

U of M - Intercity Bus and Passenger Rail User Survey
Contract No. 2007-0315, JN 88386

The purpose of this study was to analyze user data collected on Michigan's intercity bus services and the three Michigan Amtrak Services: the Wolverine (Pontiac-Detroit-Chicago), the Blue Water (Port Huron-Chicago) and the Pere Marquette (Grand Rapids-Chicago). This survey is customarily done at five-year intervals. A similar survey was conducted in December 2000 (rail) and July 2001 (bus) and the study was compiled by the University of Michigan in 2002. This effort involves personally surveying a high percentage of passengers on all three Amtrak routes and on all intercity bus routes serving Michigan's lower and upper peninsulas. The survey was conducted in-house using Bureau of Transportation Planning survey personnel. This latest study was designed to obtain current data, assess the impact and use of intercity services, analyze selected service features and compile all the data in such a way as to compare it to the earlier study.

This study was started in March of 2007 when the first user surveys were conducted by MDOT Data Collection staff on the Amtrak passenger rail and intercity bus services in Michigan. Due to budget constraints, the project was suspended in May 2007. Because the University of Michigan was required to halt all activity on this study, it was necessary for staff to continue with University projects and they were not able to continue when MDOT funds became available in the fall of 2007. This resulted in a full year interruption in the project. To eliminate a delay in analyzing the information due to data entry, MDOT staff proceeded with this aspect of the process for all rail and bus surveys during the winter of 2008. The University of Michigan was then able to begin working on the analysis in May of 2008. The study was completed in July 2009.

The final report, *Intercity Bus and Passenger Rail Study* was submitted to MDOT in July, 2009. After some revisions requested by MDOT, it was completed in early December of 2009. It includes a complete analysis of the survey data for both passenger rail and intercity bus, a comparison between the two modes, a comparison to the 2002 study, and recommendations for future surveys. Using information on passenger demographics and use patterns, as well as service characteristics, this study evaluates survey responses to better identify patterns in travel behavior, identify trends by comparison to previous surveys, and compare and contrast the use of the intercity bus and rail modes.

Intercity bus service is provided in Michigan by Indian Trails and Greyhound. Bus routes can be found throughout the state, serving both the Upper and Lower Peninsulas. Intercity passenger rail service is only found in the lower portion of the Lower Peninsula. It does, however, serve the entire state through connections to intercity bus service. There are several intermodal facilities along the rail corridors where bus passengers can transfer to passenger rail service; Kalamazoo, Battle Creek and East Lansing are good examples.

Overall, this study provides information so MDOT and its governmental agency partners can work with service providers and communities to maximize the benefits of intercity passenger service to citizens, businesses and visitors throughout Michigan.