



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. Everyone is welcome.

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

2013 MEETINGS

- 12 January** – Williamston Depot-Museum
- 9 February** – Capac Depot Museum
- 9 March** – St. Johns Railroad Station
- 20 April** – Niles Depot
- 11 May** – National Train Day
- 15 June** – Vicksburg Historic Village & Depot Museum
- 20 July** – Flushing Historic Depot
- 10 August** – S.S. City of Milwaukee Train Ferry
- 14 September** – Annual Meeting at Durand Union Station
- October 12** – Bangor Depot
- November 2** – Chicago Union Station
- December** – Executive Committee

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

Recent Restoration Work Shores Up the Historic Jackson Depot

by John Guidinger

Repair and upgrade work totaling about \$800,000 has been completed recently at Amtrak's Michigan Central Station in Jackson. The most extensive work consisted of stabilization of the 140-year-old masonry foundation. This included re-pointing the brick and stone and closing off several of the basement window openings to prevent cold air, dirt, and animals from entering the basement. The mortar in many sections of the foundation walls had dissolved for several inches into the masonry joints.

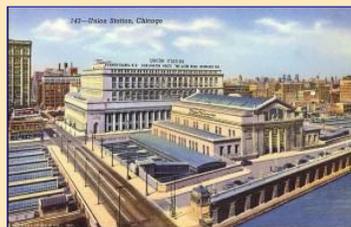
Outside, extensive excavations around much of the express building and the depot were made to replace the underground drainage system that delivers rain water to the city storm system from the parking lots and roof down spouts. After closing the excavations, new ADA compliant concrete sidewalks were installed on the west and street side of the depot. MARP hopes that the red brick pavers can be retained in the street out front of the depot and in the courtyard between the depot and express building. Plans are to use the courtyard for decorative planters and not for parking.

Roofing work included replacement of the flat canopy on the track side of the building and the porch roof on the west end of the building with new EPDM roofing membrane and new copper flashing. The canopy roof has leaked for several years and the new roofing has stopped the leaks.

The work was performed under the management of the Oscar W. Larson Company of Clarkson. The architects are Quinn Evans and Smith Group, both of Ann Arbor.

Previous work on the building included design work, reconstruction of the eaves and eave soffits, asbestos removal, and replacement of some of the down spouts. In the opinion of architect Pat Roach at Quinn Evans, the next work must include shingle replacement on the depot roof, repair of exterior brick and stone masonry, and restoration of the windows and exterior doors.

(JACKSON continues on next page)



MARP MEMBER MEETING
Saturday, November 2
11:30 am – 2:30 pm
Chicago Union Station
Head House /Great Hall
Room 107A

We will see the nerve center controlling all the train movements of the adjoining rail yard and tour some of the seldom seen areas of Chicago Union Station. [Click Here](#) for complete meeting information. If you plan to attend, please RSVP to marprail@yahoo.com.

(JACKSON continued from previous page)

At the present time the 2009-2010 grants received for the depot have been exhausted. Hopefully some money can be obtained from some of the high-speed rail funding to address some of the most important stabilization work. MARP also hopes that money can be found to pave the parking lot.

Amtrak's Michigan Central depot in Jackson, built in 1872, has been in continuous use longer than any other passenger rail station in the United States. It is on both the State Registry of Historic Places and the National Register of Historic Places.



Canopy roofing work underway on Aug 24, 2013, at Jackson depot.



Installation of storm drains at the depot (top) and the express building (bottom)



Darrin Sharp of Mark One Restoration Services of Detroit replaces some of the brick pavers in front of the depot.



Tim Gaddis of Drew Mechanical of Waterford, installs a flush-mounted storm drain in the parking lot in front of the depot.



Shofique Ali, with the Oscar W. Larsen Company of Detroit is the project manager. Mr. Ali shows his pride in working on the historic Jackson depot and enjoys talking to MARP visitors.

Photos taken Sep 28, 2013 by John Guidinger

BANGOR

A Great Place to

Wait for the Morning Train

Meeting Notes by Hugh Gurney

Approximately 25 members were greeted at the Bangor Amtrak Station by owner Ken Ratzlaff. The current station, built in 1926, is the city's second station on the site. Through the 1930's, apples and other produce were shipped from Bangor by rail. Well into the 1950's, thousands of vacationers passed through the station on their way to and from South Haven and other Lake Michigan resorts. Rail traffic declined in the 1960's and the last passenger train stopped in Bangor in 1971. The station was closed and CSX made plans to demolish it.

Fortunately, the City of Bangor had other plans and purchased the structure in 2001. Grants from the Great American Station Foundation and the Bangor Downtown Development Authority funded a historical, structural and reuse analysis. This resulted in the purchase of the structure by Ratzlaff's Beacon Specialized Living Services for \$22,000. Since its purchase, Ratzlaff has invested over \$250,000 to make the structure a community landmark. Today, the building houses an Amtrak waiting area, the Coffee Depot, and the offices of Beacon Specialized Living Services, a statewide operation.

With a coffee shop available to morning passengers and a dedicated volunteer who meets evening trains, Bangor appears to be an ideal spot for both departures and arrivals. To enhance freight business, MDOT recently helped fund a siding to a local pickle factory.

The Executive Committee accepted, with regret, the resignation of Jim Hinkins as Detroit Metro Regional Chair and appointed Robert Patterson to fill the position until the Annual Meeting in September, 2014.

(MEETING continues on page 3)

Bullet Trains Feasible for Illinois

A true high-speed rail system in Illinois not only would be feasible, but likely would cover its operating costs [a new study has concluded](#). The study, commissioned by I-DOT and completed by U-Illinois, states that the initial cost to build such a system is substantial and "would require public and/or private sector funding to cover the initial capital cost."

Recognizing these high capital costs, the study endorses the incremental approach currently practiced in Midwest rail development. "The Midwestern incremental approach is a proven strategy that mirrors successful European strategies, and builds on infrastructure currently available — a dependable model for developing ridership, stakeholder support, and funding for construction."

[CLICK HERE](#) to read about the study in Crain's Chicago Business.

(MEETING continued from page 2)

Chase reported on the October 7-8 meeting of the [Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission \(MIPRC\)](#) that she and Monteith attended. The Commission is made up of representatives from nine Midwest states plus North Dakota. Each state has four representatives, one member from each legislative chamber (Sen. Mike Kowall and Rep. Wayne Schmidt for Michigan), an appointee of the Governor (Director of MDOT's Office of Rail Tim Hoeffner), and a private sector appointee, also appointed by the Governor (former Congressman Joe Schwarz). Hoeffner is the newly elected chair of the organization.

The group has formed a group to create advocates for passenger rail among young people. Chase and Dan Sommerville from the Michigan Environmental Council will help in this effort. It was pointed out that half the student body of Southern Illinois University lives along Amtrak's *Saluki* route.

Readiness is another MIPRC goal. Because the Midwest states were ready, they received significant amounts of the federal funding provided for rail projects in recent years. MIPRC wants to be ready for the next round of funding, whenever that occurs.

Chase lamented the apparent lack of participation by Michigan's legislative appointees. Legislators from other states have played key roles in the organization. An Illinois legislator has headed MIPRC for the last four years. A Missouri state legislator is MIPRC's financial officer and is a prime mover in quarterly meetings of the cities along the rail line in that state.

Chuck Merckel reported on an excellent outreach event at Western Michigan University. Tischbein and Langdon did similar events at Kalamazoo College and Grand Valley State University, respectively. Merckel will speak at the Livonia Senior Center as a trial balloon in approaching seniors about rail travel.

Wallington urged all to attend the [MARP meeting at Chicago Union Station](#) on Saturday, November 2. Included will be a tour of both public and behind the scenes areas of the station, as well as a briefing by Larry Krieg on the recommendations of the Chicago Union Station Task Force.

Hinkins reported that the SE Michigan Regional Transportation Authority's Citizen Advisory Committee will be expanded from 30 to 50 members in hope of better representation for Washtenaw and Macomb counties. Review of Bus Rapid Transit routes will be a major topic in coming months. An important issue is whether the RTA will favor Bus Rapid Transit or commuter rail for service between Ann Arbor and Detroit. In fact, rail lines parallel many of the proposed BRT routes.

Dan Westcott is working to revive the Blue Water Coalition and expand it beyond the Convention and Visitor Bureaus to the business community. It is hoped MDOT will fund in-state promotion of the **Blue Water**. The group is also concerned about the stations along the route that are closed and dark at train time in the evening.

THE 1225 Is Back !

Steam Railroading Institute

405 S. Washington Street, Owosso, Michigan

Wednesday, 30 October, 5:00 pm

Bring your cameras for the first public firing of the re-built Pere Marquette 1225 steam locomotive. Admission is \$20. You also have the opportunity to ride behind the PM 1225 on its first public run at 6:00pm. Charge for this excursion is \$100. For more information call (989) 725-9464. All proceeds go to the PM 1225 operating fund.

Michigan Operation Lifesaver Quarterly Meeting

Friday, 8 November, 9:30 am – 2:00 pm

Durand Union Station

These meetings always feature interesting guest speakers and include updates on education, engineering, and enforcement initiatives. Attendees will be guests of Jon Cool, President of the Michigan Railroads Association, for lunch following the meeting. **Please RSVP to samcrowl@comcast.net** or phone him at 248-823-7037.

Midwest High Speed Rail Annual Fall Meeting

Crowne Plaza, Indianapolis Downtown Union Station

Saturday, 9 November, 8:00 am to 1:00 pm

The agenda includes updates on the Detroit-Chicago & South-of-the-Lake Reroute Update, the Chicago-Fort Wayne-Columbus Corridor Study, the Chicago-Indianapolis 220mph Study, and a report on Hoosier State activities. [CLICK HERE](#) for more information and to register. Cost includes breakfast: \$40 (members), \$50 (non-members), \$25 (recent students under 25)

View from elsewhere . . .

"I'm a constitutional conservative. I believe this is one of the few roles the federal government has, in the infrastructure of this country . . . this is a federal responsibility."

-- Rep. Bill Shuster, R-PA, chair of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, speaking after a 417-3 vote last week to approve an \$8.2 B water projects authorization.

"Transportation is one of the few things Congress should actually spend money on."

-- Rep. Thomas Massie, R-KY, elected in the tea party wave of 2010, explaining his vote last week on an \$8.2 B infrastructure bill.

"It's tempting and easy to hype the trendier benefits of public transportation: It's good for the planet. It's good for economic development. The Millennials are doing it! . . . But it's important to keep as a central focus the idea that mobility is about equity and providing opportunities for people. Transit and access are necessarily linked, and that doesn't just mean for those of us who move around without having to think about it much."

-- Hayley Roberts, Michigan Suburbs Alliance, blogging about Trans4M's MI Odyssey, a 2-day adventure crossing the state by public transportation.



Amtrak's Great Dome Car Comes to Illinois

Sit back and relax on [Illinois Zephyr](#) trains #380 and #383, popular favorites for getting to and from the "Gem City" of Quincy and the toddlin' town of Chicago. A 258 mile journey, with beautiful Mississippi valley views and convenient stops along the way, **Nov 5 - 22** is the perfect time to grab a seat and enjoy the view. There is no additional charge and seating in the Great Dome car is unreserved.

Contact Your Lawmaker

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