



ON TRACK

The E-Bulletin of the Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers

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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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2012 MEETINGS

- 14 January – Williamston Depot-Museum
- 11 February – Old Dog Tavern, Kalamazoo
- 17 March – New Pontiac Station
- 21 April – Chelsea Depot
- 12 May – National Train Day
- 16 June – Muskegon Union Station
- 28 July – RAPID Central Station, Grand Rapids
- August – Executive Committee Retreat
- 22 September – Annual Meeting at Durand Union Station
- 13 October – Pere Marquette Station, St. Louis MI
- 10 November – Michigan Central Station, Essex, Ontario

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

“Why I’m Excited About California High-Speed Rail!”

From Rick Harnish, Executive Director MWHSR

California has made another big step toward building the country’s first 220-mph high-speed rail system. On Monday last the California High-Speed Rail Authority released a revised 2012 draft business plan.

I want to take just a few minutes to tell you why **I am excited** about the revised business plan and why **we need to help** turn the plan into reality by getting our California friends excited too.

There are two key reasons I like this plan - it delivers 300 miles of true high-speed rail in just ten years, and (more importantly) it treats high-speed rail as part of an integrated railroad network, not a stand-alone system. The high-speed rail project is now driving massive improvements in the entire statewide passenger rail network. Under the revised plan, this is no longer a simple discussion about a stand-alone segment in the Central Valley, and that’s very exciting.

If the California Legislature votes (hopefully this spring) to approve the plan, three commuter rail systems and three Amtrak routes will see dramatic improvements soon. Closing the gap between Bakersfield and the Los Angeles basin will also be expedited. In 2018, a new Northern California Unified Service will be launched, improving service between Bakersfield and Sacramento and the Bay. Finally, with the use of high-performance trains that can operate on both high-speed and “higher-speeds” track, this plan could have the potential to create an exciting, fully-integrated network.

California is leading the way for the rest of the country to develop high-speed rail by finding solutions to the many challenges faced in this kind of process. Rail projects throughout the country have already benefited from California’s leadership. They will benefit even more when the project begins construction. Having the California Legislature vote “**Yes**” will be a major breakthrough for California - and for the whole country.

(Continued on page 2)



Photo by Ren Farley

MARP MEMBER MEETING

Saturday, June 16

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Muskegon Union Station

(Convention & Visitors Bureau)

610 W Western Avenue, Muskegon 49440

Andy Busard, Muskegon Railroad Historical Society, will speak on "Railroading Through the Years in the Muskegon Area of West Michigan". Details on the website www.marp.org Or leave a message at (269)388-3777. Your call will be returned.

(CALIFORNIA HSR continued)

The plan delivers a lot of value upfront, but it is complex and unfortunately “complex” can be a hard public sell. That is why it is so important that you help educate your friends in California about how the state benefits from this plan and all that is involved in it.

We have updated the “phasing” section of the StandUpforTrains.org website. [CLICK HERE](#) for information to help you and your friends in California understand how the plan works. Then, by clicking on [HELP NOW](#), they can easily send a message to their legislators asking them to **vote “Yes!” for high-speed rail.**

Please help us make high-speed rail a reality!

Reprinted from MidwestHSR Newsletter.

. . . meanwhile in Michigan

In a May 10 [press release](#), Amtrak announced schedule changes effective May 21 for Wolverine and Blue Water trains as a result of increased speeds of 110mph on the Kalamazoo to Porter IN segment of the Detroit-Chicago corridor. The release also stated “Permanent schedules changes are pending approval of NS for the Chicago to Porter, Ind., segment of the route and from CN, which owns the *Blue Water* route from Battle Creek to Port Huron and the *Wolverine* route between Pontiac and Detroit.”

Wolverine and Blue Water passengers can expect a return to more normal travel times between Kalamazoo and Dearborn with the lifting of speed restrictions imposed by NS on the Michigan route in March as a result of the completion of track and crossing improvements performed by NS in April.

A \$3.2 M grant announced in early May will seek to further reduce travel times between Chicago and Michigan. The study will consider improvements needed to allow faster and more frequent service over the Chicago-Porter IN segment owned by Norfolk Southern and used by 12 daily Amtrak Trains. The FRA has also announced an agreement to provide for a new West Detroit Connection Track to eliminate a rail traffic bottleneck by separating passenger and freight train movements. The \$7.9 M in federal funding will be matched by \$7.9 million from the State of Michigan.

View the [press release](http://tinyurl.com/marp00042) at tinyurl.com/marp00042.

Talgo Open House Draws a Crowd

More than 100 visitors had a first-hand look at the new Talgo Series 8 train sets on May 2 when Talgo, Inc. hosted an open house at their Century City facility in Milwaukee. The two complete train sets are intended for use on the Hiawatha route between Milwaukee and Chicago. Two more train sets are being completed for the State of Oregon.

While political wrangling is threatening to mothball the Wisconsin trains, Antonio Perez, Talgo’s president and CEO expressed his feeling that “the citizens of Milwaukee are on our side and enthused about putting these new trains into service and keeping these jobs in Wisconsin.”

The Talgo trains offer several improvements over the Horizon cars currently in use: WIFI, bike racks, upgraded food service, and ADA-compliant lavatories. Fuel cost savings will be realized due to the lighter weight of the train sets, which also achieve quicker acceleration and braking. Talgo’s innovative design, including passive tilting technology, gives greater comfort and safety on curves at higher speeds.

www.talgoamerica.com/series8-passengerCars.aspx

. . . also noted

The **Battle Creek Amtrak Station** will reopen on June 12 with ceremonies at 1:30 pm. Renovations to the building and re-configuration of the multi-modal facilities were funded with a “stimulus” grant.

Amtrak and Trinity Transit are now providing thru-way connections from the Jackson station to Toledo, thus allowing Michigan passengers to connect with the Lakeshore route to Boston and New York City and the Capitol route to Pittsburg and Washington, D.C.

The **Chicago Union Station Master Plan Study** was formally presented on May 23 aboard a historic BNSF rail car. See www.unionstationmp.com. Click on “Download the Report” and scroll down to open the Appendices separately.

Hot off the Presses!

RULING IN AAR CASE SUPPORTS AMTRAK

CN had used this case to bolster its position regarding timekeeping. This ruling nullifies a key element of the freight railroad’s counter-argument in the complaint filed by Amtrak regarding time keeping. It is not known if an appeal will be filed.

See: www.courthousenews.com/2012/06/01/47054.htm