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Fall 12-1-2020

Rail News Fall 2020

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Recommended Citation

Rail Transportation Program (2020). Rail News Fall 2020.
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RTP leads Midwest Rail Virtual Conference (MRC)

In 2020, many events were disrupted by COVID-19. [The Midwest Rail Conference](#) was one of them. Partway through the planning process, we determined the conference would have to be held virtually for the first time ever. With a theme of “Sustaining Midwest Rail,” the virtual conference was quite a success with 18 sponsors and over 270 attendees! The virtual event allowed for a great lineup of speakers, including our two keynotes: Mike McClellan, VP Strategic Planning for Norfolk Southern and Joe McHugh, VP State-Supported Services—Business Development for AMTRAK. This year’s event was collaborative effort by the TRB Freight Rail Transp. Committee (AR040), the National University Rail Center (NURail) consortium and our Michigan based team supported by the Michigan State University Center for Railway Research and Education and the Michigan Tech Rail Transportation Program.



MRC Program

Rail Transportation Advisory Board (RTAB)

Welcomes New Members

The [RTAB](#) is excited to welcome two Michigan Tech alumni as the latest additions to the Board.

Chad Scherwinski is a 2006 Civil and Environmental Engineering graduate who has been working with BNSF Railway since his graduation. Chad was recently promoted to his current Assistant Vice President, System Maintenance position.



Chad Scherwinski



Rachel Klumpp

Rachel Klumpp is 2016 School of Business graduate working with CN Railway. Rachel has been in her current position as Assistant Manager, Contract Compliance, Passenger since September, 2019. Welcome Chad and Rachel!!

Welcome Chad and Rachel!!!

Walter Friesel Wins AREMA Poster Competition

While COVID restrictions have made operation of student organizations challenging, REAC has actively used the virtual platforms in connecting students with rail industry (see sidebar for spring/fall presenters).

In addition, Walter Friesel brought home the 1st place poster award in the undergraduate student category during AREMA 2020 Virtual Conference & Expo. Congratulations Walter!!



Walter Friesel

RECENT/ UPCOMING EVENTS

[MRC 2020](#)

– AUG 11-12, 2020

See article above for details.

[Virtual AREMA 2020](#)

– September 13-17, 2020

See article below for details.

[TRB Virtual Annual Meeting 2021](#)

– January 2021

[Michigan Tech Spring Career Fair](#)

– February 17, 2021

This event will be held virtually.

[Summer Youth Program 2021](#)

– July 11-16, 2021

Information on the 2021 program will be announced soon!

[Michigan Rail Conference 2021](#)

– August 10-12, 2021

Location TBA

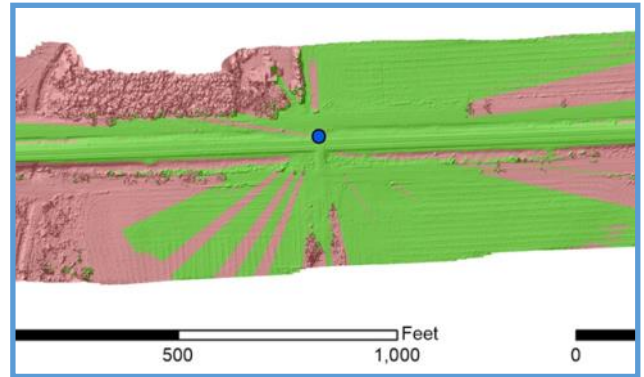
ON THE ROAD

- March 2020—Pasi Lautala gave invited presentations at University of Nevada, Las Vegas
- August 2020—Pasi Lautala & Ricardo Eiris visited Wisconsin Southern facilities to collect virtual tour materials

Michigan Tech Expands Grade Crossing and Trespasser Safety Research

It is a well-known fact that trespassers and grade crossing accidents account for a great majority of fatalities and injuries related to rail transportation. Over the past several years, Michigan Tech has been growing its contribution to this critical research field. After completing our first externally funded project in 2019, we're currently leading four projects funded by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). We have also completed an exploratory project with Metra (Chicago) to use locomotive cameras for trespasser detection. The wide range of topics we are addressing is a testimony to the diversity of our research capabilities and expertise. The project titles and leaders with their contact information are provided below. Please contact the project leads directly, if you're interested in finding out more about these projects.

- **Effects of In-Vehicle Auditory Alerts On Driver Behaviors At Highway-Rail Grade Crossings**, Project Lead Dr. Pasi Lautala (ptlautal@mtu.edu)
- **Automated Drone Based Grade Crossing Inspection**, Small Business Innovation Research; Project Lead Dr. Colin Brooks (MTRI, Inc.) (cbrooksmtriinc@gmail.com)
- **Railroad Artificial Intelligence Intruder Learning System (RAILS)**; Project Lead, Erick Vega (MTRI) (efvega@mtu.edu)
- **Developing Safe and Efficient Driving and Routing Strategies at Railroad Grade Crossings based on Highway-Railway Connectivity**; Project Lead Dr. Kuilin Zhang (klzhang@mtu.edu)



Visual Sight Line Analysis from Drone Based Inspection

Rail And Intermodal Summer Youth Program

Our 2020 edition of the [Rail and Intermodal Summer Youth Program](#) was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the first summer we have missed since the program started in 2011. We are hoping that with the news on vaccines we can successfully run a program again in the coming year. We are tentatively targeting the week of July 11-16 ... stay tuned for more information around the start of the new year!

RTP Expands Scholarship Program—Support our Next Generation of Railroaders!!

More than 150 Michigan Tech students have received rail transportation scholarships through AREMA or rail industry scholarships hosted at Michigan Tech. Due to changes with AREMA scholarships, we want to grow and diversify our internal scholarship program. For example, we want to establish specific scholarship for freshmen to encourage their involvement in the program. We hope you will join us in our mission!!

Michigan Tech Rail Transportation Scholarships, get your donations in ASAP!!

We recently had a new giving page created to make donating much easier! For more information and to donate, please go to the link below.

<https://www.mtu.edu/cee/department/giving/rail-transportation/>



Michigan Tech



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RTP GUEST SPEAKERS

- JAN 27: Brad Diener and Dennis Maney - Lunda Construction - *Union Pacific Platte River Bridge Replacement*
- FEB 24: Kathleen Hepburn and Larry Golden - GATX Corp - *Locomotive and Freight Car Leasing Logistics*
- MAR 26: Michael McLaren and Ryan Hoensheid - Kiewit & MDOT - *Several Railroad Bridge Replacement/ Upgrade Projects*
- APR 20: Bob Pokorski - Retired - *TTX Railcar Pooling Operations*
- SEP 28: Student Internship Presentations
- OCT 12: Jon Warlof and Derek Yu - Alstom - *Track Circuit Based PTC*
- NOV 9: REAC Quiz Bowl
- NOV 16: Dr. C. Tyler Dick - University of Illinois Urbana Champaign - *Precision Scheduled Railroading*
- DEC 7: Brian Royak - LB Foster - *Friction Management*

Join Our LinkedIn Group!

More than 50 alumni have joined our group since it's launch a year ago. Join our group and invite your friends at

<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12310391/> and ask to join!

MORE NEWS AT WWW.RAIL.MTU.EDU