

MRC

Midwest Rail Conference



Conference Program



Midwest Rail Conference 2017

Midwest Connections: Passenger and
Freight Rail Look to the Future

August 15 - 17, 2017

WMU Fetzer Center, Kalamazoo, MI

Welcome



A Special Greeting from the Conference Co-Chairs

We would like to welcome everyone to the Midwest Rail Conference (MRC) in Kalamazoo, Michigan. This year's conference is the first time we are bringing several Midwest states together to discuss rail transportation. It's also the first time for us to join forces with the Summerail event organized by the Transportation Research Board (TRB) Freight Rail Committee (AR040) and with the annual meeting of the National University Rail Center (NURail). This conference brings together some of the brightest minds from rail stakeholder groups, and you can look forward to outstanding discussions and presentations!

With the large number of organizations involved, we are greatly in debt to the members of our three conference committees who have made sure everything is ready for the conference, from arranging the spaces, to registrations, to speakers and sponsors. A special thanks goes to Dave Nelson and his team from Michigan Tech for locking all the pieces into a cohesive conference, to the staff at the Fetzer Center, and to Forrest Van Schwartz and his team for organizing the field visits. We also need to thank our sponsors whose generous support allows us to keep the conference costs down, making it available to a wide range of stakeholders.

As conference co-chairs, we believe that our conference theme, *Midwest Connections: Passenger and Freight Rail Look to the Future*, captures the essence of the conference. Rail transportation does not stop at state lines, and regional collaboration is a necessity for successful rail operations. Our speakers today draw from experiences within and outside the region and we hope that you find the information and networking beneficial as you return to your daily activities in advancing rail transportation.

Welcome to the conference! — **Nikkie Johnson and Pasi Lautala**

Keynote Speaker: Joseph McHugh

Joseph McHugh is the vice president of State Supported Services – Business Development for Amtrak where he is responsible for managing the company's relationships with each of the 21 state partners and helping them grow their revenue and ridership. He has been with Amtrak for over two decades and, prior to his current position, served for 22 years in the Government Affairs group where he was responsible for initiating, developing, and communicating Amtrak's legislative and funding need to the U.S. Congress.



Tuesday's Activities

Student Scholarship Fundraiser Golf Outing
Committee Meetings

Opening Reception at Bell's Brewery
featuring the Norfolk Southern Lawmen
Band

See insert for details.



Midwest Rail Conference Technical Program | August 16th

7:15 – 8:00 AM	Breakfast & Registration	(Atrium/1035–1055)
7:45 – 8:00 AM	Welcome and Safety Briefing	(Kirsch)
<div><div>Pasi Lautala Director, Rail Transportation Program, Michigan Technological University</div><div>Nikkie Johnson Project Manager–Economic Development & Freight Operations, Michigan Department of Transportation</div></div>		
8:00 – 9:30 AM	Morning Plenary – Changes Facing the Rail Industry: Threats or Opportunities?	(Kirsch)
<div>Moderator: Chris Barkan, University of Illinois</div> <div><div>Kirk Steudle Director, Michigan Department of Transportation</div><div>Deb Miller Member and former Chairman, Surface Transportation Board</div><div>Tim Strafford Associate General Counsel, Association of American Railroads</div></div>		
9:30 – 9:45 AM	Break	(Atrium)
9:45 – 10:45 AM	Plenary Panel – State DOT Rail Programs Overview	(Kirsch)
<div>Moderator: Nick Little, Michigan State University</div> <div><div>Matt Dietrich Executive Director, Ohio Rail Development Commission</div><div>Katie England Director–Multimodal Planning & Programs, Indiana Department of Transportation</div><div>Dave Simon (tentative) Chief of Railroads and Harbors, Wisconsin Department of Transportation</div></div>		
10:45 – 11:00 AM	Break	(Atrium)
11:00 AM – noon	Breakout Session #1A – Shipper Concerns	(Kirsch)
<div>Moderator: Jon Cool, Michigan Railroad Association</div> <div><div>David Closs Chair–Department of Supply Chain Management, Michigan State University</div><div>Gary Thompson Executive Vice President and COO, Regional Growth Partnership</div><div>Carl Howard Director of Warehouse Operations, Lewis C Howard, Inc</div></div>		
11:00 AM – noon	Breakout Session #1B – High(er) Speed Rail	(Putney)
<div>Moderator: Paul Vilter, Amtrak</div> <div><div>Beth McCluskey Director–Office of Intermodal Project Implementation, Illinois Department of Transportation</div><div>Chen-Yu Lin Graduate Research Assistant, RailTEC, University of Illinois</div><div>Bruce Nelson Sr. Principal Technical Specialist - WSP - Parson Brinkerhoff</div></div>		
11:00 AM – noon	Breakout Session #1C – Property Risk and Management	(1040–1050)
<div>Moderator: Kris Foondle, Michigan Department of Transportation</div> <div><div>Bob VanderClute President, Firstrail International</div><div>Chris Barkan Executive Director, RailTEC, University of Illinois</div><div>TBD Title–Department (if applicable), Organization</div></div>		
Noon – 1:30 PM	Lunch and Keynote	(1030–1055)

Midwest Rail Conference Technical Program | August 16th

1:30 – 2:30 PM

Breakout Session #2A – Future of Freight

(Kirsch)

Moderator: Pete Swan, Penn State

Brian Buchanan

Manager of Network Strategies,
CN Railroad

Ryan Fischer

Assistant Vice President–Industrial
Development, G&W Railroad

Tyler Dick

Senior Research Engineer and Director of
Education, RailTEC, University of Illinois

1:30 – 2:30 PM

Breakout Session #2B – Urban Rail

(Putney)

Moderator: Libby Ogard, Prime Focus

Kevin Keller

Vice President & National Director
of Rail Business Planning, HDR, Inc

Paul Childs

Chief Operating Officer,
QLINE Detroit

Barry Murray

Director of Economic and Community
Development, City of Dearborn, MI

1:30 – 2:30 PM

Breakout Session #2C – Grade Crossing Issues

(1040–1050)

Moderator: Tammy Wagner, Federal Rail Administration

John Sharkey

Vice President–Signal
Systems, CTC, Inc

Larry Bowron

Transportation Director, City
of Battle Creek

Reg Souleyrette

Department Chair of Civil
Engineering, University of Kentucky

2:30 – 2:45 AM

Break

(Atrium)

2:45 – 3:45 PM

Breakout Session #3A – Short Line Panel

(Kirsch)

Moderator: Matt Dietrich, Ohio Rail Development Commission

Stefan Loeb

Executive Vice President–Network
Strategies, Watco Companies

Troy Strane

General Manager, Indiana
Northeastern Railroad

Sean Pengelly

Engineer–Projects &
Development, Lake State Railway

2:45 – 3:45 PM

Breakout Session #3B – Inter-City Services

(Putney)

Moderator: Kay Chase, Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers

Mike Franke

Senior Director–State
Government Contracts, Amtrak

Martin Bloedt

Sales and Product Manager–
Locomotives, North America, Siemens

Anna Lynn Smith

Transportation Consultant and Project
Manager, WSP USA

2:45 – 3:45 PM

Breakout Session #3C – Creating a Resilient Railroad

(1040–1050)

Moderator: Andreas Hoffrichter, Michigan State University

Joe Smak

Director of Engineering,
Amtrak

Amanda Martin

Freight and Passenger Policy
Coordinator, Iowa DOT

Riley Edwards

Research Scientist and Senior Lecturer,
RailTEC, University of Illinois

3:45 – 4:00 PM

Break

(Atrium)

4:00 – 4:30 PM

Networking and Student Poster Session

(Atrium)

4:30 – 5:00 PM

3-Minute Student Thesis Competition

(TBD)

5:00 – 7:00 PM

Closing Reception

(Atrium/1035–1055)

TRB Summerail Field Visits | August 17

7:30 AM – noon

Cargill Facility & Amtrak ride to Battle Creek

12:30 – 1:00 PM

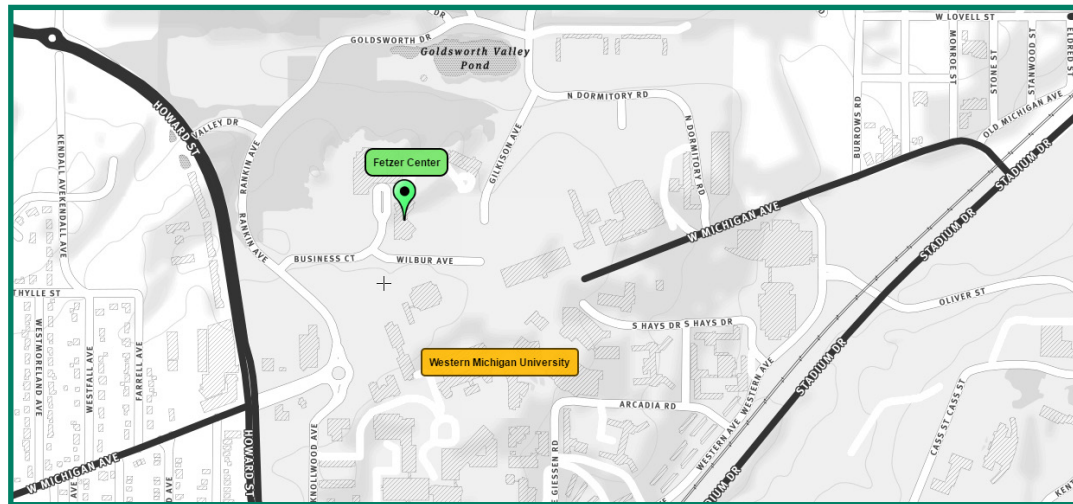
Those not attending Little River return to Kalamazoo

12:30 – 5:30 PM

Lunch & Little River Steam Train Ride



WMU Fetzer Center:
2350 Business Court
Kalamazoo, MI 49008



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Conference Planning Committee

Tammy Wagner – FRA; Forrest Van Schwartz – Global Transportation Consultancy; Shasta Duffey – Lake State Railway; Kay Chase – Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers (MARP); Nikkie Johnson – Michigan DOT; Jon Cool – Michigan Railroads Association; Andreas Hoffrichter, Nick Little, and Sue Lonier – Michigan State University; Amanda Kerttu, Pasi Lautala, and David Nelson – Michigan Tech; Matt Dietrich – Ohio DOT; Peter Swan – Penn State; Libby Ogard – Prime Focus; Tyler Dick and L. B. Frye – University of Illinois; Laura McNichol – Watco Companies