious cycle of road building-road repair and focusing instead on reconnecting corridors once connected by trains, HSRA says, "Congress can create a virtuous cycle of better transit and smarter growth."

Members and friends of HSRA are asked to show Congress that there is a broad base of supporters for a multi-level rail network across the country. [CLICK HERE](#) to add your name to the petition and help reach the goal of 5000 signers.

For more information, visit the website www.hsrail.org.

FAST FACT

The years between 1972 and 2017 saw train-vehicle collisions at rail crossings drop from 12,000 annual incidents to 2,100. This 83% reduction can be credited in no small part to the work of **Operation Lifesaver**, a nonprofit public safety education and awareness organization dedicated to saving lives at rail crossings and on train tracks.

MARP 2020 Meeting Schedule

MARP Membership meetings in 2020 are tentatively scheduled for the John D. Dingell Transit Center in Dearborn (Feb 14), TechTown in Detroit (Mar 15), Kalamazoo (May 9), Steam Railroading Institute in Owosso (Jun 20), and Jackson (Oct 17). The Lost Railway Museum in Grass Lake is being explored for MARP's 47th Annual Meeting on September 12.

Chuck Merkel, who has the responsibility for finding venues and speakers for MARP meetings, welcomes your suggestions for topics or speakers. Is there someone in your community who can offer an interesting viewpoint on historic or current day policies and practices affecting our transportation system with particular attention to our transit and passenger rail services? Contact Chuck by phone at 734-330-0281 or send email to crmerckel@aol.com.

The Executive Committee holds a conference call at 7pm on the 3rd Wednesday of the month and meets for face-to-face planning sessions in June and December. Members are always welcome to attend these meetings. Please feel free to contact Chair Adam Tauno Williams at awilliam@whitemice.org with your ideas, suggestions and concerns.

LOOK
LISTEN
LIVE!

**OPERATION
LIFESAVER** 

Michigan Operation Lifesaver will hold its next training class on January 10 from 9am to 3pm, for anyone interested in becoming an Operation Lifesaver Authorized Volunteer (OLAV). The class will be held at **Durand Union Station**, 200 S Railroad St, Durand MI 48429.

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.

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