

# ACT

Association for Commuter Transportation

Winter 2017

ACT Midwest Chapter

# NEWSLETTER

## Looking Forward to the New Year

*A message from the chapter president*

Dear ACT Midwest Chapter members,

As chapter president, I'd like to welcome you to the first edition of our 2017 Midwest Chapter newsletter. In this newsletter, we have information on a variety of topics from members across our 12 state region. I am especially excited because despite our large geographic area, we will be hosting an in-person meeting on Sunday, April 2nd, prior to the Big 10 & Friends conference in Chicago. This will be a great networking opportunity for members to get to know each other and share TDM experiences from across the Midwest. A program will be forthcoming over the coming weeks.

In addition this newsletter has information from Roman Kuropas, our Midwest Chapter representative to the ACT National board. He recently attended the national board meeting at Disney World, but alas, he didn't manage to make it to any of the attractions beyond the actual meeting. We also have reflections from our scholarship winners to the 2016 International Conference in Portland, Oregon.

## Midwest Spotlight: Grand Rapids sets Records for Active Commute Week

*Number of participants, local businesses joining fifth annual event surpass expectations*

The Rapid and the Greater Grand Rapids Bicycle Coalition (GGRBC) announced today that the number of individuals and local businesses participating in the city's fifth annual Active Commute Week reached new highs in 2016, and the number of miles logged by commuters during June 20-24 more than doubled last year's event.

"We congratulate all of the participants and volunteers who have helped make our 2016 Active Commute Week one of the most successful events we've enjoyed to date," said Peter Varga, CEO of The Rapid.

"One of our priorities is to raise awareness about the health, economic and environmental benefits of active travel," Varga said. "Grand Rapids is a more vibrant community when we have a strong, connected network of transportation options."

The Greater Grand Rapids Bicycle Coalition's (GGRBC) Active Commute Week is the city's version of National Bike to Work Week, which is part of National Bike Month that is recognized annually during May across the United States. GGRBC, The Rapid and city leaders rescheduled the event in Grand Rapids to June this year for the first time with the hope that warmer weather would increase participation.

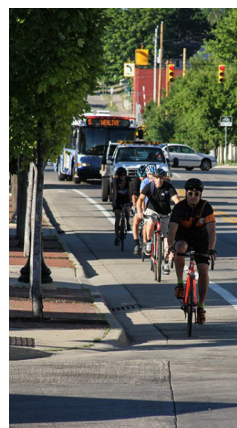
The decision produced levels of participation that far exceeded organizers' expectations, according to Nate Phelps, owner of Central District Cyclery in Grand Rapids and co-chair of the GGRBC board's special events committee.

"This is the best turnout we've ever experienced, with increases across-the-board in all categories," Phelps said. "We're delighted to promote an event that improves our quality of life in Grand Rapids as well as to help build a more respectful culture between motorists, bicyclists and active commuters."

Employers such as Steelcase, Grand Valley State University, Calvin College and Spectrum Health were among the 35 businesses and organizations that registered for the 2016 event, more than doubling the 17



*The Rapid and Founders Brewing Co. Pit Stop at Rapid Central Station*



*One of many Bike to Work Day bike trains visiting the Rapid's stop*

*New Year, continued from page 1...*  
(Don't forget to mark your calendars for this year's conference in New Orleans, July 31st through August 2nd!) The Rapid, one of our members from Michigan has a featured article. And last but not least, don't forget that we have a membership drive - any member who recruits another member will get a \$100 gift card to Amazon.

2017 is looking like a great year for ACT national and for the Midwest Chapter. We hope you'll stay engaged through this newsletter (we invite people to send content to Dan Sheehan and myself via email). Stay tuned for upcoming opportunities to get involved and happy new year! ~Becky Alper

## **Innova EV Named 'Top 10 Start-Up to Watch in 2017'**

*Founder of Innova EV, is a member of ACT Midwest*

Innova EV has wisely jumped onto the electric car bandwagon with the eye-catching Dash, a solar-charged 100% electric vehicle which costs absolutely nothing for fuel and produces no pollution. Innova EV, founded by CEO Roman Kuropas in 2006, is finding its niche as on-campus transport at universities, with the company having realized that millennials care profoundly about the environment and will often choose their college based on its level of sustainability. *[Originally published in [USA Business Review](#)]*

*Midwest Spotlight, continued from page 1...*

businesses and universities that participated last year and the highest total since its 2012 debut.

The 314 individuals who logged at least one commute last week through an online tracking system administered by The Rapid also set a new enrollment record, said Michael Bulthuis, the transit agency's public outreach coordinator of community engagement. In addition, the more than 17,000 travel miles logged last week by individual commuters sets a new Active Commute Week standard, Bulthuis said. In all, 1,935 active commutes were logged during the week.

The five-day Active Commute Week challenge helps build recognition of the different commute options that exist in Grand Rapids and encourages area residents to consider diversifying their mode of transit to work. The competition allows individual participants and teams to earn points for embracing active transportation opportunities, including bicycling, walking, riding The Rapid, carpooling, running, long-boarding or inline skating.

Beyond highlighting the healthy lifestyle benefits generated by active commuting, Active Commute Week helps support Grand Rapids' inaugural "Driving Change" Bicycle Safety Education Campaign that is designed to educate motorists and non-motorist travelers about learning to share the road.

Grand Rapids launched "Driving Change," the city's largest-ever bicycle safety education push, in May to help reduce the number of injuries or deaths from bike crashes. The initiative also is intended to improve public safety while spurring better understanding of the city's new bicycle-related ordinances that are in force beginning in 2016.

Sponsors of the 2016 Active Commute Week include: Kent County Parks Foundation, Long Road Distillers, Advantage Benefits Group, Meijer, West Michigan Ride Share, GVSU, Steelcase, Turnstone, Kent District Library, Rapid Wheelmen, Rockford Construction, Cascade Engineering, Catalyst Partners, Boston Square Community Bikes, DPT Solutions, Calvin College, Perrigo, Grand Rapids Bicycle Company, Williams & Works and Priority Health. Prizes for the Active Commute Challenge competitions included a \$100 Meijer gift card, \$75 Hydration Pack, \$155 Bivi Bike Hook and monthly bus passes from The Rapid. *[Originally published in [The Rapidian](#)]*

## **Midwest Chapter Referral Program**

Midwest Chapter members - Help recruit a new ACT member and receive a \$100 Amazon gift card! There are only two things you need to do:

- 1) Establish first contact with a potential new ACT member.
- 2) Email the name, company, and contact information of this person to the Membership Director for follow-up.

It's that easy! If the potential new member joins ACT, you and that person will each receive a \$100 Amazon gift card. There is a limit of 10 cards per year, so don't wait! For more information, or if you have already contacted a potential new member, please email the Midwest Chapter Membership Director, Michael Bulthuis, at [mbulthuis@ridetherapid.org](mailto:mbulthuis@ridetherapid.org).

# Scholarship Winners Reflect on 2016 ACT International Conference in Portland

*Conference Provides Ample Opportunity for Education and Networking*

**Dan Sheehan**

As a winner of the Midwest Chapter's ACT Conference, I was thrilled and thankful for the opportunity to attend the 2016 ACT International Conference in Portland. As a newbie in the TDM field, I was excited to attend the conference for the first time, albeit a bit nervous knowing of all the new experiences that were about to greet me.

Suffice to say, the conference was wonderful! My nerves were quelled almost immediately at the "first timer conference attendee" reception, where I got to meet other newbies in the TDM field along with mentors in the Midwest Chapter looking to welcome me and introduce me to others. That seemed to be a theme of the conference: Others were always welcoming and excited to network. It was a great opportunity to meet others who are passionate about improving TDM in their home locations!

Of course, the content of the conference was insightful. I had the opportunity to learn about best practices in the field, including new technologies that passively track commute mode and methods of inducing behavior change by breaking bad habits. All of the sessions I had the opportunity to attend were informative and were fodder for ideas/policies that I look forward to trying out back in Columbus!

Thanks again to the ACT Midwest chapter for this amazing opportunity. I look forward to joining you next year in New Orleans!

**Gail Contrucci**

As an ACT member, I was fortunate enough to be able to attend the 2016 ACT International Conference in Portland, OR this past summer and found it to be a very valuable experience. As the Business Outreach Coordinator for the Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority, I promote alternative forms of transportation to our local partners including Universities, hospitals and various other large businesses, all of which I maintain very close relationships with.

The conference enabled me to take advantage of many educational opportunities. Each day is jam packed with a variety of sessions that teach you about the financial, emotional and personal benefits of alternative forms of transportation, stress reduction, the future of transportation, how to best promote your programs, the benefits of social media, what motivates people and much more. Since there are such a variety of topics presented, it enabled me to choose not only those that would be of the most benefit to what I do on a daily basis, but also gave me the opportunity to choose topics that I need to learn more about.

My biggest "take away" was learning about the high level of stress reduction that occurs when choosing to vanpool or take another alternative form of transportation, as opposed to traveling in a SOV. There is \$150 billion per year in lost revenue due to the stress that driving a SOV creates, which effects work productivity, increases absenteeism and getting sick.

It's great to be able meet and re-connect with chapter members and establish new relationships, both of which would be tough to do without the conference. The Key Note Speakers are always very interesting and engaging and I find that each conference I attend gets better and better. I would highly recommend attending to both new and seasoned members and hope to make it to Louisiana for next year's conference!



## Shared Mobility: The Future of Transportation

By: *Roman Kuropas*

Shared Mobility and Transportation has grown from sharing a trolley to connected vehicles that can drive themselves. The movement of transportation from personal vehicles to rideshare and public transportation was demonstrated at the North American International Auto Show in the Auto MobiliD section. An entire floor of the Cobo Center was showcasing autonomous vehicles, electric vehicles, and shared mobility. Visitors had an opportunity to experience shared mobility, with test rides and an indoor test track. During the press and industry week, we promoted ACT and encouraged key members in the automotive industry to join.

The forward momentum of shared mobility in transportation was mirrored at the ACT National Board Meeting at Disney World last week. The board reviewed and approved the 2017 Work Plan, Council Leadership, Public Policy Committee, Parliamentarian, Committee Chairs and Chapter/Council Work Plans and Budgets. We look forward to the continuing of Public/Private partnerships at the DC policy event in April.

## An Introduction to the 2017 ACT Midwest Chapter Board Members



*Becky Alper, President*

Becky Alper is the Workplaces Program Manager at St. Paul Smart Trips, the TMO for St. Paul. In her first year at Smart Trips, Becky took the program from fee-free services to a fee-for-service program, generating sustainable local match and diversifying income sources. Her role spans from proposal writing to contract implementation, including conducting transportation surveys, leading experiential learning events, and suggesting new commuter pricing models. In addition, she manages the ZAP Twin Cities bicycle commute incentive program. Previously, she worked at Jefferson Bus Lines and the Minnesota Department of Transportation in the Office of Transit.



*Jarvis Keys, Vice-President*

Jarvis has worked at the Minnesota Department of Transportation since 1989 and has been an ACT member since 1990. His current position is the Greater Minnesota Rideshare Coordinator within the Office of Transit. In his position, he manages rideshare programs outside of the 7 county metro area of the Twin Cities. Jarvis is a graduate of Concordia University in St. Paul, Mn with a degree in Social Science and a minor in Physical Education.



*Kim Koy, Treasurer*

As a Business Development Project Manager for Pace Suburban Bus, Kim has engaged in various projects that help address a wide range of transportation issues in Northeastern Illinois. Drawing on over 12 years of analysis and engagement experience in public transportation, Ms. Koy currently administers the Pace RideShare Program. Over her career, Kim has created the Pace Commuter toolkit and the Pace Employer Commuter Grant guidelines to aid employers with developing a sustainable employee commuter program; partnered with economic development organizations, Chicagoland Illinois workNet centers and employers such as Advocate Health Care Network, FBI Chicago Bureau, FedEx Ground and Panduit; and worked closely with local community colleges and universities on their environmental efforts.



*Dan Sheehan, Secretary*

Dan Sheehan works at the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission as the Alternative Transportation team's Commute Coordinator. During his 2 years with the team, Dan has helped to develop a new strategic plan for program implementation, launch the region's first Commuter Challenge, and guide multiple rideshare agencies in Ohio through a comprehensive TDM advancement process. Dan graduated from Ohio State University's City & Regional Planning program in 2013.

## Upcoming Events

### Big 10 Transportation & Parking Conference + ACT Midwest Chapter Meeting

Join ACT Midwest Chapter in Chicago for our Spring, in-person meeting, immediately prior to the Big 10 and Friends Conference Transportation & Parking Conference! This will be our main opportunity to get together, in person, outside of the national conference, and to network and learn about TDM efforts here in our region. Please note: you do not have to attend the conference to attend ACT's Midwest Chapter Spring Meeting; however, if you do wish to attend the conference, you are welcome to do so and may register at <http://www.luc.edu/campustransportation/big-ten/>. More details on the program for our Spring meeting will follow in a separate email.

To summarize:

**When:** Sunday, April 2nd, noon to 4pm

**Who:** Any ACT Midwest Chapter member or anyone interested in joining ACT!

**What:** ACT Midwest's Spring Meeting, which will include lunch and light refreshments

**Cost:** \$25

**Where:** Loyola University. [CLICK HERE](#) for hotel accommodations



### ACT Public Policy Summit

Join other ACT members in Washington, D.C. on April 19-21 to help influence policy and legislation that promote TDM, transportation options, and mobility-on-demand. Register at [actweb.org](http://actweb.org).

## An Introduction to the 2017 ACT Midwest Chapter Board Members (continued)



### Michael Bulthuis, *Membership Coordinator*

Michael Bulthuis began working for The Rapid in January of 2012. His responsibilities include managing The Rapid's rideshare and vanpooling programs, assisting with the agency's marketing plan, and working directly with stakeholder groups to provide information and education about The Rapid and its services. He is also responsible for in-house media production featured on

The Rapid's YouTube channel. Aside from his roles at The Rapid, Michael serves on the Heartside Business Association Board, and is also a member of Westrain, a collection of members that markets and promotes Amtrak's Pere Marquette rail line in Southwest Michigan.



### Beth Snoke, *ACT National Board At-Large*

Beth has over 29 years of experience in both operations and administration in the transportation and parking field. For the past 28 years, Beth has worked for The Ohio State University and currently serves as Director of OSU Transportation & Traffic Management. In her current position, Beth has oversight responsibility for the Campus Area Bus Service (CABS), Motor Pool,

OSU Wexner Medical Center Valet and Transportation Services, Vehicle Maintenance and Fleet, Traffic Management, and Parking Concession Contract Management. Beth has served as a member of several peer review teams for other universities. She is an active member of the International Parking Institute (IPI), Association of Commuter Transportation (ACT), Big Ten and Midwestern Universities Transportation & Parking Association, Campus Parking and Transportation Association (CPTA), and Municipal Equipment Maintenance Association (MEMA). Favorite hobbies include cooking, wine tasting, watching football, and spending time with her four dogs.



### Roman Kuropas, *ACT National Board Chapter Rep*

As founder and CEO, Roman strives to make 100% electric, 4G LTE connected vehicles more accessible to universities and municipalities. Before Innova UEV, Roman was CEO of Expert Corporation, a global manufacturer of LEV2 and PZEV evaporative emissions systems used on over 15 million vehicles manufactured

globally. He and his team have also contributed to the development of instrument clusters, telematics and LCD touch screens for companies like Fisker, Tesla and Case New Holland.