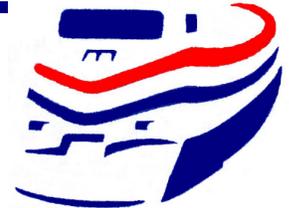


TRAINRIDER

THE NEWSLETTER OF **TRAINRIDERS/NORTHEAST**



Chairman's Update

Who says we haven't been busy since the passage of LD2019 (the bill that makes possible the extension of Downeaster trains to Freeport and Brunswick by 2010)? Who says "nothing happens in the summer"?

On July 10th, state and local officials drove several golden spikes into the Mountain Division Rail Line to mark the purchase of the final 5.2 mile section by the Maine DOT. This final piece will make it possible to travel by rail between Portland, Fryeburg, North Conway and beyond sometime in the future. The renewed interest in the Mountain Division reminded us that again, if TNE had not been around nearly 20 years ago to file a 90 day restraining order to prevent the scheduled removal of the tracks for scrap that there would have been no event in 2008. But then that's why TNE helped to create the Mountain Division Alliance in the late 80's - early 90's in anticipation of future service.

Unfortunately, there are way too many passenger and freight issues pending at the moment, and there just isn't enough money available to bring these projects on line all at the same time.

(See **UPDATE** Page 4)

Our **Downeaster** carried 48,438 passengers in July, a 33.6% increase over last July. Ticket revenues here increased by 34.1% to \$722,676!

It was also the first month to see a daily ridership over 2000 passengers.

Amtrak trumpeted its continued national ridership gains, noting its July patronage of 2,750,278 was the most for any single month in the company's 37-year existence, and up 14% compared with its July 2007 ridership. Ticket revenue for July was \$168 million, up 18.6% from July one year ago.

Total ridership through July 31 for fiscal year 2008, which began Oct. 1, 2007, was 23.7 million, up from 21.3 million for the comparable FY07 10-month period. Ticket revenue for the fiscal year to date reached \$1.4 billion, up 14.1% from the comparable FY07 period.

"Increasing fuel prices, highway congestion, airline issues and environmental awareness continue to make intercity passenger rail extremely relevant and popular," said Amtrak President and CEO Alex Kummant. "In addition, we continue to work on service improvements and better on-time performance, which draws more

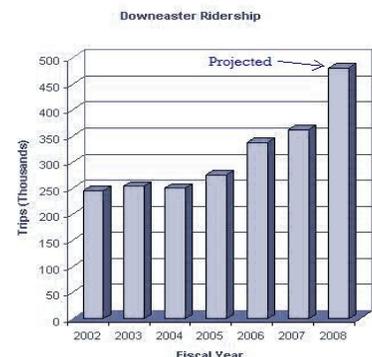
Downeaster's July 2008 Ridership Sets All-Time Monthly Record!

ridership and revenue each month. Our record-setting ridership and ticket revenue in the month of July alone

indicate we will end the year with approximately three million new passenger trips in FY09."

Amtrak ridership and revenue gains were notched in the company's long-distance, short-distance, and Northeast Corridor operations.

Congress seeks to increase Amtrak funding, particularly capital funds, for fiscal year 2009 despite the threat of a presidential veto. House and Senate conference committee members still must resolve their differences: the House approved \$1.43 billion for Amtrak, while the Senate seeks \$1.55 billion.



TrainRiders 20th Annual Meeting on May 13, 2008



Wayne Davis presents Senator Mitchell with a framed, numbered print issued for the inaugural of the Downeaster in 2001 as a thank you gift for all of his support over the many years.

It was a memorable Tuesday night at the Marriott Sable Oaks where former Maine Senator George Mitchell spoke to a capacity crowd.

Constantly setting high, but achievable goals was the theme of his address. He gave credit to those individuals who worked hard to push through LD2019, namely Senator Beth Edmonds, Representative Boyd Marley and Senator Peter Mills. This was a truly bipartisan effort at both the state and the federal level.

In addition to his dedication to the Downeaster service, his scholarship fund is second only to his family and has helped 1500 Maine students to date with close to \$6.5m in direct financial assistance for college. One student from each of Maine's 130 high schools receives the scholarship each year.

About twenty years ago, Mr. Mitchell entered the Senate "by accident" to fulfill the remainder of then Senator Muskey's unexpired term when he was appointed to Secretary of State. Senator Mitchell was immediately placed on the committees served by Muskey, including the Environment Committee and then the subcommittee that dealt with transportation measures. Every

five years a reauthorization of the major highway and mass transit bill that Congress enacts to fund projects would need to be handled. He eventually became the Chairman of that subcommittee and as a result he became familiar with issues involving transportation in our society. The importance and necessity of mass transit and the absence of a sensible national energy policy as they relate to looming global warming and climate change was evident even back then.

He became very familiar with Amtrak, its operations and got to know its leaders. Late in 1980 he was elected Majority Leader of the Senate and gave up his chair of the transportation subcommittee, but never lost interest in transportation. In the spring of 1989 two unconnected events took place that acted to ultimately converge at this Annual Meeting. Amtrak President Graham Claytor came to Senator Mitchell's office to discuss his budget and to reiterate that Maine was one of only three states without Amtrak service and offered to someday work on a plan to rectify that. At the same time, TrainRiders Northeast was created through the efforts of Wayne Davis, Henry Fern II and Sam Stokes, who placed an ad in the newspaper.



**W. Graham Claytor, Jr.
Amtrak President 1982-1993**

A few months later after it all came together, President Claytor made an on-the-spot commitment of \$50m for equipment and funding to get the project underway. Not all shared a positive projection of initiating such a service and even the

Senator admitted that he had some doubts and concerns at times. There were many obstacles to overcome, but there remained a strong bipartisan unity in the Maine congressional delegation as well as the Maine Legislature. Governors Baldacci and Governor King before him have always maintained solid support. The result is a remarkable affirmation of the difference one person can make and without Wayne's two decades of total commitment, the service would not be in existence today.



Wayne and Senator Mitchell discuss details prior to the meeting.

The Senator concluded his remarks by telling Wayne that with the service secured it's now "on to Brunswick, on to Augusta, on to Montreal and on to the North Pole."

At the close of the meeting, after all merits, awards and thanks had been issued, the TrainRiders Board of Directors took the opportunity to present Wayne Davis with a plaque to commemorate his 20 years of hard work and dedication.



TrainRiders Northeast 2008-09 Board of Directors posing with Senator Mitchell.

Track Repairs to come on Merrimack River Bridge

The MBTA will spend \$3 million in repairs to the Merrimack River Bridge in an effort to keep its commuter trains running on schedule.



Bill McCaffrey photo

Train 681 crosses the Merrimack River Bridge in May of 2006 prior to speed restrictions instituted by MBTA as a result of the Minnesota bridge collapse.

A number of inspections of the 950-foot bridge that crosses the Merrimack River have shown the wooden ties that hold the steel tracks in place have deteriorated to the point where they must be replaced. Trains crossing the bridge must reduce their speed to 5 mph and only one train is allowed to cross at a time.

"We've been having minor delays because of the speed restriction," said Richard Davey, deputy general manager for the Massachusetts Bay Commuter Railroad Co. His firm operates and maintains the commuter rail for the MBTA. "Our goal is to get back to the 35 miles per hour crossing speed."

Five years ago, the MBTA reduced the crossing speed from 35 mph to 10 mph after inspectors found deteriorating wooden ties. Following the Minneapolis bridge collapse last year, Haverhill's bridge was inspected again, and as a safety precaution, additional

restrictions were put in place for the safety of passengers.

"For trains crossing the bridge, it's a crawl as it takes several minutes to cross," Davey said.

For commuters, it has often meant a five-minute delay or more. Those delays are expected to vanish once repairs are made.

Commuters leaving the Lawrence station experienced similar delays until the station underwent \$10 million in repairs and upgrades, which took place over the last three years.

Starting in October, work will begin to replace 800 wooden ties on Haverhill's No. 2 track, or the southbound track, along with all new steel rail. Davey said the work will take place from around 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. to avoid conflict with the morning and afternoon rush. He said that during repair work the northbound track will be used for travel in both directions. Repairs to the No. 2 track are expected to be completed in about a month.

"We do this routinely and we don't expect any interruption in service," Davey said.

Part two of the project, replacing 800 wooden ties on the No. 1 track, along with new steel rails, is expected to begin in April.

The Merrimack River Bridge, built in 1919, is the only one in the MBTA train system with a design similar to the bridge that collapsed in Minneapolis last summer. The bridge connects the downtown Haverhill commuter station with the city's Bradford station on the south side of the river.

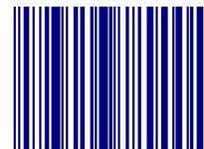
Davey said the Merrimack River Bridge sees heavy traffic each day. The MBTA runs 26 round trips a day, Amtrak's Downeaster runs five trips a day and Guilford Rail System runs as many as three

trains pulling 150 freight cars a day over the bridge.

Eagle Tribune

Quik-Trak Ticket Machines Raise the Bar

On August 24, Amtrak Information Technology activated a new functionality – bar code scanning.



Confirmation pages generated through Amtrak.com will now print out the familiar barcode that enables passengers to bypass using their credit or debit cards to activate the machine.



Simply placing the barcode in front of the red scanner grid as shown will bring up the user's itinerary and allow for the issuing of tickets with one press of the "Print Tickets" button.

Transactions witnessed to date have shown the barcode scanners to be working flawlessly and saving passengers time.

The machines will continue to maintain all of their existing functionality as well.

(UPDATE Cont'd from Page 1)

On September 17th, there will be a ground breaking for the new "Brunswick Station" which will be built adjacent to a state owned boarding platform with canopy to serve the proposed Amtrak service scheduled to begin during 2010. There's another project we've been working on for over 15 years. TNE has paraded Amtrak senior officials and representatives from The Great American Station Foundation before Brunswick officials and the public over the years and organizing public meetings on numerous occasions - trying to help "the powers" make the right decisions.

Moving down the line, the Saco Station's summer completion was delayed - because someone put a decimal point in the wrong place - and the pre-manufactured pieces didn't fit properly and had to be done over. The finished product, however, will be worth the wait. Not only will Saco passengers have an indoor waiting room - heated and air conditioned, but they will be using America's first "Green Railroad Station". Geo-thermal, solar panels and the large wind generator (which has been operating for some time now) will supply the needs of the station and more.

On September 30, the historic rail station at the University of New Hampshire in Durham will be rededicated as the new Campus Transportation Center. Beautifully restored platforms, cleaned surfaces, bus turnarounds and bus parking come with an upscale restaurant service which will retain the traditional ice cream parlor service as well. Students and the public will also enjoy having the quick-track ticket machines in the station building - saving what has been a considerable jaunt to the Whittemore Center to purchase tickets since the Downeaster began operating.

We're all waiting for the FRA to complete their "due diligence" effort on the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority's request that will allow the ROW improvements to begin for the Freeport/Brunswick Downeaster extension. We continue to promote the benefits of extending the service to Freeport and Brunswick along with the service that will share the line as far as Yarmouth before it turns left at the Jct. and goes to South Paris, Bethel (Sunday River Ski Resort), Berlin, Gorham and Montreal. And don't forget about the proposed service from Brunswick to Augusta in addition to Brunswick, Bath, Wiscasset and Rockland.

So there you have it - TNE working continually on your behalf. Help us keep things moving by keeping your dues current and adding new members. We need your support.

WD

THE TRAINRIDER

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