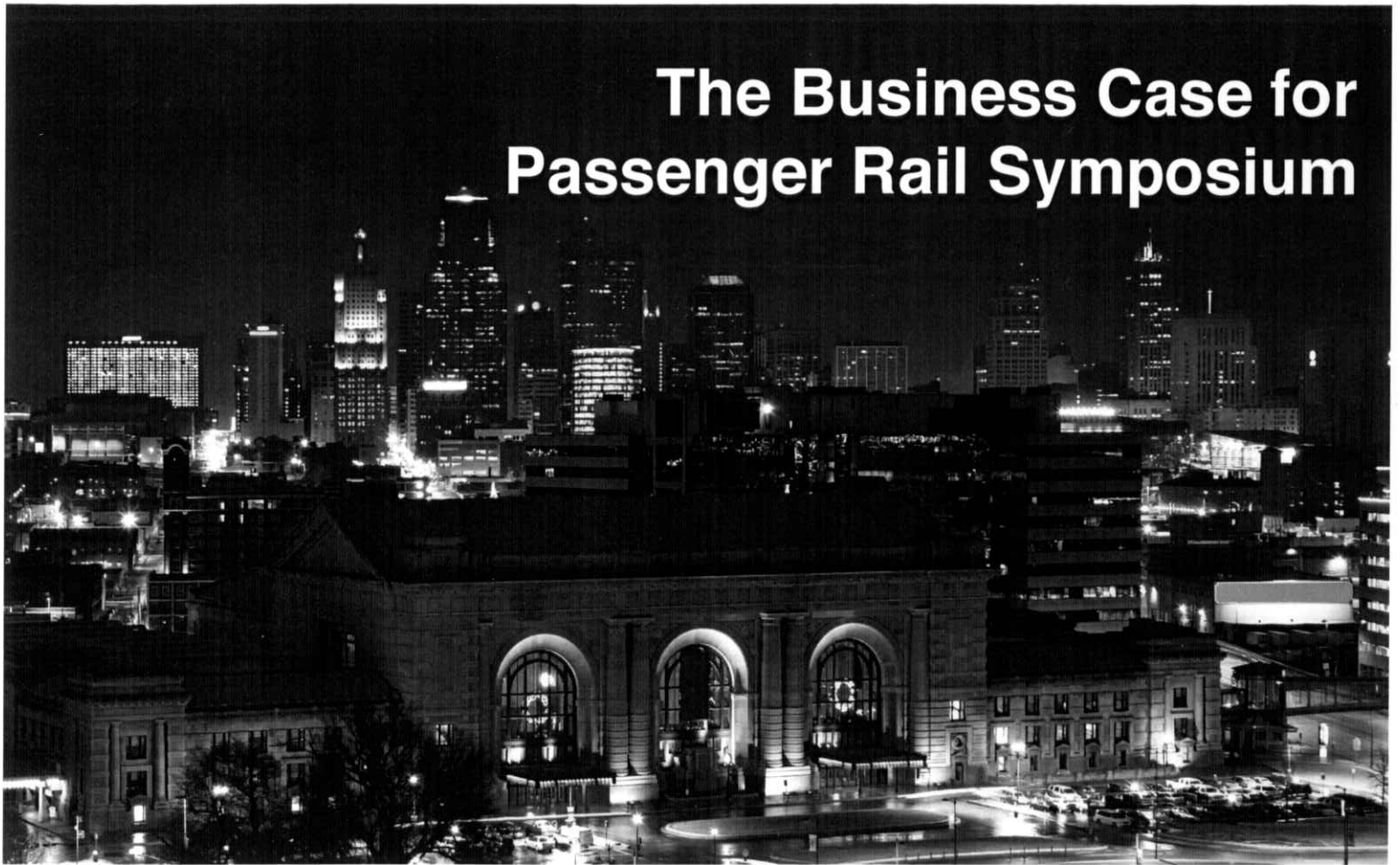


# The Business Case for Passenger Rail Symposium



## The Speakers

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### Pat and Kris Larkin The Lark Inn



Pat and Kris Larkin are originally Okies from Tulsa, Oklahoma who moved to Chase County, Kansas in 2010 after spending 20 years in Southern California.

In their previous lives, they owned and operated one of the largest residential property management companies in southern California. Kris and Pat have over 30 years of experience in Real Estate, Property Management, Hospitality, Home Building and Land Development.

They now own and operate The Lark Inn Guesthouses in Cottonwood Falls, Kansas. These properties, which the Larkins have completely renovated, are old prairie cottages dating back to the 1890's and early 1900's. They operate the guesthouses as vacation rentals and hold gourmet-cooking classes several times each month.

Pat and Kris are also writers and Instructors. They have published four books on the subject of property management and teach seminars around the country on a regular basis.

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### Chris Larson, President & CEO Larson Binkley, Inc.



With over 30 years experience in consulting engineering, Chris Larson leads the firm with a constant eye on innovation and improvement. As a mechanical engineer, he is current with the issues of building systems design, including indoor air quality, energy efficiency standards, building energy modeling, LEED® criteria, and green building practices. His experience in complex design, as well as HVAC construction and design-build production, brings cost-effective, practical and innovative options to the firm's projects.

A strong business background provides Chris the perspective needed for managing a company in today's economy. His influence is reflected in Larson Binkley's continuous application of computer science and technology to enhance product quality and the efficiency of design production.

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Community of Emporia

- City of Emporia
- Emporia Chamber and CVB
- Emporia Main Street

**Administrator Joseph C. Szabo**  
**Federal Railroad Administration**



Nominated March 20, 2009, and confirmed by the United States Senate on April 29, 2009, Joseph C. Szabo is the twelfth Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Administrator, responsible for overseeing the operations for the eight hundred plus person organization; managing a comprehensive railroad safety assurance program and regulatory initiatives; enforcing railroad safety laws and regulations; developing and implementing national freight and passenger rail policy and financial assistance programs including the High Speed Rail program; and overseeing wide-ranging advanced research and development projects in support improved railroad safety.

Szabo is a fifth generation railroader who, between 2006 and 2009, was Vice President of the Illinois AFL-CIO. He has served as mayor of Riverdale, Illinois, a member of the South Suburban Mayors Transportation Committee, and

Vice Chairman of the Chicago Area Transportation Study's Executive Committee. In 2002, he chaired the Governor's Freight Rail Sub-Committee and, in 2005, was assigned by the United Transportation Union International to the FRA's Railroad Safety Advisory Committee (RSAC), where he participated in the development of rail-safety regulations.

Szabo has served on the Executive Council of Chicago Metropolitan 2020, focusing on Land Use Planning and Transportation issues and the Board for the Historic Pullman Foundation. He was a member of the Chicagoland Metropolitan Planning Council. He holds a baccalaureate degree in Labor Relations from Governors State University and is the recipient of an honorary doctorate from Lewis University for his lifetime commitment to public service.

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**Derrick James, Director, Government Affairs - Central Amtrak**



Derrick Jones joined Amtrak in 2007. He is responsible for legislative and policy-maker outreach and communication throughout the Midwest. His 13-state territory spans an area from North Dakota to Ohio, and Michigan to Oklahoma. In testimony before state legislators, and local officials he stresses the role that a robust passenger rail system can play

in fostering greater mobility, increasing economic linkages between communities, and offering diverse travelers a viable alternative to congested roads and expensive air travel. Derrick comes to Amtrak from the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), where he was Manager of Visitor and Group Marketing.

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**Dennis Slimmer, Bureau Chief of Transportation Planning Kansas Department of Transportation**



Dennis is the Bureau Chief of Transportation Planning at the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT). As Senior Manager for Transportation Planning, he is responsible for KDOT's efforts related to traffic data collection, mapping and GIS, transportation data analysis and reporting, freight planning, statewide multi-modal planning, access management

and economic development, public transit, and metropolitan planning. Dennis received a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Kansas State University and an MBA from Washburn University in Topeka. He is a licensed professional engineer in the State of Kansas.

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## **The Panelists**

**Ross Capon, President & CEO**  
**National Association of Railroad Passenger**



Ross Capon joined the staff of the National Association of Railroad Passenger (NARP) in 1975, and became executive director in 1976. In 2008, his title was changed to president and CEO. Mr. Capon's duties as President of the only national organization advocating for the users of passenger trains and rail transit include testifying before Congress and working with members of Congress to increase funding for passenger rail service; briefing the media on passenger rail issues; and coordinating among state and regional associations of railroad passengers on local issues that affect passenger rail.

A recognized expert on passenger rail, Mr. Capon is a member of the Federal Railroad Administration's Railroad Safety Advisory Committee, the Transportation Research Board's Committee on Intercity Passenger Rail Systems, and the board of Travelers Aid International. His many speaking appearances have included such forums as Amtrak's Customer Advisory Committee;

Railway Supply Institute; American Association of State Highway & Transportation Officials' Standing Committee on Rail Transportation; American Public Transportation Association Rail Transit Conferences; Society of Government Economists; and the Transportation Research Forum. He was a presenter at the 3rd World Congress on High Speed Rail in Berlin.

Previously, Mr. Capon served as special assistant for Railroad Operations in the Executive Office of Transportation and Construction for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts where he helped save the commuter rail network of Eastern Massachusetts. He also worked in Philadelphia for the Religious Society of Friends.

Mr. Capon received his B.A. from the University of Illinois (Champaign-Urbana) in 1969. A native of Newton, Massachusetts, Mr. Capon lives in Bethesda, Maryland, with his wife Louise and their three sons. A married daughter lives in Arlington, Virginia.

**Pete Meitzner, City Council Member**  
**City of Wichita**



Pete is a lifelong resident of Wichita, attending Kapaun Mt. Carmel High School and graduating from Wichita State University with a degree in Business Administration. He and Suzi, his wife of 30 years, have two teenage children. Pete was employed in the banking industry in Wichita for 13 years before venturing into the world of entrepreneurship 20 years ago when he started, and has since run, a telecom company. Pete plans on bringing his business experience to the City Council. His experience gives him the budgeting and community knowledge that is a necessary for keeping our City moving forward. Pete's previous business experience allowed him to work closely with numerous State, County and City governments all

over the U.S. which has provided him firsthand knowledge and insight on various ways a city can be run effectively.

Pete is a successful businessman with conservative values who remains active in his church, our schools and the Wichita community. One of his greatest passions is serving as President of The Lord's Diner Advisory Board, which he describes as an incredible example of how our Wichita community comes together to help each other.

Pete believes Wichita is a wonderful city and he is committed to helping Wichita become an even GREATER CITY TO LIVE and WORK. He plans to expand his ability to serve our community and make a positive impact on our city and its residents.

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**Homer Nicholson, Mayor**  
**Ponca City, Oklahoma**



Homer Nicholson has served as Mayor of the City of Ponca City since 2007. A native of Braman, Oklahoma, he served in the U.S. Army 35 years and retired with the rank of Command Sergeant Major E-9. He worked at ConocoPhillips for 38 years in the Geophysics Department and in Facilities Management. He has owned Nicholson Auction and Real Estate for 20

years and been a pilot for 39 years. He is very active in the community, serving on many community boards and chairs the Chamber's Retail Task Force. As Mayor he serves on state and regional boards and committees. He is the current president of Oklahoma Municipal League.

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**Rick Harnish, Executive Director**  
**Midwest High Speed Rail Association**



Rick Harnish is the Executive Director of the Midwest High Speed Rail Association (MHSRA), the nation's oldest and largest high-speed rail advocacy organization.

Harnish co-founded MHSRA in 1993, became its first executive director in 2001. His quotes and opinion pieces frequently appear in national, Midwest and Illinois media, and he regularly speaks around the country on high-speed rail and railroad infrastructure issues.

Harnish has spearheaded several important passenger rail achievements. In 2006, the Midwest High Speed Rail Association was a moving force behind Illinois General Assembly's doubling of state funding for passenger trains from \$12.1 million to \$24.7 million. The organization persuaded the Illinois General Assembly to appropriate \$850 million for railroad infrastructure investment, including \$150 million for Amtrak expansion and \$400 million for high-speed rail, largest state legislative appropriation for railroads in U.S. history. And MHSRA has also persuaded Illinois Governor Quinn to make a

Chicago-Champaign Core Express train one of his top priorities. Under Harnish's leadership, the MHSRA conducted the first ever transportation engineering study of a 220-mph high-speed rail line in the Midwest. The organization subsequently commissioned a Siemen's-sponsored study of the economic impact of a 220-mph high-speed rail network on the Chicago metropolitan area.

Harnish sits on the the Civic Advisory Committee for the Chicago Union Station Master Plan Study. He is a member of Governor Quinn's Advisory Committee to the Illinois Department of Transportation's feasibility study on a 220-mph high-speed corridor from Chicago to Champaign/Urbana. He is also board member of the National Association of Railroad Passengers.

Harnish graduated from Elmhurst College in 1986 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in transportation management. After leaving Elmhurst, Harnish was a logistics manager at American President Lines and JB Hunt and managed industrial real estate in Chicago.

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**Stu Nicholson, Media Relations & Public Involvement**  
**Engage Public Affairs**



Bringing a combination of experience and skills from an award-winning career in broadcast news, as well as media relations and transportation advocacy, Stu has succeeded in earning necessary public and media attention to projects and issues including homelessness, public transit, intercity passenger rail and overall transportation policy. His down-to-earth personality and pithy style of public speaking and writing connects with people in any environment and has

helped gain both positive media attention and public support. His background as a professional journalist helps not only in connecting with media on a message, but helping to better understand how decisions are made in a newsroom about what makes news. He also brings valuable experience in grassroots advocacy, fact-finding research and facilitating civil discussion of issues, including being the spokesperson for a state agency during a major transportation initiative.

**Professor Wally Meyer**  
**University of Kansas School of Business**



Wally is the Director of Entrepreneurship Programs at the University of Kansas. He is the creator of experiential learning studies in entrepreneurship and business consulting and teaches multiple undergraduate and graduate courses as a faculty member of the KU School of Business.

Entrepreneurship is a consistent theme throughout his 25+ year career, beginning at The Gillette Company where he helped extend the Right Guard and The Dry Look brands into new product areas, continuing at RJR Nabisco where he turned around the Planters snacks line, consolidated all Nabisco USA Food Service Vend Operations into one organization yielding substantial cost efficiencies and sales enhancements and managed the development of a wholly new business unit which expanded Nabisco cookie, cracker, snacks and confection product lines into mass merchandiser, drug and convenience channels of distribution. His large company business experience includes Sprint, where as VP Marketing and Sales he had P&L responsibility for \$1.5B US revenues, 1300 employees and managed the development of Sprint Sense, the revolutionary

dime-a-minute long distance calling plan, which turned around declining divisional share, enabling record revenue and gross margin achievement.

Wally has applied the lessons learned from those experiences to several small companies, entrepreneurial challenges in which he held President/CEO positions. For Catalina Marketing, an electronic marketing and information technology company, he managed the growth from \$30M to \$100M in sales and its Initial Public Offering on the New York Stock Exchange. For Efficient Market Services, an information technology company, he conceived and managed the turnaround strategy and for SciTech Plastics Group, he directed the acquisition of eight plastic injection molding companies, integrated and positioned them to provide a design-to-production solution to all medical device manufacturers.

Wally has a BA from Franklin & Marshall College and an MBA from Baker University. He serves on multiple advisory boards and is a past Treasurer of KCPT and Board Member of the Kansas City Lyric Opera

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**Senator Daryl Beall**  
**Iowa State Legislature**



Daryl Beall was elected in 2010 to his third four-year term in the Iowa Senate. He represents the people of Calhoun, Greene and Webster counties.

Senator Beall is Chair of the Veterans Affairs Committee, vice-chair of the Local Government Committee and vice-chair of the Transportation & Infrastructure Budget Subcommittee. He also serves on the Commerce, Education and Transportation committees, and chairs the Joint House-Senate International Relations Committee.

Beall was born in Fort Dodge and grew up near the Calhoun County town of Somers. He attended Iowa Central Community College in Fort Dodge, where he earned his associates degree

and served as student body president. He earned a B.A. in political science from Buena Vista University and a Master of Public Administration from Drake University. He was a Taft Fellow at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Beall managed his family-owned furniture business in Fort Dodge and was president of the Downtown Retailers Association. He also served as president of the Interfaith Forum, the Kiwanis Club, chairman of the missions committee at his church, and as a board member of the Child Abuse Council, Arts Council, and the Alcoholism Treatment Center. Beall is a member of the Kiwanis Club, and Trinity United Methodist Church.

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**Senator Dick Kelsey**  
**Kansas State Legislature**



State Senator Dick Kelsey has served the State of Kansas as member of the House of Representatives, 2005-2008, and since 2009 as Senator representing the 26th District. Senator Kelsey has a background in business and is the president of King's Camp Incorporated, 1990-present.

He is the past administrator of Landmark Christian School, 1975-1985, and, pastor of Monticello Michigan City, 1969-

1975. He has also served as a Board Member, Barclay College, 1995-present.

Senator Kelsey serves on eight legislative committees and is the current chair of the Kansas State House caucus. He has been a leading supporter of the intercity passenger rail initiative.

Senator Kelsey resides in Goddard, Kansas with his wife Doris, with whom he has raised six children.

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**Michele Teel**  
**Missouri Department of Transportation**



Michelle Teel, MoDOT Multimodal Operations Director has worked for MoDOT for more than 15 years. Michelle oversees the division responsible for administering state and federal programs that fund and support aviation, railroads, transit, waterways and freight development.

Michelle has a bachelor degree in civil engineering from Washington University in St. Louis and a master's degree in business administration from Williams Woods University in Fulton. She is a licensed professional engineer and is also certified as a professional traffic operations engineer.