

Missouri Rail Passenger Advisory Committee (MORPAC)

The Missouri Rail Passenger Advisory Committee, or MORPAC, was formed by the Missouri Department of Transportation in July 1995. The purpose established for the committee was to work with MoDOT and Amtrak to further develop and promote rail passenger service in Missouri, identify and develop cooperative programs to increase ridership and to actively promote Amtrak travel and increase Amtrak's visibility on the local level. The formation of the group was informal, not under state statute, and there were no bylaws created to govern the organization.

The committee was originally comprised of local government representatives from the 10 communities served along the state-supported St. Louis to Kansas City corridor and representatives from two rail advocacy groups: Citizens for Modern Transit and the Missouri/Kansas Rail Passenger Coalition. Currently, MORPAC also includes representatives from Missouri Amtrak Stations at La Plata and Poplar Bluff, Union Pacific Railroad, SMART-United Transportation Union, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen and the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division. The group meets on a quarterly basis each year.

Each MORPAC quarterly meeting features information from several partners, such as Amtrak regarding ridership, revenue, on-time performance, marketing efforts and newsworthy items; Union Pacific regarding on-time performance and completed or upcoming maintenance of way projects; MoDOT regarding pertinent information on passenger rail at the state and national levels; Community Representatives regarding updates on activities/events or rail-related projects occurring in their respective cities; and occasional guest speakers.

One of the early accomplishments of the committee was to allow the transportation of bicycles on the Missouri service. The committee also advocated to the Missouri General Assembly for continued funding for the service, particularly when it was in jeopardy of being discontinued in the 2000s.

On another note, in September 1996, MoDOT also formed an Amtrak Focus Group, which was comprised of representatives from visitors' bureaus/associations and chambers of commerce on the St. Louis to Kansas City corridor, as well as MoDOT and the Missouri Division of Tourism. This group aimed to promote the use of Amtrak service as a means to attend local events in the communities served by the corridor. This group was re-established in July 2014. In addition, the group established the following subcommittees in 2008, which were to report at MORPAC meetings each quarter: Marketing, Legislative and Stakeholder Involvement. The Legislative and Stakeholder Involvement committees are not currently in action.

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