

News Release



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TRACK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT BEGINS FOR ACCELERATED MICHIGAN AMTRAK SERVICES Modified schedules affect some weekday *Wolverine* trains

CHICAGO and LANSING -- The first of three Michigan track improvement phases for the 2013 construction season begins on Sept. 9. While the projects will cause some delays and modified schedules, the result will be upgraded tracks and more reliable service for [Amtrak Wolverine Service](#) trains as part of the Accelerated Rail Program being carried out by Amtrak for the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

When all 2013 phases of the project are complete in November, more than 30 miles of new track and 130,000 new crossties will be installed by crews working ten-hour days.

“Unlike past projects to make needed repairs, this track improvement work is an upgrade to the route owned by the state of Michigan,” said Tim Hoeffner, Director of MDOT’s Office of Rail. “Passengers will feel the difference, and they and freight shippers will experience even higher reliability across the route.”

“We are condensing a lot of improvement work that was anticipated over the next two construction seasons into 12 to 14 weeks this fall,” said Al Johnson, MDOT Rail Operations Manager. “This provides the great benefits from more reliable track conditions sooner and eliminates the need for similar track disruptions next year.”

MDOT is leading a three-state effort to improve the 300-mile corridor from Pontiac and Detroit across Michigan, through northwest Indiana and to Chicago. The result of these and

- more -



WHY ACCELERATED RAIL?

- » Meet current and future travel demand by increasing accessibility and mobility for all travelers.
- » Reduce existing congestion across all travel modes.
- » Provide environmental benefits by shifting existing auto/air trips to rail.
- » Accommodate economic development opportunities surrounding stations.
- » Improve the quality of existing passenger rail service.
- » Provide a competitive passenger travel mode that benefits tourism.
- » Improve rail infrastructure to lessen delays for both freight and passenger rail.
- » Provide opportunities to connect to other Midwestern rail markets.
- » Retain/create transportation-related job opportunities.



The corridor extends approximately 300 miles from Union Station in downtown Chicago, east to a station terminal in Pontiac, Mich. The corridor is a federally-designated high-speed rail corridor with passenger service currently provided by Amtrak's Wolverine line, and it is also one of the busiest freight railroad routes in the country. The area of analysis includes portions of Cook County in Illinois; Lake, Porter and La Porte counties in Indiana; and Berrien, Van Buren, Cass, Kalamazoo, Calhoun, Jackson, Washtenaw, Wayne and Oakland counties in Michigan. Actual route and station locations will be determined as part of the Chicago-Detroit/Pontiac Passenger Rail Corridor Program.

future infrastructure improvements will allow Amtrak trains in mid-Michigan to operate at speeds up to 110 miles per hour, as they do now for 80 miles in southwestern Michigan and part of Indiana.

Michigan has the longest stretch of higher-speeds in the Midwest, with the *Wolverine* and [Amtrak Blue Water](#) trains carrying passengers at the highest U.S. speeds available outside the Northeast.



A goal of the project is to reduce the end-to-end travel time between Detroit/Pontiac and Chicago by approximately two hours from the current 6 hours and 30 minutes. A series of public meetings are set this month to advance the plans. For more information, visit [GreatLakesRail.org](#).

This first phase of the project will largely take place east of Jackson Mondays through Thursdays of the coming weeks, with the tracks open for all trains on regular schedules on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. The attached Passenger Service Notice will be distributed on trains and at stations to explain the Monday-Thursday schedule changes and provide more information about possible delays.

Under a new Amtrak system, passengers can opt in when they make their round-trip or one-way reservations to be automatically notified when their trains are behind schedule due to construction work or for any other reason.

About Amtrak®

Amtrak is America's Railroad®, the nation's intercity passenger rail service and its high-speed rail operator. A record 31.2 million passengers traveled on Amtrak in FY 2012 on more than 300 daily trains – at speeds up to 150 mph (241 kph) – that connect 46 states, the District of Columbia and three Canadian Provinces. Amtrak operates intercity trains in partnership with 15 states and contracts with 13 commuter rail agencies to provide a variety of services. Enjoy the journey® at Amtrak.com or call 800-USA-RAIL for schedules, fares and more information. Join us on facebook.com/Amtrak and follow us at twitter.com/Amtrak.

About MDOT

The mission of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) is to provide the highest quality integrated transportation services for economic benefit and improved quality of life. MDOT has direct jurisdiction over Michigan's nearly 10,000-mile state highway system, comprised of all Interstate, state, and U.S. routes. The state also owns 4,704 highway, railroad and pedestrian bridges, 655 miles of railroad track (which is managed by private operators including Amtrak), 103 miles of non-motorized trails and four airports. For more information, visit www.michigan.gov/mdot.

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Wolverine Service **Weekday Schedule and Service Changes**



Mondays through Thursdays, Only September 9-12, 16-19 and 23-26

The first of three phases of a Michigan track improvement project for the 2013 construction season begins on September 9. While it will cause some service and schedule changes, the result will be improved ride quality and more reliable service for the *Wolverine Service* and *Blue Water* trains. These improvements are part of the Accelerated Rail Program being carried out by Amtrak for the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

Eastbound Train 350: Mondays through Thursdays

- Train 350 will terminate at Jackson. Bus service will be provided between Jackson, Pontiac and all intermediate stations. The bus will operate according to the train's schedules
- In addition, Train 350 will depart all from Chicago **20 minutes earlier** (at 7:00 a.m.), and will operate **20 minutes earlier** Jackson and all intermediate stations.

Westbound Train 351: Mondays through Thursdays

Train 351 will depart Pontiac **45 minutes earlier** (at 5:00 a.m.), and will operate **45 minutes earlier** to Chicago and all intermediate stations.

Westbound Train 353: Mondays through Thursdays

- Train 353 will originate at Jackson and operate to Chicago and all intermediate stations.
- Bus service will be provided between Pontiac, Jackson and all intermediate stations. The bus will depart all stations **30 minutes earlier** than the published train times.

Trains 352, 354 and 355: Possible Delays

Trains 352, 354 and 355 will operate as scheduled, but may encounter delays of approximately 30 minutes.

Weekend Service - Possible Delays: All *Wolverine Service* trains will operate as scheduled on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, but may encounter delays of approximately 30 minutes.

MDOT is leading a three-state effort to improve the 300-mile corridor from Pontiac and Detroit across Michigan, through northwest Indiana and to Chicago. The result of these and future infrastructure improvements will allow Amtrak trains in mid-Michigan to operate at speeds up to 110 miles per hour, as they do now for 80 miles in Western Michigan and part of Indiana. This is currently the longest stretch of higher-speeds in the Midwest, with the *Wolverine Service* and *Blue Water* trains carrying passengers at the highest U.S. speeds available outside the Northeast.

Thank you for traveling with Amtrak. We appreciate your patronage and apologize for any inconvenience you may experience. Reservation and train status information is available on Amtrak.com, our free mobile apps and at 1-800-USA-RAIL (1-800-872-7245).

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