Working to implement a 21st century passenger rail system by adding the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative network and additional state-supported corridors to the region’s existing passenger rail infrastructure.

MIPRC Colleges & Universities
Passenger Rail Survey
What, How & Results
MIPRC Survey: What is it?

19,194 people at 30 schools across 9 states
75% students (90% of them full-time)

How often do they take a train?
Why, or why not take a train?
What would get them to take a train?

MIPRC Survey: How was it done?

Committee on University Partnerships created at MIPRC 2013 Annual Meeting

- Sen. David Pearce, Missouri (chair)
- Chris Barkan, University of Illinois
- Kay Chase, Michigan Assn. of Rail Passengers
- Eric Curtit, Missouri DOT
- Rex Duncan, Southern Illinois University
- Ray Lang, Amtrak
- Paul Piekarski, BLET
- Dan Sommerville/Liz Treutel, Michigan Environmental Council
- Tim Hoeffner, Michigan, MIPRC Chair (ex-officio)
- Laura Kliewer/Jon Davis, MIPRC staff
MIPRC Survey: How was it done?

2014: Survey, schools contact list developed

April 2015: Schools contacted for participation

November 2015-February 2016: Surveys conducted
(a chance for a $150 Amazon gift card was offered as an incentive to complete the survey)

February-March 2016: Results compiled, analyzed

MIPRC Survey: Results & Release

• Solid base: 23% have taken a train to/from school. Of them, 36% say passenger rail is a “very” or “extremely important” resource to be able to attend school.

• Growth potential: When asked why (and to mark all applicable answers), those who haven’t taken a train indicated inconvenient or no direct route (48%).

• 24% said they don’t know where/how to get the train near their school.
MIPRC Survey: Results & Release

• 68% agree passenger rail is important/very important to national transportation future.

• Asked what might get them on a train,
  • 44% said a station close to home;
  • 35% said more/better discounts;
  • 29% said info from school on how/where to get a train;
  • 28% said school-provided transportation to/from train station.

MIPRC Survey: Results & Release

• Education needed: 88% are “somewhat” or “not at all” aware of federal role in funding, route/schedule decisions.

• Willing Advocates: Asked if they’re willing to advocate for passenger rail, 31% (5,992) said “yes” and provided an email address. Many joined our Thunderclap and follow MIPRC’s Twitter feed (@MW_Rail).
MIPRC Survey: Results & Release

Respondents who had taken Amtrak recently were invited to take a supplemental survey about their experience; 1,597 did so. Among their answers:

• 71 percent said they enjoyed their experience or enjoyed it a lot.
• 70 percent said onboard WiFi availability is “very” or “extremely” important; 60 percent have used it during their rides.
• 55 percent said it’s “very” or “extremely” easy to get between school and an Amtrak station.
• 49 percent said their train arrived at destination later than scheduled (45 percent say their train arrived on time).

MIPRC Survey: Results & Release

• Results compiled for each school, each state, and the region as a whole. Schools were given results, with a customized press release.
• Results announced on April 14 via social media aggregator service Thunderclap. 206 people linked their Facebook or Twitter feeds to our message, giving us a potential audience of 185,106 people.
• All results, analysis available at MIPRC website: http://miprc.org/News/miprc-survey-finds-good-news-growth-potential-for-passenger-rail
MIPRC Survey: Next steps

- As a result of the survey, Amtrak has taken steps to beef up its relationships with Midwestern colleges & universities in proximity to an Amtrak station.
- MIPRC is planning to hold a webinar, in conjunction with Amtrak, for marketing contacts at Midwestern colleges/universities, allowing them to share best practices on featuring Amtrak service to current/future students.
- Questions/Other Ideas?