



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 2020-2022

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ON TRACK Editor, Kay Chase	

2021 MEETINGS

28 January – Member Meeting
Virginia High Speed Rail

18 March – Member Meeting
Amtrak has Plans for Ohio
Zoom at 5:00 PM

15 April – Member Meeting
Toledo Passenger Rail Committee
Zoom at 5:00 PM

13 May – Join HSRail.org to hear
Derrick James Amtrak's Vision 2035

10 June – Member Meeting
Empire State Passengers
Zoom at 5:00 PM

15 July – Invitation to attend
VHSR Town Hall on-line

Fall Date TBA
48th Annual Meeting

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

Wolverine Train #354 is Back

Michigan passengers will be pleased to learn that *Wolverine* Train #354 has returned to the schedule as of July 19, making day trips to Chicago possible once more. Also returning on July 19 is *Wolverine* Train #355, which seems to be a favorite of business travelers who have early morning meetings in Chicago. These welcome additions to the schedule were **announced by MDOT on May 17**.

On July 13, a **second MDOT announcement** brought the news that mid-day Trains #352 and #353 will be returning to the schedule on September 7, thus giving Michigan the full complement of three daily *Wolverine* round trips for the first time since early in the pandemic. Train #352 has been the eastbound half of the single *Wolverine* round trip in effect during the pandemic. With the return of Trains #354 and #355 on July 19, Train #352 will be absent from the schedule until its return with Train #353 in September.

The timetable on page 2 shows adjustments to the *Wolverine* schedule made necessary by ongoing track work along the route. These changes are in effect through October 31.

Most intercity passenger trains have now returned to pre-pandemic service levels. The long-distance routes that were cut back to thrice-weekly service were all returned to daily service between May 24 and June 7. In another piece of good news, **traditional dining** has returned to the western long-distance trains. In addition, coach passengers should see an enhanced Café menu offering more fresh choices on the western long distance trains starting this summer. Amtrak has indicated it is working to give coach passengers “the ability to purchase the traditional dining experience online or onboard.”

Reflecting considerable pent-up travel demand, passengers are returning to trains in remarkable numbers. MARP member Jerry Becker, who is one of the team of volunteer station hosts at East Lansing, reports that he has seen sold out trains on the *Blue Water* route. A random search for travel between various city pairs around the country shows many trains 60-70 percent full.

Amtrak has stepped up its promotional efforts and is offering an astonishing array of vacation packages. Visit www.AmtrakVacations.com to browse the offerings and get lots of online help in planning your getaway.

MARP 2021 Meeting Schedule

Due to the continuing COVID-19 crisis, MARP has suspended in-person meetings indefinitely. We urge you to **get acquainted with Zoom** as meetings will be held using this platform. The Executive Committee will continue to meet via Zoom on the third Wednesday of each month. If you have ideas to contribute, questions or concerns, please send them to us at marprail@yahoo.com. If you would like to participate in the meetings, please contact MARP Chair John Guidinger at jhguidinger1@yahoo.com.

Tell Congress to Fund Trains

The 117th Congress is currently moving along two tracks that hold promise for the future of passenger trains. On track one are bills in both the House and the Senate that would significantly boost funding for Amtrak and rail grant programs over the next five years. Check out the chart prepared by the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission [comparing the funding levels](#) in the two bills.

On track two is the [Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework](#), affectionately dubbed BIF, which proposes \$579 billion in new spending on roads, bridges, rail and broadband, among other so-called “hard” infrastructure.

As the BIF wends its way through the Senate, policy discussions are pitting proponents of less money for highway expansion and more for passenger rail and transit against those who would like to reduce the amounts proposed for non-highway spending. Against this already contentious backdrop, Senators Chris Murphy (D-CT) and Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) are leading an effort to dramatically increase the \$66 billion over five years proposed for passenger rail, arguing, “We have before us a once-in-a-generation opportunity to change the lives of millions of Americans—to bring American infrastructure into the 21st century, and to create a cleaner, greener, more interconnected nation.”

Jim Mathews, Rail Passengers Association CEO, points out the inadequacy of the \$66 billion proposed for rail in the BIF, noting that the NEC alone has a \$42 billion repair backlog.

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee chaired by Peter DeFazio (D-OR) has sent a letter to House and Senate leadership promoting the transformative elements of the [Invest in America Act](#) (H.R. 3684) passed by the full House in July. This 5-year surface transportation reauthorization bill provides \$95 billion for passenger and freight rail and \$109 billion for transit. Included in the bill are: resources for states and communities to tackle transportation greenhouse gas emissions; a ‘fix-it-first’ approach, ensuring that states maintain a state of good repair and consider affordable and efficient alternatives to reduce congestion; and “a long-overdue commitment” to expanding and improving the U.S. passenger rail network—providing Americans with better access to one of the most climate-friendly transportation options.

To see how your member of Congress voted on the INVEST in America Act [click here](#).

It’s worth noting that the President Biden’s American Jobs Plan includes \$80 billion for passenger and freight rail.

(Congress continues on page 3)

Michigan Train Schedules Effective July 20-October 31, 2021 Chicago-Kalamazoo-Ann Arbor-Detroit-Pontiac Chicago-Kalamazoo-East Lansing-Port Huron

Wolverine Service	Blue Water	Wolverine Service		Train Name		Wolverine Service	Blue Water	Wolverine Service
350	364	354		Train Number		351	365	355
Daily	Daily	Daily		Days of Operation		Daily	Daily	Daily
7:05a	4:00p	5:50p	Dp	CHICAGO, IL, Un Sta (CT)	Ar	10:47a	11:45a	10:55p
7:31a				Hammond-Whiting, IN	↑	↑	↑	9:54p
8:13a	↓	6:53p		Michigan City, IN (CT)				9:12p
9:24a	6:10p	8:04p		New Buffalo, MI (ET)			11:24a	10:02p
9:49a	6:32p	8:24p		Niles, MI			11:04a	9:42p
10:00a	6:43p	↓		Dowagiac, MI			10:52a	9:29p
10:32a	7:11p	8:58p		Kalamazoo, MI		9:16a	10:26a	9:00p
11:10a	7:38p	9:33p		Battle Creek, MI		8:49a	10:00a	8:33p
	9:00p			East Lansing, MI		↑	8:54a	↑
	9:37p			Durand, MI			8:08a	
	10:08p			Flint, MI			7:35a	
	10:34p		↓	Lapeer, MI			7:08a	
	11:31p	↓	Ar	PORT HURON, MI	Dp		6:20a	
↓		10:03p		Albion, MI	↑	8:16a		
12:12p		10:28p		Jackson, MI		7:52a		7:37p
12:58p		11:18p		Ann Arbor, MI		7:15a		7:00p
1:34p		11:54p		Dearborn, MI		6:45a		6:29p
2:04p		12:29a		DETROIT, MI		6:26a		6:11p
2:26p		12:50a		Royal Oak, MI		6:03a		5:48p
2:34p		12:57a	↓	Troy, MI		5:56a		5:41p
2:46p		1:16a	Ar	PONTIAC, MI	Dp	5:43a		5:28p

Michigan Train Schedule Effective July 19, 2021 Chicago-Grand Rapids

Pere Marquette		Train Name		Pere Marquette
370		Train Number		371
Daily		Days of Operation		Daily
6:30p	Dp	CHICAGO, IL, Un Sta (CT)	Ar	9:08a
9:14p		St. Joe-Benton Harbor, MI (ET)	↑	8:10a
9:50p		Bangor, MI		7:32a
10:33p	↓	Holland, MI		6:49a
11:34p	Ar	GRAND RAPIDS, MI	Dp	6:00a

NOTE: These time tables are provided for planning purposes only and may not show recent time changes.

Consult with Amtrak at AMTRAK.COM or 1-800-USA-RAIL to confirm when making your reservations.

Have you renewed your MARP membership?

[CLICK HERE to pay online](#)

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

Virginians For
High Speed Rail

Virtual Transportation
Town Hall Series

Town Hall #2 | July 15, 2021 at 1pm (EST)

Stephen Gardner, Amtrak President &
Shannon Valentine, VA Transportation Secretary

*“The True Story of the Virginia-CSX Rail Deal:
Lessons Learned and the Future of Passenger Rail”*

If you missed the program on July 15, you may

ACCESS THE RECORDING HERE

(Congress continued from page 2)

Details of the infrastructure bill are being hammered out and hopes are high that agreement will be reached before the August recess scheduled to begin in a couple of weeks.

Call Your U.S. Senator Now

Rail Passengers Association (RPA) asks you to call your Senators to urge their support for a transformational investment in passenger trains. Michigan’s two Senators, Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters, are known to be strong supporters of passenger rail and transit. Still, your call is important to let them know that interest is strong among their constituents. RPA has set up an action page to make it quick and easy to make that call. **CLICK HERE** and fill in your name and address. A sample script is provided, but MARP suggests this alternative script:

- >> *We have a once-in-a generation opportunity to transform our nation’s infrastructure – please ensure that passenger trains are a big part of the package!*
- >> *Let’s build on the investment Michigan has already made to give people a safe, low cost and climate-friendly way to get where they need to go.*
- >> *Thank you for your support.*

MICHIGAN RAIL CONFERENCE **MIRC** 2021
Aug. 10-11

Year of Rail: The Platform for Change

The **Michigan Rail Conference** will be held this year on August 10 and 11. Due to the ongoing COVID situation, the conference will be held via Zoom. Each day’s program will begin a bit before 9 am (ET) and will finished by around 1 pm (ET), following the day’s keynote speaker.

Keynote speakers will be Martin Oberman, Chair of the Surface Transportation Board, and Peter Anastor, Director of MDOT’s Office of Rail. Read about the speakers **HERE**.

View the complete program **HERE**.

RESERVE YOUR SPOT NOW!

There Will Be a Slight Delay

The first four of the 88 *Venture* coaches manufactured by Siemens for the Midwest’s state-supported routes began arriving in Chicago nearly a year ago. In January of 2021, Michiganders caught sight of the new equipment during a test run on the *Wolverine* route. **Last month it was revealed** that a problem had been found during routine testing last November with lead in restroom water supply lines. The **Sacramento Bee** quoted a Siemens spokesperson saying, “A solution was developed and validated for implementation on all cars . . . ensuring the water supply is in full compliance with the FDA and EPA safety regulations.” While further testing and validation must be done, Caltrans spokesman Christopher Clark expressed confidence that all 137 cars in the joint Illinois-California order would be delivered by 2024.

A “slight delay” in a nine-year’s long saga.

MARP Salutes You!

Cliff Neumann, lead agent
Scott Opland
Gerri Brown



“For the last two quarters you three have single-handedly (and consistently) had the highest customer service rating for friendliness in the entire country! Thank you for the work that you all do in taking care of our passengers day in and day out.”

— Jonathan B. Lombardi, Amtrak Superintendent, Customer Service & Station Operations

Cliff, Scott and Gerri have also been noticed by the *Yelp!* community and have earned the right to display the *Yelp!* Sticker
“People love the John D. Dingell Transit Center”



View from elsewhere . . .

“We no longer have the luxury of time when it comes to addressing climate change; and a shift to rail and to a fast and emissions-free Canadian transportation network is one of the least difficult steps on the track to a net-zero economy before 2050.”

—**Commentary by Transport Action Canada** on the announcement that Canada will move forward with development of High Frequency Rail (mostly electrified) on the Toronto to Quebec City corridor.

“We will never be able to reduce transportation emissions in time to avert catastrophic climate change without also reducing how much people must drive to accomplish daily activities. Federal transportation policy has a huge role to play in that.”

--Transportation for America blog "**Senate Democrats recommend less driving--as Senate committee approves billions for new roads**"



Charger ALC-42 Makes First Appearance

Fresh from a sneak preview during a June 17 Amtrak media event at Chicago Union Station, this new Siemens locomotive hitched a ride on the *Capitol Limited*, seen here at the Toledo station. Slightly modified from the *Charger SC-44* in service on Midwest routes, the ALC-42 has slightly less horsepower and a larger fuel tank for operation on the long-distance train routes. After testing, the ALC-42 300 will see service on the *Crescent*, *Capitol Limited* and *Cardinal* routes. Regular coast-to-coast service is expected by early fall.

Photo courtesy of Ken Borg



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