



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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2022 MEETINGS

20 January – Member Meeting
Legacy of the Pullman Porters

03 March – Member Meeting
Jim Mathews, Rail Passengers Assoc.
President & CEO

09 June – Member Meeting
Paul Trap, Early Michigan Railroads

25 August – Member Meeting
Michigan Short Line Railroads (tentative)

01 October - 49th Annual Meeting

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

Earth Day 2022 and Transportation

Alarmed by the implications of a massive oil spill off the coast of California in the 1960s, Sen. Gaylord Nelson sought a way to “shake the political establishment out of its lethargy.” Building on a **“teach-in” format developed at the University of Michigan** in the late 60s, he **enlisted Denis Hayes to help organize the first Earth Day on April 22, 1972**, in hopes of rallying the country to address the environmental degradation that was becoming ever more apparent. In the following decade several pieces of landmark legislation were passed, among them the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Super Fund Act, and establishment of the EPA.

Now, fifty-two years after that first Earth Day, the world is grappling with how to address the challenges of climate change. It is fascinating that, on this 21st century Earth Day, so little attention is paid to the transportation sector which is almost totally dependent on fossil fuels and is the largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in Michigan and the country. (A shout out to the **Rochester Riders** for highlighting this message during the **Oakland County Earth Day** event last Saturday!)

The most **recent score card released by the ACEEE** (the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy), shows the U.S. in 10th place, just behind China, among the top 25 global energy consumers. The ACEEE points out that the U.S. saw its overall score slip due to *“the previous administration’s rollback of light-duty fuel economy standards, along with low public transit ridership and relatively little investment in rail.”*

A related ACEEE analysis, the **2021 City Clean Energy Scorecard**, finds that cities’ climate efforts are being held back by a failure to set goals for reducing vehicle travel through investments in transit, installing vehicle charging stations, and making zoning changes that allow denser, mixed-use development.

Quoted recently in the New York Times, Heather MacLean, a professor at the University of Toronto, agrees that rethinking how we get around is key to meeting the challenge of climate change: *“Electric vehicles are critical, but so are policies that reduce the need for vehicle travel in the first place, like expanding high-quality public transit or designing neighborhoods where people can take shorter trips.”*

MARP 2022 Meeting Schedule

Due to ongoing concerns with COVID-19, MARP will continue to meet online using Zoom. Watch your email for announcements of upcoming meetings. The Executive Committee meets via Zoom on the third Wednesday of the month. If you have ideas to contribute, questions, or concerns please send them to us at marprail@yahoo.com. If you would like to sit in on a meeting, please contact MARP Chair John Guidinger at jhguidinger1@yahoo.com.

Operation Lifesaver Logs 50 Years

Did you know? There were 1,901 train-motor vehicle collisions across the country in 2020. While that is an alarming number, it is a dramatic reduction from the roughly 12,000 annual incidents that occurred in 1972, the year that laid the foundations for the organization we know as **Operation Lifesaver**. In 1972, understandably alarmed by



a rising number of injuries and fatalities at rail crossings, the Idaho governor's office, along with the Idaho Peace Officers and Union Pacific Railroad, launched a six-week public awareness educational campaign to promote highway-rail grade crossing safety. Impressed by the 43% drop in Idaho's fatalities as a result of this campaign, Nebraska followed suit in 1973 and Kansas and Georgia joined the effort the following year. During the next decade, states across the nation came on board and in 1986 a non-profit national Operation Lifesaver office was created to help support the efforts of state programs and raise national awareness on highway-rail grade crossing issues.

Today, Operation Lifesaver has programs in 46 states and the District of Columbia, as well as in Canada, Mexico,

Estonia and South Africa. The success of the program is driven by a cadre of trained volunteers and instructors dedicated to reducing collisions, fatalities and injuries at highway-rail crossings and preventing trespassing on or near railroad tracks.

Underpinning Operation Lifesaver's approach is the concept of the three E's - Education, Enforcement and Engineering - to keep people safe around the tracks and railway crossings within their communities.

Operation Lifesaver's network of authorized volunteer speakers and trained instructors offers free rail safety education programs to school groups, driver education classes, community audiences, professional drivers, law enforcement officers, and emergency responders. Programs are co-sponsored by federal, state and local government agencies, highway safety organizations and America's railroads, including Amtrak.

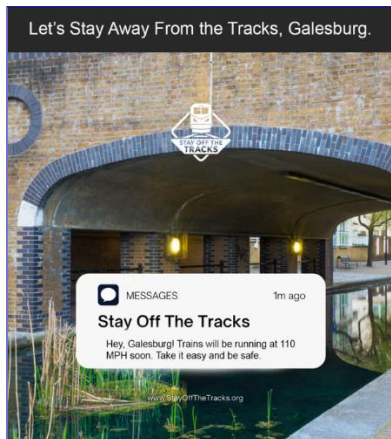
Each September, Operation Lifesaver collaborates with rail safety partners across the country to observe **Rail Safety Week** with public service announcements, news stories, social media messaging, live events, and law enforcement "safety blitzes" at railroad crossings.

Over 50% of vehicle-train collisions occur at crossings with warning lights and/or gates.

Sam Crowl Steps Down as OL Coordinator

Sam Crowl, who has served so ably as State Coordinator for **Michigan Operation Lifesaver** (MI-OL) since 2009, announced last summer his desire to step away from his leadership role in order to reduce his work load and turn attention to family matters. In leaving the post, Sam lauded the many volunteers and associated law enforcement agencies for achieving three-plus years with no crash-related fatalities and a reduction by half of trespass injuries and fatalities during his tenure. MARP salutes Sam for a job well done and looks forward to seeing him at events around the state.

Assuming the State Coordinator position is Sam's indefatigable assistant Curtis Stewart, who has served MI-OL in a number of roles over the last 20 years. Curtis plans to continue MI-OL's mission and work to recruit and retain new authorized volunteers who will, among other things, make presentations to new drivers, school bus drivers, and transit employees. Curtis may be contacted at frmn2009@sbcglobal.net or by phone at 517-974-1737.



Michigan Operation Lifesaver volunteers can be found at community events throughout the state bringing their message of safety around trains. Pictured above at last fall's Huckleberry Railroad/Crossroads Village "Rail Fans Weekend" are Curtis Stewart, State Coordinator (L), and Sam Crowl, Assistant State Coordinator (R). The original caption quipped "That's not a misprint, folks," highlighting the fact that Sam is keeping his hand in even though he is officially "retired" from the position of State Coordinator.

--Photo courtesy of Larry Burk

The poster on the left is part of a Michigan Operation Lifesaver "safety blitz" in the small communities just east of Kalamazoo where trains are now traveling up to 110-mph. A major state trunk line (M-96) and several busy local roads cross the tracks at grade in this area.



Northwest Ohio and Southeast Michigan celebrate
Train Day Toledo

Thirteenth Annual OPEN HOUSE

**Celebrating the 125th Anniversary of Amtrak's
Lake Shore Limited**

**Saturday, May 14, 2022
9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

Toledo Amtrak Station
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Plaza
415 Emerald Avenue, Downtown Toledo
Served by TARTA

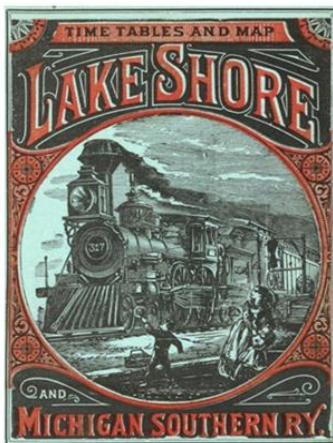
Model Train Layouts, Romick Railway Children's Train Ride,
Rides on Handcars and Speeders – Ohio Valley Railcars,
Free Amtrak Ticket Drawing, Displays, Vendors
Operation Lifesaver Kids' Rail Safety workshops
Public Library and Other Historical Exhibits
High Speed Rail Proposals, Food, Music
Featured Artist – Craig Staufer

**FREE EVENT
FREE PARKING**

Information at traindaytoledo@aol.com

Or  National Train Day Toledo

Event Subject To Pandemic Restrictions



HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

GO TO marp.org/?page_id=4782

To Pay Online or Download the Mail-In Form

Would You Like to Help on Toledo Train Day?

Dr. Patrick Miller, MARP member hailing from Northville (metro Detroit area), is organizing a MARP display table for Toledo's Annual Train Day on Saturday, May 14. He would like you to join him in chatting with visitors and sharing your enthusiasm for all things trains.

If you are interested in helping out (and you know you are!), please contact Chuck Merckel by email at crmerckel@aol.com or phone him at 734-330-0281.

We will help in arranging carpooling if there are others in your area planning to attend.

Mask Mandate Lifted

A federal judge in Florida has struck down the mask mandate that was to have been in effect through May 3 for travelers on trains, planes, and intercity buses.

Amtrak has posted this on their website: *"While Amtrak passengers and employees are no longer required to wear masks while on board trains or in stations, masks are welcome and remain an important preventive measure against COVID-19. Anyone needing or choosing to wear one is encouraged to do so."*

Likewise, the Centers for Disease Control will no longer enforce the mask mandate, but continues to recommend that people wear masks in indoor public transportation settings at this time. Local transit agencies may choose to keep face covering requirements in place.

Flixbus Arrives in Michigan

Flixbus USA has recently expanded intercity bus service into the Midwest, serving Detroit, Ann Arbor and Kalamazoo in Michigan as well as Milwaukee and Madison in Wis., Indianapolis and Lafayette in Ind., Columbus and Dayton in Ohio, and Minneapolis, Minn.. The end point of all trips appears to be Chicago. Tickets must be purchased **online** or using the **Flixbus app**. Schedules are irregular, presumably due to the continuing pandemic. Flixbus Mobility operates buses and trains throughout Europe and has recently acquired the iconic **Greyhound company** in the U.S. In a recent webinar, Joe Schwieterman, director of the Chaddick



Institute for Metropolitan Development at DePaul University, expressed optimism the Flixbus is truly interested in providing a service not just acquiring the physical assets of the company.

View from elsewhere . . .

"I want a Tony Fauci of planning in this country with a 10-year term who can be a truth teller and a resource to policy makers throughout the country."

--Anthony Foxx, former U.S. transportation secretary, speaking on a virtual panel **"Undoing the Damage of Urban Freeways"** cohosted by Transportation for America and Third Way, 20 April 2022.

"New federal and state funding is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform Illinois' key infrastructure in ways that advance solutions to climate change realities. Policymakers will make choices in the next year that determine whether we accelerate a sustainable future or squander these resources. Let's choose very wisely".

--Howard Learner, Environmental Law & Policy Center executive director, in an op-ed originally published in Crain's Business Chicago and **reprinted on the ELPC website**. Learner's recommendations for the transportation sector can be applied anywhere.

*On Earth Day 2022, the Federal Transit Authority and Federal Highway Administration launched a **joint Flexible Funding website** to encourage communities to use flex funding for projects promoting safer routes to transit.*



Amtrak Salutes Operation Lifesaver On Its 50th Anniversary

In recognition of the valuable work done by Operation Lifesaver in its five decades as an organization dedicated to safety around trains and tracks, Amtrak has given this locomotive an attention-getting paint job. Pictured above is The Capitol, Ltd. Train No. 29 at Chesterton IN on a beautiful winter day in early February 2022.

Photo courtesy of Randy Olson

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from Chicago IL to Holland MI
April 7 – May 15

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