



# 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.*

## MARP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2020-2022

John Guidinger	Chair
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Chuck Merckel	Meetings Coordinator
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Todd Schultz	West Region Chair
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Webmaster, Larry Sobczak

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## 2022 MEETINGS

**20 January** – Member Meeting  
Legacy of the Pullman Porters  
Speaker, Robert West

**03 March** – Member Meeting  
Jim Mathews, Rail Passengers Assoc.

**09 June** – Member Meeting  
Paul Trap, Early Michigan Railroading

**15 September** – Member Meeting  
Derrick James, Amtrak

**22 October - 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting**  
Keynote Speaker Tim Hoeffner  
In person meeting at the  
Lost Rail Museum in Grass Lake

Visit [www.marp.org](http://www.marp.org)  
Email [marprail@yahoo.com](mailto:marprail@yahoo.com)

## Let Your Candidates Know Trains and Buses Are Important to You

**The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law** (often referred to as “The BIL”) that passed Congress in November of 2021 is being celebrated as “transformational” by people all over the country who, like you and me, want to see greater investment in alternatives to driving: more passenger trains, transit options, and active transportation modes such as walking and biking.

“The BIL” not only guaranteed tens of billions in “new” money for certain programs through guaranteed “advanced appropriations” over a five year period, but also reauthorized the Surface Transportation Act at more generous levels for Amtrak and public transit.

Thus, we see that Congress has demonstrated a willingness to make a greater investment in transportation options that will serve not only a wider and more diverse population (elderly, young, physically challenged, economically disadvantaged), but that will help meet sustainability and climate goals. If you watched the **Aug 12 webinar on the Chicago Access/Michigan East project** that Amtrak and the Michigan and Illinois DOTs have submitted for federal funding, you heard Amtrak’s Joe Shachter say—more than once—that Amtrak takes its cues from the states when contemplating expansion projects. And the FRA has made it clear that states must have some “skin in the game” if they expect federal largesse.



What does this have to do with the fall elections? A lot. We need local leaders and Lansing lawmakers who care about passenger transportation and who will go to bat for the funding needed in order to leverage available federal funding. You can make it a point to look for opportunities at public forums and debates, neighborhood coffees, and other campaign events to ask your candidates about their views on passenger trains and let them know what this issue means to you: safe & affordable travel, energy efficiency and sustainability, relaxation and productivity while enroute.

As November 8<sup>th</sup> election day approaches, visit the website of the Michigan Secretary of State to check your voter registration status, order an absentee ballot, find your polling place, and see a sample ballot.

[www.mvic.sos.state.mi.us](http://www.mvic.sos.state.mi.us)

## MARP 2022 Meeting Schedule

See page 3 for information on the 15 September “virtual” member meeting. Coming soon, 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting announcement. 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](mailto:marprail@yahoo.com). If you would like to sit in on a meeting, please contact MARP Chair John Guidinger at [jhguidinger1@yahoo.com](mailto:jhguidinger1@yahoo.com).

Save  
The  
Date!

## MARP's 49<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, October 22, 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM

*Lost Railway Museum, 142 W Michigan Ave., Grass Lake MI 49240*

Our Featured Speaker is Tim Hoeffler, former Director MDOT Office of Rail

DETAILS COMING SOON

### Todd Schultz Joins MARP Executive Committee



Please welcome Todd Schultz as the newest member of MARP's Executive Committee. Todd was appointed in April to fill a vacancy on the committee. Prior to that Todd had volunteered to keep watch on the St. Joseph train station, just a few blocks from his home, keeping it supplied with copies of *The Michigan Passenger* and other MARP

print materials, a task he continues to perform.

Todd grew up in Minnesota, not far from Fargo, and attended the University of South Dakota in Vermillion. He moved to Michigan in 2012 when the company he had been working for in Las Vegas NV was purchased by a Michigan company. In 2015, he took a new job with KIPP, Inc., a century-old, family-owned company based in Germany that makes a number of unique specialty handles, knobs, and work-holding devices. The company's signature product is the "Kipp-handle", a combination of a bolt with a ratcheting handle that permits easy adjustments of machinery. KIPP products are shipped to points throughout the U.S., Canada and Mexico from the Stevensville MI distribution center. Todd manages the marketing program for the company's North American operations and coordinates the company's presence at industrial trade shows throughout the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, traveling (by air!) to most of them.

Todd's move to Michigan ten years ago brought regional rail to his attention for the first time. Initially, he found the Midwest equipment and lack of reliability to be major "turn-offs." He recognizes the challenges of effecting change, but sees reasons for optimism in projects like Amtrak's **Chicago Access/Michigan East proposal**, commenting that "getting a passenger-friendly route between Chicago and the Michigan state line is the best thing we can do to improve on-time performance." He believes the "biggest contribution MARP can make is at the local, community organization level [to] make sure city councils and mayors know the value of trains in their communities

*(SCHULTZ continues in next column)*

### MARP NEEDS YOU



*We are looking for a few good men and women to be part of MARP's leadership team.*

*MARP's 12-member Executive Committee is the budgetary, planning and policy recommending body for the organization. With two recent resignations due to family illness, there are currently four open positions. Because we feel it important to have all areas of the state represented on the Executive Committee, we are particularly interested in having a member from the central part of the state and one from northern part of the state.*

*The current members of the committee are eager to welcome you and your fresh ideas as we seek to become more effective in meeting the opportunities for improvement and expansion of passenger services in our state and region.*

*If you are interested, or if you would like to suggest someone else for consideration, please send an email to [marprail@yahoo.com](mailto:marprail@yahoo.com).*

**Committee member Clark Charnetski or MARP Chair John Guidinger** look forward to talking with you.

*(SCHULTZ continued from previous column)*

so that support can roll upwards through the bureaucracy to the level where effective changes can be made."

Todd acquired a love of trains in early childhood, taking extended trips around the country with his father. He continues to keep in close touch with the rails—from his office, Todd can monitor the daily movements of the *Pere Marquette* and various CSX freight cargoes as they pass through Stevensville. When he finds some leisure time, Todd likes to putter in the garden or work with graphic design, printing, and paper. A train trip to visit his parents in Minnesota is in the near future.

**MARP Member Meeting**  
**Thursday, September 15, 5:00 PM ET**

**Guest Speaker**  
**Derrick James**  
**Amtrak Government Affairs**

Join the Zoom Meeting Here

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81137058876?pwd=aTZoMmxaSm9HcE5kSWgxNFByOEY5UT09>

Meeting ID: 811 3705 8876

Passcode: 029102

Dial in: 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Since Mr. James last spoke with us, Congress has passed the multi-billion dollar Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (The BIL) that has opened a pathway toward realization of the **Amtrak Connects US** vision. Not wasting any time, Amtrak, along with Illinois and Michigan, is applying for funding for a project called **Chicago Access / Michigan East** that has important implications for the future of Michigan's train services.

See an [outline of this multifaced project here](#) and then [sign the petition](#) that will be sent to USDOT Secretary Buttigieg urging support for this hugely important project.

If you have questions for Mr. James, please submit them in advance to [marprail@yahoo.com](mailto:marprail@yahoo.com).

**USDOT Secretary Buttigieg**  
**Now a Michigander**

According to an MLive.com posting in the 22 July print edition of the Kalamazoo Gazette, Pete Buttigieg, U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary, has changed his residence from South Bend IN to the Traverse City area in Michigan. A spokesperson for Buttigieg said that moving to Traverse City will allow him to be closer to family, something that became especially important after he and Chasten adopted their twins last fall. The spokesperson also confirmed that the secretary will be changing his voter registration so he can vote in Michigan's primary and general elections this year.



**\*\*\* Sign of the Times ? \*\*\***

**Wolverine Trains 350 and 355**  
**Temporarily Suspended**

**Effective Mon., Aug. 29 – Fri., Sept. 16, 2022**



**Attention Amtrak Passengers:**

Due to a lack of manpower and available train equipment, *Wolverine Service* is impacted as outlined below. Schedule times listed on Amtrak.com have been updated to reflect these changes.

**Wolverine Service**

- **Trains 350 and 355**, which normally operate between Chicago and Pontiac, are cancelled with no alternate transportation provided.
  - Trains are planned to resume normal operations on September 17.
- **Trains 351, 352, 353, and 354** will operate normally.
- **Blue Water Trains 364 and 365** will operate normally and also serve *Wolverine* stations in southwestern Michigan.

For updated schedules and information, visit Amtrak.com, use our free mobile app, speak with station personnel or call/text 800-USA-RAIL (1-800-872-7245).

We appreciate your patronage and apologize for any inconvenience. Thank you for traveling with Amtrak.

PSN 0822-82 Issued August 28, 2022 Remove September 17, 2022  
 Amtrak is a registered service mark of the National Railroad Passenger Corporation.

**Missouri River Runner Resumes Full Service**

On July 18<sup>th</sup>, the eight communities between St. Louis and Kansas City turned out to celebrate the arrival of the first **Missouri River Runner** morning train out of St. Louis since t 03 January 2022. It appears the state legislature was moved to restore the \$13 million needed to fund two daily round trips by the results of a Cambridge Systematics study showing the train generates \$22 million in tax revenue and an overall economic benefit to the state of \$208 million. Between the pandemic and flooding on the Missouri River, the state has had only six months of full service since April 2020. The train is popular with bicyclists who ride **the famous Katy Trail**, as well as Missourians looking for a safe and relaxing way to get to the many **festivals and community events** taking place in communities along the

**FAST FACT**

*The 70-mile extension of the Ethan Allen Express from Rutland to Burlington is one strategy being employed by the State of Vermont to quadruple intercity passenger ridership over the next 20 years and reduce carbon emissions as identified in the Vermont State Rail Plan and the Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan.*



## View from elsewhere . . .

*"We hear a lot about expanding mobility options in the state. Not everyone has a car... There's a benefit to the modality of the multi-mobile nature for people to have options. It's good for the environment. It's good for the economy."*

--MoDOT Director Patrick McKenna, **urging lawmakers to fully fund the Missouri River Runner** as an economic and environmental benefit to the entire state. He added that routine MoDOT surveys find that Missourians want more Amtrak service.

*"The appropriations process for 2023 determines funding levels for key infrastructure projects set up under the new infrastructure law. Congress's proposals and the president's budget aren't lining up with the administration's stated goals to improve safety, reduce emissions, and expand the national rail network."*

--Transportation for America blog **"Congressional appropriations miss the mark"**, taking Congress to task for underfunding Amtrak's National Network and stripping from the FY2023 budget the **Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail**, a key source of funds for expanding passenger rail across the country.



After a two-year pandemic-induced hiatus, the Agawa Canyon Tour Train is back, albeit for a shortened season. Go to the **Algoma Country website** for a wealth of information for visitors to Sault Ste. Marie and a link to the tour train website to learn more and make your reservations.



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**SEPTEMBER IS THE PERFECT TIME FOR A LATE VACATION**  
**AMTRAK has a trainload of travel packages just for you!**

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 Livonia, MI 48154-2952

## 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**