



DRAFT Conference Program



Michigan Rail Virtual Conference

“The Year of Rail: A Platform for Change”

August 10-11, 2021

Welcome

A Special Greeting from the Conference Co-Chairs

Welcome to the 2021 Michigan Rail Virtual Conference (MRC). While it's unfortunate that we are still meeting virtually, we look on the bright side of the situation, ability to have excellent speakers without barriers caused by physical distance. As always, we thank all individuals and organizations essential to continuing our tradition of MRC. Your Conference Planning Committee has worked tirelessly to get the best speakers for us. They also secure sponsors who help keep MRC fees low and thus enable larger participation. Finally, we're greatly indebted to our diverse group of speakers across the nation and beyond, who have committed to take time in their busy schedules and share their expertise toward advancing rail in Michigan.

Our conference theme, Year of Rail – Platform for Change, is a great successor to our last year's team that concentrated on "sustaining the rail". The challenge under the pandemic was to figure out how to keep rail operating, but now it's time to turn the attention to the future, how to grow rail in the post-pandemic world. If the last year and a half has taught us anything, it is the reality that even best plans can take an unprecedented direction...and take it very fast. The question is both how should we frame rail transportation for long-term success and how do we make it nimble enough to adapt to an ever-changing environment. We are confident that our carefully-selected invited speakers from near and afar can give us the latest insight on what is happening right now and what will need to happen in the future for rail transportation to excel, both passenger and freight, regardless of the circumstances.

We would like to thank you all for choosing to participate in the Michigan Rail Virtual Conference 2021....and we hope you enjoy the sessions and discussions!!! ~Pasi Lantala and Nick Little

Tues. Keynote



Martin Oberman
Chairman - Surface Transportation Board

Martin J. Oberman was designated Chairman of the Surface Transportation Board by President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. on January 21, 2021. Marty has had an extensive career in both the public and private sectors. His unique combination of litigation experience, elected public service, and exposure to the significant complexities of railroad infrastructure finance and operations will inform his work as a Member of the Surface Transportation Board.

Wed. Keynote



Peter Anastor
Director - MDOT Office of Rail

Peter Anastor became the Director of the MDOT Office of Rail on January 25, 2021. Having more than 25 years of state service, he began his career at the State Budget Office and later moved to the Michigan Economic Development Corp. In 2015, he moved over to MDARD to focus on promoting and assisting the growth of food and agriculture companies, including transportation issues and solutions. Anastor oversees the Office of Rail that works to ensure that Michigan's rail system meets the economic needs of the state and is safe for the motoring public, rail passengers, and railroad employees.

Sessions are set up with 50 minutes for presentation and Q&A and then a 10 minute transition between the sessions.

MRC Technical Program | Tuesday, August 10th

8:45 AM

Zoom Conferencing Opens

8:50 AM

Welcome and Safety Briefing

Nick Little

Director - Railway Education
Michigan State University

Pasi Lautala

Director, Rail Transportation Program
Michigan Tech

9:00 - 9:50 AM

Plenary Session - Reauthorization Impacts

Moderator: Libby Ogard, Prime Focus, LLC

Shayne H. Gill

Program Director - Multimodal Trans
AASHTO

Elaine Nettle

Senior Associate
Blakey & Agnew LLC

Jennifer Macdonald

AVP Government Affairs
Association of American Railroads

10:00 - 10:50 AM

Breakout Session #1A – Preparing Competitive Federal
Rail Grant Applications

Moderator: Nikkie Johnson, MDOT

Sean Pengelly

Engineer - Projects & Development
Lake State Railway Co.

Kevin Keller

VP, Sr. Professional Assoc.
HDR

Alison Rogers

BUILD-TIGER Program Manager
Federal Highway Administration

10:00 - 10:50 AM

Breakout Session #1B – The Rebirth of Integrated
Passenger Systems

Moderator: Larry Krieg - MARP

Stacie H. Tiongson

SR Director - Govt Affairs & Advocacy
APTA

Trevor Brydon

Planner - Plan & Policy Development
Southern MI Rail Development

Derrick James

Director - Government Affairs
Amtrak

11:00 - 11:50 AM

Breakout Session #2A – Shipper Panel

Moderator: Shasta Duffey, Lake State Railway Co.

Keith Baker

Coldwater City Manager
City of Coldwater

John Belger

Logistics Manager
Arauco

Chris Weiler

Profit Center Manager
The Andersons

11:00 - 11:50 AM

Breakout Session #2B – Rail Safety

Moderator: Deb Brown, MDOT

Kris Foondle

Program Manager - Local Grade
Crossing, Michigan DOT

Rusty Orbin

Resident VP, Public Affairs
CSX

&

Herbert Smith

Regional VP, Govt Relations
Norfolk Southern

Jon Cool

President
Michigan Railroads
Association

12:00 - 12:50 PM

Keynote Presentation

Moderator: Libby Ogard, Prime Focus, LLC

Martin Oberman

Chairman
Surface Transportation Board

1:00 PM

Wrap-Up and Closing Comments

MRC Technical Program | Wednesday, August 11th

8:45 AM

Zoom Conferencing Opens - Networking

8:50 AM

Welcome and Safety Briefing

Nick Little

Director - Railway Education
Michigan State University

Pasi Lautala

Director, Rail Transportation Program
Michigan Tech

9:00 - 9:50 AM

Plenary Session – Rail Under Change

Moderator: Pasi Lautala, Michigan Tech

Todd White

Director - Bureau of Planning
Michigan DOT

Brad Sharlow

Project Manager - Bureau of Planning
Michigan DOT

Carlo Borghini

Executive Director
Shift2Rail, European Union

10:00 - 10:50 AM

Breakout Session #1A – Improving the Rail
Environmental Footprint

Moderator: Nick Little, MSU

Kathleen Martz & Erik Herzog

Nat'l Regions & Affiliate Prog Mgr &
Benefits Analyst, Rail Tool Lead
US EPA

Jason Eddy

AVP Mechanical
NS - Sustainability

Mike Iden

Consultant
Tier 5 Locomotive LLC

10:00 - 10:50 AM

Breakout Session #1B – Shortline Update

Moderator: Jon Cool, MRA

Peggy Emeis

Sales Manager
Watco

Jocelyn Hill

General Council
Conrail

Mike Hnatiuk

Marketing
West Michigan
Railroad Co.

John Rickoff

President & CEO
Lake State Railway
Co.

Jodi Heath

Director - Business
Development
Pioneer Lines

Julie Eddy

Asst VP Ops
G&W

11:00 - 11:50 AM

Breakout Session #2A – Rail Changes in Michigan

Moderator: Nikkie Johnson, MDOT

Ken Lucht

AVP Government and Industry Relations
Watco

John Rickoff

President & CEO
Lake State Railway Co.

Alex King &

Principal Consultant
WSP

Ethyan Kramer

MPSC
MDOT

11:00 - 11:50 AM

Breakout Session #2B – Michigan Mobility 2045

Moderator: Jesse Gwilliams, MDOT

Sara Moore

Asst Project Manager - Bureau of
Planning, Michigan DOT

Elisha Wulff

Asst Project Manager - Bureau of
Planning, Michigan DOT

Brad Sharlow

Project Manager - Bureau of Planning
Michigan DOT

12:00 - 12:50 PM

Keynote Presentation

Moderator: Nikkie Johnson, MDOT

Peter Anastor

Director - Office of Rail
Michigan Department of Transportation

1:00 PM

Wrap-Up and Closing Comments

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Conference Planning Committee

In addition to the moderators and co-chairs listed above, we'd like to thank: Larry Lloyd - CN; Shasta Duffey and Mike Hnatiuk – Lake State Railway Company; Michael Gaynor - GoRail; Jon Cool – Michigan Railroads Association; Amanda (Kerttu) Codere – Michigan Tech; Derrick James - Amtrak; Bob Pokorski - Copper Harbor; Kay Chase - MARP

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