



ITS Michigan Newsletter

JOIN TODAY!

Hello Craig,

This edition of the *ITS Michigan Newsletter* is focused on the organization's **2021 Annual Meeting** which took place Oct. 5.

Here's what's included below:

- Overview of Annual Meeting
- John U Bacon delivers luncheon address
- Mark de la Vergne looks at the future of mobility
- Infrastructure operators discuss emerging technologies
- OEMs consider impacts of technology
- Thought leaders and transportation trends
- ITS America President and CEO Laura Chace
- Talent development and "upskilling"
- ITS Michigan 2021 scholarship winners
- Thanks to event sponsors



2021 ITS Michigan Annual Meeting provided wealth of info about connected and autonomous vehicles; John U Bacon was luncheon speaker



ITS Michigan President Gary Piotrowicz welcomes attendees to the 2021 Annual Meeting.

From the most knowledgeable leaders in automotive and infrastructure technology to one of the nation's leading sports authors, the 2021 Intelligent Transportation Society of Michigan (ITS Michigan) Annual Meeting had something for everybody.

And, the meeting was in person. "After cancelling last year's annual meeting due to COVID concerns, it felt really great to finally meet with everyone again in person and get to rekindle friendships and catch up with peers," observed ITS Michigan President Gary Piotrowicz, deputy managing director/county highway engineer of the Road Commission for Oakland County, who lead the planning process for the event.

"There really is so much value to be gained from an in-person session like this," Piotrowicz added.

The event was held Oct. 5 at Weber's Boutique Hotel in Ann Arbor and attracted a sold-out crowd of approximately 120 people. "Frankly, we weren't sure what to expect in the current climate," Piotrowicz confessed, "but the turnout and the enthusiasm far exceeded our expectations."

The day-long event featured numerous expert speakers, several panel discussions and a very popular luncheon address by nationally recognized sports and business author, journalist and sports commentator John U. Bacon.

Bacon provides insight on leadership during popular lunchtime comments

John U. Bacon is the author of “Let them Lead,” “Fourth and Long: The Fight for the Soul of College Football,” “The Spark,” “Bo’s Lasting Lessons,” “Three and Out: Rich Rodriguez and the Michigan Wolverines in the Crucible of College Football,” “Playing Hurt: My Journey from Despair to Hope” and others. He also provides weekly sports commentary on behalf of the U of M athletic program for Michigan Radio and often appears on National Public Radio (NPR), ESPN and the Big Ten Network among other networks. He teaches journalism at Northwestern University and at U of M.

At the ITS Michigan event, Bacon discussed “Let Them Lead”, which is an analysis of his three years of coaching the Huron High School hockey team in Ann Arbor, and taking the team from being one of the worst high school hockey teams in the nation to one of the best, and the leadership lessons he learned through the process.

While not related to transportation technology, Bacon’s talk was warmly received and provided lots of insight into leadership strategies and observations that are widely applicable to all walks of life. “John allowed us to step away from technology for a moment,” ITS Michigan President Gary Piotrowicz noted, “while reminding us that leadership skills are necessary to succeed in any field.”



A look at the future of transportation: Mark de la Vergne

The Annual Meeting truly got underway when noted mobility expert Mark de la Vergne offered his insight into the future of mobility in our state.

He is the vice president of Cavnue, a company created to build the world's most advanced roads. De la Vergne is nationally recognized for his experience in innovating and implementing mobility solutions in cities. His work in Detroit over the last three years has established the playbook for how cities and the private sector can work together.

Prior to joining Cavnue, de la Vergne was the chief of mobility innovation for the City of Detroit. Prior to that, he spent eight years as the growth and innovation principal at Sam Schwartz Consulting.

De la Vergne talked about the evolution of transportation and where the infrastructure needs to go to be able to accommodate “hands-off” driving. He called for simplifying the road-operating environment for both people and vehicles as technology moves forward.

He also discussed the challenges that will arise from the diverse needs of autonomous vehicles, ranging from freight-hauling trucks to transit vehicles to passenger vehicles.

De la Vergne's presentation can be viewed [here](#).



Infrastructure operators discuss emerging technologies on the roadway

Next up, a panel of leading infrastructure operators from around the region offered real-life insight into what they are doing today and what is coming in the future. The panel included:

- John Abraham: Director of Traffic Operations, Macomb County Department of Roads
- Elise Feldpauch, Connected-Vehicle Specialist, Michigan Department of Transportation Presentation [here](#)
- Tony Geara, ITS and Traffic Engineer, City of Detroit
- Ahmad Jawad, Signal Systems Engineer, Road Commission for Oakland County Presentation [here](#)



Above, pannelists Elise Feldpauch, Tony Geara and Ahmad Jawad. Below, John Abraham.



The session was moderated by ITS Michigan President Gary Plotrowicz.

OEMs offer perspective on the impact of technology on their industry



After hearing about the infrastructure, the Annual Meeting audience was treated to a discussion of how emerging technologies are changing the landscape for the original equipment manufacturers (OEMs).

Presenting the automakers' perspectives were Hideki Hada, executive engineer of active safety for Toyota Motor North America, and Bakhtiar Litkouhi, PhD, manager of automated driving and vehicle control systems for General Motors.

A representative of Ford Motor Company had also planned to participate, but was unable to attend.

The Toyota presentation is [here](#).

The discussion was moderated by Kiel McIntosh, sales engineer at Carrier and Gable, and ITS Michigan vice president.

Pictured above are Toyota's Hideki Hada (left) and GM's Bakhtiar Litkouhi, PhD.

Leaders talk about key trends in mobility

A panel of thought leaders in the field of mobility field provided some fascinating insight on the subject to kick off the afternoon.

Included were:

- Collin Castle, ITS Program Manager, Michigan Department of Transportation
Presentation [here](#)

- Henry Liu, Director, Center for Connected and Automated Transportation at U of M
Presentation [here](#)

- Trevor Pawl, Chief Mobility Officer, Office of Future Mobility and Electrification, Michigan Department of Transportation

- Rebuen Sarkar, President and CEO, American Center for Mobility
Presentation [here](#)

The discussion was moderated by Matt Smith, associate vice president and emerging technologies practice lead, Michael Baker International.



Collin Castle



Henry Liu



Trevor Pawl



Rebuen Sarkar

ITS America president offers Washington perspective



Laura Chace, the new president and CEO of the Intelligent Transportation Society of America (ITS America) offered a Washington DC perspective on the proposed federal infrastructure bill and other related issues.

She also spoke about the importance of encouraging more female and minority participation in the connected-vehicle and STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) fields. She is a founding member of MobilityXX, which is an initiative that seeks to increase the number of women in transportation by 10 percent over 10 years.

Chace became ITS America president and CEO in August. She previously served as the association's chief operating officer.

Presentation [here](#).

Panel discusses talent development and "upskilling"

Wrapping up the conference was an exciting panel discussion about talent development and "upskilling". The group addressed the critical question: Where is your workforce going to come from?

The panel was moderated by Barb Land, executive director of Square One Education Network and featured:

- Megan Klein, a student at the University of Michigan who is looking forward to a career in the STEM field.
- Janeen Erne, regional apprenticeship administrator for the Workforce Intelligence Network
- Elaina Farnsworth, CEO of The Next Education
- Michelle K. Mueller, PhD, vice president of economic and college development at Washtenaw Community College

Photos: Above right, Barb Land. Middle right, Michelle Mueller and Megan Klein. Bottom right, Elaina Farnsworth.



Two awarded ITS Michigan scholarships during Annual Meeting

During the Annual Meeting, ITS Michigan selected the winners of its annual scholarship contest, in which participants are invited to display and present a poster. The students are allowed to choose the topic of the poster based on a list provided by ITS Michigan. The contest entrants must be undergraduate or graduate students at a Michigan-based college or university.

This year, two students were selected to receive the \$2,000 scholarships. They were:

- **William Wakefield**, and undergraduate student at Kettering University
- **Claire Wan**, and undergraduate student at the University of Michigan

ITS Michigan thanks its sponsors for the Annual Meeting

The ITS Michigan Annual Meeting is not a simple or inexpensive undertaking. In fact, were it not for the generous contributions of the event's sponsors, the event would not be possible.

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